

AUSTRIAN STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP - FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

Background:

With a view to preparing the European Commission's new ERA Communication, a stakeholder workshop took place in Vienna on 26 February 2020. It was the second stop of the Commission's ERA - Tour des Capitales. At the premises of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), Director General for Research and Innovation, Jean-Eric Paquet, had an extensive full day discussion with representatives of Austrian stakeholders and policy makers on the future of ERA. The workshop design consisted of brief statements, discussions and brainstorming methods to collect input from the Austrian stakeholders.

Key messages delivered in statements and discussions are summarized below.

- The current ERA priorities are still valid but delivery on these priorities must be improved.
- ERA as a concept is broadly supported. But it is a widely shared notion that ERA needs better branding and more visibility not only in Europe but also globally.
- EU Partnerships are broadly supported, but stakeholders call for simple rules and less bureaucracy.
- The Member States and the European Commission need to join forces, and national governments, processes and systems must be adapted accordingly.
- Action at European level must be much faster. There should be less policy papers and more proposals for concrete solutions and more and faster action.
- ERA does not need new instruments but more focus and courage to stop unsuccessful initiatives.
- Stakeholders clearly ask for harmonized rules and better alignment for R&I funding. One proposal for how to achieve this could be to set common standards and certify programmes/agencies who apply these standards.
- A better integration of transnational activities within national R&I policy should be envisaged
- For industry, framework conditions including human resources are the number one concern. The global search for talent is impeded by bureaucratic hurdles. Overall, the legal framework or at least the implementation of legal frameworks at national levels for mobility of Third country nationals is not favourable (visa, work permit, fragmented pension systems, and so on).
- Cross sectoral mobility (i.e. between academia and the private sector) is still difficult due to diverging career incentives.
- The access to Research Infrastructures throughout Europe should be facilitated by harmonised rules and conditions.
- A solid education base is needed. Education plays a crucial role and should be high on the European agenda. The collaboration of ERA and EHEA should be intensified.
- The knowledge and experience of national agencies should be used more often when designing European initiatives.
- Use should be made of best practices. For instance, Urban Europe involves the problem owners (cities), is successful in reaching out to widening countries, and has achieved critical mass, if one considers the whole picture, and not only at funding provided in calls.

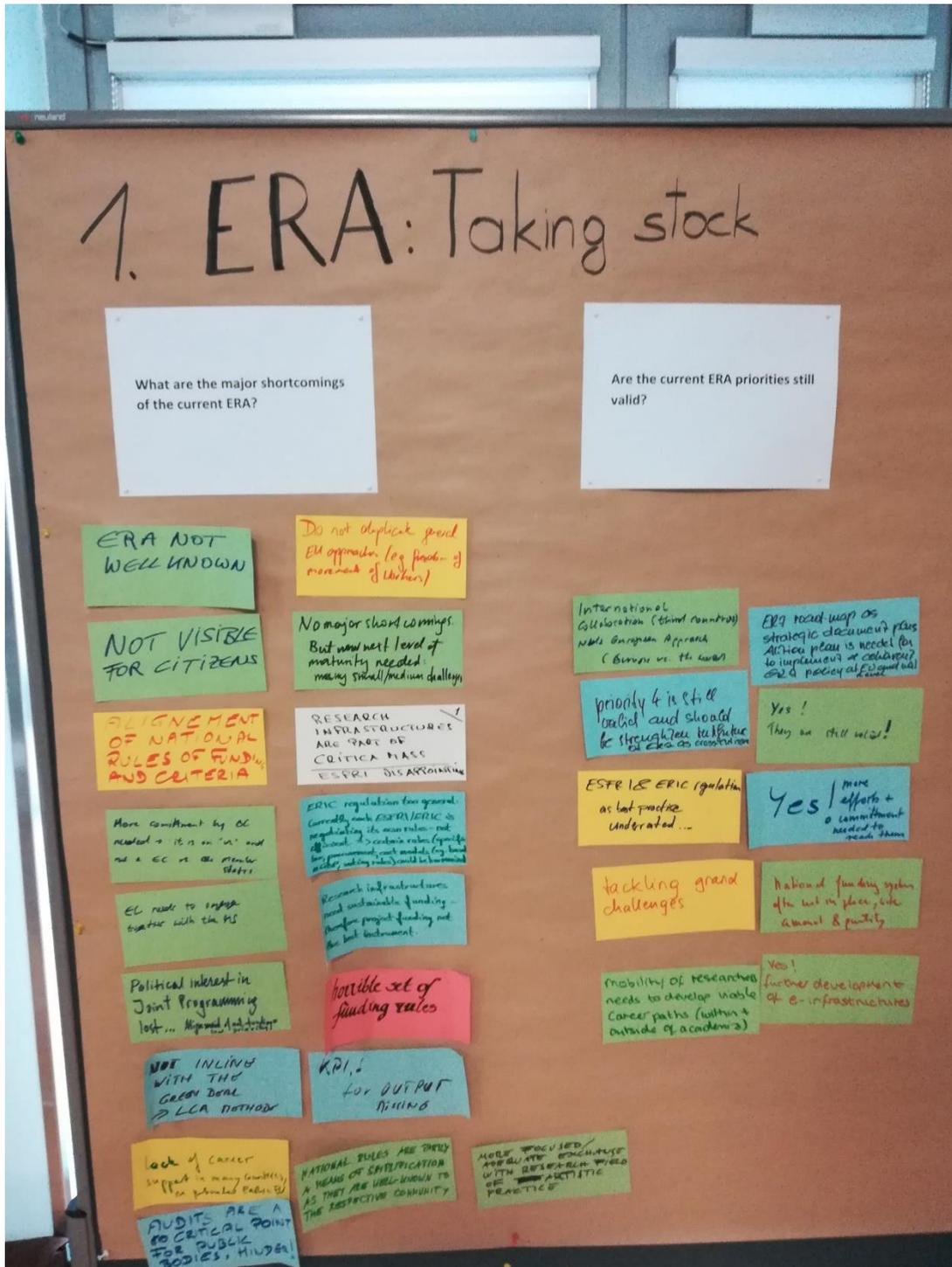
TAKE HOME MESSAGES

ANNEX: Photo documentation of the flipcharts, collecting input from Austrian stakeholders to selected questions:

ERA - Taking Stock:

What are the major shortcomings of the current ERA?

Are the current ERA priorities still valid?

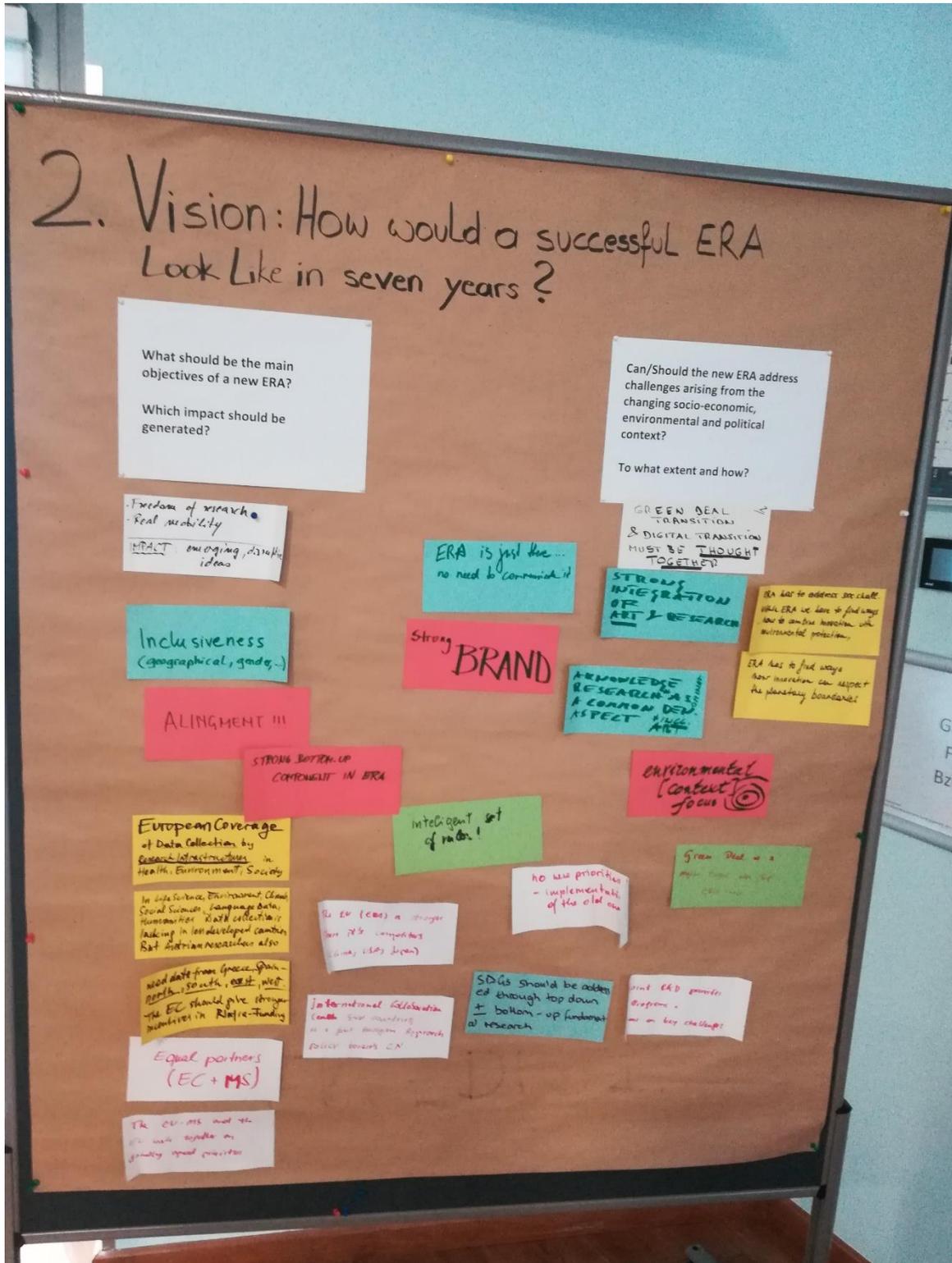


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ERA Vision

What should be the main objectives of a new ERA?

Which impact should be generated?

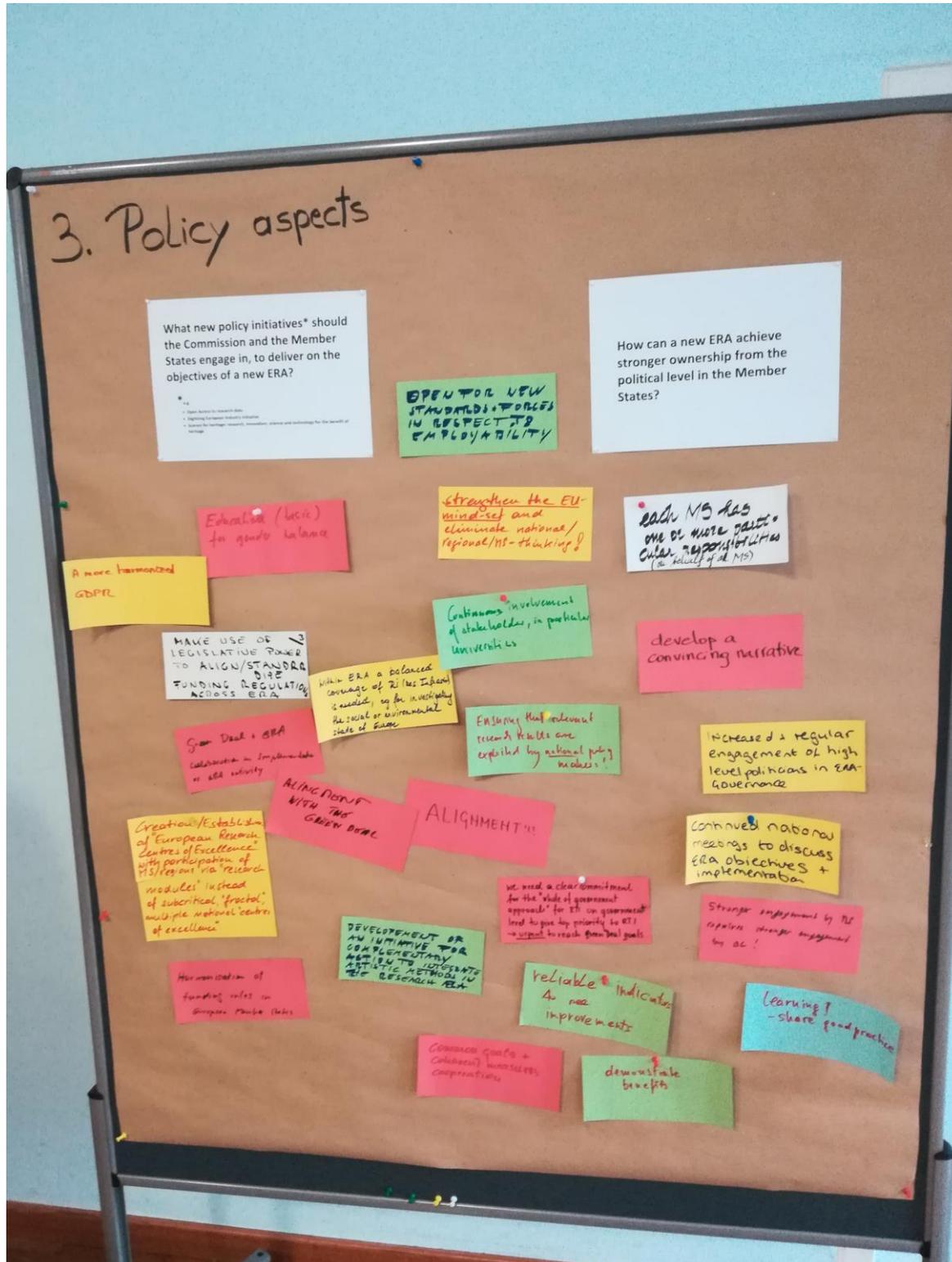


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ERA Policy aspects

What new policy initiatives should the Commission and the Member States engage in?

How can a new ERA achieve stronger ownership from the political level in the MS?



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ERA ... what else?

What would it take for you to engage more strongly in ERA?

Questions to the European Commission?

