

## **EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL - EIC BOARD**

### **Inaugural Meeting**

Hotel NH Brussels EU Berlaymont; Friday, 26 November 2021, 9:00 – 15:45 (CET)

### **Minutes of the meeting**

#### **1. Welcome and introduction**

Anna Panagopoulou, Director for European Research Area (ERA) & Innovation at DG Research & Innovation welcomed the new EIC Board and presented their guiding and advising role on the EIC strategy and implementation, and on EU innovation policy

#### **2. Approval of the agenda**

The agenda for the meeting was approved.

#### **3. Acknowledgement the Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct, annexed to the contracts of Board members, was circulated in advance. The Code sets out how EIC Board members apply their obligations in practice, and in particular how they must act in a personal capacity and carry out their work in a confidential, impartial and independent manner. All members acknowledged the Code of Conduct and agreed to its contents.

#### **4. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure**

The Secretariat had circulated a draft Rules of Procedure in line with the standard rules developed by the Commission and incorporating relevant elements from the legislation such as the role of the President of the Board. The purpose of these Rules is to define how the Board will operate, its working methods, and decision making processes. These Rules can be amended by the Board at any time. The first version was agreed and adopted by the Board.

#### **5. Nomination of an Interim chair**

The Commission recently published a vacancy notice for the first President of the EIC Board, with a deadline of 17 December 2021. One of the roles of the EIC Board President is to chair the EIC Board and its meetings. In the meantime, while there is no president appointed, the Board will be steered by an interim chair. Professor Mark Ferguson was invited to act as interim chair for this purpose, and he accepted this role. Ms Panagopoulou handed him the chair role for the remainder of the meeting.

#### **6. Tour de Table**

Most members had introduced themselves at the informal dinner on 25 November. The chair invited those not present at the dinner, and in particular those who joined the meeting via videoconference, to introduce themselves.

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### **7. Setting the scene - EIC – the story so far**

Jean-David Malo, Director of the EIC & SME Executive Agency presented the progress achieved by the EIC pilot and full EIC following its launch in March 2021, highlighting key achievements and impacts described in the new EIC impact report 2021. Mark Ferguson, as former chair of the EIC pilot Advisory Board provided a brief presentation on the experience, outputs, the working groups and recommendations from the previous pilot EIC Advisory Board.

Board members praised the different actions taken, were generally positive about the progress achieved in the past years, the unique role of the EIC Fund, and the different actions taken. The Board indicated it would monitor compliance with the KPIs developed by the former EIC pilot Advisory Board and continue the work done under the EIC pilot, while making improvements learning from the experience. The role of Programme Managers was highlighted, together with the need for better gender balance and finding ways to involve programme managers in the Board's work. Board members welcomed the joint work with EIT and ERC and emphasised that this should continue.

Board members also highlighted the importance of linking the EIC to national, both public and private, innovation funds and agencies. The Board also stressed the relevance of regulatory issues (including speed of regulatory decisions) and competition and state aid rules (noting the importance that Seals of Excellence awarded by the EIC awards are exempt from State Aid rules). Several members pointed out the importance of public procurement as a tool where further initiatives are needed (e.g. offering a procurement contract as a prize, better matchmaking between procurers and EIC startups). Board members also recalled the proposal to establish a 100 billion euro pan-European fund for breakthrough innovations, and the need to connections with the EIB including through InvestEU.

Mr Malo replied to all the points, explaining that their advice is central to developing new initiatives and identifying areas for improvement for the EIC.

### **8. EIC Board - role**

The Head of Unit for the EIC Board & Strategy (EISMEA) presented the role of the EIC Board under Horizon Europe and the process of preparing the EIC Work Programme to which the Board is expected to provide substantial inputs. He contrasted the role of the Board, which is now set out in the Horizon Europe legislation, with the more informal arrangements used during the pilot phase and that the Board has a wide ranging mandate covering all aspects of the EIC and beyond.

### **9. Round Table discussion on priorities**

The Chair invited all Board members to enumerate the 2-3 key priorities they would like the Board to focus on. All members present intervened with a rich set of relevant priorities.

After some discussions, the Board decided to establish a first set of four working groups to address some of the priorities and come up with concrete recommendations to be discussed at the main Board:

1. Working group on communication, branding and strategic positioning of the EIC

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2. Working group on improving participation of innovators from “widening countries” in the EIC
3. Joint working group with the ERC Scientific Council
4. Joint working group with the EIT Governing Board

Operational improvements will also be discussed, including on KPIs, monitoring and data. Future priorities for considerations also included: gender, diversity and inclusiveness; technological sovereignty; scale up financing; interactions with Programme Managers; and emerging areas such as ed-tech.

It was agreed that the Secretariat will:

- Consult members about which working groups they wish to participate in (all to participate in at least one) and possible chairing of the working groups.
- Organise kick off meetings (online) for all WGs in December or January to agree on the scope and report back to next Board meeting.
- Follow up with the EIT and the ERC to formalise arrangements and memberships of the joint WGs.
- Consolidate the priorities proposed by members in the form of a draft work plan for 2022 indicating which topics would be discussed at the various Board meetings.

### **10. Developments in EU Innovation Policy**

Anna Panagopoulou, Director, and the Head of Unit for Innovation Policy and Access to Finance, DG Research and Innovation, presented the developments in EU innovation policy and the potential role of the Board to support this. Ms Panagopoulou stressed the need to work closely with Member States aligning EU and national R&I policies, and ensuring European Structural Funds contribution to EU R&I priorities. The Head of Unit for Innovation Policy and Access to Finance presented the results of the stakeholder survey on Europe’s innovation ecosystem and reported on the first meeting of the EIC Forum, noting that the EIC Board President will be a plenary member of the Forum and that the Forum has agreed on 5 working groups (Innovation Policy; Plug-in scheme to the EIC Accelerator; EIC Prizes Alumni Network; European Innovation Procurement; Data).

Board members commented on the directions for EU innovation policy, asked questions about the ongoing developments and how they can support the work of the EIC Forum and the new innovation policy development. The Secretariat was tasked with providing more information about the future meetings of the EIC Forum and potential participation in the Forum working groups (e.g. on procurement, data, etc.)

### **11. Next steps**

The Chair asked the secretariat to propose dates for meetings in 2022, either in Brussels or other locations (potentially linked to innovation related events). The Secretariat informed Board members that they may be invited to participate in other events such as major ecosystem events or to assist in the recruitment of Programme Managers.

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### List of participants

#### Members of the Board (all in personal capacity)

- Ana BARJASIC
- Bart BECKS
- Kat BORLONGAN
- Liene BRIEDE (*Remote*)
- Carsten DREHER
- Mark FERGUSON
- Lars FRØLUND
- Radoslav GEORGIEV
- Jan GOETZ
- Hermann HAUSER (*Remote, morning*)
- Vicky KEFALAS
- Taavi MADIBERK (*Remote, morning*)
- Marja MAKAROW
- Ana MAIQUES VALLS
- Francesco PROFUMO
- Cristina RIESEN
- Kinga STANISŁAWSKA
- Bruno SPORTISSE
- Špela STRES (*Remote*)
- Anita TRAASETH

#### European Commission

##### DG Research & Innovation

- Anna Panagopoulou – Director, ERA & Innovation (*for Welcome & afternoon*)
- Head of Unit Innovation Policy & Access to Finance
- Policy Officer, Innovation Policy & Access to Finance

##### EIC & SME Executive Agency

- Jean-David Malo - Director
- Head of Department European Innovation Council
- Head of Unit EIC Board, Strategy and Feedback to Policy
- Head of Unit EIC Pathfinder (*Remote*)
- Head of Unit EIC Transition and Business Acceleration Services (*Remote*)
- Head of Unit EIC Accelerator (*Remote*)
- Head of Unit EU and place-based Innovation Ecosystems (*Remote*)
- Acting Head of Unit Programme Managers' Office (*Remote*)
- Policy Advisor, EIC Board Secretariat
- Policy Officer, EIC Board Secretariat