



# European Research Area

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**Alignment in Joint Programming: Some reflections based  
on the Report of the GPC WG Alignment**

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## Introduction – Preliminary remarks

- 5 years into the JP process and around 4 years after establishing first JPIs: Crucial phase: What form and what impact will they have at the start of FP9?
- Joint calls have been a first joint activity for most of the ten JPIs, activities should go far beyond joint calls
- *Commissioner MGQ at the Dublin Conference (February 2013):* Member States (MS) should engage in alignment of national policies to the SRA of the various JPIs
- *Report of the GPC Working Group Alignment (September 2014):* In order to fully embrace the double nature of Joint Programming (structuring ERA and addressing societal challenges), alignment of national policies towards a defined SRA of a JPI is the prerequisite to realise Joint Programming



## Introduction – Preliminary remarks

- The overall objective of JP: to ensure highly attractive research systems in Europe, to make best use of Europe's knowledge potential for jobs and growth by ensuring competition, optimal division of labour and strategic cooperation.
- This requires is a more integrated (between MS, EC, Stakeholders) and systematic approach regarding a true research governance in Europe (all MS research policies and EU-level policies). This is not happening yet and is a long-term, strategic process.
- JPIs play a catalytic role for the realisation of ERA, as strategic tools for optimal transnational cooperation and competition. In fact, the realisation of ERA very much depends upon the structuring of national research programmes/policies/activities towards common goals.



## Characteristics of JPIs: Why alignment?

- In the context of the joint programming process, a “virtual programme” is created by joining various existing national programmes into one at transnational level.
- In many ways, JPIs are more than “programmes” because a lot more than the typical research funding activities are undertaken by a JPI.
  - They engage with policymakers, researchers and society stakeholders, they provide policy advice, they act as the European partner at global scale (eg JPND) etc.
  - JPIs could be described as **political supranational bodies/intergovernmental organisations**, bundling Member States’ powers into one body which is usually institutionalised (secretariat) and with sophisticated governance structures (General Assembly, Management Board, Governing Board, Scientific Advisory Board, Stakeholder Advisory Board), planning and management instruments such as annual work plans and bi-annual implementation programmes based on a joint research strategy operationalised in a Strategic Research Agenda.



# Multi-level governance of research policy

Three levels of complexity:

- Coordination between national actors for societal challenges already demanding within the national context alone (multiple ministries and agencies, research institutions and societal actors)
- Even more complex at the transnational level in ERA with the creation of joint programmes between MS in the domain of societal challenges based on different cultural and political backgrounds
- Third layer in coordination of JPis relates to the division of labour and complementarity between the two previous levels with the supranational level of the FP and EU policy in general in the context of common societal challenges
- Challenge inherent at all three levels but a separate topic: the feedback and translation of research results back to policy in the light of the societal challenges approach



## The Mandate of the GPC Working Group on Alignment\*

- to explore the concept of alignment and to develop a common understanding of the ways of alignment in the context of Joint Programming
- to produce practical recommendations and implement actions that lead to alignment
- to make proposals for establishing measurable targets to help monitoring the progress of alignment
- to identify the possibilities for implementing alignment in parallel with Horizon 2020

\* The Commission acted as the secretariat of this WG



# The Recommendations by the GPC - WG on Alignment

5.1. A proposal for a Definition of alignment in the context of Joint Programming

5.2. Recommendations for actions to enhance alignment for the JPIs, for the Member States and for ERA

5.2.1. Recommendations for the role and engagement of Member States in the alignment of national research programmes and JPIs

5.2.2. Recommendations for actions of JPIs to enhance alignment

5.2.3 Recommendations for alignment in the perspective of ERA and the role of alignment in the coherence of Horizon 2020 and JPIs

5.3. Recommendations for monitoring the progress of alignment



## **A common definition of Alignment developed by the GPC Working Group**

- Alignment is the strategic approach taken by Member States' to modify their national programmes, priorities or activities as a consequence of the adoption of joint research priorities in the context of Joint Programming with a view to implement changes to improve efficiency of investment in research at the level of Member States and ERA.
- Alignment is bi-directional: Alignment concerns MS and JPIs alike and the form it takes will depend on the individual JPI and the individual Member State: no unified approach for alignment
- The state of alignment for a particular JPI is changing and developing over time.





## **Recommendations for the role and engagement of MS in the Alignment of national research programmes to JPIs**

### **1. National engagement in the JPI domain**

Alignment is facilitated if MS develop National Action plans, Roadmaps, Strategies to mirror their commitment to the SRA of JPIs. MS do not necessarily need thematic programmes that fit into a JPI's SRA but they do need a national strategic approach towards the respective challenge.

### **2. Barriers for Alignment to be observed and reduced by MS**

Bottom-up approach to research funding makes it difficult to identify areas for alignment. More than one national funding agency in the JP domain and lack of coordination at national level on strategic research agenda and funding

### **3. Political commitment for the JPIs**

Communication at all levels (EU, GPC and JPI level) on how alignment can enhance JPIs has to be improved and become more political.



## Recommendations for the roles and actions of JPIs

### 1. The spectrum of Alignment

Alignment covers actions spanning all the programming cycle: from joint foresight, development of strategic research agenda to joint processes of research practices, funding, implementation and ex-post evaluation

### 2. Alignment is a long term development

All examples for types of alignment should be considered, applied, evaluated and finally given the state of “best practices for alignment”. Such best practices are to be shared among JPIs and supported by the member states

### 3. Best practices of Alignment

Several proposals covering mapping, networking, capacity building standardization, joint calls to development of national strategies (see GPC Alignment Report)

### 4. Barriers for Alignment to be observed by JPIs and reduced – mainly by MS



## Recommendations for alignment: ERA and coherence of Horizon 2020 and JPIs

- Joint Programming is the most strategic and all-encompassing process developed within the ERA so far, and has the potential to be the vehicle for the other, more operational elements of ERA.
- JPIs should become platforms for strategic programming and foresight for Member States working jointly together according to the identified good practices for alignment.
- The European Commission should facilitate the process of alignment in Joint Programming by mapping, monitoring and evaluating the synergetic actions taken in the domains of societal challenges between Member States and between Member States and the EU-level.



## Recommendations for monitoring the progress of alignment

- Monitoring of alignment activities should be undertaken by both JPIs and Member States. The role of the GPC would be to develop a common approach for monitoring alignment and to regularly review the progress of alignment as achieved by the individual JPIs and MS.
- The JPIs individually should develop a strategy for monitoring their alignment activities and continuously define which good practices for alignment it will apply and then monitor the implementation of these.
- The Member States should individually develop a strategy for monitoring their own alignment activities based on their situation: The participating country of a JPI should identify how much its own “programmes, priorities and activities” have changed since its commitment to the JPI and/or the adoption of the SRA



# Thank you for your attention!

*I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas.*

John Maynard Keynes (1936): The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money. London: Macmillan

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