Perspectives on the ERA actions

UNICA activity:
Influencing Policy Agenda

UNICA Research meeting 2024

Brussels, 2-3 December 2024

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Through UNICA, we have charted new territory and claimed a unique opportunity – to shape the research policy sitting at one table with the key stakeholders of European Research Area.

ERA Governance?

To: Minister Simona Kustec, Commissioner Mariya Gabriel

Brussels, 4 October 2021

Open letter on ERA governance

Honourable Minister Simona Kustec and Commissioner Mariya Gabriel,

With this letter, the undersigned representatives of research and innovation (R&I) organisations

6

European Research Area (ERA) governance

Following the adoption of the **Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe** (November 2021) and the endorsement of the **ERA Policy Agenda for 2022-2024** by the European Council the new governance structures for the European Research Area (ERA) were adopted in **2023**, including:

1. **The European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC):** A strategic policy advisory body to support coordination among EU Member States and the European Commission.

2. **The ERA Forum:** A permanent structure replacing the ERA Forum for Transition to operationalize and monitor the ERA Policy Agenda.

3. **Monitoring and reporting mechanisms:** These ensure the tracking of progress toward ERA objectives across member states.

ERA university sectorial coordination group [within ERA Forum]: serves as a **platform** that brings together **key stakeholders from the university sector** to contribute to and coordinate efforts related to the European Research Area (ERA). Its purpose is to **ensure the effective involvement of universities** and higher education institutions in implementing the ERA's objectives and to facilitate collaboration and coherence among the various organizations representing the sector

1st survey

Relevance and viability of proposed ERA activities

Points of Interest (max 17, min 1)

- [17 Points] Facilitating and accelerating the responsible use of AI in science in the EU
- [15 Points] Upscaling knowledge valorisation capacities and activities
- [15 Points] Improving synergies between Research & Innovation (R&I) and Higher Education within the ERA and unleashing the full potential of European R&I environments
- [13 Points] Fundamental research and scientific leadership of Europe
- [13 Points] Making research careers more attractive and sustainable
- [12 Points] Global Approach to Research and Innovation
- [12 Points] Enhancing Research Security
- [12 Points] Reforming Research Assessment
- [11 Points] Strengthening inclusive and intersectional gender equality in the European Research Area
- [11 Points] Improve EU access to excellence
- [11 Points] Empowering Research and Innovation: A New Era in Research Management
- [10 Points] Equity in Open Science
- [9 Points] Promoting and Protecting Freedom of Scientific Research in Europe
- [9 Points] Advancing the European Science for Policy (S4P) Ecosystem

Points of Interest (max 17, min 1)

- [8 Points] Enabling open science via sharing and re-use of data, including through the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)
- [8 Points] Greening Research: towards climate-sustainable research practices
- [7 Points] Accelerating New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) to advance biomedical research and testing of medicinal products and medical devices
- [7 Points] A framework for a European approach to integrity and ethics in R&I in the face of emerging challenges
- [7 Points] Enhancing Trust in Science through Citizen Engagement and Science Communication
- [5 Points] Strengthen sustainability, accessibility and resilience of research infrastructures in the European Research Area
- [4 Points] Accelerating R&I investments for Europe's industrial transformation and competitive sustainability
- [4 Points] An R&I foresight community of practice for the ERA
- [1 Point] Enshrining Research in the Strategic Energy Technologies Plan

2nd survey

Snapshot of the **ability of countries and stakeholders to contribute** to the proposed activities of the future ERA Policy Agenda 2025-27 and to clearly determine whether there is an appetite for a certain ERA activity.

2nd survey

Question Block I

* 1. Do you intend to support this ERA activity implementation, if it is part of the next ERA Policy Agenda?
- ◉ Definitely yes
- ○ Most likely
- ○ Unlikely
- ○ No

Question Block II

* 1. Lead entity/Main contributor at national level

for example, public administration, agency, HEIs, RTOs – several indications possible

Email of action contact point at national level

Email of second action contact point at national level, if necessary

* 2. Planned activities regarding the implementation, including resources to be spent

This can include but is not limited to legislative initiatives/framework conditions, non-legislative initiatives, such as guidelines, awareness events and other dedicated activities

2nd survey

19. Accelerating R&I investments for Europe's industrial transformation and competitive sustainability

Question Block I

* 1. Do you intend to support this ERA activity implementation, if it is part of the next ERA Policy Agenda?
- ○ Definitely yes
- ○ Most likely
- ○ Unlikely
- ● No

* 2. Choose a reason
- ○ Insufficient resources
- ● Does not align with our interests
- ○ Other

Any other comments

[   ]

2nd survey results

ERA structural policies and actions 2025-2027 highly likely to be included in next ERA policy agenda	VOTE MS	VOTE AC	TOTAL
Enabling open science via sharing and re-use of data, including through EOSC	23	4	27
Upscaling knowledge valorisation capacities and activities	22	4	26
Strengthen sustainability, accessibility and resilience of research infrastructures in the ERA	21	4	25
Making research careers more attractive and sustainable	22	3	25
Facilitating and accelerating the responsible use of AI in science in the EU	21	4	25
Enhancing Research Security	21	4	25
Strengthening inclusive and intersectional gender equality in the ERA	19	4	23
Reforming Research Assessment	19	4	23
Global Approach to Research and Innovation	20	3	23
Accelerating R&I investments for Europe's industrial transformation and competitive sustainability	19	4	23
Empowering Research and Innovation: A New Era in Research Management	19	4	23
Advancing the European Science for Policy (S4P) Ecosystem	16	3	19
Enhancing Trust in Science through Citizen Engagement and Science Communication	14	4	18
Improving synergies between Research & Innovation (R&I) and Higher Education within the ERA and unleashing the full potential of European R&I environments	13	4	17
Enshrining Research in the Strategic Energy Technologies Plan	13	3	16
Equity in Open Science	13	2	15
Fundamental research and scientific leadership of Europe	12	3	15
An R&I foresight community of practice for the ERA	8	2	10
Notes			
Items in red: actions for which EUA indicated that they will not be part			
Item in green: EUA's strong committment to this action, which is a proposal of the academic sector			
ERA structural policies and actions 2025-2027 which did not reach the threshold (lower likelyhood to be included)	VOTE MS	VOTE AC	TOTAL
A harmonised and coordinated framework for a European approach to integrity and ethics in R&I in the face of emerging challenges	10	4	14
Promoting and Protecting Freedom of Scientific Research in Europe	9	4	13
Improve EU access to excellence	10	3	13
Accelerating New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) to advance biomedical research and testing of medicinal products and medical devices	9	3	12
Greening Research: towards climate-sustainable research practices	8	3	11

Explanatory documents for ERA priorities

Action title *(Please use as a maximum of one line to create meaningful, actionable title.)*	**Enabling open science via sharing and re-use of data, including through the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)**
Categorisation *(Please indicate whether it is an ERA structural policy or ERA action and add a one-sentence rationale.)*	**ERA structural policy** It is a long-term policy with structural effects in the European R&I system, and with existing governance structures.
Description of the action *(Please describe as a narrative, what is the problem and why is an ERA action a solution?)*	This ERA structural policy aims to achieve a step change across research communities and research infrastructures in Europe towards open sharing, seamless access and reliable re-use of research data and other digital research objects such as methods, protocols, software and publications - used and produced along the research life cycle. The 2025-2027 work plan under this structural policy takes into account the progress achieved in delivering ERA Action 1 for 2022-2024 and sets out concrete outcomes that can only be achieved with close collaboration of the EU with the Member States (MS) and countries associated to Horizon Europe (AC).

Explanatory documents for ERA priorities

Outcomes

(Please indicate the actions' concrete and tangible outcomes, such as the deliverables (e.g. guidelines) resulting from the intervention, similar to the previous Policy Agenda. You can also link them to a timing.)

The Work Plan sets out the following specific outcomes to be delivered during 2025-2027:

1. **Develop a high-value EOSC federation and increase its uptake by research communities.** This includes notably:
   - Enlarge the EOSC federation with a sufficient number of EOSC nodes, including thematic nodes and possibly also national and/or regional nodes of the MS/AC. Ensure the scalability of the EOSC federation, based on common EOSC standards, access and acceptable use policies and rules of participation.
   - Ensure the effective uptake of EOSC by research communities and citizen scientists, developed as a public good to serve research communities in Europe;
   - Open EOSC progressively to the public sector and to partners from the commercial sector that are dedicated to open science;
   - Deploy EOSC as the European Data Space for research and innovation and support its interconnection with other European data spaces;
   - Ensure the governance and sustainability of EOSC after 2027.

2. **Increase the amount and productivity of FAIR research data in Europe.** This includes notably:
   - Support research data repositories to enable FAIR data quality and long-term data preservation, and connect them to the EOSC Federation;

Explanatory documents for ERA priorities

Actors *(Please explain who would take part in the action and who would benefit from it, also taking into account the national level.)*	The success of EOSC and the advancing the FAIR data agenda will crucially depend on the commitment of the EU and the ERA countries. The ERA Forum has a key role to play to ensure political support and appropriate follow up by the EU and the MS/AC to deliver on the outcomes of this action, and to enhance interaction of Action 1 with other ERA Actions of relevance to open science. Specific activities under this action will also involve as needed dedicated groups and organsations in Europe such as the EOSC Steering Board, the EOSC Association and CoNOSC, as well as other national, international and/or community driven structures and initiatives related to EOSC or open science. The beneficiaries of this action should primarily be researchers in Europe.
Expected impact *(Please describe the expected impact of the action in addressing the existing gap or problem.)*	The action should contribute to the following expected impacts: • open science practices and skills are rewarded and taught, becoming the 'new normal'; • standards, tools and services allow researchers to find, access, reuse and combine results; • a federated community-driven infrastructure enabling open sharing of scientific results is deployed and sustained; • Europe is in the driving seat towards a web of FAIR research data with established links to other data spaces;

Questions for discussion

- What role do we envision for UNICA?

- What challenges do UNICA members currently face in engaging in ERA priorities?

- How can UNICA help university leaders recognize the value of prioritizing ERA engagement in their strategic plans?

- When assessing involvement, what factors should determine whether UNICA leads or supports ERA activities?

- What questions should be included in a survey to understand member universities' interests and capabilities regarding ERA priorities?

- How can the UNICA Research Group serve as an effective platform for cross-institutional collaboration on ERA priorities?

- What role can the UNICA Research Group play in co-creating policy briefs, position papers, and contributing to international discussions?

We have all the means, opportunities, and decision-making power to shape the extent of UNICA's involvement (cumulative involvement of our universities via UNICA's avatar). **Now, it's up to us to harness this resource and turn it into something extraordinary.**