

An ERA for Excellent Research

Science Europe's Input to the European Commission Consultation on the Pact for Research and Innovation

Introduction

1. In line with Science Europe's continued involvement in building the European Research Area (ERA), this paper provides input to the Commission's [Consultation](#) on the preparation of the 'Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe'. Science Europe appreciates the efforts of the ERA Forum for Transition in developing the Pact.
2. Science Europe, bringing forward the perspective of the major national research performing and research funding organisations, supports the development of a Pact for Research and Innovation that includes R&I-related values and principles. It is crucial that these are implemented in a relevant way for the research activity in the ERA, meaningfully involving research communities, national governments, research organisations, and R&I stakeholders in the development and implementation of the ERA policies.
3. Identified values and principles should be embedded in all relevant policy initiatives, ensuring coherence across other priority areas. For instance, it is important that any policy changes associated with reward and incentive structures also promote good practices that are in line with research career priorities. Likewise, in valuing ethics and integrity, research assessment processes should appropriately recognise the practices and behaviours that uphold them.

An ambitious Pact needs concrete commitments

4. The roles of the European Commission, European Parliament, Council of the EU, Member States, and stakeholders should be clarified. Tangible and concrete commitments and objectives must be defined, according to their distinct responsibilities and capacities.
5. In line with the principle of subsidiarity, Member States should provide adequate funding for R&I, which is key to achieving the ERA. The Pact should reaffirm the investment target of 3% of EU GDP dedicated to research and development, as well as the new 1.25% EU GDP public effort target to be achieved by Member States by 2030, as proposed in the Communication on 'A new ERA for Research and Innovation.'
6. Linked to the setting up of principles and values, the commitments should include the revision and update of some existing codes and policies, such as European Charter & Code for Researchers, European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, or European charter of access to research infrastructures. In addition, adequate new policies and legislative initiatives should be proposed.

To be achieved, the ERA needs to be inclusive

7. The ERA as a political vision for Europe should consider that not all European countries are EU Member States, and that, together, we are able to actively and constructively contribute to a European research ecosystem that is globally competitive.
8. Science Europe calls for the countries associated to the EU Framework Programmes to be included in the development process of the ERA. In particular, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as key players in ERA, should be part of the process defining the values and priorities.
9. Science Europe considers that a structured and systemic approach to stakeholders' involvement in both the development of the Pact and the ERA governance would be beneficial for ERA. It would facilitate constructive discussions and greater ownership of the Pact for Research and Innovation (R&I) by stakeholders.

ERA needs to be built on research values

10. The Pact for Research and Innovation needs to reflect the values that underpin the research ecosystem. In this context, Science Europe considers that certain principles are essential to research and the ERA. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Research excellence and scientific quality.
 - Academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - Ethics and research integrity.
 - Openness.
 - Transparency.
 - Free circulation of researchers and ideas.
11. Science Europe draws particular attention to the following elements:
 - The freedom of scientific research must encompass institutional autonomy and accountability (which includes the autonomy of funding decisions by research funders and the freedom of research topics by research performers) and the need to protect the rights that underlie academic freedom, in particular the rights to freedom of expression, opinion, assembly, thought, information, and free circulation of knowledge. This also includes combatting all types of violence associated with the opposition to academic freedom.
 - Gender equality and equal opportunities have to include combatting harassment as well as any kind of discrimination and bias across the whole R&I system.

ERA priorities must reflect the reality of research

12. Science Europe also considers that a strong emphasis needs to be put in the Pact on the importance of fundamental, curiosity-driven research. A good balance of curiosity-driven and challenge-oriented research is crucial to tackle tackling social, environmental, and economic challenges.
13. Science Europe considers that the following priority areas should be at the core of the Pact and ERA, and that concrete and tangible actions need to be defined to advance progress in them:
 - Improving access to research excellence and reducing the geographical divide

- Research careers
- Research culture
- Open Science
- Science communication
- Research Infrastructures
- Gender equality and inclusion
- Research assessment
- Synergies between the national and EU levels

14. Science Europe highlights that specific attention should be given to the following elements:

- Research careers refer to all relevant research-related careers that enable the conduct of research, including high-level technicians, data stewards and research managers, as well as career perspectives and paths for researchers who leave academia.
- Open Science is a broad movement within the research community that includes not only Open Access to publications and research data, but encompasses the free circulation of scientific knowledge, requiring sustainable access and the long-term preservation of research outputs. It needs interoperable infrastructures and appropriate supporting policies across Europe.
- Access to Research Infrastructures is key and support to the long-standing initiatives to better link the national and European (and global) RI roadmaps and planning is needed.

Science Europe, Brussels, 07 May 2021

About Science Europe: Science Europe is the association representing major public organisations that fund or perform excellent, ground-breaking research in Europe. It brings together the expertise of 36 of the largest and best-known research organisations in the world to jointly push the frontiers of how scientific research is produced and delivers benefits to society. It advocates science and the scientific community to help build the European Research Area (ERA) and shape the global scientific agenda.

Science Europe member organisations develop, manage, and implement national research policies, as well as a large variety of funding programmes, from bottom-up schemes to mission-oriented research. They collectively invest over €18 billion each year on research in 27 European countries. Science Europe members are also developing and adapting national policies on an on-going basis to create the best possible conditions for research.