

## A Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe<sup>1</sup>

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### Policy document summary

The Pact defines a common set of values and principles for researchers, research processes and research and innovation systems. The Pact also sets out the priority areas for joint action in support of ERA, calls for prioritizing of investments and reforms and outlines the monitoring and policy coordination mechanism for making ERA priorities a reality.

### Disclaimer

This brief overview is intended to summarize the essential points from the EU institutions' policy document that are relevant for research performing and innovation institutions, without providing the full extent of information available in the original document. The focus of the overview is put on initiatives regarding circulation of highly qualified staff, especially researchers, relevant to the European Research Area. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission.

## 1. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The Commission has defined a common set of values and principles for researchers, research processes and research and innovation systems that concern:

1. **Ethics and integrity of research and innovation** - Researchers are obliged to adhere to the strict ethics and integrity rules and practices which shall ensure the conduct of trustworthy research free from undue influence, biases and methodological shortcuts. Upholding the ethics and integrity of research and innovation is a prerequisite for pursuance of research excellence.
2. **Freedom of scientific research** - Freedom of scientific research is a necessary condition for researchers to be able to freely define their research questions, theories, and methods in an open and secure manner, and to produce, share, and disseminate knowledge, data, and other results.
3. **Gender equality and equal opportunities** - Gender equality and equal opportunities include embracing gender balance in research teams at all levels, gender balance in decision-making, and the integration of the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation.
4. **Free circulation** - This involves sharing scientific knowledge, data, and tools as early as possible, notably through open science practices, attractive and merit-based careers, recognition of researchers' and technical staff's skills, enhancing framework conditions for researchers' mobility, and encouraging exchanges between academia and industry.
5. **Pursuit of excellence** – Pursuing excellence means committing to programme, perform or support research of the highest possible quality, with the aim of achieving and rewarding excellence as a prerequisite for scientific, technological, economic, policy, and societal development and broadening Europe's overall knowledge base.
6. **Value orientation** - This implies enhancing the impact of research and innovation by transforming Europe's leadership in knowledge creation into relevant and

<sup>1</sup> You can access the original document here: [Council of the European Union. \(2021, November 26\). Council recommendation \(EU\) 2021/2122 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe. Official Journal of the European Union, L 431, 1-8.](#)

sustainable products, services, processes, and solutions that aid the wellbeing of citizens, economic prosperity, open innovation, evidence-based policymaking, and open strategic autonomy.

7. **Coordination, coherence and commitment** - Member states, with the assistance of the Union, shall coordinate their research and innovation policies and programmes in areas of common interest, including by ensuring complementarity with the EU framework programmes for research and innovation, thereby facilitating transnational cooperation in the ERA, and direct research and innovation investments and reforms.
8. **Global outreach** – Member states shall work together and with third states on research and innovation while upholding the Union's values and the principles laid out in the present Pact, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant international instruments.
9. **Inclusiveness** – In order to remain competitive at global level, the member states shall work towards unleashing the full potential of the Union. It is imperative that less performing Member States and regions intensify their efforts to enhance the performance of their research and innovation systems, and enhance their capacities, both human and infrastructural, by ensuring synergies between their national funding and Union funds.
10. **Societal responsibility** – Societal responsibility means working to be responsive to society's needs to expand collective capacities and achieve greater societal impact and increase trust in science and innovation.

## 2. PRIORITY AREAS FOR JOINT ACTION

The Commission set out the following priority areas for joint action in support of ERA:

### 1. Deepening a truly functioning internal market for knowledge

**Open science** – Efforts shall be aimed at the development of a culture of open science in the Union. This means giving everyone access to scholarly publications and research data, spreading open science ideas and practices, considering different cultures, teaching open science skills, and improving digital infrastructure and services.

**Research infrastructure** - Develop further the open access to and better use of European and national research infrastructures. This will help European science compete globally, help narrow the research and innovation gap, and help make the ERA more inclusive. This will require, among other things, using a wider range of funding sources for world-leading research infrastructures and looking at new ways to fund transnational and virtual access.

**Gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusiveness** – Action shall be taken to support women's wider participation in science and innovation and work to remove inequities regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

**Careers and mobility of researchers and research assessment and reward system** – Member States shall give greater recognition to the careers of researchers, make their careers

more attractive, and equip them with the training and skills required to meet the changing needs of the researcher role across the Union.

**Knowledge Valorisation** - The EU Member states shall aim to enhance cooperation and interconnections among research and innovation actors and to better coordinate policies and programmes at the European, national, and regional levels through establishing frameworks for knowledge valorisation, implementing research results, enhancing upskilling, and managing intellectual assets.

**Global engagement** – Actions shall be taken to develop a coherent global engagement strategy and common tools, promoting shared European values and principles for research and innovation in terms of international cooperation, capitalising on the attractiveness of European research and establishing cooperation with third countries.

## **2. Taking up together the challenges posed by the twin green and digital transition, and increasing society's participation in the ERA**

**Challenge-based ERA actions** - The Commission and Member States shall work more closely together to design and implement more resilient and sustainable sectoral policies to foster research and innovation based solutions and mitigate potential threats. These actions can include Horizon Europe Missions, European partnerships, joint programming initiatives or support for multilateral alliances.

### **Synergies between research and innovation policy, education and the EU Skills Agenda**

Through the higher education institutions and research infrastructures, synergies between the ERA and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as two key pillars of innovation and knowledge creation shall be developed.

**Synergies between research and innovation policy and industrial policy, in order to boost innovation ecosystems** – The Commission proposal specifies that actions are required to develop and exploit the synergies between the ERA and the updated industrial strategy, notably through research and technology infrastructures, higher education institutions (HEIs), Horizon Europe partnerships including EIT KICs, Industrial Alliances and common industrial technology roadmaps (from basic research to deployment) in key strategic areas.

**A more active citizen and societal engagement in research and innovation in all its dimensions** – The Commission specifies that contribution of and capacity to benefit from citizens' views and involvement, will raise awareness of the benefits and impact of research and innovation in people's daily lives, ensure a greater diversity of approaches for designing and implementing research and innovation policy and make R&I more relevant for society.

## **3. Amplifying access to research and innovation excellence across the Union**

Amplifying access to research and innovation excellence across the Union involves:

- **More investments and reforms in countries and regions with lower research and innovation performance** (mobilising Union and national funding for research and

innovation investment, in combination with support and assistance to engage in the necessary research and innovation reforms);

- **Synergies between Union, national and regional funding programmes** (synergies between the Union's funding programmes and national and regional research and innovation funding schemes need to be encouraged and enhanced, in particular between Horizon Europe, cohesion policy and the Resilience and Recovery Facility);
- Increased collaborative links and excellence-based integration of research performing organisations from countries with lower research and innovation performance into European scientific networks and innovation ecosystems;

#### **4. Advancing concerted research and innovation investments and reforms**

Advancing concerted research and innovation investments and reforms involves:

- Support to prioritise and secure long-term research and innovation investments and policy reforms: at all governance levels (Union, national and regional), including regulatory sandboxes and experimentation clauses; their design, implementation and assessment should go hand in hand in order to maximise synergies and impact;
- Coordination of research and innovation investments: by supporting the identification and implementation of potential for coordinated investments and reforms in order to strengthen the ERA dimension across all governance levels in the Union and maximise its impact for the benefit of Union's science and innovation systems.

### **3. PRIORITISING INVESTMENTS AND REFORMS**

Based on the Commission's proposal, the EU and its Member States shall **prioritise investments and reforms** that address **ERA priorities** and provide the necessary conditions and support for stronger private research and innovation investment at national and regional level by setting realistic, but ambitious Union and national voluntary targets for research and development investment:

- **Public research and development expenditure and private research and innovation investments** require an adequate policy and regulatory framework to maximise their effectiveness and efficiency and ensure an economic and social impact.
- **Research and development investment targets** not only spur the overall rate of increase of research and development expenditure but also reflect more **qualitative objectives**, in terms of scientific, technological, societal, or industrial orientations; this applies notably to public research and development expenditure supporting the ERA priorities, including reforms of national research and innovation systems, a sustainable and competitive economy and the twin transitions.
- Confirm their intention to **raise the Union-level investment in research and development** in the following manner:
  - (a) Increase the **total expenditure** on research and development to 3% of EU GDP

- (‘3% target’);
- (b) Increase the **total public effort** on research and development to 1.25% of EU GDP by 2030;
- (c) Increase the **share of national public research and development expenditure** committed to joint programmes, research infrastructures and European Partnerships to 5% of national public R&D funding by 2030;
- (d) a 50% increase in **total research and development expenditure** over the next 5 years for Member States lagging behind the EU average research and development expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

#### 4. POLICY COORDINATION

Based on the Commission Communication, the implementation of an enhanced monitoring and coordination mechanism for the purpose of ensuring progress towards the ERA priorities requires:

(A) Union-level coordination and support including:

- A common ERA policy agenda, which sets out the jointly agreed ERA actions to be implemented in a coordinated manner, in support of the common principles for research and innovation and ERA priorities set out in this Pact.
  - A dedicated ERA policy online platform for reporting on (i) the implementation of the ERA policy agenda (at Union level and national level) and on (ii) other investments, reforms and activities supporting the principles and ERA priority areas set out in this Pact
  - An ERA scoreboard, which monitors progress towards the ERA objectives at national and Union level, through a combination of indicators and qualitative analyses related to the ERA priorities
  - Regular policy dialogues between the Member States and the Commission – both bilaterally and multilaterally – to support the implementation of the ERA policy agenda
- (B) Joint agreement of the Commission and the Member States on a common ERA policy agenda, informed by the ERA scoreboard and the strategic advice provided by the European Research and Innovation Advisory Committee (ERAC), and following appropriate engagement with stakeholders. The ERA Forum for Transition prepares the draft of the ERA policy agenda
- (C) Sharing information between the Member States and the Commission about the implementation of current policies and programmes and the planning of future ones, and is shared through the ERA policy online platform
- (D) Reviewing the implementation of the ERA policy agenda at national level and publishes an annual report on the state of play of the ERA implementation, including individual reports on the progress of each Member State.