

Future governance of the European Research Area¹

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Policy document summary

The Council conclusions highlight the need for a comprehensive revision of the future governance of the ERA. The conclusions specify that the new ERA shall be based on the revised framework shaped by the Pact for Research & Innovation in Europe and the ERA Policy Agenda (attached in annex of the Council conclusions). The conclusions further specify the role of and actions needed in relation to the European Research Area and Innovation Committee as well as the ERA Forum.

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.

The Council's conclusions emphasize the necessity for a thorough reform of the governance framework for the European Research Area (ERA). They indicate that the new governance structure for the ERA will be influenced by:

- The Pact for Research & Innovation in Europe (Pact for R&I), which outlines the core values and principles for research and innovation, identifies priority areas for ERA initiatives, and describes the mechanisms for policy coordination.
- The ERA Policy Agenda, which aims to support the priority areas established in the Pact for R&I by detailing voluntary actions coordinated at the Union level to achieve specific outcomes.

The Council has approved a common ERA Policy Agenda for the years 2022-2024, which is included in the Annex of its conclusions. The conclusions specify that the implementation of the ERA actions outlined in the ERA Policy Agenda should meet the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** Actions must address at least one priority area from the Council's recommendation on the Pact for R&I, demonstrating clear added value from collaborative efforts.
- **Viability:** Actions should clearly define their objectives, timelines, milestones, participants, funding, and expected contributions to the realization of the ERA.
- **Commitment:** At least half of the EU Member States must be committed to ensure significant political support and provide broader benefits to all Member States.

The conclusions reaffirm the role of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) as a high-level strategic advisory body that requires a mandate to guide the strategic direction of European and national research and innovation policies. The revised mandate should include elements such as:

- Advising on strategic policy directions and emerging trends that necessitate updates to Union and national, including regional, research and innovation policies,

¹ You can access the original document here: [Council of the European Union. \(2021, November 19\). Conclusions on the future governance of the European Research Area \(ERA\) \(14126/21\).](#)

particularly regarding the current and upcoming Union R&I Framework Programme and other relevant initiatives.

- Initiating updates to the ERA Policy Agenda by offering early strategic advice, taking into account the progress of ongoing ERA actions.
- Reflecting on and advising about new policy needs that meet the criteria of the ERA Policy Agenda during its implementation.
- Engaging with governance and coordination structures in related policy areas, such as higher education and industry.

The Council's conclusions also call on the Commission to establish the ERA Forum by the end of 2021. This forum will be responsible for improving coordination for the effective implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda. The conclusions suggest that the ERA Forum should:

- Collaborate with the Commission and Member States to prepare initiatives for future updates to the ERA Policy Agenda and ensure alignment with other policies.
- Coordinate the implementation of ERA actions among the Commission, Member States, and, when applicable, associated countries, stakeholders, and relevant third countries.
- Analyze the monitoring and evaluation of the ERA Policy Agenda's implementation through the ERA Scoreboard and information from the ERA policy platform, contributing to the Commission's report to the Council.
- Facilitate the preparation of additional candidate ERA actions with support from the Union as appropriate, and promote the exchange of best practices regarding national ERA policies and measures.