



ERA Monitoring 2023

EU-level Report



Independent
Expert
Report

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18-months-review of the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda ('EU-level Report')

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This EU-level report is the first 18-months review of the progress towards the priority areas for joint action in the European Research Area (ERA), as laid down in the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe, and of the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda. It is part of the new ERA Monitoring Mechanism (EMM), which also includes the ERA Policy Platform with the ERA Dashboard and Scoreboard as well as country-level reports. In the context of the renewal of the ERA since 2021, the monitoring will allow for evidence-informed policymaking. The present report is the first one of its kind and will serve as a baseline when assessing future progress at EU-level.

1. Purpose of the report

As a baseline study, the report presents the starting point of the revamped ERA at EU-level by

- **Mapping trends towards achieving the ERA priorities over a longer period** as defined in the Pact for Research and Innovation at EU-level through a limited number of measurable indicators.
- **Outlining the implementation state of play of each ERA Action** (between January 2022 to July 2023), set out in the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024, which translates each priority area of the Pact into tangible activities.
- **Providing insights related to Member States and Associated Countries**, where relevant, to exemplify the findings from the EU-level.

2. Key insights

The **ERA Policy Agenda 2022-24 is in full implementation mode**. Several outcomes of ERA Actions have already been achieved, and some ERA Actions have even been completed.

The **ERA Forum** - with its sub-groups and other implementation instruments - has been **proven to be a successful co-creation body**, bringing together EU Member States, countries associated to Horizon Europe, R&I stakeholders and the European Commission, all joining their efforts to turn the new vision for the European Research Area into reality.

The mapping of the trends through the Scoreboard and Dashboard indicators shows that there are **disparities in progress between the different ERA priorities**:

- The majority of sub-priorities within the first ERA priority 'Deepening an Internal Market for Truly Functional Knowledge' show limited progress or stagnation.
- As regards the second ERA priority 'Taking up Together the Challenges Posed by the Twin Green and Digital Transition, and Increasing Society's Participation in the ERA', government budget allocations for R&D in the EU show a positive trend.
- While there is limited data available to measure progress towards ERA priority 3 'Amplifying Access to Research and Innovation Excellence across the Union' and 4 'Advancing Concerted Research and Innovation Investments and Reforms', the findings of this report show a positive trend regarding the total R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP in widening countries.

3. Notable achievements of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-24

While the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 is ongoing, several achievements can already be highlighted:

- Within the newly created, bottom-up **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)** European research funders and research performers work on new approaches for research assessment (ERA Action 3);
- With the aim of promoting attractive research careers, talent circulation and mobility of researchers, the Commission tabled a Council Recommendation on a '**European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe**' in 2023 (ERA Action 4);
- A core achievement within ERA Action 6 is the publication of a comprehensive **strategy for tackling foreign interference in EU Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Research Performing Organisations (RPOs)**, focusing on values, governance, partnerships, and cybersecurity;
- **Council Recommendations outlining guiding principles for knowledge valorisation** have been adopted in December 2022, with the aim of improving the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities. An awareness campaign and a mutual learning exercise followed (ERA Action 7);
- With 11 participating countries, the **Plastic Pirates initiative (within ERA Action 14) was successfully rolled out**, involving more than 5000 young citizens as active participants in campaigning against plastic pollution;
- Bringing together research and innovation policy actors and managing authorities, **RIMA assesses the innovation divide, increase excellence and capitalise on existing widening instruments** (ERA Action 16);
- To reinforce evidence-informed policy-making in the ERA, **a new ERA monitoring and evaluation framework has been set up** (ERA Action 19).

While the first ERA Policy Agenda is continuously being implemented, preparatory discussions for the next ERA Policy Agenda (2025-2027) have already started with the ERA Forum and with ERAC in order to identify the actions to be addressed from 2025-2027.

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