



European  
Commission

# ERA Country Report 2024

## Albania

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Report

Research and  
Innovation

## **ERA Country Report 2024: Albania**

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# **ERA Country Report 2024**

## **Albania**

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## Key takeaways

- The National Strategy for Science, Technology, and Innovation 2023-2030 and the new Law on Science and Scientific Research mark a turning point for Albania's R&I system. These regulations aim to align Albania with the European Research Area priorities by promoting open science, improving research assessment, enhancing coordination, and strengthening research careers and infrastructure.
- Open Science principles are integrated into national legislation. The law mandates open access, reusability, and interoperability for publicly funded research, aligning with the European Open Science Cloud and establishing a foundation for improved knowledge sharing.
- Efforts to improve research careers are underway but remain constrained by limited funding. A new PhD funding scheme, with the aim of funding 100 positions, was launched in late 2024, prioritising themes aligned with national priorities. The law further introduces provisions for career development and international mobility.
- Digital transformation and green innovation are areas of relative strength. Albania's Digital Agenda 2022-2026 promotes digital infrastructure, education, and accessibility, while the European Innovation Scoreboard highlights strong growth in environment-related technologies.
- Albania's participation in Horizon Europe and international cooperation is increasing. The number of participating institutions has grown from 26 to 36 since 2021, and the associated project budget has risen from EUR 5 million to EUR 6.8 million. Albania also contributes to EU missions and participates in European partnerships like Biodiversa+ and EOSC.

# 1. National context

Albania is among the smaller associated countries and is categorised as an *Emerging Innovator* in the latest European Innovation Scoreboard 2024, with a performance of 41.8 per cent<sup>1</sup>. Albania's performance falls below the average of the Emerging Innovators group. Since 2017, its performance has increased by 9.8 percentage points (with EU average at 10).<sup>2</sup>

Table 1 Structural Key Indicators

Indicator	EU27	Albania		
	2023	2023	Average 2018-2020	Average 2021-2023
GDP in current prices, euro per capita	35 790.00	5 390.00	4 440.00	/
Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD) as a share of GDP	2.27	/	/	/
Size of the population (million)	448.80	2.76	2.86	2.80
Researchers (in FTE) per million inhabitants	4 681.34	/	/	/

Source: Annex 1

Since the publication of the 2023 ERA Country Report on Albania, two main developments have occurred. First, the “**National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2023-2030**”<sup>3</sup> was adopted, which has been in progress over the past year. The strategy aims to advance scientific research, foster technological innovation, and specifically to align Albania’s scientific landscape with ERA principles. Its implementation is led by the Ministry of Education and Sport, while research funding is coordinated by the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI). Updates on the implementation of this strategy have not been published yet. A working group has been appointed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. Their first report on the period of 2023-2024 is expected to be published by mid-2025.<sup>4</sup>

The second development is the new law **On Science and Scientific Research**, published by the Albanian government in the second half of October 2024.<sup>5</sup> The new law was adopted in December 2024. This legislation is designed to replace the existing legislative framework and reorganise the country’s scientific research system. It seeks to establish a **National Council for Science and Scientific Research**, which will operate under the leadership of

<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2024). European Innovation Scoreboard 2024: EIS interactive tool. <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard/eis-2024>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2024). European Innovation Scoreboard 2024: Albania country profile. <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard/eis-2024#/eis/countries/AL>

<sup>3</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2017). Vendim nr. 710, datë 01.12.2017: Për miratimin e Strategjisë Kombëtare për Shkencën, Teknologjinë dhe Inovacionin 2017–2022 [Decision no. 710, dated 01.12.2017: On the approval of the National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2017–2022]. [https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Vendim-i-KM\\_710\\_01.12.2017\\_Strategjia-e-Kerkimit-Shkencor.pdf](https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Vendim-i-KM_710_01.12.2017_Strategjia-e-Kerkimit-Shkencor.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Albanian ERA representative (November 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2024). Projektligji për shkencën [Draft law on science]. [https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK\\_714\\_Projektligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx](https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_714_Projektligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx)

the Prime Minister. It also emphasises fostering coordination between Higher Education Institutions (HEI), strengthening international collaboration, and improving research infrastructure and funding.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Status of the Implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda

This Chapter briefly summarises new developments in Albania's research ecosystem since the publication of the ERA Country Report 2023. Albania has not formally committed to the actions outlined in the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024. Despite this, efforts have been made in alignment with the overarching ERA Priorities. The findings are based on qualitative desk research and interviews.

### ERA Priority 1: Deepening a truly functioning internal market for knowledge

In 2024, Albania made progress in fostering a more integrated research and innovation system aligned with the ERA priority 1. The Law on Science and Scientific Research<sup>7</sup>, introduced in 2024, places a strong emphasis on open science, the development of research infrastructure, and enhanced collaboration (**ERA Action 1**). It mandates open access to publicly funded research and encourages reusability and interoperability of research outputs in alignment with the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). This legislative effort shows Albania's growing commitment to embedding Open Science principles at the national level.

To ensure a supportive legal environment for research and innovation (**ERA Action 2**), Albania updated its data protection framework with the adoption of the new "Law on the Protection of Personal Data" in December 2024<sup>8</sup>. This law is designed to be fully aligned with the EU General Data Protection Regulation<sup>9</sup>, ensuring consistent protections across public and private research organisations. Meanwhile, Albania's Copyright Law (2016) continues to cover scientific, literary, and artistic domains<sup>10</sup>. While generally aligned with EU norms, further updates may be required to address the evolving needs of digital research environments.

In line with **ERA Action 3**, the law<sup>11</sup> also introduces new monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for research, aiming to reform assessment systems and enhance transparency and accountability across institutions. These efforts are designed to improve research quality and institutional performance, reflecting broader ambitions to align with European standards in research evaluation.

The law also tackles key issues related to research careers and mobility (**ERA Action 4**). Notably, NASRI launched a PhD funding programme in November 2024 to support young researchers until June 2025. 100 PhD positions for new researchers will be funded under this

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<sup>6</sup> As of December 2024, the law has yet to be published in the national gazette, marking the final step before its formal enactment.

<sup>7</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2024). Projektligji për shkencën [Draft law on science]. [https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK\\_714\\_Projektligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx](https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_714_Projektligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx)

<sup>8</sup> Law no. 124/2024 On the Protection of Personal Data

<sup>9</sup> DLA Piper (2025). Data Protection Laws of the World. <https://www.dlapiperdataprotection.com/>

<sup>10</sup> Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë (2016). Ligji nr. 35/2016, datë 31.03.2016: Për të drejtën e autorit dhe të drejtat e lidhura me të [Law no. 35/2016, dated 31.03.2016: On copyright and related rights]. [https://wipo-lexresources-eu-central-1-358922420655.s3.amazonaws.com/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/al/al068en\\_1.pdf](https://wipo-lexresources-eu-central-1-358922420655.s3.amazonaws.com/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/al/al068en_1.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2024). Projektligji për shkencën [Draft law on science]. [https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK\\_714\\_Projektligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx](https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_714_Projektligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx)

scheme.<sup>12</sup> This initiative prioritises PhD projects aligned with national priorities, including food security, agriculture, energy transition, and digitalisation. Complementary provisions in the draft law aim to foster more attractive research careers through enhanced career development, equal access to research resources, and stronger support for international mobility. These steps address persistent challenges such as talent retention and limited PhD funding opportunities.

Gender equality and inclusiveness have also been prioritised (**ERA Action 5**). The new law upholds principles of gender equality, anti-discrimination, and inclusiveness in scientific research. These provisions mark continued alignment with the Ljubljana Declaration and reflect Albania's ongoing attempt to fostering an equitable research environment. NASRI, in collaboration with the Policy Answers project of HE, has launched a national campaign to implement the GEP (Gender Equality Plan).<sup>13</sup> All public universities and the majority of private universities have implemented this plan.

Academic freedom and institutional autonomy were topics of considerable public debate in 2024 (**ERA Action 6**). The new law<sup>14</sup> reaffirms the protection of academic freedom and intellectual property rights, echoing commitments outlined in the 2023 ERA Monitoring Report. However, the proposal to establish a National Council for Science and Scientific Research, an advisory body to the Prime Minister<sup>15</sup>, raised concerns from academic institutions over potential centralisation of research governance. While the Ministry of Education emphasised the law's safeguards for autonomy, the issue sparked a wider dialogue about maintaining the independence of the scientific community<sup>16</sup>.

On the front of knowledge valorisation (**ERA Action 7**), the new Law on Science highlights the importance of research infrastructure and knowledge transfer. A key development in 2024 was the partnership between the Albanian Government and EIT Raw Materials to establish a Regional Innovation Centre in Elbasan. This initiative, the first of its kind in the Western Balkans, is expected to become a regional hub for innovation in the raw materials sector and shows Albania's efforts to link research to economic and societal impact<sup>17</sup>.

Research infrastructure development remained a priority in 2024 (**ERA Action 8**). Albania aligned its national strategies with the ERA Policy Agenda and addressed the main gaps through the new law, especially in promoting open access and collaborative research<sup>18</sup>. For the year 2024, funding for scientific research infrastructure has been the highest in recent years, amounting to 3 million euros and supporting 22 funded projects. This trend is expected

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<sup>12</sup> Input from NASRI representative (2025).

<sup>13</sup> NASRI (2024). Strategic Gender Equality Plan. <https://nasri.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Strategic-Gender-Equality-Plan-For-the-National-Agency-of-Scientific-Research-and-Innovation-for-2023-2025.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2024). Projektligji për shkencën [Draft law on science]. [https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK\\_714\\_Projekligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx](https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_714_Projekligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx)

<sup>15</sup> Western Balkans Info Hub (2024). Draft law on scientific research presented to the Albanian Parliament. <https://westernbalkans-infohub.eu/news/draft-law-on-scientific-research-presented-to-the-albanian-parliament/>

<sup>16</sup> Kryeziu, E. (2024). The draft law on science is opposed: It burdens academic autonomy and freedom. Citizens.al. <https://citizens.al/en/2024/10/21/kundershtohet-projektligji-per-shkencen-rendon-autonome-dhe-lirine-akademike/>

<sup>17</sup> EIT RawMaterials (2024). EIT RawMaterials partners with Government of Albania to launch landmark Regional Innovation Centre. <https://eitrawmaterials.eu/press-releases/eit-rawmaterials-partners-government-albania-launch-landmark-regional-innovation>

<sup>18</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2024). Projektligji për shkencën [Draft law on science]. [https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK\\_714\\_Projekligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx](https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_714_Projekligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx)



to continue growing.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the ERA Country Report 2023 noted persistent challenges, including limited funding and underdeveloped support services for managing research infrastructures. Strengthening these areas remains critical for ensuring long-term sustainability and integration with the broader European research landscape<sup>20</sup>.

In support of international cooperation (**ERA Action 9**), NASRI continued to play a central role in coordinating Albania's participation in European and global research networks. Two active programmes promote research mobility and institutional collaboration: one focusing on bilateral university partnerships and the other enhancing participation in initiatives such as Horizon Europe and Eureka. In addition, responsibility for the international mobility programme Erasmus+ is handled by a dedicated office under the Ministry of Education and Sports.

## **ERA Priority 2: Taking up together the green transition and digital transformation and other challenges with impact on society and increasing society's participation in the ERA**

In 2024, Albania continued to strengthen its participation in EU missions and partnerships, contributing to shared European research goals (**ERA Action 10**). Notably, the city of Elbasan is among the twelve European cities located in Associated Countries and selected to participate in the EU Mission "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030"<sup>21</sup>, underscoring Albania's growing role in mission-oriented R&I activities. In addition, Albanian institutions are currently involved in several European partnerships, including Biodiversa+<sup>22</sup>, EU-PHRESO<sup>23</sup>, JPND<sup>24</sup>, SD-WISHEES<sup>25</sup>, and EOSC<sup>26</sup>, supporting collaboration across thematic and strategic research domains.

Participation in Horizon Europe has also continued to grow. Since the programme's start in 2021, the number of Albanian participating institutions has increased from 26 to 36, and total project funding rose from EUR 5 million to EUR 6.8 million<sup>27</sup>. The NASRI anticipates further increases in both institutional engagement and funding, which reflects a growing national capacity and alignment with ERA goals.

Environmental sustainability remains a key focus of Albania's research and innovation strategy (**ERA Action 11**). According to the European Innovation Scoreboard 2024<sup>28</sup>, Albania has demonstrated relative strength in environment-related technologies, which have shown strong growth since 2017. Sustainability principles are now formally integrated into national

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<sup>19</sup> Input from NASRI representative (2025).

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Albanian ERA representative (November 2024).

<sup>21</sup> NetZeroCities. 112 Mission Cities striving for climate neutrality by 2030. <https://netzerocities.eu/mission-cities/>

<sup>22</sup> ERA-LEARN (2024). Biodiversa-plus: Rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth. <https://www.era-learn.eu/network-information/networks/rescuing-biodiversity-to-safeguard-life-on-earth>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.era-learn.eu/network-information/networks/euphresco-self-sustained>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.era-learn.eu/network-information/networks/jpnd>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.era-learn.eu/network-information/networks/sd-wishees>

<sup>26</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&groupID=3756>

<sup>27</sup> Estimates based on interview with Albanian ERA representative (November 2024).

<sup>28</sup> European Commission (2024). European Innovation Scoreboard 2024: Albania country profile. <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard/eis-2024#/eis/countries/AL>

research funding frameworks<sup>29</sup> through provisions in the new Law on Science and Scientific Research.

Progress on the digital transformation is also evident (**ERA Action 12**). The 2024 European Innovation Scoreboard<sup>30</sup> highlights ICT training as another area of relative strength in Albania—an essential asset for navigating the digital transition. The Albanian Digital Agenda 2022–2026<sup>31</sup> sets the framework for advancing digitalisation across sectors. Its strategic priorities include government digitalisation, support for businesses and citizens, digital infrastructure development, cybersecurity, and data management. Additionally, the strategy promotes digital education, inclusiveness, and innovation, further reinforcing Albania's commitment to a green and digital future.

Moreover, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are being positioned as central actors in Albania's research system transformation (**ERA Action 13**). The Law on Science and Scientific Research designates national strategic research areas, aligning them with ERA and environmental objectives<sup>32</sup>. HEIs are encouraged to play a leading role in these efforts through joint research initiatives with the public sector and industry, fostering cross-sector collaboration and innovation. These provisions aim to elevate HEIs as both drivers and beneficiaries of green and digital research priorities.

Efforts to engage the public in science have also advanced (**ERA Action 14**). The National Strategy for Scientific Research, Technology, and Innovation 2023–2030<sup>33</sup> includes targeted actions to embed a culture of science and innovation in education, with the goal of connecting research to everyday life. A flagship initiative under this strategy is the government's plan to establish 1,200 "smartlabs" in schools across the country. These labs aim to promote early engagement with science, technology, and innovation among students<sup>34</sup>.

### ERA Priority 3: Enhancing access to research and innovation excellence across the Union and enhancing interconnections between innovation ecosystems across the Union

In 2024, Albania made targeted efforts to improve its integration into the ERA by enhancing legal and institutional foundations that support access to excellence (**ERA Action 16**). The

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<sup>29</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2024). Projektligji për shkencën [Draft law on science]. [https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK\\_714\\_Projektligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx](https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_714_Projektligji-per-shkencen-20.03.2024-clean.docx)

<sup>30</sup> European Commission (2024). European Innovation Scoreboard 2024: Albania country profile. <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard/eis-2024#eis/countries/AL>

<sup>31</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2022). Vendim nr. 370, datë 1.6.2022: Për miratimin e strategjisë ndërsektoriale "Agjenda Digjitale e Shqipërisë" dhe të planit të veprimit 2022–2026 [Decision no. 370, dated 1.6.2022: On the approval of the cross-sectoral strategy "Digital Agenda of Albania" and the action plan 2022–2026]. <https://www.akshi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/vendim-2022-06-01-370-Agjenda-Digjitale-e-Shqiperise-22-26-dhe-plani-i-veprimit.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë (2023). Projektligji për shkencën në Republikën e Shqipërisë [Draft law on science in the Republic of Albania]. <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Projektligji-Per-SHKENCEN-GP.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Këshilli i Ministrave (2017). Vendim nr. 710, datë 01.12.2017: Për miratimin e Strategjisë Kombëtare për Shkencën, Teknologjinë dhe Inovacionin 2017–2022 [Decision no. 710, dated 01.12.2017: On the approval of the National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2017–2022]. [https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Vendim-i-KM\\_710\\_01.12.2017\\_Strategjia-e-Kerkimit-Shkencor.pdf](https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Vendim-i-KM_710_01.12.2017_Strategjia-e-Kerkimit-Shkencor.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> CAN et al. (2023). Scientific research and innovation, the new strategy requires 274 million euros of funding. <https://www.cna.al/english/ekonomi/kerkimi-shkencor-dhe-inovacioni-strategjia-e-re-kerkon-274-milione-euro-i375491>

new Law on Science and Scientific Research establishes a framework to facilitate joint research projects, resource sharing, and exchange programmes with international partners. It also mandates alignment with European ethical standards and harmonises the classification of research fields with those of the European Research System, supporting Albania's smoother participation in EU-wide research initiatives. Additionally, Albania continues its participation in the COST programme,<sup>35</sup> coordinated by NASRI, which remains an important mechanism for knowledge exchange and collaboration across borders. Albania has covered over 90% of the COST actions in 2024.

However, enhancing the strategic capacity of public research-performing organisations remains a challenge (**ERA Action 17**). Research management structures are underdeveloped in many Albanian universities and research institutes. Typically, responsibilities for project coordination and research administration fall on individual researchers, and there is limited visibility of research output and activity on institutional platforms. This lack of dedicated infrastructure, combined with insufficient funding, hinders institutional effectiveness and growth<sup>36</sup>.

To address these gaps, the new Law on Science introduces institutional planning, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms, requiring organisations to develop long-term strategies and systematically assess performance based on clear indicators. These measures are designed to promote resource-efficiency, accountability, and better capacity to attract and manage international funding, including EU-funded projects.

Complementing these legal reforms, the EU4Innovation programme continues to play a central role in building Albania's R&I capacity. As part of the EU's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III, 2021–2027), EU4Innovation supports the development of research infrastructures, including the creation of regional centres of excellence in Korça, Vlora, and Shkodra. These hubs are designed to serve as sustainable and accessible facilities for research, innovation, and knowledge exchange, especially in underrepresented areas<sup>37</sup>.

## **ERA Priority 4: Advancing concerted research and innovation investments and reforms**

In 2024, Albania engaged with the development of the ERA's monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (**ERA Action 19**), by contributing to ERA instruments such as the EU-level ERA report<sup>38</sup>, ERA Scoreboard<sup>39</sup>, ERA Dashboard<sup>40</sup>, and ERA Country Reports, as well as the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) 2024<sup>41</sup>. However, limitations in national data collection and reporting capacity were noted: only 23 out of 32 EIS indicators were submitted in 2023, placing Albania below the reliability threshold for robust evaluation<sup>42</sup>. These challenges underline the ongoing need to strengthen statistical and monitoring systems to ensure full

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.cost.eu/about/members/albania/>

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Albanian ERA representative (November 2024).

<sup>37</sup> EU4Innovation. <https://euforinnovation.al/about/>

<sup>38</sup> European Commission (2023). ERA monitoring EU-level report 2023. <https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-11/ERA%20monitoring%20EU-level%20Report%202023-KI0423859ENN.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> European Commission (2024). European Research Area (ERA) monitoring EU-level report 2023. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d0d03530-ec0d-11ee-8e14-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-311951586>

<sup>40</sup> European Commission (2023). ERA dashboard 2023. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/16305>

<sup>41</sup> European Commission (2024). European Innovation Scoreboard 2024: Albania country profile. <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard/eis-2024#/eis/countries/AL>

<sup>42</sup> European Commission (2023). European Innovation Scoreboard 2023. <https://www.research.org.cy/wp-content/uploads/european-innovation-scoreboard-2023-KI0523230ENN.pdf>

and accurate representation in EU-wide assessments. The Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) has recently put considerable efforts in providing missing data to Eurostat.

The new Law on Science and Scientific Research introduces measures aimed at improving investment transparency and monitoring research funding flows<sup>43</sup>. It defines funding sources to include state budgets, international grants, private sector contributions, and public-private partnerships, while prioritising a competitive and multi-criteria allocation process. These provisions are aligned with ERA goals, particularly in directing investments toward strategic research areas such as sustainability, health, and technological innovation.

A landmark development in 2024 was the launch of the Regional Innovation Centre in Elbasan<sup>44</sup>, supported by the EIT Raw Materials Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC). This centre—the first of its kind in the Western Balkans—represents a significant step in translating research into societal and economic impact. Its focus includes promoting scientific innovation in the mining and raw materials sector, fostering collaboration between Albanian and EU researchers, and supporting technology transfer and knowledge valorisation.

### 3. Contribution of ERA Actions to national performance in reaching ERA objectives

This chapter provides a qualitative assessment of how the joint ERA Actions contributed to Albania's performance in achieving the ERA objectives as defined in the Pact for R&I during the period 2022-2024.

**ERA Priority 1** is addressed through a range of national initiatives. Albania, however, has no official commitment to ERA priorities. The Law on Science and Scientific Research mandates open access and reusability for publicly funded research, aligning with **Action 1**. This commitment is supported by ERA Dashboard Indicator 6, which shows Albania's share of open access publications is comparable to the EU27 average. However, ERA Dashboard Indicator 7 shows the absence of open-access research datasets, highlighting gaps in digital infrastructure and data sharing systems under **Action 1** and **Action 8**.

Reforms to the research assessment system under **Action 3** are reflected in the introduction of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the new law, aiming to enhance transparency and institutional performance. For **Action 5**, the law emphasises gender equality and inclusiveness, which is supported by ERA Dashboard Indicators 13, 14, and 15, showing Albania's gender balance is in line with EU norms. Notably, ERA Dashboard Indicator 16 reports a female doctoral graduate rate of around 60 percent, well above the EU27 average of 35 percent.

Progress on **Action 4** is reflected in the launch of a national PhD funding scheme and legal provisions to strengthen research careers and mobility. Albania's international cooperation efforts under **Action 9** are advancing through NASRI-led participation in Horizon Europe and other European programmes, as shown by upward trends in ERA Dashboard Indicators 17 and 18. Additionally, Albania shows slow but steady increase in the share of its publications among the top 10% most cited worldwide, as reflected in ERA Dashboard Indicator 26. ERA

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43 Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë (2023). Projektligj për shkencën në Republikën e Shqipërisë [Draft law on science in the Republic of Albania]. <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Projekt-ligji-Per-SHKENCEN-GP.pdf>

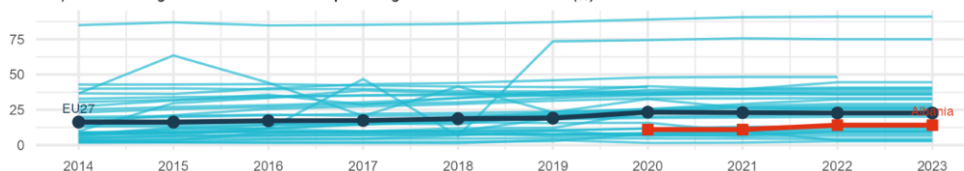
44 EIT RawMaterials Regional Innovation Center Albania (2024). Work plan 2024. <https://www.rawmaterials.albania.al/work-plan>

Dashboard Indicator 27, however, suggests a slight decline in academic freedom, related to **Action 6**. This is reflected in concerns expressed by academic institutions about the establishment of a National Council for Science and Scientific Research, its authority over research strategy, potentially undermining institutional independence.

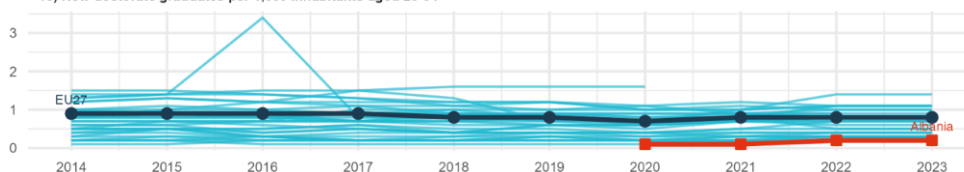
Figure 3-1 Indicators for ERA Priority 1



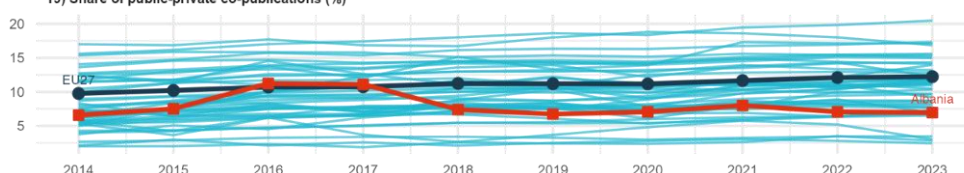
17) Share of foreign doctorate students as a percentage of all doctorate students (%)



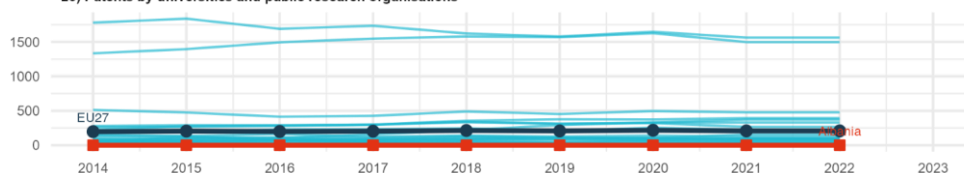
18) New doctorate graduates per 1,000 inhabitants aged 25-34



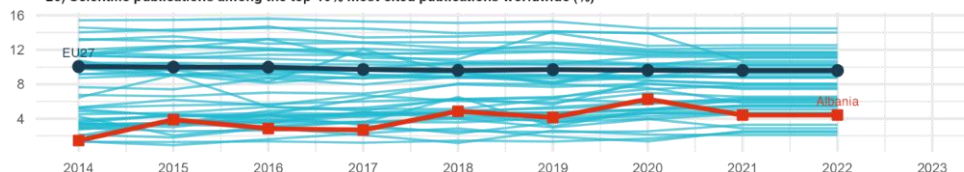
19) Share of public-private co-publications (%)



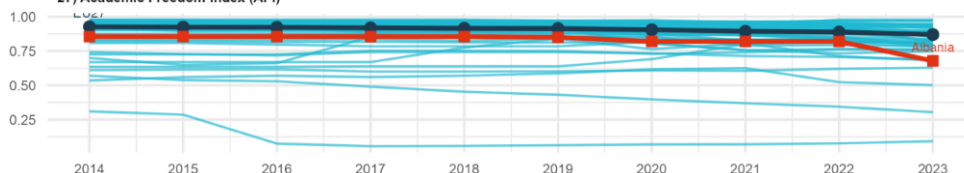
25) Patents by universities and public research organisations



26) Scientific publications among the top-10% most cited publications worldwide (%)



27) Academic Freedom Index (AFI)



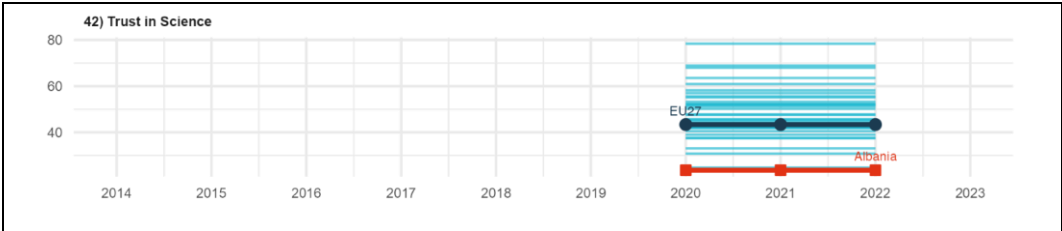
Source: Annex 1

**ERA Priority 2** is addressed through a range of national initiatives. Albania has growing participation in Horizon Europe and EU missions, showing progress towards **Action 10**. Albania has also progressed on integration of sustainability into research funding in scope of



**Action 11**, and the Digital Agenda 2022-2026 guiding digital transformation under **Action 12**. The Law on Science strengthens the role of higher education institutions in national research priorities, relating to **Action 13**. The ERA Dashboard Indicator 42 indicates that trust in science in Albania is exceptionally low compared to EU27. To address this, Albania's efforts under **Action 14**, aimed at bringing science closer to citizens through the National Strategy for Scientific Research, Technology, and Innovation (2023-2030), may help improve public perception.

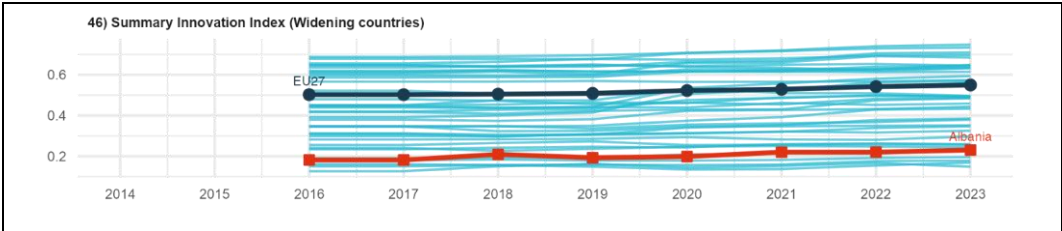
**Figure 3-2 Indicators for ERA Priority 2**



Source: Annex 1

**ERA Priority 3** is addressed through a range of national initiatives such as participation in the COST programme and new legislation promoting joint research and alignment with European standards, relating to **Action 16**. Although ERA Dashboard Indicator 46 reflects a very low innovation index for Albania compared to EU-27, the EU4Innovation programme and the new science law aim to improve research management and infrastructure through the establishment of regional centres of excellence in Korça, Vlora, and Shkodra (**Action 17**).

**Figure 3-3 Indicators for ERA Priority 3**



Source: Annex 1

**ERA Priority 4** is not addressed through an official commitment to ERA priorities. Albania is working to establish a monitoring system for its national strategies and participated in the EU level ERA monitoring activities in 2024 (**Action 19**). Direction of R&I investments (**Action 20**) is coordinated by the government in order to align with broader EU goals. The lack of available data for Albania limits the ability to measure the progress quantitatively.

## 4. Effects of ERA Action implementation on the national R&I system

This chapter presents a qualitative assessment of the ERA Action commitments of Albania and their effects on the national R&I priorities, including the quantitative performance in the ERA Dashboard. Albania is an Associated Country. It has not specific commitments to actions identified in the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024.

**ERA Priority 1:** Albania's progress under Priority 1 reflects a strategic intention to strengthen its national R&I system through legal reform and to align with ERA principles. The Law on Science and Scientific Research introduces provisions for open access, improved research assessment, gender equality, and academic freedom. These elements correspond to Albania's ambition to create a more transparent and standards-based research environment. ERA Dashboard indicators show Albania performs near the EU27 average in gender representation, with a notably high share of female doctoral graduates. However, challenges continue in digital infrastructure and open science.

**ERA Priority 2:** Albania shows alignment with ERA priorities in green and digital transformation. Participation in Horizon Europe, EU Missions, and partnerships such as Biodiversa+ and EOSC support Albania's integration into European research initiatives. The Digital Agenda 2022–2026 and involvement in the "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities" mission show an effort to address digitalisation and sustainability.

**ERA Priority 3:** Albania's engagement under Priority 3 is developing, particularly through its involvement in COST and EU4Innovation. The new law introduces standards for research planning and performance evaluation, but institutional research management remains underdeveloped and constrained by funding.

**ERA Priority 4:** Albania has taken steps toward improved investment coordination and monitoring. The new law introduces competitive and transparent funding mechanisms, and Albania contributes to EU-level monitoring tools. At the same time, limited national data reporting is a barrier to monitoring and evaluation.

## 5. Conclusions

Albania is making strides in aligning its research and innovation policies with the ERA priorities, despite its status as an emerging innovator and ongoing resource limitations. Recent developments include the implementation of the National Strategy for Science, Technology, and Innovation 2023–2030, which is aimed at harmonising the Albanian Science, Technology, and Innovation framework with ERA principles, and the new Law on Science and Scientific Research aimed at reorganising the research system and enhancing coordination, infrastructure, and international collaboration. This new law aligns with ERA priorities by promoting open science, gender equality, and sustainable digitalisation, while addressing research infrastructure and research career development. Albanian institutions continue to face challenges, however, especially in terms of research management, limited resources, and data accessibility. Efforts like the Digital Agenda 2022–2026 and advancements in green technologies and ICT training highlight Albania's progress in digitalisation, though funding constraints and limited infrastructure remain an overall barrier to further advancements.



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## Annex 1 – List of ERA Dashboard Indicators

The indicators used in the report are taken from the ERA Dashboard 2024. The full ERA Dashboard Report and the supporting Data Replication Package can be downloaded at <https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/era-monitoring-reports>. However, *GDP (in million €)*, *Size of the population (million)*, and *Share of female researchers, all sectors of performance (%)* were added to provide additional context and directly retrieved from the Eurostat website.

Additionally, EU and country averages are for 2023, except *Share of female researchers, all sectors of performance (%)* (2021).

**Table 1 Structural Key Indicators:**

Indicator number	Indicator	Source
/	GDP in euro per capita, current prices	Eurostat <a href="https://doi.org/10.2908/TEC00001">https://doi.org/10.2908/TEC00001</a>
1	Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD) as a share of GDP	Eurostat
2	Government Budget Allocations for R&D (GBARD) as share of GDP	Eurostat
4	Business Enterprise Expenditure on R&D (BERD) as a share of GDP	Eurostat
5.2	Expenditure on R&D procurement as a percentage of GDP	EC/European Innovation Procurement Observatory
/	Size of the population (million)	Eurostat, <a href="https://doi.org/10.2908/TPS00001">https://doi.org/10.2908/TPS00001</a>
3	Researchers (in FTE) per million inhabitants	Eurostat
/	Share of female researchers, all sectors of performance (%)	Eurostat, <a href="https://doi.org/10.2908/TSC00005">https://doi.org/10.2908/TSC00005</a>

**Figure 3.1 Indicators for ERA Priority 1**

Indicator number	Indicator	Source
6	Share of publications available in open access (green, gold, and diamond)	OpenAIRE
7	Number of open-access research datasets by country	OpenAIRE
8	Number of repositories by country	EOSC - Re3data
9	Country investments in EOSC and Open Science (in ranges of investment)	EOSC Observatory
10	Share of national public R&D expenditure committed to European research infrastructures	ESFRI
11	Number of European RIs in which a Member State or an Associated Country participates	ESFRI
12	Proportion of women of Grade A among academic staff/researchers	Women in Science - She Figures
13	(Corrected) Proportion of mixed-gender teams	EC_Scopus
14	(Corrected) Proportion of women in authorships of the top 10% most cited publications	EC_Scopus
15	Women in Digital index (0-100)	EC-Women in Digital Scoreboard

16	Proportion of women among doctoral graduates by narrow fields of STEM	Eurostat
17	Share of foreign doctorate students as a percentage of all doctorate students	Eurostat
18	New doctorate graduates per 1,000 inhabitants aged 25-34	Eurostat
19	Share of public-private co-publications	EC_Scopus
20	(Cumulative number of) Best practice examples and methodologies for knowledge valorisation	Knowledge Valorisation Platform
21	Number of PCT patent applications divided by GDP in million Euros/Dollars	OECD, Eurostat & World Bank
22	Share of innovating firms collaborating with HEI/PRO out of all innovative firms	Eurostat CIS (own calculations)
23	Business enterprise researchers as % of total researchers	OECD
24	Business enterprise researchers in full-time equivalent per thousand employment in industry	OECD
25	Patents by universities and public research organisations	EPO PATSTAT - Fraunhofer ISI calculations
26	% of scientific publications among the top-10% most cited publications worldwide	EC_Scopus
27	Academic Freedom Index (AFi)	V-Dem Varieties of Democracy
28	Average ranking score of top 10 universities by country and year	QS World University Ranking
29	Sum of ERC grants received by country in a given year per 1,000 R&D personnel (in FTEs)	EC-ERC
30	International co-publications with non-EU partners per 1,000 researchers in the public sector	EC_ScienceMetrix and Eurostat/OECD
31	Share of patents with foreign co-inventors	OECD
32	European and international co-patenting in EPO applications at national and EU level	Eurostat
33	Government budget allocations for R&D (GBARD) according to NABS as % total GBARD	Eurostat

**Figure 3.2 Indicators for ERA Priority 2**

Indicator number	Indicator	Source
34	Note: The ERA Dashboard Indicator 34 was removed from the Dashboard in January 2025. As a consequence, the indicator has also been omitted from the Country Report, while, however, keeping the original numbering of the indicators.	
35	Environmentally related government R&D budget, as % of total government R&D	Eurostat
36	National public and private investments as suggested in the SET Plan progress report 2021 (EUR million)	SETIS R&I data
37	% Patents on environmental technology	OECD
38	Share of innovative firms cooperating with higher education institutions or public/private research institutions	Eurostat CIS
39	Enterprises that purchased or licensed-in patents or other IPRs from public research organisations, universities or higher education institutions	Eurostat CIS

40	Direct government support and indirect government support through R&D tax incentives as a % GDP	OECD
41	Green bond issuance as a percentage of total bond issuance	Eurostat - EEA
42	Trust in Science	Eurobarometer 95.2
43	Increase in total R&D expenditure in widening countries, expressed as a percentage of GDP	Eurostat, OECD, UNESCO

**Figure 3.3 Indicators for ERA Priority 3**

Indicator number	Indicator	Source
44	<i>Number of participations in Horizon Europe (of Widening countries) measured in terms of 1,000 R&amp;D personnel (in FTEs)</i>	Cordis - Eurostat
45	<i>Sum of Horizon Europe grants (€) received by Widening countries in terms of 1,000 R&amp;D personnel (in FTEs)</i>	Cordis - Eurostat
46	<i>Summary Innovation Index (Widening countries)</i>	EC_EIS
47	<i>Share of enterprises using public funds from different governance levels (local or regional, national, and EU) for R&amp;I activities</i>	Eurostat CIS
48	<i>Number of Seal of Excellence projects on the InvestEU Portal per 1,000 R&amp;D personnel (in FTEs)</i>	EC - Invest EU
49	<i>Number of collaboration networks of RPOs in Widening countries with other EU countries</i>	Cordis - Horizon Dashboard
50	<i>Average number of partners from non-widening countries per institution from a Widening country participating in the Horizon programme each year</i>	Cordis - Eurostat
51	<i>Share of patents registered by a Widening country together with partners from other EU countries</i>	OECD
52	<i>Share of innovative enterprises that cooperated with RPOs located in other countries</i>	Eurostat CIS
53	<i>Share of public R&amp;D expenditures financed by the private sector</i>	Eurostat

**Figure 3.4 Indicators for ERA Priority 4**

Indicator number	Indicator	Source
54	<i>GBARD allocated to Europe-wide transnational, as well as bilateral or multilateral, public R&amp;D programmes per FTE researcher</i>	Eurostat

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