

# European Research Area Public consultation questionnaire

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

## Introduction

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This public consultation forms an integral part of the preparation of the European Research Area Act (the 'ERA Act').

[The Commission Communication on a Competitiveness Compass for the EU](#), adopted on 29 January 2025, included the ERA Act as one of the flagship actions aimed at 'closing the innovation gap' with other global economic powers. The ultimate objective of the ERA Act is to strengthen the capacity and performance of the EU's research and innovation ('R&I') ecosystem and to help the EU become the world's most attractive destination for researchers. The ERA Act aims to tackle enduring issues that hinder the efficiency and performance of the European R&I ecosystem, such as fragmented regulatory frameworks, disparities in research and development ('R&D') investment, and barriers to knowledge sharing and cooperation. Building on [Enrico Letta](#)'s and [Mario Draghi](#)'s 2024 reports, the ERA Act will be an opportunity to ensure the 'fifth freedom', the free circulation of researchers, scientific knowledge and technology in the EU's single market. The ERA Act will do this by tackling obstacles to this fifth freedom, through the uniform application of rules and the enforcement of EU policies to create a level playing field for researchers and innovators across the Member States. The ERA Act is closely linked to other initiatives announced in the [Commission's Political Guidelines](#), in particular the proposal for a European Innovation Act.

The purpose of this public consultation is to collect feedback on the key challenges that the ERA Act aims to address and on potential solutions to tackle them by means of EU-level legislation.

The issues addressed include:

- reaching public and private investment goals;
- aligning the policies and programmes of the EU and the Member States, and across the Member States;

- challenges related to upholding the fundamental values of the European Research Area;
- improving the framework conditions for research and researchers.

**This consultation questionnaire is structured around the main areas and problems that fall within the scope of the future legislation. It will take a maximum of 25 minutes to complete the full questionnaire but you are also welcome to only respond to the sections that are relevant for you.**

The results of this public consultation will be summarised in a report that will be published on the [Have your say](#) website. The results will also be analysed together with other data that is being collected through targeted stakeholder consultations and an impact assessment. At the end of the survey, you will have the possibility to upload a file with a more detailed contribution.

**\* Please select the sections of the questionnaire to which you would like to contribute:**

- 1. Strengthen R&D investment and bring it up to the 3% GDP target to address the current lack of investment.**
- 2. Greater alignment of R&I investments, policies and programmes between the EU and Member States, and between Member States.**
- 3. Improve the general conditions for research and researchers in Europe.**
  - 3.1. Upholding the fundamental values of the European Research Area: freedom of scientific research; gender equality and equal opportunities.**
  - 3.2. Ensuring the free circulation of researchers and scientific knowledge: researchers' careers and mobility; free circulation of scientific knowledge; European research infrastructure consortia; knowledge valorisation.**
  - 3.3 Aligning guidance on artificial intelligence (AI) in research.**
  - 3.4 Improving consistency in approaches to international cooperation and research security across the EU.**

About you

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\* Language of my contribution

- Bulgarian
- Croatian
- Czech
- Danish
- Dutch
- English
- Estonian
- Finnish
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Irish
- Italian
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Maltese
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Slovak
- Slovenian
- Spanish
- Swedish

\* I am giving my contribution as

- Academic/research institution
- Business association
- Company/business
- Consumer organisation
- EU citizen
- Environmental organisation

- Non-EU citizen
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Public authority
- Trade union
- Other

**\* First name**

Dominique

**\* Surname**

Selier

**\* Email (this won't be published)**

selier@neth-er.eu

**\* Organisation name**

*255 character(s) maximum*

Netherlands House for Education and Research - Neth-ER

**\* Organisation size**

- Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- Small (10 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250 or more)

**Transparency register number**

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

01678796979-90

**\* Country of origin**

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

*This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.*

- Afghanistan
- Åland Islands
- Albania
- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Libya
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Macau
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Saint Martin
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname

- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Myanmar/Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Türkiye
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine

- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

If you are contributing as an individual researcher, what is your main scientific field of research?

- Natural sciences
- Engineering and technology
- Medical and health sciences
- Agricultural and veterinary sciences

- Social sciences
- Humanities and the arts

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

### \* **Contribution publication privacy settings**

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

#### **Anonymous**

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

#### **Public**

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)

## **1. Strengthen R&D investment and bring it up to the 3% GDP target to address the current lack of investment**

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The EU's [R&D intensity](#), measured as the proportion of GDP spent on R&D, is still well below the target of 3% of GDP set by the [European Council in Barcelona in 2002](#), despite the steady but slow progress made since then. In 2023, approximately EUR 381 billion was invested in R&D in the EU, which accounts for only 2.22% of the EU's GDP. The large disparities between Member

States (ranging from 0.5% to 3.6% of GDP) are partly due to the lack of private investment in R&D compared with other major economies (China, Japan, South Korea, United States, etc.). The low level of R&D intensity negatively affects the EU's competitiveness and, therefore, its socio-economic progress and the resilience of our society, and accentuates the R&D investment gap with other countries.

Meeting the EU's 3% target would require an additional investment of EUR 134 billion per year across the EU. Therefore, to achieve the 3% target by 2030, the EU would need substantial additional funding from both private and public sources, a better alignment and complementarity between public and private investments, and better coordination of policies at both national and EU levels.

## ***Current situation***

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The EU's innovation gap with other major economies is largely caused by underinvestment in R&D.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We should reduce disparities in R&D intensity between Member States, which create innovation gaps inside the EU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing R&D intensity should be a priority at EU level to boost socio-economic progress and competitiveness in the EU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## **Possible way forward**

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate for EU-level legislation to increase R&D intensity?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Define national R&D intensity targets, where public investments are solid obligations.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask Member States to write multiannual national plans or roadmaps for implementation and monitoring of progress towards R&D intensity targets.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensure the better use of public R&D investments to further mobilise private R&D investments.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there any other key challenges regarding the need to increase R&D intensity or possible ways to address this challenge that you think should be considered?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The ERA Act should reaffirm and enforce the 3% norm and member states should take the necessary measures to stimulate both public and private investments by creating enabling conditions. At least two-thirds of R&D investments should come from the private sector.

Member States must commit to making sustained progress towards the 3% target by 2030. The EU has an important role in encouraging member states to invest more in R&D taking into account national starting positions and structural differences. The ERA Act should therefore enforce the 3% minimum investment target and emphasise stronger contributions from the private sector.

As a substantial share of R&D investment must come from the private sector, the ERA Act should encourage member states to strengthen enabling conditions for private R&D investments. Both public and private R&D investments are essential, while maintaining a balance between stronger coordination and space for disruptive innovation.

As an enabling condition to stimulate public investments, we suggest that member states develop a clear roadmap with concrete national commitments integrated into national and regional reform plans under the new MFF. This is important so that the member states establish the measures necessary according to the national needs and reach the EU-wide 3% minimum investment target.

As recommended by Draghi, the European Semester should explicitly monitor progress on R&D. It is essential to monitor the cost efficiency and return on investment on knowledge, research, innovation and development - and not solely to industry and defense. It is also important to monitor that investments maintain a balance between curiosity driven research and programme-specific investments.

## **2. Greater alignment of R&I investments, policies and programmes between the EU and Member States, and between Member States**

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In addition to the lack of R&D intensity, the EU falls short of what it could achieve in R&D because policies and investment priorities are not sufficiently coordinated between Member States and between the EU and the Member States. R&I in Europe is governed at multiple levels, with policies and investment pursued at the local, regional, national and EU levels, scattered across ministries in different Member States.

Investments in R&D are often dispersed and poorly aligned between Member States, while only about 10% of total R&D spending is managed through EU-wide programmes. By contrast, competitors like the United States benefit from a single national strategy, leading to a more coordinated allocation of resources and the strategic alignment of investment priorities. This disparity is especially problematic for sophisticated and complex technologies such as AI, quantum computing or biotech. This fragmentation of European R&D investments makes it

difficult for the EU to address common challenges by focusing on a coherent set of strategic areas, and leads to missed opportunities for collaboration and network effects.

### **Current situation**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The lack of mechanisms to coordinate and prioritise research and innovation policies at EU level reduce the effectiveness of R&D investments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The existing institutional structures and instruments are insufficient to align policies and R&D investments across Member States, and between Member States and the EU, and to set out strategic priorities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
EU spending on R&D is not well-aligned with key EU-wide policy priorities, e.g. industrial policy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Existing mechanisms that support R&D initiatives co-funded by different actors (notably European Partnerships [1]) are not sufficient to address the current needs for coordination and alignment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The system of European Partnerships is too complex and fragmented in terms of its implementation modalities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are too many European Partnerships to ensure critical mass and strategic orientation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[1] *[European Partnership](#)* means an initiative, where the EU, together with private and public partners, commit to jointly supporting the development, implementation and evaluation of a programme of activities, and where the costs are shared between all partners.

## Possible way forward

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate for EU-level legislation to better align R&D investments, programmes and policies?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Create a coordination instrument to allow the EU and the Member States to set out their strategic R&D priorities together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The competencies of the ERA governance bodies (i.e. the <a href="#">ERA Forum and the European Research and Innovation Committee - ERAC</a> ) could be expanded and applied to the definition of strategic priorities and to the alignment of R&D investments and policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The European Partnerships should concentrate a critical mass of funding in key strategic areas, which are aligned with the EU's priorities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The system of European Partnerships should be constructed in such a way that it is flexible enough to adapt to evolving EU policy priorities, for instance by re-orienting existing European Partnerships, possibly ending existing Partnerships or creating new ones.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The system of European Partnerships should become more transparent and easier to use by						

creating and running partnerships in a harmonised way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Key provisions for implementing European Partnerships should be included in the ERA Act.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The respective roles of public and private actors should be taken into account in creating and running European Partnerships	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there any other key challenges regarding policy and investments alignment or possible ways to address them that you think should be considered?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The ERA Act should enable both coordination for greater R&D investment, and at the same time allow room for bottom-up innovation and cooperation for the fifth freedom. The Act should be flexible enough to adapt to changing European and national conditions.

If the ERA Act introduces a coordination instrument to facilitate alignment of EU and national strategic priorities, it is necessary to critically evaluate which R&D areas would benefit from EU coordination. Neth-ER emphasizes the need to introduce an EU-level methodological framework to measure the economic sustainability and societal impact of R&I. An impact assessment and valorisation method is necessary to improve understanding of the impact of public R&I investment. This method could use the 'Six Capitals' framework developed by the International Integrated Reporting Council.

The framework must include research on the role of RPO's for their contributions to knowledge development and valorisation, and the R&T infrastructures and facilities that support industry. RPO's monitor the input, activities and output of collaborative research and possess the necessary data to be integrated into broader macro-economic analyses. Such an impact assessment would also contribute to a future-proof research sector, public support for R&D, knowledge valorisation and HEU's success as well. We therefore urge the Commission to include such an EU-wide recognised methodological framework, to align R&D policies.

European Partnerships should become more flexible and transparent to allow for more strategic choices. For example, co-funded partnerships need more transparency around the selection of project topics. This is necessary to better respond to changing societal needs, and the requirements of the public and private actors involved. The system however, should become more predictable.

ERA governance bodies can discuss strategic research priorities. HEU and the ECF should have the lead in setting these.

## **3. Improve the general conditions for research and researchers in Europe**

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### **3.1 Upholding the fundamental values of the European Research Area**

In 2021, the Council of the EU agreed on a set of fundamental values underlying the revamp of the ERA in the [Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe](#). The ERA must ensure that its fundamental values are respected in full throughout the EU in a consistent and fair manner. These values are the unquestionable promotion of the freedom of scientific research, and of ethics and integrity when carrying out R&I, and the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities.

#### **3.1.1 Freedom of scientific research**

There is currently no harmonised EU-level legal framework that ensures the consistent and enforceable protection of freedom of scientific research in the Member States. Researchers and research institutions across the EU face a combination of pressures that, in practice, can limit the full exercise of freedom of research.

The absence of a clear and enforceable EU framework has contributed to uneven levels of protection of freedom of scientific research in the Member States. This has led to significant disparities between Member States, making the EU a less attractive destination for global research talent, and undermining the objectives of the ERA.

## **Current situation**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
There is no clear and enforceable legal protection for the freedom of scientific research in my country.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher education institutions and research-performing organisations lack enough autonomy from undue interference, whether political, economic, or otherwise. This undermines their ability to safeguard freedom of scientific research effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social and cultural pressures, including public criticism, online harassment or media backlash, can discourage researchers from addressing certain topics or sharing their findings openly.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Precarious employment and lack of stable career paths undermine the independence of researchers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Europe needs stronger and more uniform legal safeguards to protect and promote freedom of scientific research.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## **Possible way forward**

To what extent would the following suggested measures be appropriate to address the identified problems?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Establish uniform, legally binding protection at the EU level for the freedom of scientific research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Require EU Member States to implement minimum standards protecting the freedom of scientific research, while allowing some flexibility at Member State level.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Define clear core rights for individual researchers and rights and obligations for research institutions.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create mechanisms to enforce compliance with the freedom of scientific research, such as linking respect for this freedom to access to EU funding, including for research, or cutting EU funds when the freedom of scientific research is not respected.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensure that legal measures to protect freedom of scientific research also strengthen the autonomy of research institutions and promote transparent governance in research institutions.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Complement legal measures with awareness-raising, education, and programmes to promote a culture of scientific freedom and integrity.



Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there any other points you would like to make regarding the need to protect the freedom of scientific research and the potential way forward?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

Firstly, it is necessary to distinguish "freedom of scientific research" and "academic freedom", which are both ambiguous and not necessarily synonymous. Member states and stakeholders should take the lead in developing flexible definitions for both, to guarantee the diversity of research practices and institutions, before introducing a European right to hold member states accountable.

The ERA Act should focus on improving the protection of researchers' rights, by including standards for a European right to conduct research across borders and share results without restrictions. It is necessary to protect the freedom of scientific research across Europe to ensure that researchers and institutions can pursue independent, high-quality work without undue interference. The Act should require researchers and RPOs to uphold high standards of integrity, ensure legal protection and reinforce institutional autonomy. Stakeholders should develop flexible definitions as part of this.

In this way, the ERA Act should lay the basis for a separate, future regulation ensure both a scientific culture that also supports the independence of researchers and research agendas. A separate regulation may include a European right to academic freedom, as not all member states legally protect this freedom yet. A European right would hold member states accountable for guaranteeing the freedom of scientific research and establish clear enforcement mechanisms to uphold transparency and avoid political interference or misuse. The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences is currently working on a report to research whether judicial protection is appropriate and beneficial, expected in summer 2026.

This way, both the ERA Act and a separate regulation should improve the protection of freedom of scientific research, in line with the draft resolution presented by MEP Eszter Lakos.

### **3.1.2 Gender equality and equal opportunities**

Gender equality is a core value and key priority for the EU, and as such it is integral to European research and innovation. Since 2020, the EU gender equality policy in research and innovation aims to address intersections of gender with other social categorisations (e.g. ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation), as well as to promote geographical and sectoral inclusiveness, especially by involving the private sector. Despite significant efforts and some positive developments, there are still disparities in this area. To address this, [gender equality plans](#) have been introduced as a condition to receiving EU research funding. The plans require public bodies and research and higher education organisations to outline concrete actions and commitments to promote gender equality. However, private sector organisations (where the gender gap is largest) are exempt from producing gender equality plans, and the effectiveness of the plans varies across the EU.

To improve the quality of research and develop effective solutions that benefit society as a whole, research and innovation must not only welcome all talents but also consider gender and

equal opportunities for other social categories, such as ethnicity, disability and age, in their content. Gender, however, is incorporated in less than 2% of scientific publications ([She Figures 2024](#)). These and other related issues underscore the need for a stronger EU framework to promote gender equality and equal opportunities in research and innovation, building on existing initiatives and ensuring a consistent approach across the EU.

### **Current situation**

To what extent do you agree that the following problems should be addressed to promote and achieve gender equality and equal opportunities more effectively in research and innovation?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The inadequate and fragmented uptake of gender equality policies across the EU (e.g. gender equality plans).	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inconsistent national and limited EU-level frameworks for the monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies and actions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient consideration of gender and other social factors (e.g. ethnicity, disability, age) in research and innovation content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support for researchers with caregiving responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of engagement of the private sector in addressing gaps in gender equality and inclusiveness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## **Possible way forward**

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate for EU-level legislation to promote gender equality and equal opportunities more effectively in research and innovation?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Establish legally binding minimum rules for gender equality plans, specifying the organisations that are required to implement them, the essential components of the plans, and the processes for national-level monitoring and compliance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Set a minimum level of spending on gender equality policies and actions in research and innovation at EU, national, and organisational levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incorporate considerations of gender and other social factors (e.g. ethnicity, disability, age) into public research and innovation programmes, with regular reporting and evaluation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop legislation to make big private companies more involved in improving gender equality and inclusiveness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Include the cost of caring for dependents in public research funding programmes to help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

researchers with caregiving responsibilities to overcome barriers to participation and career progression.

Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there any other key challenges regarding gender equality and equal opportunities or possible ways to address them that you think should be considered?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The ERA Act should focus on equity as a whole and not merely be limited to gender equality for equal opportunities. While equity does not necessarily need to be framed as a standalone theme in the ERA Act, it is a fundamental precondition for the effective functioning of the fifth freedom. Without sufficient attention to equity, the ERA risks being unevenly accessible and therefore ineffective in practice.

Equality aims to help everyone in the same way but does not consider inherently significant differences between people with regards to diversity factors beyond gender. Equity is more results-oriented (the result is the same) rather than resources-oriented (everyone gets the same), as in equality. Therefore, Neth-ER advocates for equity to ensure equal opportunities. We support equity as a core principle to ensure quality, future-proofing and well-being in the sector.

However, equality and equity policy is a core competency of the Member States. The ERA Act may set norms and objectives to promote equity for an effective and inclusive R&I ecosystem. The Commission may not develop a regulatory framework or legally binding provisions within the ERA Act to achieve these objectives.

## **3.2 Ensuring the free circulation of researchers and scientific knowledge**

### ***3.2.1 Researchers' careers and mobility***

Attractive research careers in different sectors are a fundamental part of a fully-fledged European Research Area. Following the adoption of the Council [Recommendation establishing a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe](#) in December 2023, stronger legal measures can be considered to address specific issues which would help to strengthen research careers and improve the mobility of researchers across the ERA.

## Current situation

To what extent do you agree that the following problems currently prevent research careers in the EU from being more attractive?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Widespread use of fixed-term contracts, in particular because of project-based funding and /or national legislation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient social security benefits for early-career researchers, notably PhD candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support for researchers to develop their careers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National and organisation-level obstacles preventing seamless mobility between Member States (e.g. administrative and language barriers) and between organisations.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obstacles to the mutual recognition by Member States of researchers' academic qualifications for work purposes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obstacles to the recognition by Member States of academic qualifications gained in non-EU countries.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obstacles for researchers from non-EU countries in obtaining visas to work in EU Member States.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obstacles for researchers from non-EU countries who have a work-related visa issued by an EU Member State to move to other Member States.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

<p>Insufficient mapping of national and organisational career structures for researchers against the R1-R4 career profiles (R1 First-Stage Researcher; R2 Recognised Researcher; R3 Established Researcher; R4 Leading Researcher), with a negative impact on intersectoral and interoperable careers.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Insufficient use of the R1-R4 career profiles in vacancies.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Administrative complexities related to business trips for researchers (e.g. the need to complete A1 forms [2]).</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

[2] *An A1 form is a portable document that, in line with Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009, serves as proof of the social security legislation applicable to a person (employee or self-employed) temporarily working in a different Member State.*

## **Possible way forward**

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate for EU-level legislation to address the identified problems?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Ensure that national laws do not impede or overly complicate the ability of public sector employers to offer open-ended, indefinite or permanent contracts to researchers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensure that researchers at all career stages, including PhD candidates, have the same level of social security benefits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop an EU-level contract template for the recruitment of researchers, which employers in the public and private sectors can use voluntarily. This template would ensure that minimum standards are met, making positions more attractive to researchers and facilitating mobility, including between Member States.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carry out measures to prevent practices that could lead to discriminatory behaviour against some researchers and make it more difficult to be mobile, such as the exclusive use of the local language of a Member State in job advertisements and employment contracts.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Facilitate the automatic recognition (for work purposes) of the academic qualifications that a researcher gained in an EU Member State.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase the understanding and transparency of the skills and academic qualifications of researchers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitate the recognition (for work purposes) of the academic qualifications that a researcher gained in a non-EU country.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitate the visa application process for researchers from a non-EU country and reduce the obstacles to their mobility within the EU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carry out a mapping exercise to align national and organisational career structures with the R1-R4 researcher profiles.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensure that all job vacancies addressed to researchers use the R1-R4 profiles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce the administrative burden associated with researchers' business trips.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there any other key challenges regarding enhanced research careers and mobility that you think should be considered, including national-level obstacles preventing seamless mobility across Member States?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The ERA Act should focus on reducing systemic obstacles to increase mobility, while respecting national frameworks on competencies such as employment conditions, anti-discrimination legislation and social security.

The internal market should become more open for the free movement of knowledge, including for talent from outside the EU. For this, it is essential to ensure inclusive assessment and recognition criteria. In addition, the ERA Act should ensure better upskilling and reskilling opportunities. These policies should be aligned with education policy, CoARA, and explicitly reference the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). Social security rights should be improved and equal at the EU-level for all researchers, including pension schemes in particular. Underrepresented groups in the research sector require special attention to ensure equal opportunities.

While R1-R4 career profiles can bring a useful competences framework, it would not be appropriate to apply these to all vacancies. This is because these profiles do not fully align with national research career profiles. It is important to prioritise diversity & inclusion in recognition and reward systems.

### **3.2.2 Free circulation of scientific knowledge**

Despite progress in promoting open access, which has been driven especially by the open science policies and actions of the EU and the Member States, the proportion of scientific publications and research data available through open access remains well below targets. Legal and technical obstacles, and other barriers such as research assessments based on the quantity of publications in prestigious journals, are impeding access to, and reuse of research output. The lack of standardisation and interoperability of research data within and across scientific disciplines and across borders is a major obstacle to achieving the free circulation of scientific knowledge.

## Current situation

To what extent do you agree with the following statements, which describe possible obstacles to ensuring access to and sharing of scientific knowledge?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Insufficient open access to publicly funded peer-reviewed publications.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certain publishing requirements (e.g. transfer of author rights or embargoes) may limit open access to publicly funded peer-reviewed publications.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient open access to publicly funded research data, software and other research outputs.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Barriers (technical, legal etc.) preventing efficient access to and the sharing and reuse of data and other research outputs across borders within the EU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Barriers (technical, legal, etc.) preventing efficient access to and the sharing and reuse of data and other research outputs between scientific thematic areas.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apart from legal constraints imposed by sector-specific or cross-cutting legislation on data management, there are additional barriers that impede researchers' access to publicly funded data that could be overcome with targeted legislation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient alignment between research institutions and between EU countries on the requirements for open access to publicly funded research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is legal uncertainty over how researchers can share, access and reuse copyright-protected material or sensitive data for scientific purposes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient use of existing legal possibilities and market-based mechanisms to share, access and reuse copyright-protected material for scientific purposes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rising costs for research institutions to access scientific information and publish in open access.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient information about agreements between public institutions and publishers on the supply of scientific information and open access publishing services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Current research assessment practices are primarily based on the number of publications in prestigious journals and do not take into account the intrinsic quality and impact of the research and the diverse contributions of researchers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Possible way forward

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate for EU-level legislation to achieve the free circulation of scientific knowledge?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Research-funding organisations (RFOs) responsible for managing public research-funding and research-performing organisations (RPOs) that receive public funding should include in funding agreements requirements for immediate open access to and reuse of publicly funded scientific publications in public open access repositories as a condition to providing public funding for research.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public RFOs and RPOs receiving public funding shall foresee requirements for researchers and/or their organisations to retain the necessary intellectual property rights to provide immediate open access and reuse of their research outputs.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public RFOs and RPOs receiving public funding shall foresee, where relevant, requirements for data management plans and open access to research data and other research outputs under the principle ‘ <i>as open as possible, as closed as necessary</i> ’.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Member States should ensure the findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability (FAIR) of publicly funded research data and other research	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

outputs, and their availability through secure and trusted digital environments.						
Member States should ensure that research data is standardised and interoperable within and between different scientific disciplines and across borders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Member States should ensure the further development of secure and trusted infrastructures for access to, sharing, reuse and preservation of scientific information and data.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The applicable legal frameworks should be reviewed to improve legal certainty and facilitate open access, sharing and reuse of data for scientific purposes in a secure way that ensures privacy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Publicly funded researchers should have facilitated access (e.g. in terms of technical requirements, available platforms or administrative procedures) to data under the <a href="#">common European data spaces</a> .	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-legislative measures should be implemented to improve the awareness and use of existing legal and market-based solutions that make it possible to share, access and reuse protected content for scientific purposes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public RFOs and RPOs that receive public funding should create mechanisms to ensure that assessments of research, researchers and research organisations recognise the diverse outputs, practices and activities that help maximise the quality and impact of research.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there any other key challenges regarding the free circulation of scientific knowledge or possible ways to address them that you think should be considered?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The ERA Act must introduce secondary publication rights for researchers, building on ERA Action 2. In addition, the ERA Act should clarify legal frameworks and tackle systemic barriers to promote interoperability to promote the free circulation of scientific knowledge. It is essential to leave flexibility for national and institutional initiatives to continue creating innovative and successful practices to be shared across member states.

Open access policies should be ambitious to improve collaboration and transparency, and to maximize the quality and societal impact of research. EU policy should always apply the principle “as open as possible, as closed as necessary” to research data and scientific publications and adhere to FAIR principles for research data and software. Policy can build on the EOSC, Data Space, and Digital Innovation Hub.

The Act should tackle technical, legal, and systemic barriers to the free circulation of scientific knowledge. The lack of structural funding for existing data infrastructures is one of the most pressing obstacles. Reducing financial burdens is important to contribute to the exchange of data and upholding of open access standards between member states. RPO's and RFO's can also support this by prioritising investment in development and maintenance of existing data infrastructures. Other barriers include the commercial influences of the private sector to research. There is also much to learn from Member States that have been particularly proactive in implementing open access and FAIR data practices. E.g., Open Science NL works with 23 national partners to embed OS as standard practice.

Moreover, including citizen science and the funding thereof is an essential part of improving open science policy. Citizen science has shown ample evidence of added value for and with society.

It is unclear what "the necessary intellectual property rights" and "existing legal possibilities and market-based mechanisms" entail.

### **3.2.3 European Research Infrastructure Consortia**

A European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) is a legal entity set up under EU law to facilitate the establishment and operation of research infrastructures of European interest. The [ERIC Regulation](#) has made it possible to launch and integrate many research infrastructures at European level, which align national investments and research priorities, and pool resources and expertise.

Despite the widely recognised success of the ERIC instrument, which has resulted in the establishment of 32 ERICs so far, a number of issues in the current legislation have been raised both by EU Member States and by the scientific community (see, for example, the [third report on the application of the ERIC Regulation](#)).

To what extent do you agree that the following topics should be considered in view of a possible future amendment of the ERIC Regulation?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The possibility for third countries other than associated countries and intergovernmental organisations to join an ERIC as of its establishment as founding members.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The rules in the ERIC Regulation on the applicable law and jurisprudence may create problems either in the setting-up of new ERICs or the resolution of disputes within existing ones.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Further harmonisation of the legal status of ERICs is needed to reduce discrepancies in the recognition by Member States of European Research Infrastructures under national law that hinder the ERICs' efficiency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there other key challenges regarding the ERIC regulation or possible ways to address them that you think should be considered?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

ERICs are valuable, but can bring legal uncertainties. Differing interpretations of rules and regulations from Member States can create complexities in the practical implementation of ERICs. The governance also tends to be complex, and there are issues surrounding personnel mobility across borders, in part due to a lack of understanding of what an ERIC is.

It is important that ERICs stay open to participation from third countries, in order to improve Europe's position as the access point for international cooperation. The current article 9 of the ERIC Regulation may be formulated less ambiguously so that third countries and IGOs can be founding members of the ERIC, under the condition that this does not lead to more complexities.

However, the ERA Act should not only focus on amendment of the ERIC regulation, but pay adequate attention to R&T infrastructures as a whole. It would be insufficient to limit the scope to the ERIC framework. For example, UMCs work extensively with clinical data infrastructures, biobanks, and imaging platforms that are not ERICs, but are still crucial. Expanding the scope is essential to improve access to R&T infrastructures for the entire R&I ecosystem and to include locally managed infrastructures.

The ERA Act should provide a legal framework for R&T infrastructures that aligns with the European Strategy on Research & Technology Infrastructures. A legal framework should ensure that researchers, innovators and industry in Europe have open access to cutting-edge facilities and services to support scientific and technological excellence and industrial competitiveness. This framework should also pay adequate attention to the upholding of existing infrastructures, not only the creation of new ones.

The Act may not introduce and impose new rules and conditions. Instead, it should stimulate alignment of national rules and procedures to reduce bureaucracy and administrative burdens for cross border collaborations.

### **3.2.4 Knowledge valorisation**

Despite the growing policy emphasis and guidance on knowledge valorisation, including the Codes of Practice on the [management of intellectual assets](#), [citizen engagement](#), [industry-academia co-creation](#) and [standardisation](#) to implement [the Guiding Principles for knowledge valorisation](#), structural problems persist that hinder the efficient transformation of research results into societal and economic value.

Knowledge valorisation can have multiple aspects. Issues related to the commercialisation of the outputs of publicly funded R&I were tackled in the public consultation on the European Innovation Act. Therefore, this consultation focuses on other knowledge valorisation aspects.

## Current situation

To what extent do you agree that the following problems currently prevent R&I in the EU from achieving optimum levels of knowledge valorisation?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
There are limited financial and non-financial incentives for researchers, higher education and research-performing organisations to valorise knowledge.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic reward systems are predominantly focused on publications and citations, with limited recognition for activities that create socio-economic impacts.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher education and research-performing organisations, and their researchers lack the capacity to collaborate with the private sector, public authorities and citizens, and to engage in standardisation activities.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dedicated support services in universities (e.g. knowledge and technology transfer offices, public engagement units and innovation offices) to facilitate effective knowledge valorisation are under-resourced.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Many researchers lack the training and skills necessary to engage successfully with non-academic collaborators (industry, citizens, public authorities) as part of knowledge transfer and valorisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Researchers' employment conditions lack flexibility for two-way mobility between academia and industry (e.g. short-term secondments) and to engage with external stakeholders (e.g.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

consulting, collaboration with societal actors and public authorities).

## **Possible way forward**

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate for EU-level legislative action to address the identified problems?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Member States should set knowledge valorisation as a key priority in their research and innovation policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If they haven't already done so, Member States should adopt policies aimed at incentivising researchers and universities to engage in knowledge valorisation activities.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful commercialisation, standardisation and engagement with policy makers and the public should be recognised and rewarded in the assessment and progression of research careers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If a university decides not to commercialise an invention, the researcher/inventor should be granted full rights to exploit it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More schemes for mobility between sectors should be created, allowing researchers to work in industry or the public sector for a certain period, and ensuring their right to return to their previous position.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A competence framework for knowledge valorisation professionals in public research organisations should be defined.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Member states should develop strategies and measures to upscale knowledge valorisation for informing the design of public policies.



Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there any other key challenges regarding knowledge valorisation and possible ways to address them that you think should be considered?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

Knowledge valorisation needs scaled up financing, as it is currently underfunded and under-recognised. Firstly, recognition & rewards systems and support services are under-resourced as institutions often need to fund these themselves. As a result, researchers lack support and receive limited recognition, especially in the field of social sciences and humanities. Another bottleneck for why not enough research results reach the market and society, is that valorisation is time-consuming and costly. The research result must be further developed in collaboration with the main users, before it can be further utilised and have economic or societal impact.

The ERA Act should stimulate member states to set standards around valorisation that extends beyond commercialisation. For example, engagement, standard-setting, societal impact, and flexible pathways for mobility between sectors should be rewarded equally. It is also necessary to generate more private capital to contribute to valorisation.

Automatically granting rights to researchers of inventions not commercialised by a university does not reckon with state-aid rules and the different circumstances of various types of inventions, or circumstances where commercialisation may be delayed. With this in mind, it is vital that researchers are in the lead and have the first say when it comes to making arrangements with the university on exploitation of their invention.

Finally, Neth-ER strongly emphasises the need for an ecosystem approach to knowledge valorisation that explicitly includes the whole knowledge chain: research universities, universities of applied sciences, vocational institutions, university medical centres and Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) & Research Performing Organisations (RPOs). This should ensure that the entire knowledge chain, also including industry, universities of applied sciences, has access to excellence and competition.

### **3.3 Aligning guidance on artificial intelligence (AI) in research.**

Across the EU, research organisations and funding bodies have issued diverse and often conflicting guidelines on the use of AI in scientific research. As a result, research proposals involving AI are subject to varying requirements on ethics, transparency, intellectual property, data protection and data governance. This fragmented landscape creates uncertainty for researchers and complicates cross-border collaboration between researchers.

## ***Current situation***

To what extent do you agree that the following problems regarding the use of AI in research should be addressed?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
There is a lack of harmonised guidelines on the ethical and responsible use of AI in research across the EU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Researchers face legal uncertainty and administrative burdens when using AI due to differing national and institutional guidelines.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The fragmented landscape of AI-related codes of conduct undermines cross-border and interdisciplinary scientific collaboration.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The current frameworks do not provide sufficient clarity on how to manage risks such as dual-use, reproducibility, or transparency in the use of AI in research.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### **Possible way forward**

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate to address the identified problem, and which solutions and should be pursued through EU-level legislation?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Promote capacity-building to implement and monitor AI governance in research organisations.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage alignment between national and EU-level research programmes on AI-related standards.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Embed in the ERA Act non-binding EU-wide principles and harmonised guidelines on the responsible and ethical use of AI in research.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## **AI misuse whistleblowing mechanism**

Currently, there is no EU-level mechanism to report concerns about the misuse of AI in scientific research. Researchers lack trusted and secure channels to raise the alarm when AI is used unethically or for (un)intended harmful purposes. This gap increases the risk that dangerous applications go undetected and undermines trust in the research system.

### **Current situation**

To what extent do you agree that the following problems regarding the current lack of whistleblowing mechanisms for misuse of AI in research should be addressed?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The absence of a dedicated mechanism to report misuse increases the risk that harmful or unethical applications of AI go undetected.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Researchers currently lack secure, trusted channels to raise the alarm when AI-based research outputs are repurposed for unintended uses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a lack of awareness among researchers of where and how to report concerns related to the misuse of AI in research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reporting channels, where they exist, are often not tailored to the specific risks and complexities of AI in research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### **Possible way forward**

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate to address problems with the potential misuse of AI, and should these solutions be pursued through EU-level legislation?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Create an EU-level whistleblowing mechanism specifically to report the suspected misuse of AI in research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Link this whistleblowing mechanism to national authorities and research institutions to ensure that responses are well-coordinated.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create an independent EU body or contact point to manage cases of AI-related whistleblowing in research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Are there any other key challenges or problems regarding Artificial Intelligence guidance in research and possible ways to address them that you think should be considered?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The Act may include non-binding European principles for responsible AI use in research, aligned with existing legislation and standards. This should support trust, transparency and reproducibility, while preserving AI research flexibility. However, the main concern is regulatory fragmentation. Additional binding AI provisions under the ERA Act risk overlap with existing frameworks (i.e., AI Act, GDPR/EHDS, MDR). We would strongly favor alignment, coherence, and interoperability over new binding layers. The ERA Act can therefore support the upscaling of national regulatory structures to avoid the misuse of AI in research, increase its digital autonomy and avoid becoming dependent on big tech companies.

A narrowly scoped European whistleblowing mechanism may have potential benefits increase transparency, but the added value is still unclear. Firstly, it is necessary to research the existing national, institutional and publisher-level structures to assess the benefits of current guidelines and mechanisms. For example, university integrity offices, medical ethical committees, and data-protection structures carry multidisciplinary expertise on research integrity. Next, the Commission should provide clear guidance on how current EU AI initiatives apply to research practice, e.g. AI Act and Apply AI & AI in Science Strategies. This is necessary to avoid further uncertainty and delays, as researchers are currently delaying part of their plans awaiting clarification from the EC. More research on current policy is also important] to avoid added administrative overload or legal ambiguity for research organisations rather than introducing more EU-level mechanisms.

As for other fields, Europe should adhere to the principle 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary' when it comes to 'open source' AI infrastructure. If open source is not an option, the focus should be on European alternatives that prioritise governance and legal aspects over profit.

### **3.4 Improving consistency in approaches to international cooperation and research security across the EU**

Openness, international cooperation and academic freedom are at the core of world-class research and innovation. However, with growing international tensions and the increasing geopolitical significance of research and innovation, researchers are increasingly exposed to security risks. With the adoption of the [Council Recommendation on enhancing research security](#) in May 2025, the EU has clear political (i.e. non-binding) guidance on how to ensure that international cooperation in research and innovation is both open and secure. However, there are still substantial differences in how research is safeguarded between and within the Member States. There are calls to set minimum requirements at EU level to ensure a level playing field.

#### ***Current situation***

To what extent do you agree that the following problems should be addressed?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The lack of a level playing field in the EU in safeguarding research and innovation against security risks.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverging national approaches to research security, which potentially hinder cooperation between researchers in different Member States (e.g. overlapping and/or conflicting requirements).	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The lack of adequate safeguards for research security in some Member States exposes all of the EU to research security risks ('weakest link' scenario).	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Researchers in Member States with well-developed research security policies are at a disadvantage compared with researchers in Member States that do not have similar policies in place.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### **Possible way forward**

To what extent are the following suggestions appropriate for EU-level legislation to better safeguard against research and innovation security risks?

	Very appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Very inappropriate	No opinion
Recognise research security as a concern for all Member States that requires appropriate measures at national and EU levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Set minimum requirements for a consistent approach to research security at national and EU levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide the reasoning behind your responses and/or additional suggestions. Do you see any other issues that need to be addressed to support a more coherent and consistent approach to international research and innovation cooperation in a way that is both open and secure?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The ERA Act should create a level playing field for European researchers and apply a unified approach on research security. The current fragmentation creates barriers that reduce the attractiveness of countries for researchers and collaboration, while still allowing potentially harmful actors access to sensitive research through European consortia. Moreover, these differences highlight inadequate safeguards in the entire Union, as it can lead to critical attitudes in collaboration between Member States. Collective action should be well-coordinated with Member States, as a dual regime of national and EU regulation is highly undesirable.

The Act should build a trust-based framework of measures for EU-level coordination' and minimum requirements for member states and institutions. This framework must] ensure consistent security measures, while maintaining openness and international cooperation. It should support member states and institutions to formulate guidelines on the recruitment and selection of candidates for positions and projects in sensitive technology areas and share best practices to support implementation (e.g., 'loket kennisveiligheid'). To respect institutional autonomy, the Act should include positive guidelines and avoid negative measures and restrictions - e.g. by supporting and enabling the desired due diligence approach. This would enable institutions flexibility for their research and international cooperation strategies. The Act support the 2024 Council Recommendation, respect the principle 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary' and prohibit discrimination between EU and non-EU citizens aligned with The European Convention on Human Rights.

In this framework, a European definition of dual-use, aligning with the Innovation Act, should be explicitly included to safeguard research and ensure a level playing field. Dual-use risks require robust safety measures when exchanging knowledge at the European level.

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## **Background Documents**

[Consultation questionnaire pdf](#)

## **Contact**

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