

ERA Structural Policy – Enhancing trust in Science

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ERA - European Research Area

The European Research Area (ERA) is the ambition to create a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the EU.

The ERA is based on excellence and

- prioritises investments and reforms in research and innovation,
- boosts market uptake,
- strengthens mobility of researchers and free flow of knowledge and technology,
- improves access to excellence.

ERA is governed and monitored by the European Commission, the Member States and Associated Countries through the expert group ERA Forum in collaboration with major EU R&I stakeholders. The triannual ERA Policy Agenda sets the priorities for the ERA.

ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027



Background - Bring science closer to citizens

The **ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024** set out voluntary ERA actions for Member States and Associated Countries via **ERA Action 14 Bring science closer to citizens** and through separate activities in the WIDERA programme of Horizon Europe. These initiatives aimed to empower citizens and local communities, to increase trust and interest in science, through science engagement. Some expected and achieved outcomes:

- Scale-up of the **Plastic Pirates – Go Europe Citizen** science campaign engaged young people across 13 countries.
- Launch of the **European City for Science** in Leiden 2022, during the European Year for Youth;
- **Mutual Learning Exercise (MLE)** on Citizen Science and MLE on Citizen Science. Exchanges between Member States on how to build capacity and scale effective practices.
- Propose a **policy coordination mechanism** on public engagement practices, including citizen involvement in scientific processes.



European Research Area:

**Enhancing Trust in Science through
Citizen Participation,
Engagement and Science
Communication**



#EUResearchArea

ERA Policy Agenda 2025-27:

List of ERA activities

ERA structural policies

'long-term ERA policies, which are not confined to individual policy agendas but still have a three-year workplan'

1. Enabling open science
2. Research infrastructures
3. Inclusive and intersectional gender equality
4. Making research careers more attractive and sustainable
5. Research assessment
6. Upscaling knowledge valorisation capacities
7. Global Approach to R&I
8. SET Plan as a key component of ERA
9. Improving the articulation between R&I and higher education within ERA unleashing the full potential of European R&I ecosystems
- ★ 10. Enhancing trust in science through citizen participation, engagement and science communication
11. Improve EU access to excellence

ERA actions

'which are new and to be completed within the three-year policy agenda'

1. Equity in open science
2. Advancing the European science for policy ecosystem
3. AI in science in the EU
4. Enhancing research security
5. Accelerating R&I investments for Europe's industrial transformation and competitive sustainability
6. Accelerating new approach methodologies to advance biomedical research and testing for medicinal products and medical devices
7. A harmonised and coordinated framework to support integrity and ethics in R&I
8. An new era in research management

ERA Trust in Science Sponsors – core partners

The implementation of the structural policy requires active involvement of the European Commission, Member States, Associated Countries, and relevant stakeholders.

Main “sponsors” are the:

- German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR),
- Swedish Research Council, SRC, and
- All European Academies, ALLEA

The initiative is coordinated by DG RTD at the European Commission.



Main objectives

- **Boost public engagement** in R&I, citizen science and science communication through commonly developed guidelines;
- **Develop more effective mechanisms** for substantial, inclusive public engagement in R&I;
- **Strengthen science-society links** at national/ regional/ local level;
- **Increase scientific literacy and science capital** through closer links between the scientific community and young people and with people not habitually involved in science



Main outcomes

- **Inclusive engagement guiding principles:** develop common approaches for public engagement in R&I and science communication;
- **Activities connecting researchers and young people:** innovative ways of effectively and inclusively engaging and involving young people with science, by inviting practitioners to provide best national practices and build on the work to develop handbooks and guidelines under EU funded projects;
- **Connect science and citizens, organise activities connecting and strengthening local R&I communities** with different stakeholders and citizens around the topic of science and its role in society;
- **Mutual learning exercise on trust in science,** consolidating and sharing knowledge on how to build, measure and enhance trust through public engagement; building on the results from the MLE on PE in R&I;
- **A mechanism and funding scheme designed to scale up of best practices** of national citizen participation and engagement initiatives to EU level.





Federal Ministry
of Research, Technology
and Space



Vetenskapsrådet
Swedish Research Council

Proposal for the implementation of the Structural Policy “Enhancing Trust in Science through Citizen Participation, Engagement and Science Communication”

1st online meeting, 2 December 2025

www.bmbf.de

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Securing societal trust in science for democratic resilience

in Europe

Link between trust in science and trust in democracy

- Shared European challenges require a common ERA response
- raising political relevance and ERA visibility

Structural policy to focus on three outcomes:

- Youth, Science and Democracy
- Connecting Science and Citizens
- Exploring Successful Initiatives



A 2-Step European Approach

Step 1 : Build a European Community of Practice (2025-2027)

- Gather and connect existing CoPs and networks (trust, democracy, sci-comm, citizen science) into a Europe-wide Community of Practice.
- Bring together diverse approaches under the shared objective of securing trust in science for democratic resilience

Milestones

- Q4 2025: Kick-off; activation of interested actors.
- 2026: roadmap process towards building the CoP, regular CoP exchanges



Launch a **coordinated series of events and interactive formats** under a joint umbrella brand:

“Trust in science for democratic resilience”.

Address the guiding question: **What can science do to maintain/regain public trust under current threats and contribute to safe-guarding democracy?**

Target groups: Researchers, science communicators, policy-makers as recipients of scientific advice and practitioners of democracy (e.g.

parliamentarians) and civil society



Step 2: Step 2: European Action Campaign (from 2027 on)

- Explore successful public engagement initiatives in order to make them visible and applicable across Europe
- Coordinated events and interactive formats under the umbrella brand “Trust in science for democratic resilience”
- Draw on MLE on Trust in Science

Milestones

- Action initiative period with contributions of different formats by the CoP
- Draw on reports and recommendations from MLE



Timeline

- 2 December 2025: Kick-off with interested MS, AC, SHO, contact points and stakeholders; engagement of interested actors
- January 2026: Start implementation by activating the core group; concretising a roadmap, tasks and timeline; mapping of relevant CoP across the ERA
- 1st quarter 2026: Start building the CoP through regular exchanges
- 1st quarter 2026 to the 3rd quarter 2027: Running of CoP exchanges with stakeholders in conjunction with events and meetings across Europe

Possible COALESCE involvement

- Become member of the Community of Practice;
- Participation in CoP Exchanges, provide expertise, share knowledge and best practises..
- Cocreation of the activities.
- Provide an arena for CoP exchanges with stakeholders.



Get in touch

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