

Engaging citizens with science: Insights and success stories from across Europe

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ERA Structural Policy “*Enhancing Trust in Science through Citizen Participation, Engagement and Science Communication*”

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, and local levels;
- increase scientific literacy and science capital through closer links between the scientific community and young people and with people not habitually involved in science.



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The implementation of the structural policy: European Commission, Member States, Associated Countries, and relevant stakeholders. **Trust in science** is not an issue confined to one country, but rather a European challenge that requires a **common ERA response**.

Activities have kicked off in December. Co-sponsors of the structural policy: *German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space* (BMFTR), the *Swedish Research Council*, and *ALLEA*. Main focuses of the exercise are:

- Youth, science and democracy
- Science and citizens
- Scaling-up relevant initiatives in the field



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2-step approach:

- ✓ Build and nurture a European community of practice
- ✓ Implementation campaign: as of 2027 several coordinated activities across Europe

Timeline:

December 2025: kick-off with interested MS, AC, contact points, and stakeholders; establishment of an initial core group of interested parties.

January 2026: start implementation by activating the core group; charting of relevant Communities of Practice across the ERA; developing a roadmap.

1st quarter 2026: start building the CoP through regular exchanges among members.

1st quarter 2026 to the 3rd quarter 2027: running of CoP exchanges with stakeholders in conjunction with events and meetings across Europe.



WIDERA WP: Pillar III - Citizens and science in ERA Fostering citizen engagement for more responsible and democratic R&I

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-05

Area 1: Citizen science for enhancing democratic governance

Improved framework conditions for integrating citizen science in democratic governance, considering issues of institutional feasibility and preparedness, including protocols and working modalities that foster the use of citizen science data in policies;

Improved data practices employed by researchers and experts in citizen science initiatives;

Increased awareness about the valuable scientific knowledge generated by citizen science and its contributions to tackling societal challenge.



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Area 2: Guiding principles for inclusive engagement in R&I

Enhanced institutional and organisational capacities in relation to public engagement and science-society links;

Actionable pathways for strengthening the co-creation of R&I by society, and evidence of the impacts of public engagement;

Common ERA approaches for researchers, policymakers, public engagement professionals, and communication experts to boost public engagement in R&I and science communication



Thank you



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