



# Policy Brief: The European Research Area Policy Agenda 2025-2027

---

NETWORK OF THE MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

---

Task 3.4	Policy Briefs
Issued by:	RANNÍS
Issued date:	06 February 2026
Work Package Leader:	RANNÍS (IS)



Funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Why ERA matters for MSCA proposals</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027</b>	<b>2</b>
ERA priority areas	3
<b>What has changed compared to the 2022-2024 agenda?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How can MSCA applicants use the ERA policy agenda?</b>	<b>4</b>
In the Excellence section	4
In the Impact section	4
In the Implementation section	4
<b>References and Resources</b>	<b>5</b>

## Introduction

This policy brief gives a brief summary of the European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda 2025–2027. It aims to help MSCA applicants, supervisors and NCPs understand the ERA priorities and how they relate to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

The MSCA are one of the main funding instruments that put ERA priorities into practice. They support researcher mobility, skills development, open science, responsible research practices and strong research careers. Understanding ERA helps applicants show how their project relates to EU policy objectives.

The ERA Policy Agenda involves both the European Commission and EU Member States. It sets out shared priorities where European countries work together to make the ERA stronger, such as improving research careers, supporting open science, strengthening research infrastructures and helping Europe respond to major social, industrial and technological challenges.

This policy brief summarizes the main information and gives simple guidance on how ERA priorities can be reflected in MSCA proposals.

## Why ERA matters for MSCA proposals

Many of the principles behind the ERA, such as open science, good supervision, gender equality, research integrity and career development, are already reflected in MSCA evaluation forms. This means applicants can strengthen their proposals by showing how their project puts these practices into action. Concrete examples work best. Instead of saying “we will apply open science,” you might explain how data will be shared in trusted, FAIR-compliant repositories. Institutional practices such as CoARA membership, having a Gender Equality Plan (GEP), strong supervision structures or good open-science support also help show that the host offers a solid research environment. This approach fits well with the MSCA Work Programme, which highlights that MSCA directly support ERA goals through mobility, skills development and knowledge circulation.

## The ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027

The ERA Policy Agenda is renewed every three years. The 2025–2027 agenda consists of: **11 structural policies** (longer-term actions embedded in EU and national research systems) and **8 ERA actions** (shorter-term, goal-oriented activities to be delivered by 2027).

These priorities correspond to the four joint areas of the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe. They aim to create a more open, connected and competitive European research system, while also ensuring stronger talent development, ethical standards and scientific excellence.

All these priorities – and the related ERA structural policies and ERA Actions – can serve as reference points for training, supervision, ethics, secondments and impact planning in MSCA projects.

## ERA priority areas

### 1. A well-functioning internal market for knowledge

This includes:

- Open science and reuse of research data (including EOSC)
- Sustainable, resilient and accessible research infrastructures
- Gender equality and inclusiveness
- Attractive and sustainable research careers
- Research assessment reform
- Stronger knowledge valorisation capacities and activities
- Europe's Global Approach to R&I

#### **Relevance for MSCA:**

Many of these issues are in fact core principles of MSCA. MSCA projects are expected to follow FAIR data practices, provide good supervision and career support, promote equality in selection and recruitment processes, and encourage mobility and cooperation across sectors and borders.

### 2. Achieving impact on societal challenges, notably for the green and digital transitions

This includes:

- Strategic R&I investments responding to challenges, notably for the green and digital transition (renewables, clean energy, etc.)
- Improving the articulation between higher education and R&I
- Better links with society and improved science communication

#### **Relevance for MSCA:**

MSCA projects often work across sectors and disciplines, notably under Doctoral Networks and Staff Exchanges. Applicants can for example demonstrate how the green or digital transition is supported by their training and secondments, and how their communication work contributes to promoting trust in science. The MSCA Green Charter can also be relevant here through the promotion of sustainable practices and the smart use of digital tools in MSCA projects.

### 3. Enhancing access to excellence and interconnections between innovation ecosystems

This includes:

- Strengthening access to research excellence across Europe
- Focus on the role of research management in empowering R&I in Europe

#### **Relevance for MSCA:**

This ties closely to Widening actions. MSCA consortia with partners from widening countries can highlight how the network supports ERA objectives by spreading excellence and strengthening research ecosystems.

### 4. R&I investments and reforms

This includes:

- Better coordination of national reforms
- Support for efficient investment in research systems

#### **Relevance for MSCA:**

As it concerns essentially the coordination of investments at EU and national levels, this area is less directly linked to individual MSCA projects.

## What has changed compared to the 2022-2024 agenda?

The first ERA Policy Agenda covered 2022–2024 and was based on the Pact for Research and Innovation. The 2025–2027 agenda builds on that first cycle and simplifies the structure.

- The structure has been simplified: 20 actions reduced to 11 long-term policies and 8 short-term actions.
- Stronger focus on research careers, research assessment reform, research security and the responsible use of AI.
- A clearer link between ERA objectives and Europe’s industrial competitiveness.
- More emphasis on cooperation between higher education institutions and research organisations.
- Updated monitoring system: ERA scoreboard, EU-level report and country reports.

These changes also matter for MSCA applicants, as they shape the expectations for how hosts handle issues such as research security, responsible AI, and modern approaches to research assessment.

## How can MSCA applicants use the ERA policy agenda?

While MSCA proposals remain bottom-up they are expected to contribute to wider EU policies. Referring to ERA priorities can help demonstrate the relevance and potential impact of a project. When describing your project, avoid generic claims. Instead, point to specific ERA principles and explain how you apply them in practice—whether in your methodology, training plan, secondments, open science work, institutional support or communication activities.

The following show a few examples of how applicants can do that, depending on the nature of their projects:

### In the Excellence section

- Mention how the project follows FAIR and open science principles.
- Highlight links to research infrastructures or EOSC services.
- Refer to responsible AI if relevant to the methodology.
- Describe how the project supports research careers and skills development.

### In the Impact section

- Show how the project supports structured doctoral training with strong non-academic involvement, as required in DN proposals.
- Link the communication activities to the ERA objective of engaging society and establishing trust in science.
- If applicable, show how the project supports green or digital transition, or industrial innovation.
- Refer to knowledge valorisation through collaboration with non-academic partners.

### In the Implementation section

- Demonstrate how hosts are supportive of good supervision, gender equality, research assessment reform or ethical standards.

- If the institution is part of CoARA, has a GEP, or provides open science services, then these are relevant to ERA.
- For secondments: link partners to ERA objective (e.g., green transition, research infrastructures, citizen engagement).

### Examples

<b>Postdoctoral Fellowship (open science)</b>	<b>Staff Exchanges (research management)</b>	<b>Doctoral Networks (research careers)</b>
“All publications and data will follow FAIR principles and be shared through trusted repositories.”	“The project contributes to the ERA action on research management through capacity building and training of research support staff.”	“Our training programme supports the ERA action of making research careers more attractive by offering structured supervision, career development training and intersectoral mobility.”

---

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

### ERA documents:

[ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027](#)  
[Council Recommendation on the ERA Policy Agenda \(2025\)](#)  
[ERA Monitoring Report 2024](#)  
[European Research Area Platform](#)

### MSCA documents:

[Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#)  
[MSCA Work Programme 2026-2027](#)  
[MSCA calls on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal](#)  
[The RADIANCE handbooks](#)  
[MSCA Green Charter](#)

### Additional useful resources:

[Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#)  
[European Open Science Cloud \(EOSC\)](#)  
[FAIR Data Principles](#)