

# High Level Workshop on the European Research Area

OSLO, 18-20 NOVEMBER 2025



## RESEARCH COLLABORATION, COMPETITION, VALORISATION, AND PROTECTION IN AN ERA OF UNCERTAINTY

### Concluding Statement on a Balanced, Collaborative and Secure R&I Framework

*The Research Council of Norway (RCN), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and Science Europe co-organised the 2025 High Level Workshop on the ERA in Oslo on 18–20 November. The annual event facilitated strategic research policy discussions across a broad cross-section of leaders of both Science Europe Member Organisations and beyond, including early-career researchers, foundations, key associations representing research and technology, universities, and policy makers at the national and European levels.*

**AGAINST THE BACKDROP** of numerous global challenges, declining trust in science, and geopolitical uncertainties, Europe is undergoing a paradigm shift. These global transformations upend the status quo and place strategic resilience, geopolitics, and competitiveness on the forefront of the EU's strategy. This calls for urgent changes in R&I policy. In this context, the upcoming 10th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe, provides a unique opportunity to strengthen links between R&I, competitiveness, collaboration, and security, in order to contribute to the improvement of our societies. A careful equilibrium is needed between autonomy and guidance in research governance; security and openness in collaboration; international co-operation and local innovation; and, short-term results and long-term perspectives.

The issues raised at the Workshop cover R&I policy and governance, open collaboration, and research security. Polar research was presented as an overarching case study to demonstrate the discussed concepts and their implications. The discussions emphasised the importance of strengthening research culture, promoting integrity and inclusion, supporting early-career researchers, and ensuring sustainable and predictable funding. They identified open science practices, robust research infrastructures, and equitable participation – including the full involvement of Associated Countries – as the essential foundations of a resilient ERA. A summary of the key themes:

- 🔍 **A broad notion of competitiveness:** The concept of competitiveness should be broadened to encompass lasting, sustainable and regenerative growth, including cultural, societal, and technological development and environmental care. For this, R&I – ranging from fundamental research with long-term impact to valorisation, supporting immediate priorities – should be a key component. Such a broad definition, supported by continuous, reliable, and ambitious investment into R&I, would contribute to Europe's strategic autonomy and resilience.
- 🔍 **Interconnectedness of societal challenges:** Geopolitical challenges pose risks to the global web of R&I connections to tackle societal challenges: means to reinforce these connections must be found. In this context, the indispensable nature and

manifold goals of collaboration across borders in polar research are illustrative. Furthermore, strengthening connections between research and citizenship could lead to more resilient societies, enhanced by the integration of the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts, and interdisciplinary approaches to all R&I.

- ▶ **Research governance:** Responsible self-governance builds public trust, and enables free and fundamental research, essential for providing a base for innovation and address long-term challenges. Meanwhile, EU-level policy tools – co-developed with governments, funders and researchers from all career stages – should be available to support impact-driven collaboration and valorisation.
- ▶ **Security and openness:** It is key to recognise challenges and trade-offs in complementary approaches. Geopolitical challenges, which may reach beyond the scope of R&I policy, must be acknowledged. However, doing so should not limit advocating open international scientific collaboration, such as that exemplified by polar research. EU-level policy tools, guidelines, and appropriate governance – especially with regards to dual-use R&I – could enable the conduct of research collaboration in a responsible, equitable, and secure manner.
- ▶ **Links with other programmes:** Horizon Europe should remain rooted solely within R&I. The benefits of connections with other EU instruments, such as the European Competitiveness or Cohesion Funds, should be defined. Clarity and consensus amongst all stakeholders on the practicalities of these links are necessary, especially regarding the overlap between Horizon Europe and the Competitiveness Fund. Connections should enable seamless funding and the continuation of collaboration, thus driving innovation, translation, and uptake.
- ▶ **Association to Horizon Europe:** Enabling the open participation of Associated Countries is crucial. Horizon Europe must enable their smooth and timely participation, and provide clear and flexible pathways to both full and partial association. Open collaboration with associated partners enhances research quality, allows for tackling international challenges, as well as building and strengthening much-needed international connections in the face of geopolitical challenges.

Dialogue on these important areas between a wide range of key R&I stakeholders, both within and beyond the membership of Science Europe, helps to build a sector-wide consensus. We are committed to open research collaboration, empowered by a research security framework that transcends borders and enables trusted partnerships, converging across all sectors and stages of the research pipeline to engage with the R&I opportunities presented by Horizon Europe, supported by its links with other programmes. While the proposal for a Standalone 10th Framework Programme marks an important milestone, enthusiastic and constructive dialogue that involves all stakeholders must continue.

The participants of the 2025 High Level Workshop on the ERA called for policy recommendations and concrete follow-up actions to ensure that the new Horizon Europe and related European initiatives have impact, foster trusted partnerships, and maintain Europe's leadership in scientific excellence. The key outcomes of the discussions contribute to this dialogue while maintaining high ambitions, leading to the further development of an excellent and free European R&I ecosystem in this critical period.

