Resolution on the upcoming European Research Area (ERA) Act

2025/2951(RSP) - 10/03/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 399 votes to 78, with 69 abstentions, a resolution on the upcoming European Research Area (ERA) Act.

The EU still lacks an integrated European Research Area (ERA) that attracts and retains talent, owing to barriers such as inadequate prioritisation of research and innovation (R&I) investment, with few Member States meeting the 3 % of GDP target, insufficient R&I policy coordination, continued fragmentation, performance disparities, and excessive administrative burdens for researchers and universities. The ERA Act represents a key opportunity to elevate European research by addressing such challenges.

Parliament supported aligning EU and national R&I priorities to ensure complementarity, increase cooperation between universities, research organisations, regions, Member States and industries, create an effective governance framework, make research careers and private investment more attractive.

Members called for a **two-track approach** of voluntary cooperation under the ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027 combined with legislative measures, including the ERA Act and complementary initiatives, to provide ERA with a binding and enforceable framework.

Furthermore, the resolution recommended that the ERA Act be a **regulation**, ensuring direct applicability across Member States, stimulating private investment in R&D, the free circulation of researchers, scientific knowledge and technology, and contribute to reducing single market fragmentation. Members also called for the ERA Act proposal to be accompanied by a separate legislative proposal with a **distinct legal basis** protecting the fundamental freedom of scientific research, including minimum standards for researchers' rights, ethical conduct, integrity and institutional independence, and supported by effective monitoring mechanisms.

Against this background, Parliament also called:

- for the ERA Act to include the Union target of investing at least 3 % of Union GDP in R&D by 2030, complemented by national targets for total R&D expenditure;

- for increased support for public research by strengthening funding for European programmes such as Horizon Europe;

- on Member States to: (i) improve coordination of R&D investment through national roadmaps and targets to ensure complementarity of public and private funding; (ii) increase financial resources for universities and public research organisations; and (iii) undertake reforms to remove barriers to the free circulation of researchers and knowledge, and to enhance cross-border collaboration and innovation. In this regard, it reiterated support for a European Charter for Researchers;

- for strengthened governance of the ERA, and for existing policy and monitoring instruments to be rationalised;

- on the Commission and the Member States to enhance coordination between national and EU R&I initiatives in line with overarching ERA priorities, ensuring synergies across national and Union funding instruments and policies to strengthen Europe's global scientific and technological leadership.

Lastly, Parliament recommended that the ERA Act be aligned with existing and future initiatives, such as the Innovation Act, the Pact for R&I, the Framework Programme and the European Education Area, to ensure mutually reinforcing reforms, innovation uptake, talent mobility and funding.