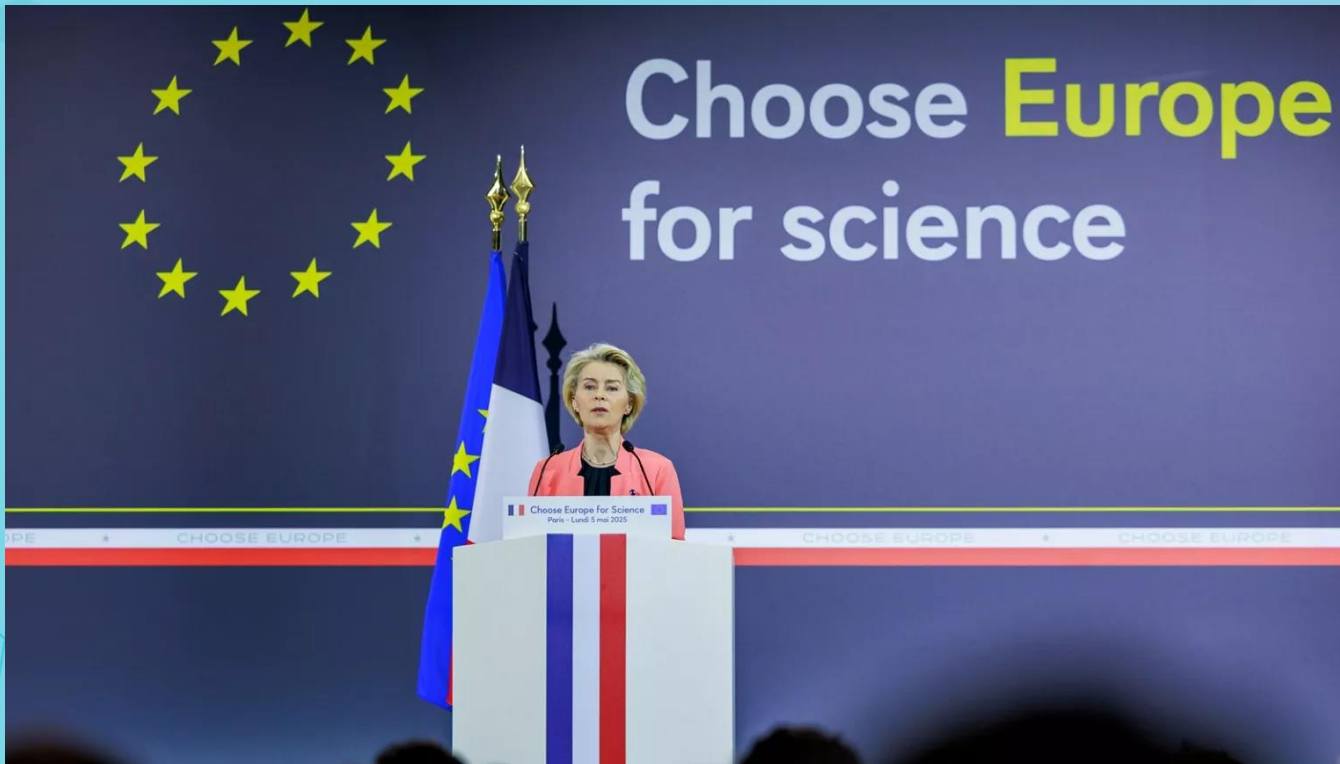


Empowering Research Careers through Competences: A New ERA with ResearchComp

Maria MECENERO

European Commission, DG R&I
*ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research
Careers*



ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027

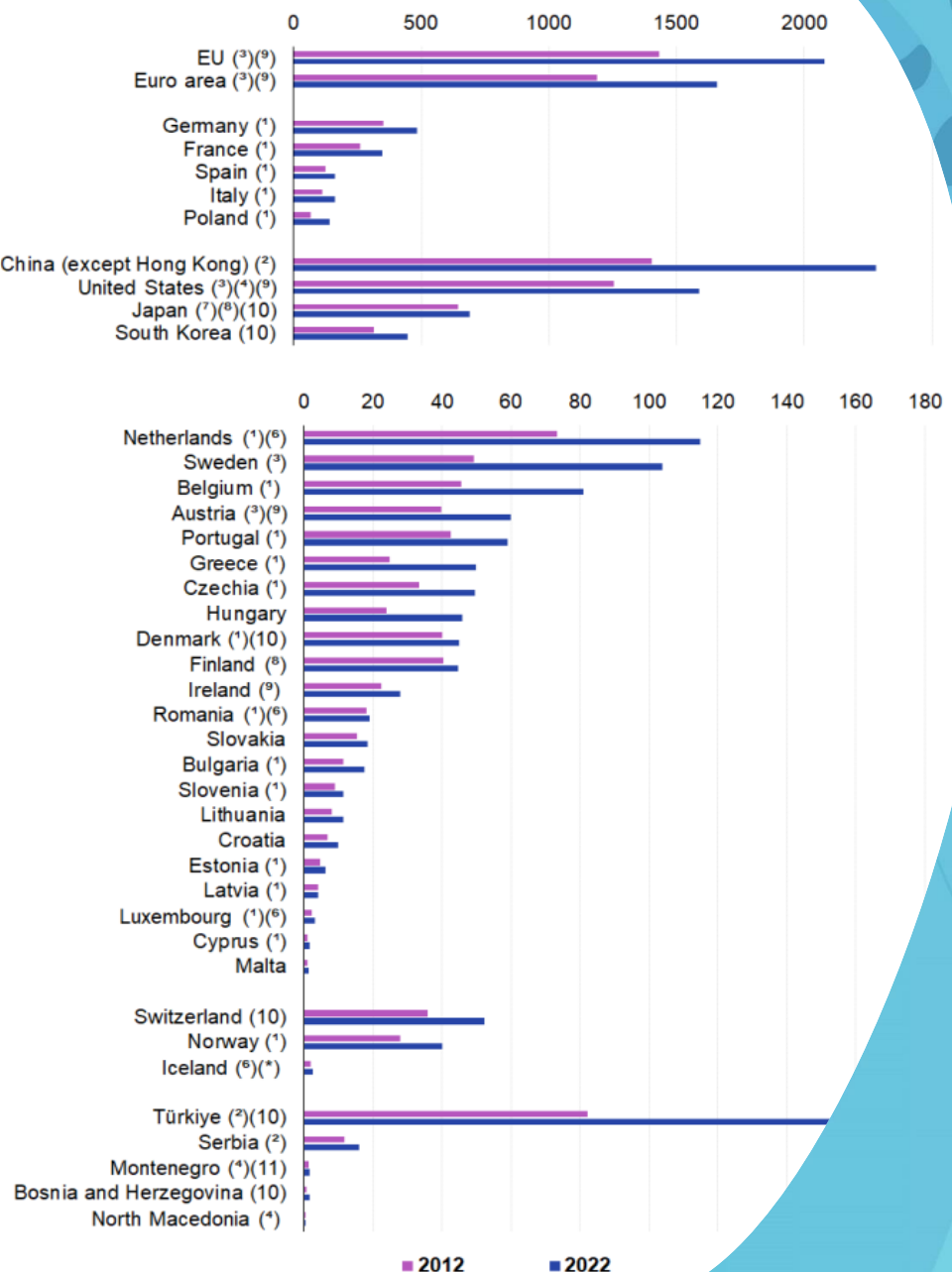
© European Union, 2025

PRESS RELEASE | May 15, 2025 | Brussels | 3 min read

Commission invests €1.25 billion in researchers and invites them to 'Choose Europe for Science'

Background and policy context

Number of researchers, 2012 and 2022
(thousand full-time equivalents)



More researchers than we might think!

2 million researchers

670.000 doctoral candidates
57% business sector
32% academic sector
10% government sector

45% increase since 2012

62% in China
26% in US

1% total EU labour force

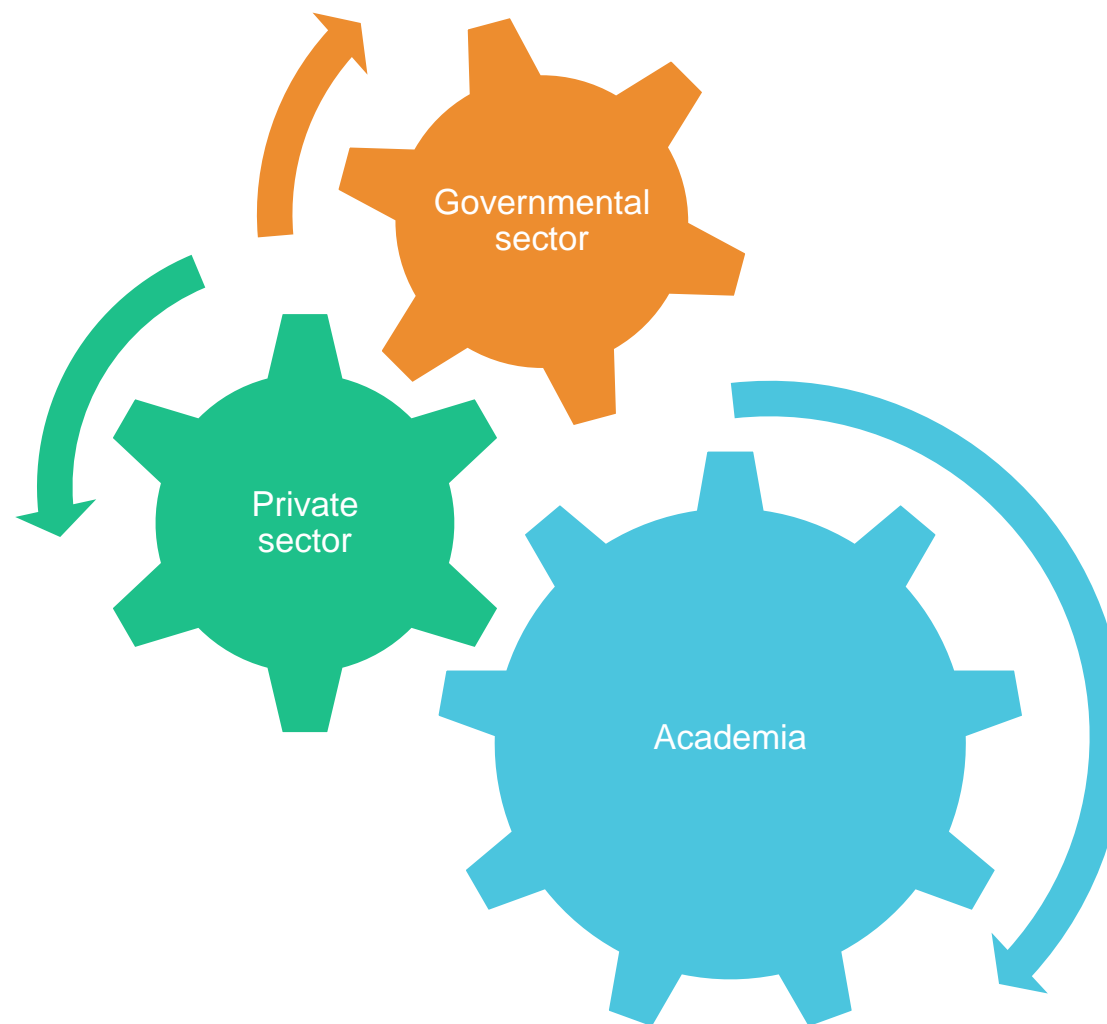
Ranging between 0.4% and 2% in MS

...who face several challenges

- **Precarious conditions** based on project-based temporary contracts.
- **Skills** too often focused on careers within academia and not easily transferable to other sectors.
- **Unawareness about transversal skills** and trainings needed to fill the gap.
- Inability to seize **opportunities in the broader labour market**, and to **create their own business**.
- Poor match with **highly specific skills** requested by the labour market.



A continuous flow of talents



25 years of European Research Area

What is the ERA? – Art. 179 of the TFEU

**A single,
borderless market for
research, innovation
and technology
across the EU...**

**...where
countries come
together and improve
their research policies
and systems...**

**...and where there
is free movement
of researchers,
knowledge and
innovation.**

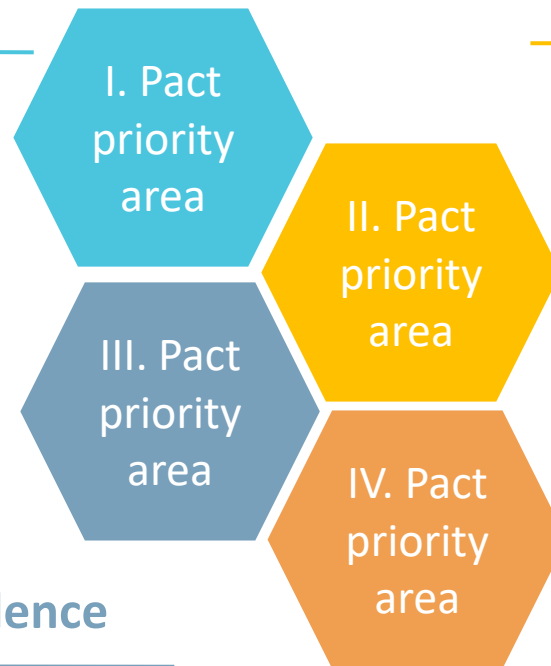
Finalisation of ERA Policy Agenda 2022-24

Deepening an internal market for knowledge

1. Open sharing of knowledge, incl. EOSC
2. Data legislation fit for research
3. Reform of research assessment
4. **Strengthen research careers**
5. Gender equality and inclusiveness
6. Protect academic freedom
7. Better Knowledge Valorisation
8. Research infrastructures
9. Global Approach

Research and innovation excellence

15. Regional and national R&I ecosystems
16. EU-wide access to excellence
17. Strategic capacity of public RPOs



Green and digital transition

10. R&I Missions and Partnerships for ERA
11. Green energy transformation
12. Transition of industrial ecosystems
13. Empower higher education institutions
14. Bring science closer to society

Investments and reforms

18. Coordination national support for ERA, merged with other actions
19. ERA monitoring mechanism
20. Prioritisation and coordination of R&I investments and reforms

ERA Policy Agenda 2025-27: Commission proposal

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

Making research careers more attractive and sustainable

Setting standards

- Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Research Careers (incl. new European Charter for Researchers)

Supporting implementation

- MLE, ResearchComp, ERA Talent Platform one-stop-shop, R&I Careers Observatory, RESAVER...

Promoting cultural change

- Reform of research and research assessment (*COARA.eu; ERA Action 3*)

Coordinating investments

- Pilot in Horizon Europe 2024 supporting organisational change – possible upscaling 2026-2027



ERA Policy Agenda 2025-27

- Guidelines and recommendations
- Communities of practice
- Investment pathways

THE EUROPEAN COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHERS

DOING RESEARCH



- Have disciplinary expertise
- Perform scientific research
- Conduct interdisciplinary research
- Write research documents
- Apply research ethics and integrity principles

MANAGING RESEARCH TOOLS



- Manage research data
- Promote citizen science
- Manage intellectual property rights
- Operate open source software

WORKING WITH OTHERS



- Interact professionally
- Develop networks
- Work in teams
- Ensure wellbeing at work
- Build mentor-mentee relationships
- Promote inclusion & diversity

MANAGING RESEARCH



- Mobilise resources
- Manage projects
- Negotiate
- Evaluate research
- Promote open access publications

MAKING AN IMPACT



- Participate in the publication process
- Disseminate results to the research community
- Teach in academic or vocational contexts
- Communicate to the broad public
- Increase impact of science on policy & society
- Promote open innovation
- Promote the transfer of knowledge

SELF MANAGEMENT



- Manage personal professional development
- Show entrepreneurial spirit
- Plan self-organisation
- Cope with pressure

COGNITIVE ABILITIES



- Abstract thinking
- Critical thinking
- Analytical thinking
- Strategic thinking
- Systemic thinking
- Problem solving
- Creativity

RESEARCH
COMP

ResearchComp –
what is it and why
do we need it?



European
Commission

Two steps for two interconnected activities

1. Update of the European Classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO) – January 2022
2. Development and launch of ResearchComp (website launched July 2023)



The European Classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations

ESCO works as a dictionary, **describing, identifying and classifying** professional occupations, skills, and qualifications relevant for the EU labour market and education and training.





ESCO and a European Competence Framework for Researchers - Methodology

A literature review of existing competence profiles and career structures for researchers

Two online surveys, one among researchers from the academic and private sector, and one among umbrella organisations

Case studies

Analysis of the full 2020 Euraxess database on the requested skills/competences by employers in different sectors and diverse career stages

Interviews with stakeholders

A focus group

A multi-stakeholder validation meeting

ResearchComp

Policy brief – Knowledge Ecosystems study



<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8d536780-3025-11ed-975d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-284494338>

ResearchComp: the European Competence Framework for Researchers

- 7 Competence Areas
- 38 Competences
- All competences are equally important & interrelated
- Competences can be acquired via dedicated training, on-the-job-training, peer-to-peer learning, coaching and mentoring
- Each stakeholder can use the Framework as a starting point to address its own needs
- Researchers encouraged to develop competences in all 7 areas, but should not acquire the same or the highest level of proficiency for all competences



ResearchComp - Proficiency levels

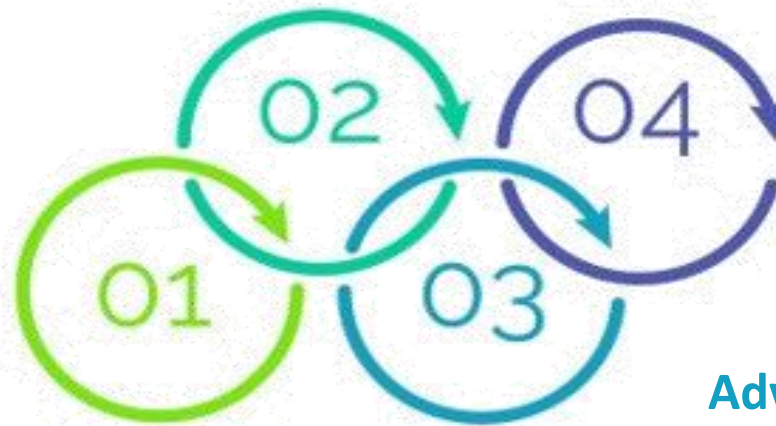
4 proficiency levels

Intermediate

Building independence

Expert

Driving transformation,
innovation and growth



Foundational

Developing expertise
with guidance

Advanced

Taking responsibility
and guiding others

ResearchComp – Overall structure

7 Competence Areas

38 competences* with descriptors

4 proficiency levels for each competence

Learning outcomes for each proficiency level of each competence

*they will be soon 39, with the addition of a
competence on Artificial Intelligence

Practical implementation of ResearchComp

Charles University, Prague (CZ)

ResearchComp is an **added value**:

For the university

- Training **workshops for postdocs and PhD candidates** based on ResearchComp.
- Using ResearchComp to identify **common topics for mentor-mentee** in Mentoring Programme for postdocs.
- Incorporating ResearchComp into the **career development plan templates for postdocs**.

For students

- **Connecting with other students and researchers** across Europe using the same 'language'.

Other relevant examples

Kiel University

Implementing ResearchComp as the **strategic framework** for their continuing professional development strategy for researchers

Talent ecosystem's projects

Projects using ResearchComp as a basis to develop **activities and resources to support early-career researchers**

RESKILLSPAN

Using ResearchComp as starting point to support researchers, **providing trainings and fostering intersectoral mobility**

ResearchComp's Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)



Why a Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)?

- Provide researchers with a **user-friendly tool** to fully exploit ResearchComp's potential.
- **Identify strenghts** and **gaps**, or areas where **trainings** might be necessary.
- Provide **understandable** and **clear results** that summarise their proficiency level for some or all competences, to use as a starting point for **trainings** or **upskilling processes**.
- To widen transversal and coherent use of ResearchComp.

The screenshot displays the ResearchComp Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) interface, which is organized into a grid of seven competency areas. Each area includes a title, a list of skills with checkmarks, and a 'Take questionnaire' button. The first area, 'Cognitive Abilities', also shows a score of 57.14% at an Advanced Level and includes 'Retake' and 'View result' buttons.

Competency Area	Skills	Buttons
Cognitive Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Think critically and creatively.✓ Solve complex problems.✓ Connect ideas across fields.	Retake, View result, Take questionnaire
Making an Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Mobilize resources.✓ Manage projects and risks.✓ Share research openly.	Take questionnaire
Managing Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Share research widely.✓ Influence policy and society.✓ Turn knowledge into innovation.	Take questionnaire
Working with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Collaborate effectively.✓ Mentor and support peers.✓ Promote diversity.	Take questionnaire
Doing research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Deepen your expertise.✓ Advance knowledge responsibly.✓ Apply ethics and privacy rules.	Take questionnaire
Managing research tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Organize and reuse data.✓ Engage citizens in research.✓ Protect research outputs.	Take questionnaire
Self-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Manage your career growth.✓ Work sustainably.✓ Stay resilient under pressure.	Take questionnaire

The SAT in practice

- **Digital SAT** enabling researchers to assess their proficiency level in some or all 38 competences, coherently with the learning outcomes described in ResearchComp.
- **Questionnaire with multiple-choice questions** according to the 7 competence areas and the 4 proficiency levels.
- **Understandable results** summarising the user's proficiency level for the assessed competence area, which can be downloaded.
- **Results' analysis:** strenghts and gaps, competence breakdown and spider diagram.

Your results for the competence area

Cognitive Abilities

Results summary

Your overall score is
57.14%

Your competency level is
Advanced

Advanced Level

You are beginning to develop cognitive abilities in research and connect research ideas, but you still mostly rely on known methods.

Your strengths

- ✓ Understanding key concepts in your field
- ✓ Basic but overarching awareness of established approaches

To improve

- 💡 Reflect on broader implications of own research
- 💡 Practice connecting cross-disciplinary concepts

Competence breakdown

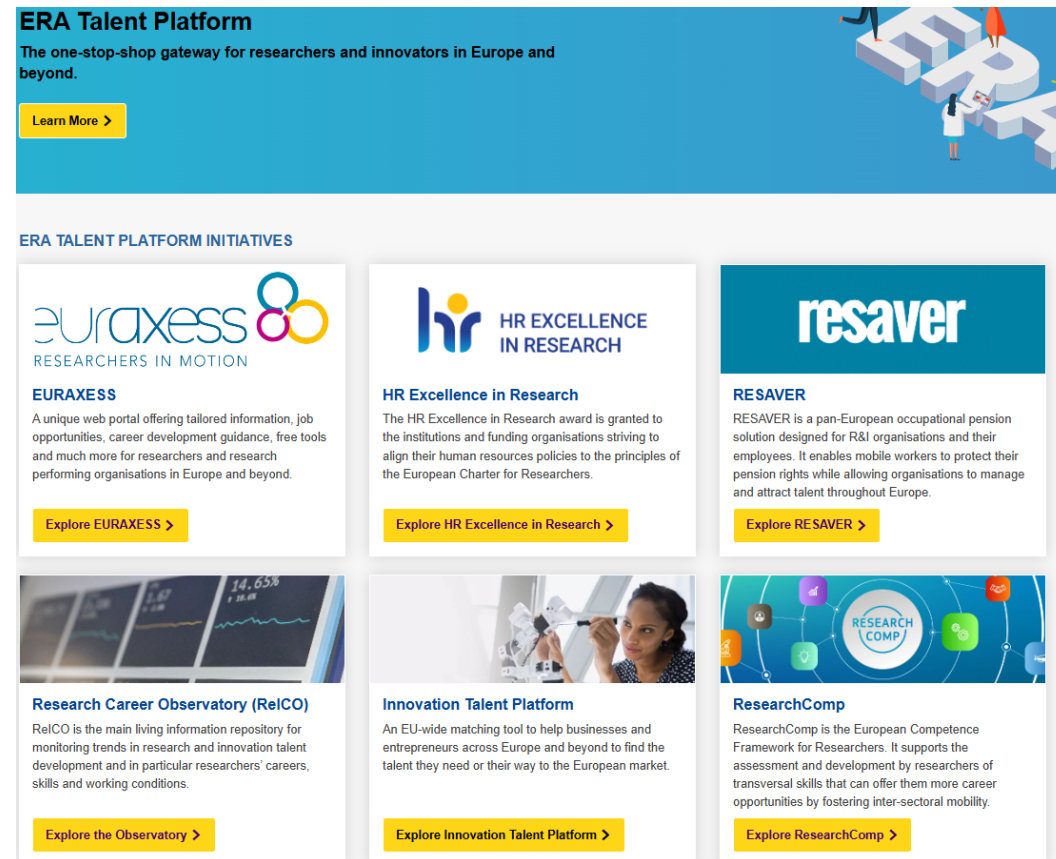
Abstract thinking

You assimilate concepts from your discipline and establish relationships with your knowledge.



Promoting ResearchComp and the SAT


- **Update of existing tools** (webpage, ERA Talent Platform, interactive pdf)
- **Communication strategy** targeting our current and potential users (researcher, Higher Education Institutions, etc.) on relevant channels (social media, newsletters, existing networks, events)
- **Promotional video ‘tutorial’** on how to use the self-assessment tool
- **Synergies with universities and EU-funded projects** using ResearchComp



ERA Talent Platform
The one-stop-shop gateway for researchers and innovators in Europe and beyond.

[Learn More >](#)


ERA TALENT PLATFORM INITIATIVES



EURAXESS
RESEARCHERS IN MOTION

A unique web portal offering tailored information, job opportunities, career development guidance, free tools and much more for researchers and research performing organisations in Europe and beyond.


[Explore EURAXESS >](#)



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

The HR Excellence in Research award is granted to the institutions and funding organisations striving to align their human resources policies to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.


[Explore HR Excellence in Research >](#)



RESAVER

RESAVER is a pan-European occupational pension solution designed for R&I organisations and their employees. It enables mobile workers to protect their pension rights while allowing organisations to manage and attract talent throughout Europe.


[Explore RESAVER >](#)



Research Career Observatory (ReICO)

ReICO is the main living information repository for monitoring trends in research and innovation talent development and in particular researchers' careers, skills and working conditions.


[Explore the Observatory >](#)



Innovation Talent Platform

An EU-wide matching tool to help businesses and entrepreneurs across Europe and beyond to find the talent they need or their way to the European market.

[Explore Innovation Talent Platform >](#)



ResearchComp

ResearchComp is the European Competence Framework for Researchers. It supports the assessment and development by researchers of transversal skills that can offer them more career opportunities by fostering inter-sectoral mobility.

[Explore ResearchComp >](#)

Interesting news and upcoming events



European
Commission

RMComp: The European Competence Framework for Research Managers

- **7 Competence Areas** (Cognitive Abilities/Personal Attributes, Technical Proficiency, Research Project Oversight, Stakeholder Engagement, Line Management and Talent Development, Communication, Subject Matter Expertise/Specialised Knowledge)
- **50 Competences**
- **800 learning outcomes** along **4 proficiency levels** (foundational, intermediate, advanced, expert)
- It is not envisaged that Research Managers acquire the highest level of proficiency or have the same proficiency across all the 7 competency areas.



Keeping up with research careers



Choose Europe

Advance your research career in the
EU



RESEARCHERS IN MOTION

EURAXESS

A unique web portal offering tailored information, job opportunities, career development guidance, free tools and much more for researchers and research performing organisations in Europe and beyond.

[Explore EURAXESS >](#)

& more to come soon!



Mutual Learning Exercise on More Attractive and Sustainable Research Careers and Better-balanced Talent Circulation

Final report

Some questions for you:



- Did you know about ResearchComp before today? If yes, **have you used it?**
- What do you think are the **most important research competences** in the private sector/ industry? Do you think they are **valued** by employers?
- How do you think HEIs, research centres, etc. could provide researchers **with more transversal skills?**
- Do you think the upcoming **self-assessment tool** will be useful to better understand researchers' proficiency level? Do you agree that **unawareness** of own competences is an issue within the researchers' community?
- In your opinion, what should be our next steps?

THANK YOU!



For more info:

- The new European Research Area:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/era_en
- ERA Policy Agenda(s):
https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/european-research-area-policy-agenda-2022-2024_en and <https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/documents/proposal-council-recommendation-european-research-area-policy-agenda-2025-2027>
- Policy brief on competences:
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8d536780-3025-11ed-975d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
- ResearchComp:
https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/jobs-research/researchcomp-european-competence-framework-researchers_en
- Mutual Learning Exercise for more attractive and sustainable research careers: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/612dc9f7-3528-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

Contact: maria.mecenero@ec.europa.eu



European
Commission