

Joint Statement on the EU Council conclusions on Research Assessment and the Implementation of Open Science

Eurodoc, MCAA, YAE, ICoRSA and GYA welcome the recent [EU Council conclusions on research assessment, the implementation of Open Science, and multilingualism](#). The conclusions address several of [our earlier concerns](#) with the implementation of Open Science and Plan S, as well as those shortcomings identified in our recent [survey on open science](#). Moreover, the conclusions draw clear connections to related issues in career development and training of researchers, as well as gender, biases, and other inequalities. We commend the Council for this vision, express our support to the cause, and offer our views on the implementation.

I. Reforming Research Assessment

- (1) We agree that appropriate assessment practices should shape **good research culture** (see [The Royal Society](#)) and foster reliable and high-quality science, represented by a wide variety of research outcomes, early knowledge sharing, and collaboration, rather than focusing on narrow quantitative indicators. It is important to distinguish between the assessment of individuals, teams, institutions, and the research itself to address quality, openness, performance, and impact as well as to overcome biases against researchers at the beginning of their careers. We further highlight the importance of a proper balance between quantitative and qualitative evaluation, while valuing all forms of research outputs, processes, and activities according to their relevance for the assessment purpose, rather than focusing only on publications.
- (2) We welcome the recently established [European initiative](#) towards a **reform of the research assessment system**. Practices should be inclusive and reflect the diversity of national specificities and disciplines' characteristics, with researchers of all career stages taking an active part. We emphasise the role of Member States and all stakeholders to advance the assessment reform through appropriate training, incentives, and rewards. Analysing barriers, proposing countermeasures and providing supporting framework conditions will be key to achieving knowledge exchange, independence, openness, reproducibility and transparency. We welcome the call for European Universities alliances to act as a testbed for assessment pilots and highlight other initiatives aiming at similar pilots including the [Coalition of the willing](#) and the [UK's Researcher Development Framework](#). All of these pilots should specifically include rewards in researchers' careers for open science and monitor the outcomes, e.g. for career progression, newly introduced biases, or negative impact particularly on researchers in precarious conditions, such as many early-career researchers. Moreover, we recommend establishing mandatory training on open science for researchers, staff, and committee members within the pilot actions.
- (3) We agree that **essential principles** need to be observed in the reform of research assessment systems, namely autonomy and academic freedom, research integrity and responsible use of quantitative and qualitative indicators, gender equality,

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transparency, diversity of national, disciplinary and individual contexts, including the different stages and diverse pathways of research careers.

- (4) We agree that assessment is a key component that should be included in the development of the **European Framework for Research Careers**, the revision of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers, as well as the future establishment of the ERA Talent Platform. Since assessment plays a central role in shaping a researcher's career, early-career researchers should also receive training on how to conduct research that can be effectively assessed and should develop the necessary skills to assess the research of others at a proper stage of their careers.

II. European capacities for publishing

- (5) We agree with and support the call for **transparency and diversity** of the shared research knowledge system with strategies for mitigating the inflation of publication expenditures, while ensuring fair and equal conditions. We further support the call to improve the regulatory framework for unimpeded access to and reuse of publicly-funded research outputs with minimal administrative burden.
- (6) We agree with the call for **common European approaches** and shared principles to solve the issues of knowledge development, sovereignty and proper use of public funds. These common approaches will require further capacities and proper coordination between all stakeholders and disciplines. We support the call for Member States and institutions to join existing European initiatives and to take concrete measures against insufficiently transparent contractual arrangements, which have shown particularly detrimental for researchers at the beginning of their scientific careers.
- (7) We agree that open science can provide solutions to improve research integrity, reduce the reproducibility crisis, and counter gender-based and other [biases](#). For this, however, more **coherent frameworks, guidelines, and training** are required for researchers at all career levels, but particularly for early-career researchers.

Signed by [Oleksandr Berezko](#) [President European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers ([Eurodoc](#))], [Fernanda Bajanca](#) [Chair Marie Curie Alumni Association ([MCAA](#))], [Gemma Modinos](#) [Chair Young Academy of Europe ([YAE](#))], [Gordon Dalton](#) [Chair International Consortium of Research Staff Associations ([ICoRSA](#))], [Priscilla Mante](#) and [Prosper Ngabonziza](#) [Co-chairs of Global Young Academy ([GYA](#))] on 09 September 2022.