



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

## Response to the EC Consultation on the Roadmap towards ERA Communication

July 2020

Alliance4Life welcomes the European Commission (EC) initiative that opened a [public consultation](#) on the new European Research Area (ERA) paradigm with the aim to respond to new global challenges.

In line with its mission to contribute to closing the divide in European health research and innovation (R&I), the Alliance4Life fully shares the values of the ERA and contributes to its implementation in a constructive way. As an initiative of ten leading life science institutions from nine EU Member States located in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the alliance is committed to stimulating institutional change and having a say in shaping research policy at institutional, national, and European levels.

Apart from the topics laid down in the Roadmap, Alliance4Life highlights the following three priorities formulated as recommendations to be addressed in the expected ERA communication:

### 1. Excellent science as a cornerstone of the ERA

Alliance4Life considers the primary focus on excellence in research to be a key for the future ERA paradigm. This means research independence from political interventions and unconscious biases, and full support of talents, bold research ideas, and a bottom-up approach. Therefore, Alliance4Life proposes to strengthen the support of research schemes that foster excellence, such as European Research Council (ERC) or Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) schemes. In the Central and Eastern European Member States, outcomes of these schemes also provide an important and independent benchmark, not only for individual, but also institutional performance in terms of top talent attraction, support, and retention. Therefore, Alliance4Life recommends to expand these schemes, which are necessary for enabling and promoting leadership in scientific research.



## 2. Concertation of R&I capacities for an effective ERA

As a result of project schemes such as European Structural and Investment Funds and Horizon 2020 Teaming projects, R&I remains shattered as new research institutes are established along the existing entities. Institutional financing is often diluted at national levels. Concertation of capacities is needed in the entire ERA, in order to achieve the sustainability of the recent investments in R&I for the foreseeable future. Alliance4Life sees the necessity to recognise excellent research capacities in each country of the EU and support the quality. This concertation of capacities is necessary not only at national levels, but also across borders and trans-nationally.

## 3. Research Infrastructures as a driving force of ERA

While being driven by technological developments and, at the same time, being the source of technological innovation, Research Infrastructures are vital for the future ERA that should be based on the values of complementarity and collaboration. Both the European Commission and national governments should consider strengthening support of the existing institutions that demonstrate their potential. This recommendation concerns the financing of Research Infrastructures, including funding their technology driven upgrades from national sources and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The recognition of eligibility of the ESIF for this purpose would mean an important asset for advancement of the ERA.

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**Alliance4Life is a bottom-up initiative of ten leading life science institutions from nine countries of Central and Eastern Europe that aim at closing the divide in European health research and innovation. Members of the alliance are progressive research institutions that have the necessary strength to stimulate institutional change.**

**For more information on the recommendations from Alliance4Life, see the [WHITE PAPER](#) that highlights key factors for speeding up the process of closing the R&I divide in Europe.**