

YERUN briefing on Research Security at EU level

Enhancing Research Security in the context of the European Economic Security Strategy

Balancing risks and benefits of international collaboration

Although open international collaboration is at the heart of EU research, growing tensions and increasing geopolitical relevance of R&I, concerns are increasing over the risks that academics may be confronted with when cooperating internationally. This briefing and related webinar focuses on research security, entailing:

- **Undesirable transfer of technology:** sensitive technology channelled to military purposes.
- **Foreign interference:** HE improperly influenced to diffuse or influence specific narratives.
- **Ethical or integrity violations:** technologies used to undermine fundamental values.

Economic Security Strategy, published by the European Commission in July 2023, is based on pillars: promoting, protecting, partnering. R&I is highly relevant in all three. The Commission has followed up with a recently published (Jan 2024) White paper bringing into discussion EU support for dual-use technologies and whether research in these fields should continue to be separated under civil and defence applications and therefore channelled through different funding mechanisms or whether more synergies could be enabled.

Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on Research Security was adopted on 24 January, following a call for evidence published in December 2023, to which YERUN responded.

YERUN recommendations detailed in our **response to the call for evidence** and summarised below were to a great extent addressed by the Commission proposed Council Recommendation:

- **Enhance understanding of research security** to inform effective policy-making, promoting scientific research on knowledge safety for better risk assessment and mitigation while maintaining open collaboration.
- **Support institutional preparedness and action** with guidance, tools and funding to develop and implement knowledge security policies, including training and awareness-raising, empowering research management offices to take a proactive approach.
- **Foster two-way communication and collaboration** in developing proportional and explainable knowledge safety measures, appointing responsible staff and promoting dialogue between institutions and national authorities.
- **Coordinate research security efforts at European level** through peer learning, stakeholder coordination, and the creation of communities of practice to ensure comparable approaches across Member States and prevent a waterbed effect.
- **Caution against closed-door hiring policies** for researchers from specific countries to maintain Europe's competitiveness in research and innovation.
- Finally, monitoring of Member States' adoption of guiding principles should **not burden institutions administratively**, and differential security strategies should **not lead to funding discrimination** within EU research programmes.

TIMELINE

- Jun 2023, initiative on Research Security part of [EU Economic Security Strategy](#).
- Dec 2023, targeted EC consultation meeting on research security with stakeholders ([slides](#)).
- Dec 2023, EC opened [Call for evidence on Boosting RS in the EU](#) was open until 3 Jan 2024.
- Jan, 2024, [YERUN responded](#) to the Call for evidence.
- Jan, 2024, EC published the [Proposal for a Council Recommendation](#) on enhancing research security and the [White paper R&D on dual-use technologies](#).
- Upcoming, 16 Feb, **YERUN webinar** for members on research security with EC speakers.
- Upcoming, 7 May, deadline to respond to [consultation](#) on dual-use support options.
- Upcoming, 23 May, expected adoption of Council Recommendation on Research Security.