



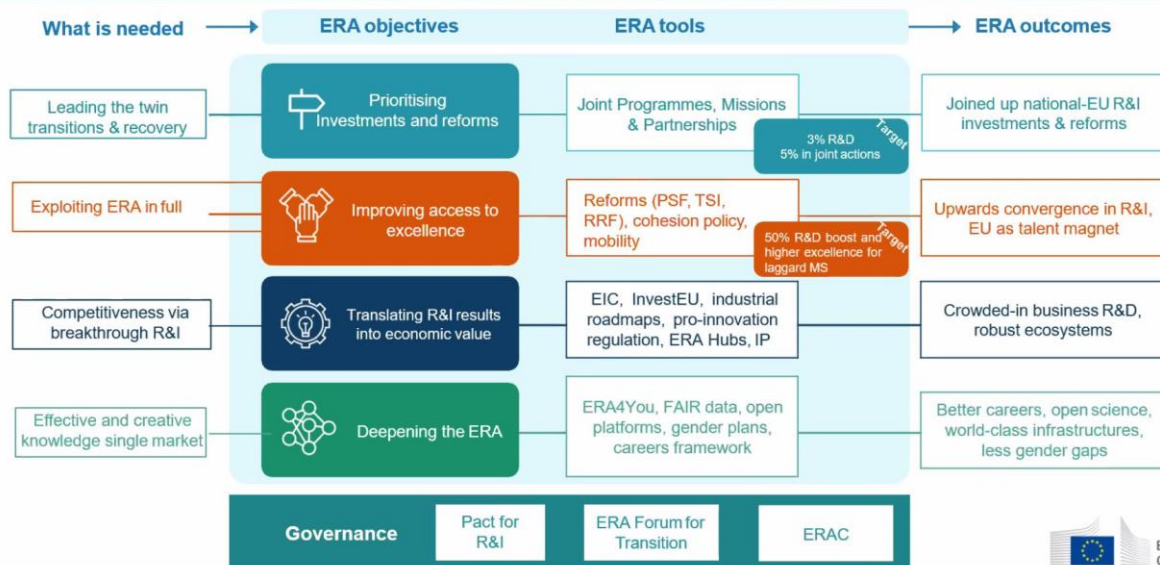
ENRF Briefing Note

The Future of Research and Innovation Funds in the EU

The ENRF joined a virtual conference organised by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology ([NTNU](#)) in cooperation with the Norwegian Contact Office for Research, Innovation and Education ([NORCORE](#)) on EU funds for research and innovation. This conference, titled “One Hour with Europe”, aims to keep interested researchers up to date on what is happening in the EU institutions, and about the latest novelties on Funding. This event highlights the future opportunities that the various EU initiatives hold for researchers – including nursing researchers.

The key speaker of the session was Anna Panagopoulou, Director of Common Support Centre at DG Research and Innovation ([European Commission](#)). She explained that the European Commission is working on the European Research Area ([ERA](#)). It has successfully established itself as a new “Single Market” for Research and Innovation. It has been operating for already 20 years. For the European Commission, there is a need to translate R&I results into the economy and to support the transition and the recovery. Also, in terms of gender equality, as progress there is slow – only 24% of top positions in the higher education sector are occupied by women. In addition, citizens and society should be better involved in research, too.

A stronger ERA for the future



The European Commission is working on a stronger ERA for the future in which funding comes from different sources to foster research on key areas and on key priorities. Research and innovation results should be brought closer to the citizens, the businesses and the companies who need it. To fill in this gap, it is also needed to bring closer the academia and the industry. The speaker then introduced the upcoming [Horizon Europe](#) research and innovation programme – it has three pillars: 1) Excellent Science, 2) Global Challenges and European industrial Competitiveness (including health), and 3) Innovative Europe. Finally, during 2021, the European Commission will organise meetings with stakeholders (and a targeted consultation) to collect their input on the transformation of the higher education area (the universities). They will discuss what will be the future of high-level education institutions in Europe.

In addition to all this information, there is the upcoming [EU4Health Programme](#), which will run from 2021 to 2027.

The EU4Health programme is EU's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which have had a huge impact on the working condition of frontline nurses and other healthcare professionals. Through this programme, the EU plans to invest €9.4 billion in the shape of funding to EU countries, health organisations and NGOs. Funding will be open for applications in 2021.



The EU4Health programme is set to:

- boost EU's preparedness for major cross border health threats by creating 1) reserves of medical supplies for crises, 2) a reserve of healthcare staff and experts that can be mobilised to respond to crises across the EU, and 3) increased surveillance of health threats
- strengthen health systems so that they can face epidemics as well as long-term challenges by stimulating 1) disease prevention and health promotion in an ageing population, 2) digital transformation of health systems, and 3) access to health care for vulnerable groups
- make medicines and medical devices available and affordable, advocate the prudent and efficient use of antimicrobials as well as promote medical and pharmaceutical innovation and greener manufacturing.

Other EU funding programmes that will provide additional investments in the health sector to complement EU4Health are the following:

- European Social Fund Plus ([ESF+](#)) to support vulnerable groups in accessing healthcare
- [European Regional and Development Fund](#) to improve regional health infrastructure
- Union Civil Protection Mechanism/[rescEU](#) to create stockpiles for emergency medical supplies
- [Digital Europe](#) and Connecting Europe Facility for creating the digital infrastructure needed for digital health tools

To conclude, it is key that nursing researchers benefit from all these upcoming opportunities to 1) advance their research and deploy it, both for the nursing frontline and for the European citizens; and 2) to transform their Universities, with the support of EU funds, into more targeted organisations that can fill the gap of research outcomes implementation and liaise closer with the health industry.

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