



Advancing Nursing Research

ENRF Newsletter December 2020



Dear ENRF colleagues and Friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to hit Europe, with two waves in which infections have surged already. The virus is taking a toll on every aspect of our lives, but above all, it is taking a toll on the frontline nursing profession, whose working conditions are threatened and where colleagues are exposed to the risk of infection.

Researchers continue to contribute to the generation of new knowledge even under these most difficult conditions, often in collaboration with multidisciplinary teams. Nurse researchers continue to support our healthcare systems with new and innovative methods of organising and giving care, optimising clinical pathways and outcomes and seeking new ways to protect and enhance the working conditions of frontline nurses.

Many countries have commissioned Covid specific programmes of research. Healthcare systems across Europe and national governments continue to benefit from nursing input on how to best tackle the pandemic, both at the hospital and at long-term care settings. That is why we are also embarking on conversations with the Commission to try and influence their priorities and inform them of what nursing can offer. There are many concerns on how this crisis will impact citizens and patients and indeed our workforce in the long run. Nevertheless, I remain confident that as a research community will can contribute to the pool of knowledge, solutions and interventions that will help us draw out lessons and build back better for preparedness in the future.

We continue to monitor EU funds for research and disseminate findings to our community. Wishing you all the opportunity to have a safe seasonal celebration and rest and recharge for what we hope, with the vaccine on the horizon, will be a better 2021.

Professor Dame Anne Marie Rafferty
ENRF President

ENRF News

Publication of Several New Briefing Notes

The ENRF has taken the opportunity of these last months to publish a series of new Briefing Notes (BN), each on a different topic informing nurse researchers on ongoing developments at the EU level, including funding, for their information and for taking actions if relevant.

The BN on [“Co-creation & Co-design with the end-users! Real time data for the European Health Data Space”](#) reflects the Commission dialogue on the real world, real-time data for the anticipated European Health Data Space, a revitalised European Research Area, as well as other key digital policies such as the European approach to AI and data strategy. The BN on [“Bridging the Implementation Gap Between Nursing Research, the General Data Protection Regulation, and Artificial Intelligence”](#) highlights the great prospects that GDPR and AI have in the field of healthcare. When using patient’s data, the focus is on protecting that data with the view to protect the individual right and freedom of those who first produced it.

The ENRF informed the nursing research community about the [“European Research & Innovation Days 2020”](#), and event organised by the European Commission (22-24 September), insights which could be beneficial for the European nurse researchers in their work and/or disseminating research programmes to which they could adhere. Furthermore, the ENRF published a BN on [“National Contact Points in Horizon Europe”](#) which main aim is to provide guidance, practical information, and assistance on all aspects of participation in framework programmes. NCPs are also present in many non-EU and non-associated countries ("third countries"). Their main role is to provide support to all the parties interested in applying for EU projects. Finally, the BN on [“The Future of Research and Innovation Funds in the EU”](#) reflects the discussion of the 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”, aimed to keep interested researchers up to date on what is happening in the EU institutions, and about the latest novelties on Funding. This event highlighted the future opportunities that the various EU initiatives hold for researchers – including nursing researchers.

EU News

Research and innovation in the next EU budget

The European Commission is working on a new proposal for [its 2021-2027 multiannual budget](#), which is to be paired with a recovery plan aimed at helping the EU come out of the looming recession set in motion by the coronavirus pandemic.

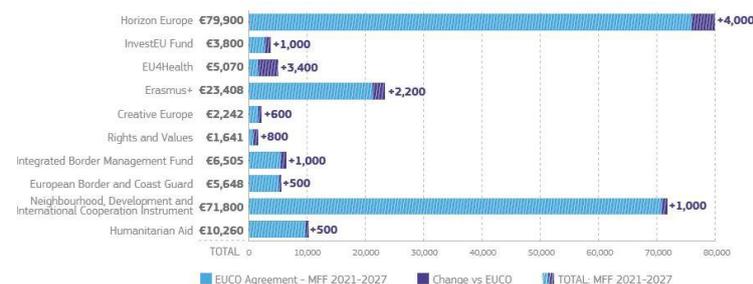
On 27 November 2020, EU research ministers had a first meeting to discuss the plans for reviving the [European Research Area \(ERA\)](#) and the ongoing [Horizon Europe](#) negotiations. This was a first meeting online, that will shape the amount and form of upcoming EU funds dedicated to research.

Horizon Results Platform Available

Nurse researchers from across Europe can now access the new European Commission’s [“Horizon Results Platform”](#) – a one-stop website with the results of all the EU-funded projects and the contact details of their creators. This platform, which is free and easy to use, has a wide range of flags and attention-grabbing features to attract the audiences. An explanatory video is available [here](#).

European Commission proposes new rules for easier data sharing

Within the long-term budget 2021-2027, **ten programmes received top-ups** compared to the compromise agreement from 21 July 2020.



All amounts in EUR billion. Source: European Commission.

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The European Commission has announced its proposal for [new data governance rules](#), which seek to facilitate data sharing in the EU – including health data. The upcoming [Data Governance Act](#) is expected to serve as a basis for future open data spaces, pools of voluntarily shared that research organisations may be able to access across EU countries under similar conditions. *“The data governance act is an important milestone to boost the data-driven economy in Europe”,* said EU Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager. *“It is about creating the right conditions, so that if people want to share data, they can do so in a trustful way.”*

EU promises new guidelines against foreign spying in universities and labs

The European Commission is going to publish new guidelines in 2021 on foreign interference targeting EU universities and higher education institutions. This move is part of a broader strategy that aims at strengthening and simplifying patent protection, while preventing foreign countries from wrongfully acquiring European research and innovation assets.

Achieving a European Education Area by 2025 and resetting education and training for the digital age

The European Commission adopted two initiatives that will strengthen the contribution of education and training to the EU's recovery from the coronavirus crisis and help build a green and digital Europe. Setting out a vision of the [European Education Area](#) to be achieved by 2025, the Commission proposes new initiatives, more investment and stronger cooperation of Member States to help all Europeans, of all ages, benefit from the EU's rich education and training offer. The Commission also adopted a new [Digital Education Action Plan](#), reflecting lessons learned from the coronavirus crisis, and devising a plan for a high-performing digital education ecosystem with enhanced digital competences for the digital transformation. More information is available [here](#).

Speech by Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager on a New Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 and a New European Research Area

Last 30 September the Vice-President Margrethe Vestager gave a speech on the need to digitalise Europe's educational systems and presented the new Digital Education Action Plan, as well as the New European Research Area. She said that: *“The key lesson of the COVID-19 crisis is that digital education should no longer be viewed as an island of its own but considered an integral part of all education and training. Those words are not mine. They come from a teacher who shared feedback during our stakeholder consultation. I think it's a very good way of stating an essential point: digital education is now an integral part of our future. It is a matter of utmost importance. This is why we have suggested that 20% of the Recovery and Resilience Facility is invested in digital transformation. And two of the seven flagships we have prioritised for the recovery are reskilling and upskilling of people, and the modernisation of public services including education. So today, the Digital Education Action Plan proposes to take this journey forward. It is designed to support Member States, because most of the competence in this field lies with them [...]”.*

New EU open peer review system

The European Commission's scientific publishing service has launched a new venue for EU research grantees to publish free-to-read results. The [Open Research Europe platform](#) promises beneficiaries an “easy, high quality peer-reviewed” system at “no cost to them”. However, there is a certain level of controversy on this as authors, not editors, choose what they wish to publish. This upgrade has been received with a certain level of asceticism by some. And there are doubts about the open review method and moving to a system that excludes non-EU grant winners.

23 new research projects to receive €128 million in EU funding

The European Commission will support 23 new research projects with €128 million in response to the continuing coronavirus pandemic. The funding under [Horizon 2020](#), the EU's research and innovation programme, is part of the Commission's €1.4 billion pledge to the [Coronavirus Global Response initiative](#), launched by President Ursula von der Leyen in May 2020. The 23 projects shortlisted for funding involve 347 research teams from 40 countries, including 34 participants from 16 countries outside of the EU. The funding will enable researchers to address the pandemic and its consequences by strengthening the industrial capacity to manufacture and deploy readily available solutions, develop medical technologies and digital tools, improve understanding of behavioural and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, and to learn from large groups of patients (cohorts) across Europe. More information is available [here](#).

EU grants €314 million to innovative companies to combat the coronavirus and support recovery

The Commission announced that it has awarded nearly €166 million, via the [European Innovation Council](#) (EIC) Accelerator Pilot, to 36 companies set to combat the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, over €148 million will be granted to another 36 companies set to contribute to the recovery plan for Europe, bringing the total investment from Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation programme, to €314 million in this round. More information is available [here](#).

Interesting Reading

European Innovation Scoreboard 2020: EU's innovation is increasing

The Commission released last June the [European Innovation Scoreboard 2020](#), which shows that Europe's innovation performance continues to improve across the EU, surpassing for the second year the United States. However, more needs to be done to catch up with global innovation leaders like South Korea, Australia and Japan. The results, which cover data from 2019, highlight the opportunities to better coordinate EU innovation policies, help Europe improve its global competitiveness and strengthen the key role innovation plays in overcoming the coronavirus pandemic.

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *“The EU is leading the way out of the coronavirus crisis by intensifying its support to research efforts and bringing together diverse players of the innovation ecosystems, from both the public and private sector, that can transform new ideas into reality and improve the life of citizens. Post-COVID EU will be stronger and more united than ever before leveraging its creativity and innovation performance as this year's Scoreboard highlights”.*

Opportunities of artificial intelligence

STUDY
Requested by the ITRE committee



Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence



Policy Document to the European Council, Scientific and Quality of Life Policy
Author: J. VAN DER WERF, R. VAN DER WERF, E. VAN DER WERF
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This study focuses on presenting the technological, impact and regulatory state of play in the EU, as compared to key competitor countries. It also highlights industrial areas in which AI will bring significant socioeconomic benefits, before presenting a methodology for scrutinising the fitness of the EU policy and regulatory framework in the context of AI. This document was provided by the Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies at the request of the committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). The full publication is available [here](#).