

A Reform of Research Assessment The Agreement & CoARA Coalition *a university perspective*

Stephane Berghmans
Director for Research & Innovation

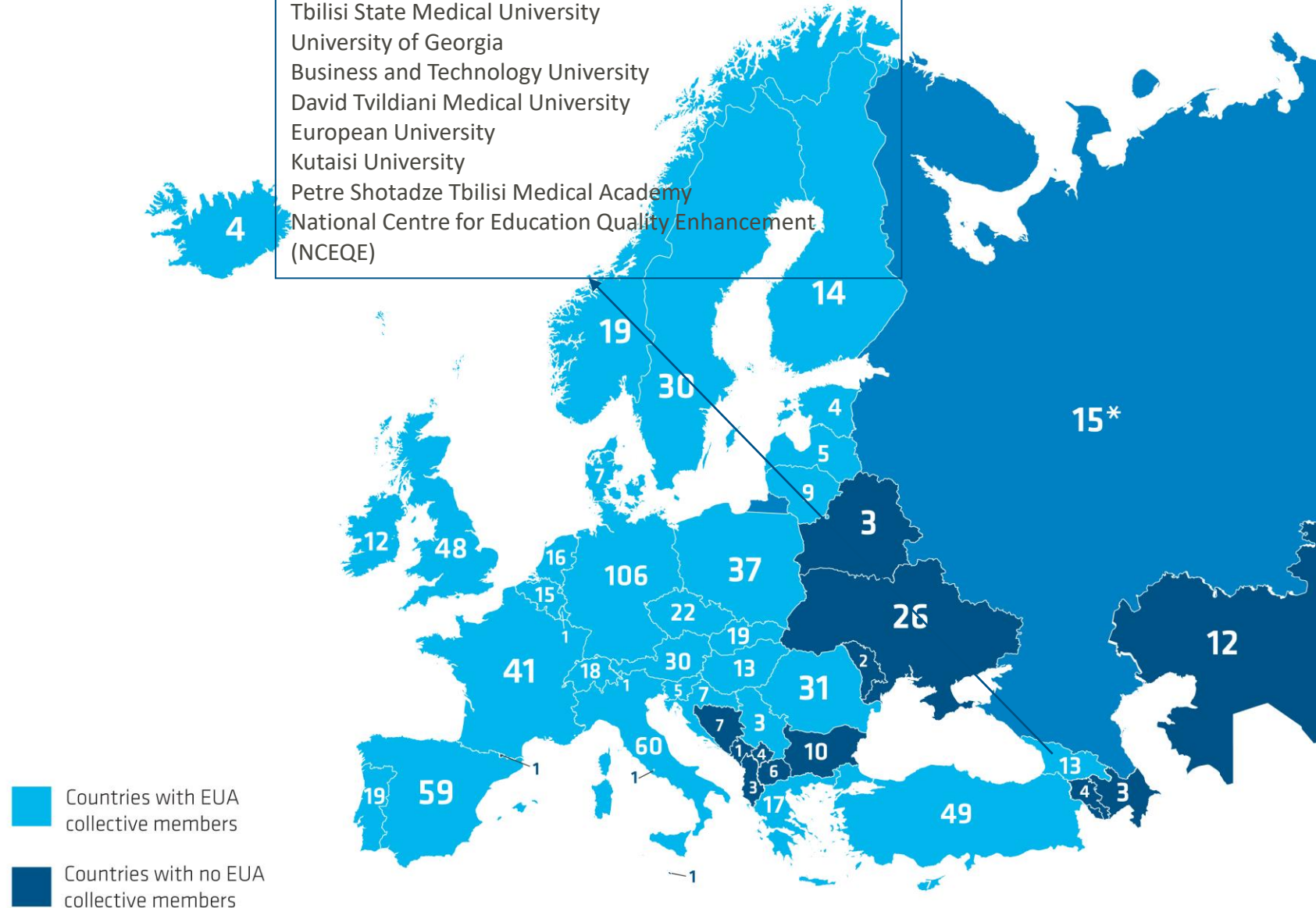
National Center for Educational
Quality Enhancement Annual
International Conference 2023
27 February 2023

- 800+ higher education institutions
- 35 National Rectors' Conferences
- 48 countries
- Established in 2001
- Non-governmental membership organisation
- Independent voice of the university sector
- Forum for exchange, peer learning for members
- Advocacy for the university sector at European levels

Permanent Conference of Rectors of Georgian Public HEIs

Caucasus University
 East European University
 Georgian Technical University
 Ilia State University
 Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
 Tbilisi State Medical University
 University of Georgia
 Business and Technology University
 David Tvildiani Medical University
 European University
 Kutaisi University
 Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy
 National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE)

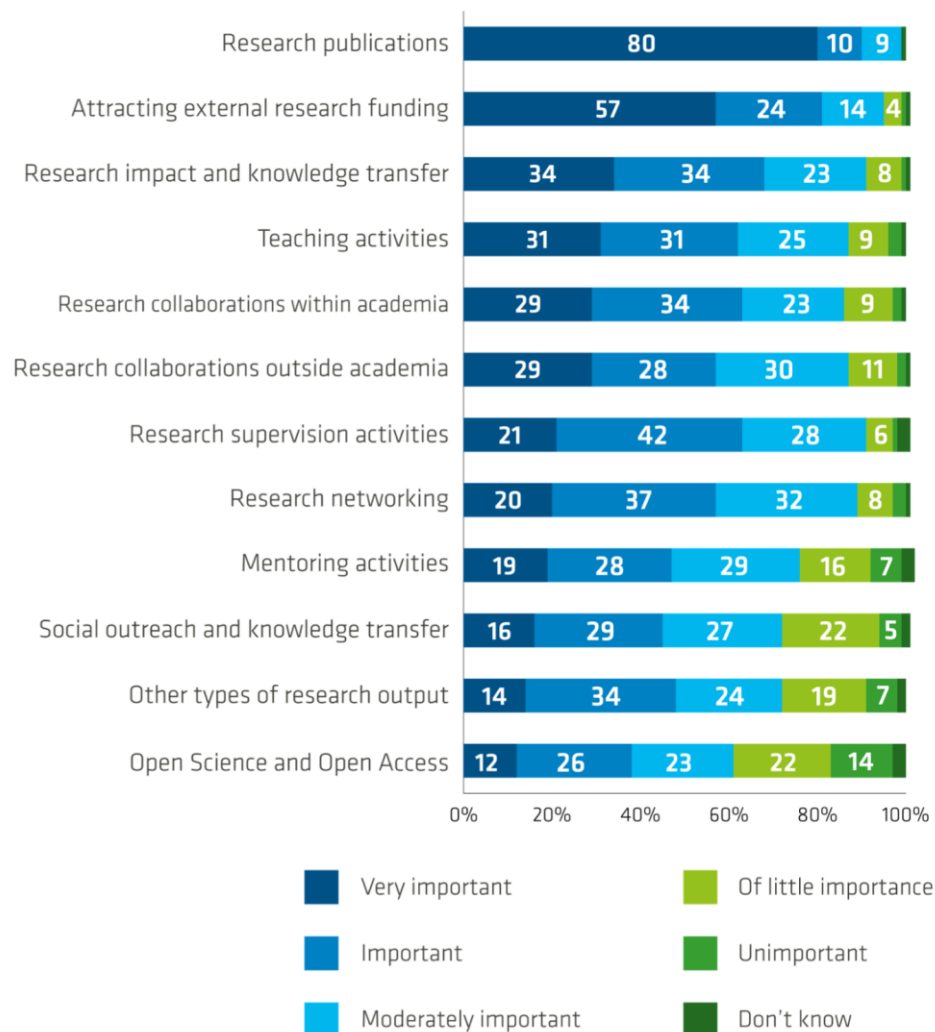
eua EUROPEAN
UNIVERSITY
ASSOCIATION



2019

Figure 2 – Importance of academic activities for research careers (2019 survey data).

Number of respondents: 191-195/272.

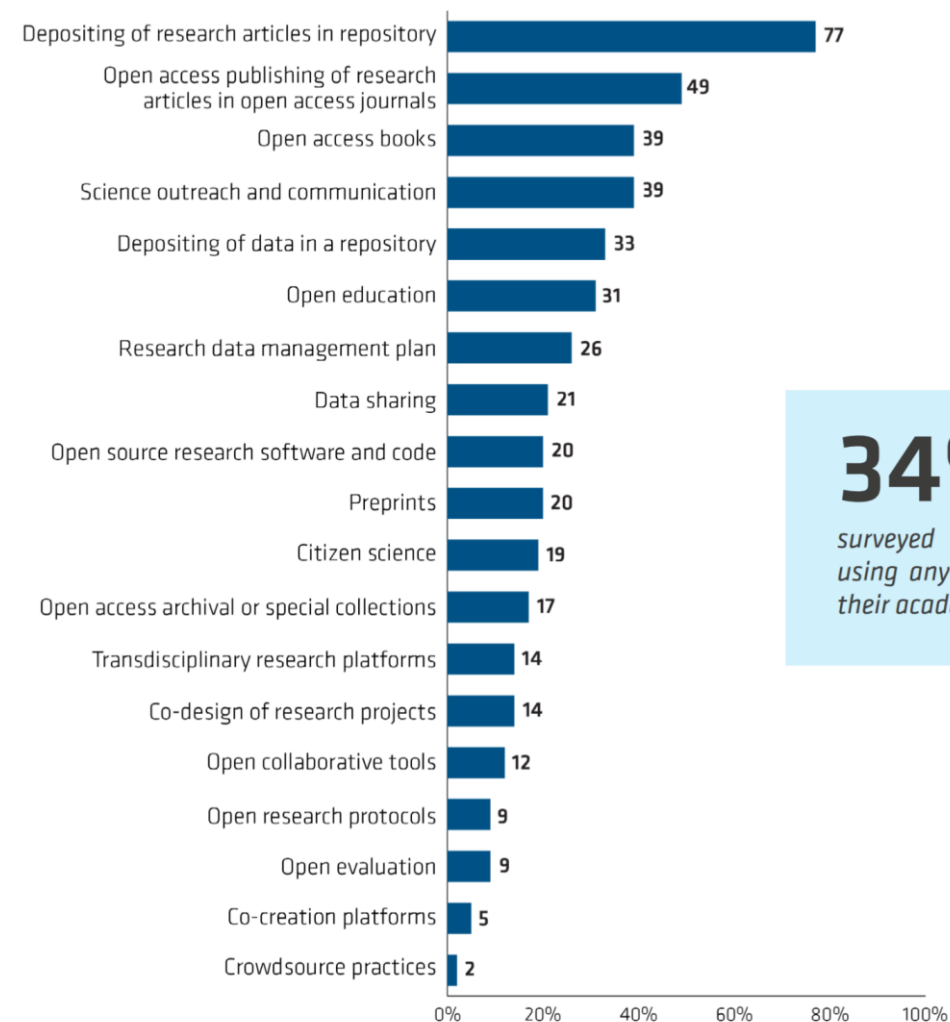


2021

Figure 1 – Open Science elements included in academic assessment (2020-21 survey data).

Number of respondents: 172/272.

Note: this figure only includes institutions that indicated using at least one element of Open Science as part of their academic assessments.



34%

surveyed institutions reported not using any Open Science elements in their academic assessments.

Change is happening



CASE STUDY REPORT

Reimagining Academic Career Assessment: Stories of innovation and change

Bregt Saenen (EUA), Anna Hatch (DORA), Stephen Curry (DORA), Vanessa Proudman (SPARC Europe) and Ashley Lakoduk (DORA)

January 2021



The Declaration Signers [Project TARA](#) News and Resources



Tools to Advance Research Assessment (TARA) is a project to facilitate the development of new policies and practices for academic career assessment.

Dashboard

An interactive online dashboard that tracks criteria and standards academic institutions use for hiring, review, promotion, and tenure around the world.

Toolkit

A toolkit of resources informed by the academic community to support academic institutions working to improve policy and practice.

Survey

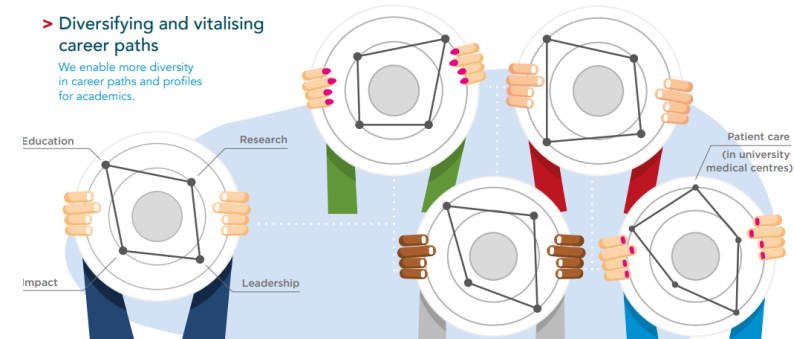
A survey of U.S. academic institutions to gain a broad understanding of institutional attitudes and approaches to research assessment reform.

Room for everyone's talent

towards a new balance in the recognition and rewards of academics

> Diversifying and vitalising career paths

We enable more diversity in career paths and profiles for academics.



NOR-CAM - A toolbox for recognition and rewards in academic careers

U:R Universities
Norway



[Link Report](#)

[Link Repository](#)

Universities needed to bring about change



It is crucial that universities are actively involved in the reform of research assessment



Universities should make an informed decision on this process

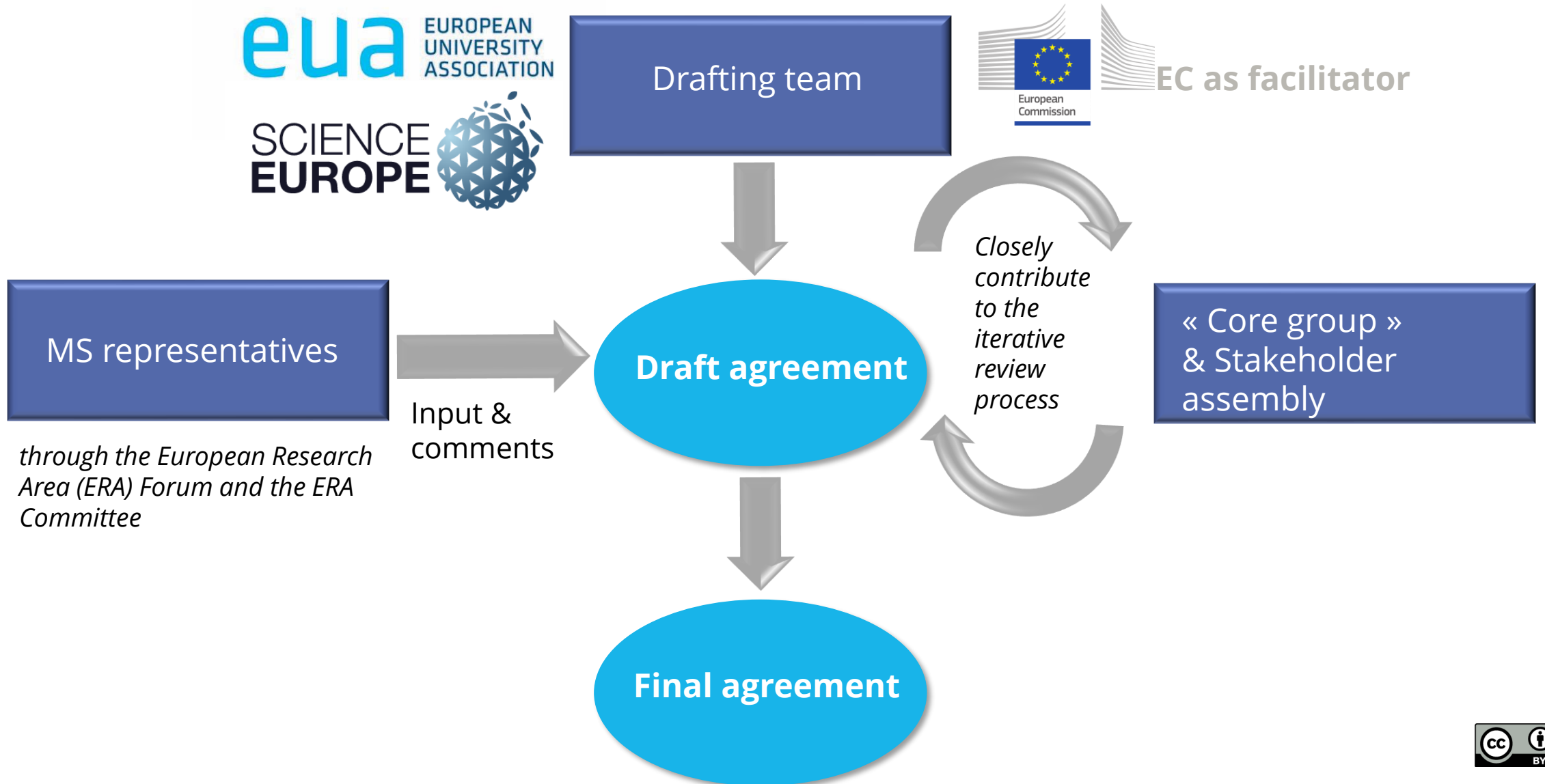


Universities should be properly represented in the future coalition and its governing bodies



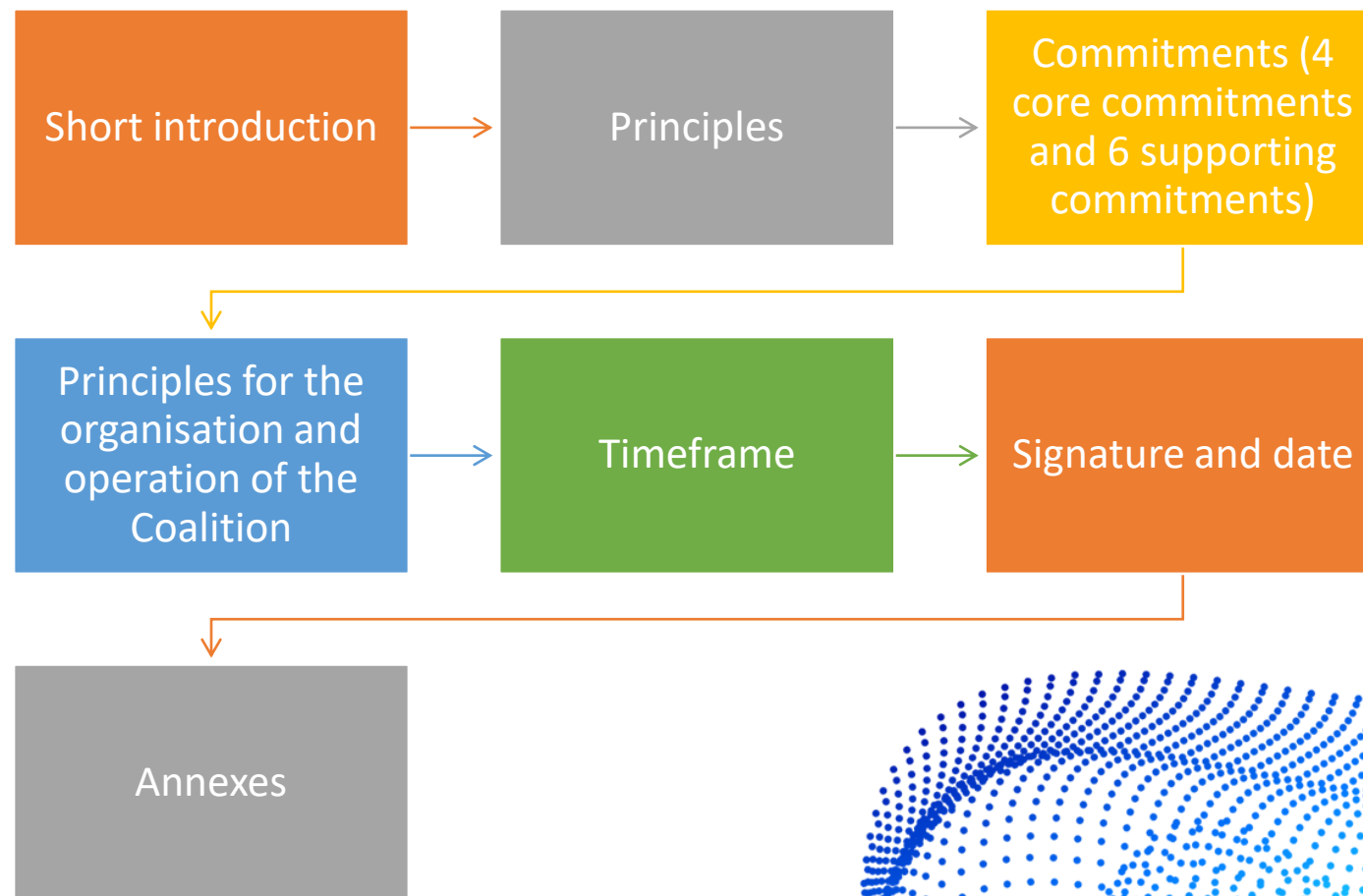
Only a substantial number of universities joining the coalition will guarantee that the interests of the sector are taken into account in the reform process

Drafting an Agreement, a co-creation exercise





<https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/>



Introduction

As signatories of this Agreement, we agree on the need for reform of research assessment practices.

Vision: The assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. [...]

Scope: RPOs and research units, research projects, individual researchers and research teams. [...]

This Agreement establishes a **common direction** for research assessment reform practices, while respecting organisations' **autonomy**.

We commit to realise reform through a **coalition** of RFOs, RPOs, national/regional assessment authorities and agencies, as well as associations of the above organisations, learned societies and other relevant organisations, that is **global in scope**.

We will **work together** to enable **systemic reform** on the basis of **common principles** within an **agreed timeframe**, and to facilitate **exchanges of information and mutual learning** between all those willing to improve research assessment practices.

Core commitments

1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators
3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index
4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment



Supporting commitments (1)

5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to
6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes

6.1 Criteria for units and institutions

With the direct involvement of research organisations and researchers at all career stages, review and develop criteria for assessing research units and research performing organisations, while promoting interoperability

6.2 Criteria for projects and researchers

With the direct involvement of researchers at all career stages, review and develop criteria, tools and processes for the assessment of research projects, research teams and researchers that are adapted to their context of application



Supporting commitments (2)

7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use
8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition
9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments
10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research



Timeframe

Year 0 (2022)

Signature

Year 5 (2027)

At least one cycle of review
and development of own
assessment criteria, tools
and processes

Year 1 (2023)

Start the process of
reviewing or developing
criteria, tools and processes

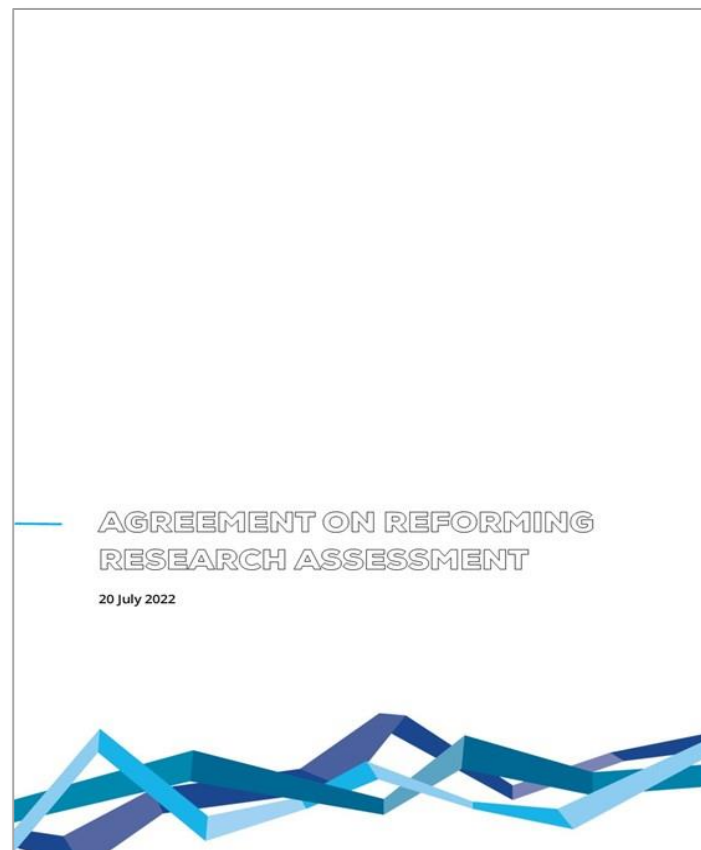
NB: Organisations can sign the Agreement at any point in time beyond 2022.
The timeline for organisations signing after 2022 will be adjusted accordingly.

Annexes

- Do not form an integral part of the Agreement.
- Annex 1 outlines the need for reform.
- Annex 2 clarifies the terminology used.
- Annex 3 suggests a reform journey.
- Annex 4 provides an initial toolbox.

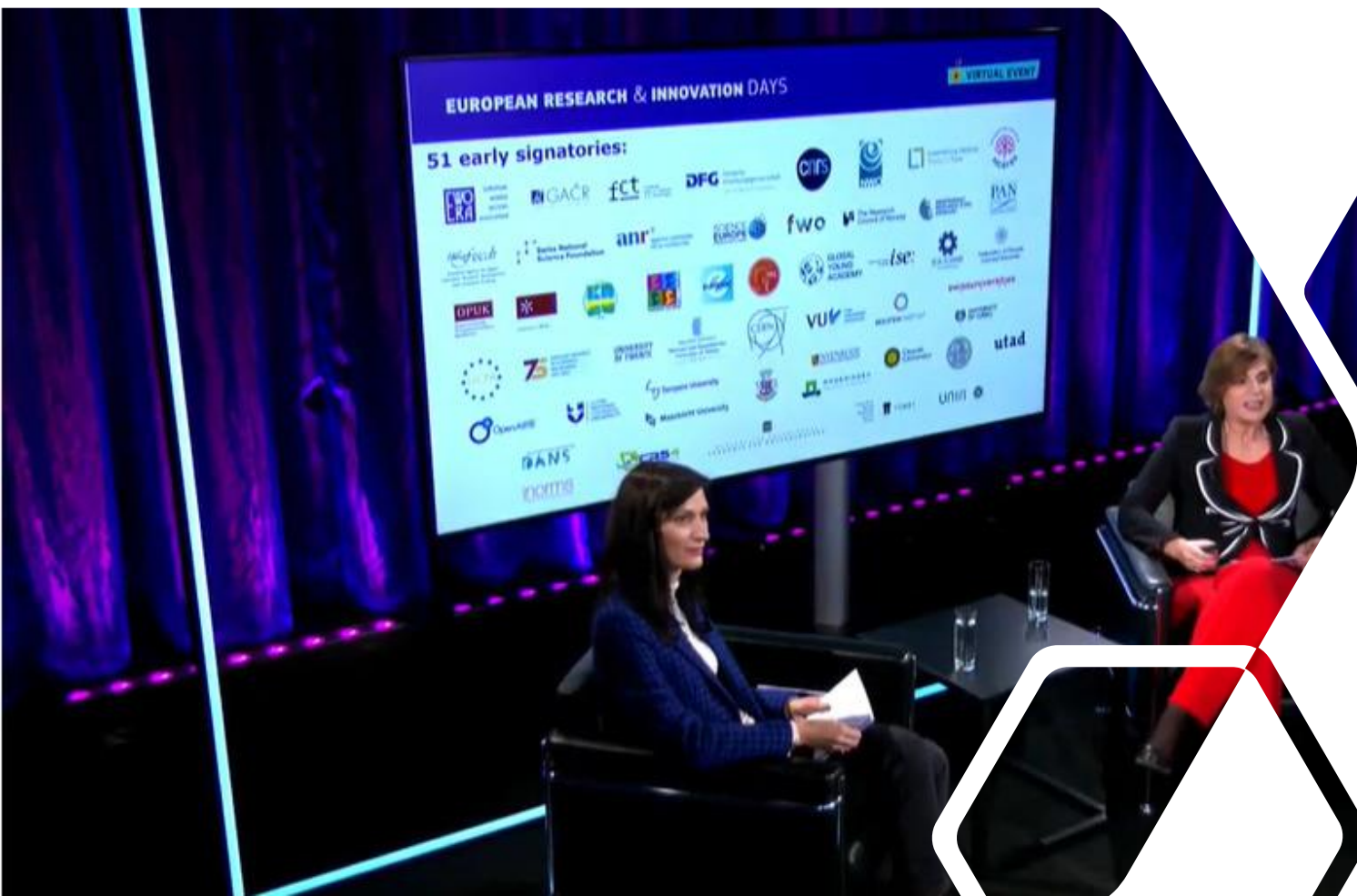


PUBLICATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON 20 JULY



<https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/>

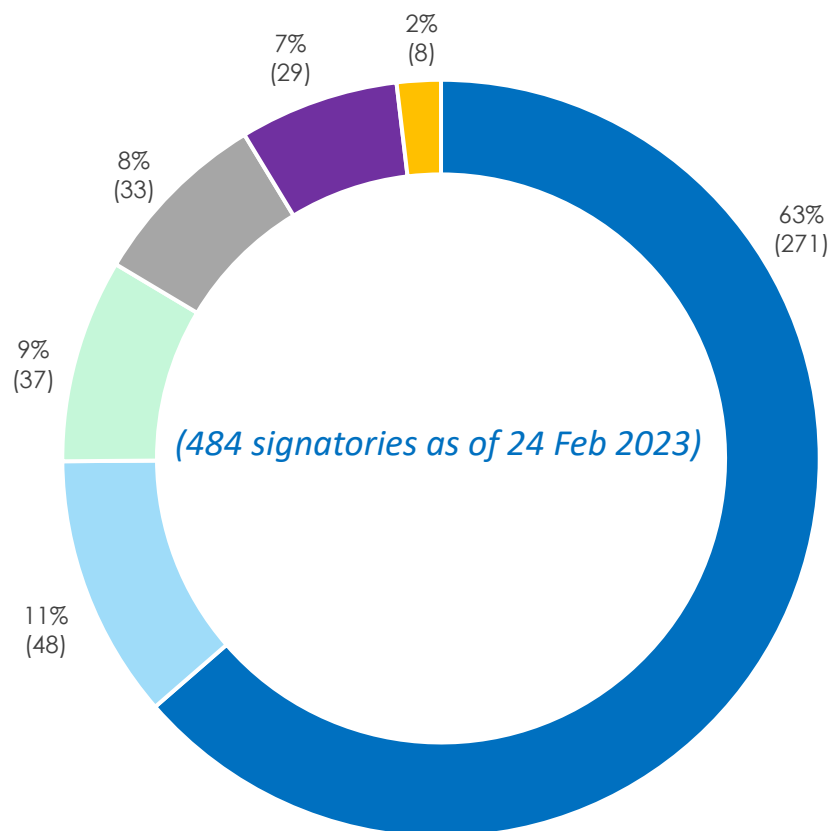
OPENING OF THE AGREEMENT FOR SIGNATURES



SIGNATORIES UPDATE

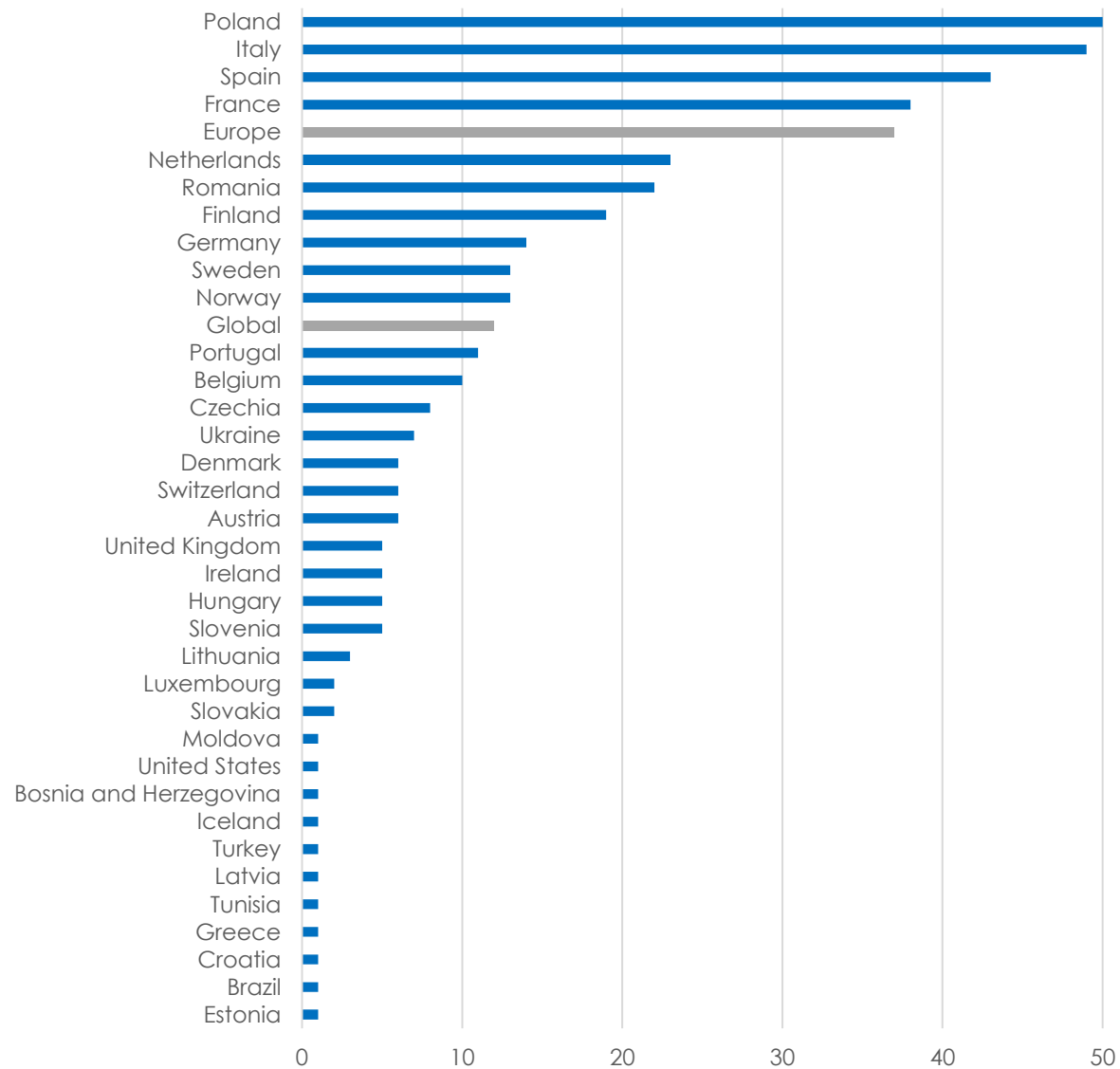
**426
signatories**

as of 1 Dec 2022



- Universities and their associations
- Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations
- Public or private research funding organisations and their associations
- Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers
- Other relevant non-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations
- National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations

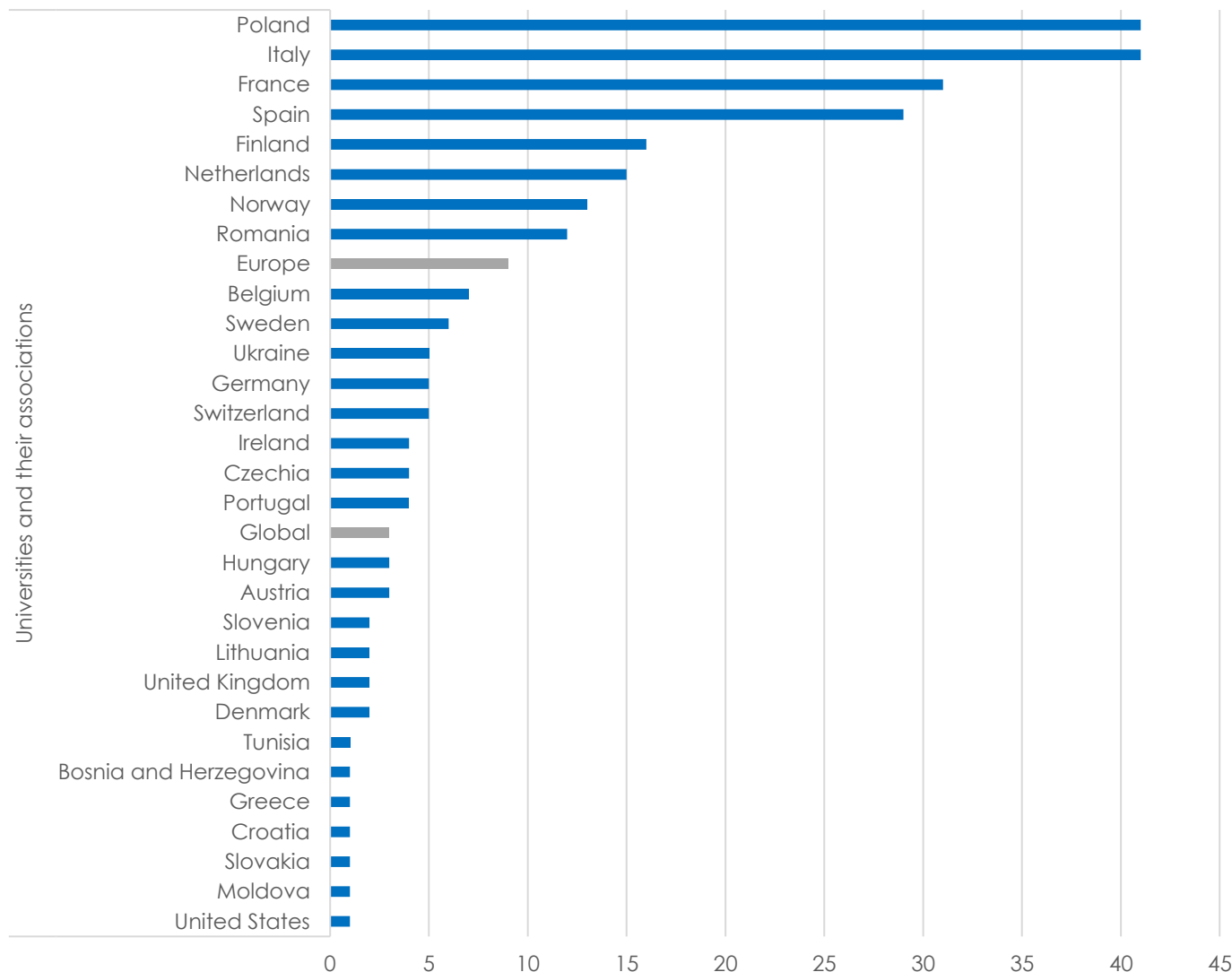
SIGNATORIES – COUNTRY DISTRIBUTION



Shota Rustaveli National
Science Foundation

SIGNATORIES – UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

253 universities
9 NRCs
9 other univ networks
(271 in total)





Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment

Our vision is that the assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. This requires basing assessment primarily on qualitative judgement, for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.

COALITION BODIES

- **General Assembly of Members** – All Members. The organ representing all the members of the Coalition. The highest-level decision-making body, that meets at least once a year (at least three times during the first year)
- **Steering Board** – Elected. A collegial body, responsible for the overall oversight, strategy, business plan and sustainability of the Coalition. Taking decisions by mutual agreement
- **Coalition Secretariat** – Supports the administrative, managerial, logistical, communication, engagement, networking, outreach, leadership and other activities of the Coalition
- **Working Groups** – Voluntary participation. To exchange knowledge, learn mutually, discuss and investigate any topic to advance research assessment and help with the implementation of the Members commitments

WORK OF THE COALITION

- **Working Groups** operating as '**communities of practice**' and offering space for mutual learning and collaboration. Examples:
 - "**Interest communities**", on ad-hoc horizontal topics
 - "**Discipline communities**", on approaches to tailor criteria and processes by discipline, inter-disciplinary field, thematic area
 - "**Institution communities**", on topics specific to a given type of organisation
 - "**National communities**", on issues specific to different types of organisations of a given country or group of countries
- **Other complementary means** like workshops, webinars, (annual) conferences, seminars, trainings, etc.

COARA CHAIR AND STEERING BOARD

- Rianne Letschert (**Maastricht University, UNL, YERUN**) – **Chair**
- Elizabeth Gadd (INORMS Research Evaluation Group) – **Vice-Chair**
- Karen Stroobants (Marie Curie Alumni Association; EuroScience) – **Vice-Chair**
- Lidia Borrell-Damián (Science Europe)
- **Paul Boyle (European University Association)**
- Yensi Alejandra Flores Bueso (Global Young Academy)
- Matthias Koenig (German Research Foundation – DFG)
- Eva Mendéz (**Universidad Carlos III de Madrid**)
- Menico Rizzi (Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes – ANVUR)
- Sylvie Rousset (French National Centre for Scientific Research – CNRS)
- Toma Susi (Initiative for Science in Europe – ISE)

Signing the agreement...

What does it mean for my institution?

What to expect and how will it affect us

Signing the agreement...

What does it mean for my institution?

Is this Agreement legally binding?

- Not legally binding, but...
- It is an Agreement, with clear commitments.
- Signing the Agreement is a precondition for joining the Coalition.
- Participation on a voluntary basis.
- Full autonomy of organisations, full control on the steps towards the implementation of the Agreement and the speed of the reform journey.
- More of a morally binding signature, towards peer organisations and own community.
- Organisations and their staff can leave the Coalition at any time.

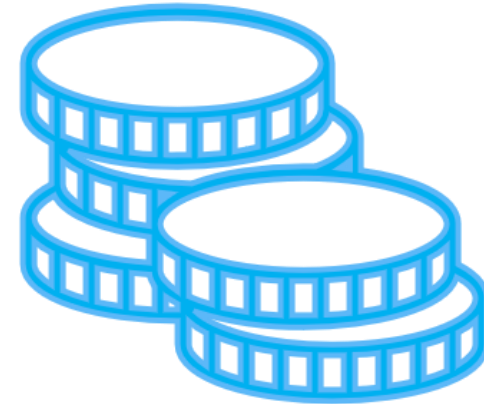


Signing the agreement...

What does it mean for my institution?

A word on coalition funding

- **The preliminary work plan and budget of the CoARA were endorsed by the Constitutive Assembly.**
- The document describes the tasks foreseen for the CoARA during the period 1st December 2022 to 31st December 2023, the corresponding budget necessary and available, and the fundraising strategy.
- **No membership fee will be applied to CoARA members.**
- The Secretariat has been tasked with fundraising. It will engage with public funding organisations, philanthropies, and other organisations within and outside the Coalition. It will also apply to relevant calls for proposals.



Signing the agreement...

What does it mean for my institution?

Resource allocation

Commitment 5: Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to

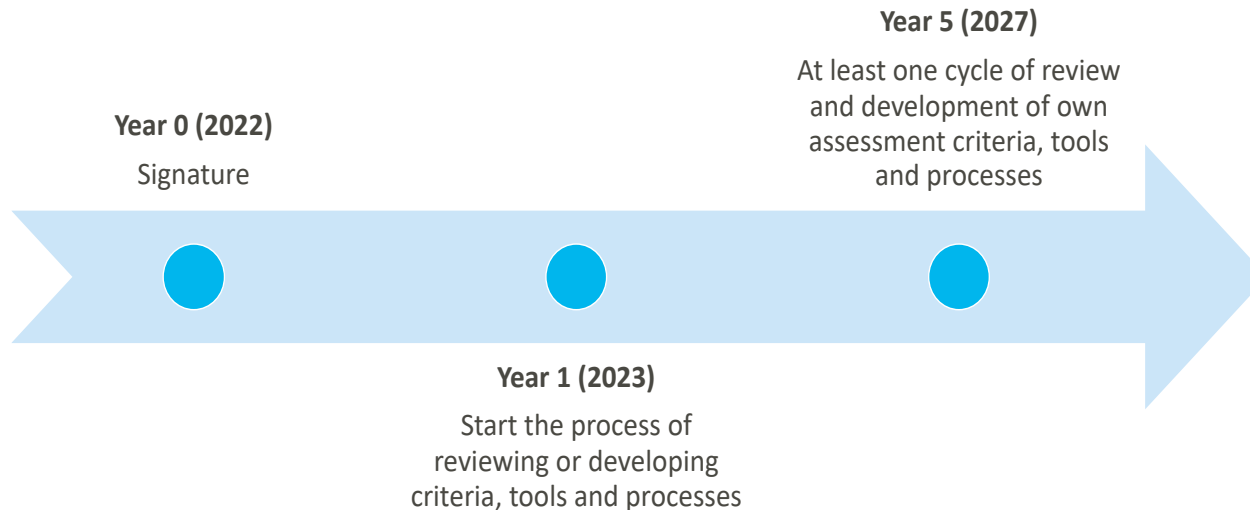
Purpose: “This commitment will ensure that organisations allocate the necessary resources, whether in the form of budget or staff capacity, to improve research assessment practices within their agreed timeframe.”

“Resources should be allocated as is needed for each organisation to achieve the changes that will enable adherence to the Principles and to implement the Commitments.”

Each institution will be autonomous in deciding the type and amount of resources they will commit to implement the Agreement. There is no minimum requirement.

Signing the agreement...

What does it mean for my institution?



- Concrete steps and activities to be developed in Year 1 and up to Year 5 will be decided by each institution.
- Each institution will develop its own path in the implementation of the Agreement.
- No benchmarking with other institutions.

Participants will keep full control on the steps they make to implement the Agreement and the speed of their reform journey, which can vary from one organisation to another depending on many factors (...)

*Organisations commit to share information on the progress made and lessons learnt in their reform journey, according to the timeframe included in the agreement. Sharing of information shall be done on the basis of **self-assessment and by no means the progress of individual organisations will be validated by the Coalition.***

(cf. [FAQ](#))

Universities without walls

A vision for 2030

Priorities for action

REFORM ACADEMIC CAREERS

This vision for Europe's universities in 2030 requires a reform of academic careers. This should be acknowledged and supported by all stakeholders

[Link](#)

EUA CoARA work plan

Possible roles for EUA

Engagement in CoARA

- **Support to the Steering Board**
 - Experience from drafting of the Agreement and establishing the coalition
 - Represent and promote the voice and shared positions of universities from across Europe
- **Working Groups**
 - Manage/lead a Working Group linked to the core activities of universities
 - Ensure complementarities/synergies between CoARA activities and EUA's activities related to research/academic assessment
- **Policy Advocacy in the new European Research Area (ERA)**
 - Link CoARA's activities and outputs leading to policy development in the ERA Forum for dialogue with Member States
- **Global outreach through sister organisations**

Support EUA members

- **Support** through webinars, seminars, guidelines, etc.
- **Platform for exchange and collaboration**
 - EUA members in CoARA
 - Non-CoARA EUA members

What about CoARA's future...

What are the challenges ahead?

- Start CoARA operations
- Keep the momentum going
- Identify quick wins
- Develop synergies with other initiatives
- Expand the membership in Europe
- Expand the membership globally
- Be sustainable (funding)
- Think about (academic) career assessment
- Set in motion nationally

ERA Action 3: Advance towards the reform of research assessment

#EUResearchArea

Proposed next steps



Preparation of national discussions

- Interested ERA Forum members, with the support of the EC, to consult national stakeholders members of CoARA
- CoARA member organisations from the interested countries could be asked to indicate the (3) most important priority barriers and possible solutions for their removal, complementing the survey responses

A few (2-3) national 'pilot' workshops

- Organised by national authorities (ERA Forum) + interested CoARA member organisations + possibly others
- Focus: discuss national barriers identified, and brainstorm on possible solutions

ERA Forum meeting to take stock of the pilots, lessons learned, and discuss next steps

- Assess whether to extend the pilots to other countries, roll-out this approach on a wider scale to all interested countries, or envisage other methods to support the removal of barriers



Sign the Agreement

While acknowledging that this Agreement does not have any legally binding effect, it represents a public commitment to contribute actively and constructively to reforming research assessment. The Agreement is open for signature by organisations from across the world, including organisations without legal personality. However the Agreement is not open for signature by individual persons.

First Name *

Last Name *

Full name of organisation *

Position with organisation *

www.coara.eu/sign

Thank you for your attention

More questions?

researchassessment@eua.eu

stephane.berghmans@eua.eu

