

No Directionality in MSCA

Research community urges the EU to preserve MSCA's bottom-up approach

Joint statement warns that introducing directionality in MSCA would risk undermining the programme's success

European research organisations, led by Coimbra Group, EU-LIFE and YERUN, have issued a joint statement calling on the European Commission and Member States to preserve the **bottom-up structure of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)**. The statement responds to a proposal to introduce *directionality* in the 2026–2027 Work Programme by steering project calls toward predefined areas.

The signatories stress that **MSCA's success lies in its openness to all fields and topics**, driven by researchers' initiative and scientific excellence. Imposing thematic restrictions risks narrowing the scope of innovation and limiting opportunities for early-career researchers.

MSCA in its current state already delivers significant contributions to strategic areas even before any political prioritisation is envisioned. More than 1,000 ongoing projects focus on artificial intelligence, backed by nearly €1 billion in EU funding under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe. Over 170 projects address quantum technologies, and thousands of MSCA researchers are involved in work related to the EU Missions.

Also notable is that the demand for MSCA continues to grow, while the budget has seen only marginal increases between funding cycles. While the primary message is about preserving MSCA's model, the signatories also encourage a significant funding boost in the next Framework Programme (FP10) to match the programme's expanded impact and address the structural challenges that research careers face.

The joint statement is currently supported by: **YERUN, Coimbra Group, EU-LIFE, ALLEA, Aurora Universities Network, CESAER, EASSH, ECIU, EUA, Eurodoc, Initiative for Science Europe (ISE), LERU, MCAA, PoISCA, SPARC Europe, The Guild, UNICA.**

Any other organisation wishing to support this initiative is welcome to help raise awareness by sharing the statement.