

Joint response to the Proposal for a Regulation establishing Global Europe

Introduction

The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild) and the European Research Alliance for Sustainable Development (ERASuD) urge European institutions to fully realise the potential for research, innovation and higher education to support talent development, societal impact, sustainability and long-term competitiveness in Europe's international partnerships.¹ We welcome the ambition of the proposal for the Global Europe Instrument, its geographic structure, and its integration of different types of activities and investments.² We fully support that the design of investments and action plans should be led by partner countries and regions to suit their local needs and the international opportunities they find attractive. We are excited that the Global Gateway strategy and Team Europe approach, both established during the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), can be integrated into the design of the upcoming Global Europe Instrument from the start of the next MFF. This new phase can bring added value to the partnerships that Europe collectively fosters through scale, effectiveness and accountability.

Integrating the Global Gateway strategy

The Guild and ERASuD support the principle of ownership of development priorities by partner countries in the proposed regulation. The benefit of such principles goes beyond development effectiveness; it also fosters better ideas and solutions from the excellent research and innovation capabilities in partner countries. The principle also underpins equitable partnerships between researchers and research-performing organisations in Europe and the regions addressed by the Global Europe Instrument. Using the Global Gateway framework can complement partner countries' and regions' autonomy to identify and design investments because the headings are broad enough to allow flexibility and diversity for local needs. While providing flexibility, this strategic approach serves to highlight shared challenges faced by Europe and other global regions alike, that is to say, areas of overlap between partners and [Europe's strategic interests](#) that can be coherently addressed with long-term approaches for mutual benefit.

Research, innovation and higher education are integral to strategies and programmes for European Competitiveness, with FP10 connected to the [European Competitiveness Fund](#). Research, innovation and higher education must coherently enhance Europe's interaction with other countries and regions around the world. Despite a strong EU commitment to the Global Gateway strategy since 2021, our coalition of stakeholders has highlighted the untapped potential for [enabling knowledge-driven international collaborations](#) for mutually beneficial economic development and tackling common challenges. Taking the Global Gateway to the next level, in a way that addresses heightening geopolitical, economic and societal challenges, requires the integration of the Global Gateway strategy in the legal basis for Global Europe's

¹ This position paper was partly informed by the insights of participants at the 13th Africa–Europe Science Collaboration Forum, held in Brussels, 20 – 22 April 2026. More information available here: <https://aerapsience.org/events/africa-europe-forum-2026/>

² European Commission. (2025). *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Global Europe*. Retrieved April 1, 2026, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0551>

implementation. We fully support the EU Parliament's insistence that the proposal must "seize the opportunity to include any substantive codifying provisions on the Global Gateway".³

We recommend adding references to the Global Gateway in the programme's legislative articles to establish a legal basis for implementing this strategy effectively. The proposed legislation for the Global Europe Instrument aligns with the EU's Global Gateway strategy in Recital 24, but there should also be actionable provisions included in the:

- general programme objectives (Article 4),
- general principles (Article 9),
- geographic programming principles (Article 14) and
- programming documents (Articles 15 & 16).

By regarding the Global Gateway strategy in these key aspects of the instruments' implementation, a variety of investments chosen by partner countries can be typified and further developed, where relevant, as contributions to Global Gateway priority areas which have an added value when combined holistically. The overall schematic approach that the Global Gateway offers can support the efficacy and transparency of development, implementation and monitoring of projects. This strategic schema can facilitate scaling up for greater impact, through cross-border coordination of efforts by local authorities and organisations across partner countries and across Europe when Team Europe initiatives are implemented. With regard to the Global Gateway's fifth priority area of education and research, we reaffirm the socio-economic value of Global Europe investment in research, innovation and higher education infrastructure and ecosystems. There is strong evidence of wider benefit to societies of investing in joint infrastructure, such as radio astronomy or genomics, that is designed for R&I with meaningful involvement of universities and academics. There is also a track record of such investments being part of international partnerships in the multi-stage digital transformation enabled by AfricaConnect.⁴ [Co-creative international collaboration on the future of data sharing and governance in the field of health is just as important for the European Union](#) and its partners as it is for making cutting-edge, excellent research possible. Furthermore, there is also potential for research, innovation and higher education as part of a 360-degree approach that can enhance the transformational quality of infrastructure primarily dedicated to other Global Gateway priority areas such as transport systems, green transition or provision of public health.

International partnerships that enhance knowledge societies

If the Global Europe Instrument fully integrates the Global Gateway strategy in its design and implementation logic, the next MFF can become an opportunity to strengthen awareness and capacity for education and research as an approach for enhancing international partnerships and aligning with the Draghi report's focus on science, technology and innovation. Better participation of education and research in Global Europe would address the expert recommendations of the high-level expert group led by Manuel

³ Ridel, H. B. C. (n.d.). *REPORT on Global Gateway — past impacts and future orientation* | A10-0045/2026 | European Parliament. © European Union, 2026 - Source: European Parliament. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-10-2026-0045_EN.html#_section6.

⁴ Fiore, S., & Fiore, S. (2026, March 2). AfricaConnect: receives a €40 million boost from the EU to expand digital infrastructure for Research and Education in Sub-Saharan Africa | GÉANT CONNECT Online. GÉANT CONNECT Online | the Leading Collaboration on E-infrastructure and Services for Research and Education. <https://connect.geant.org/2026/02/23/africaconnect-receives-a-e40-million-boost-from-the-eu-to-expand-digital-infrastructure-for-research-and-education-in-sub-saharan-africa>

Heitor which states that the mutual benefit of European cooperation with low- and middle-income countries is clear and stresses the “utmost importance” that such cooperation should better serve the economic interests of developing countries.⁵ Cooperation of mutual benefit to the knowledge societies of Europe and partner countries is important at all stages of the research and innovation spectrum; with opportunities fostered from fundamental research through to closer-to-market innovation.

Recital 7 of the legislation for the Global Europe Instrument should reference partner country and region’s own medium- and long-term strategies. This will ensure mutually beneficial partnerships are strengthened by their co-design and co-implementation of long-term objectives. Education and research present increasing opportunities for aligning geopolitical, economic and societal resilience through the strategies adopted by Europe and other regions in the world. This includes multilateral initiatives for science as a global public good fostered by UNESCO and G20 agendas, or regional strategies such as the AU STISA 2034⁶, Africa CDC Health Sovereignty and Security Agenda⁷ and the Science Granting Councils Initiative Africa⁸, to mention just some of the relevant regional strategies. Such initiatives should be harnessed for the greater success of Global Europe, and Global Europe’s implementation should be a force that bolsters the success of our partners’ strategic agendas.

Article 2 of the legislation for the Global Europe Instrument must include definitions for research-performing organisations and higher education institutions. This can underpin the specific needs and potential contribution of the education and research priority area of the Global Gateway. Ensuring these stakeholders and contributors to Global Europe are properly engaged in the instrument will improve the instrument’s impact, alongside the engagement of the private sector, civil society organisations and local authorities. Defining research performing organisations must also recognise the additional quality and impact when such organisations are deeply integrated in multilateral networks spread across Europe and partner regions.⁹ “Increasing capacities and maintaining partnerships with European and partner countries’ civil society organisations, networks, platforms and alliances to create an enabling environment”¹⁰ is an important proposed objective for Global Europe, harnessing scientific networks’ as part of this objective will better reflect Europe’s unique strengths and values. We recognise that EU delegations across the world and their cooperation officers play a vital role in supporting partner countries and regions to develop annual and multiannual action plans. Better integration of education and research in the Global Europe instrument through the proposed amendments above can produce practical guidance and activities designed for Europe’s diplomatic capacity that foster better collaboration between research staff, the private sector and policymakers. It can build guidance and investment pathways for education and

⁵ European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. (2024). *Align, act, accelerate: research, technology and innovation to boost European competitiveness*. Publications Office of the European Union.
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/9106236>.

⁶ H.E. PROF. MOHAMMED BELHOCINE, & Madougou, S. (2025). Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa STISA 2034. *African Union*. Retrieved April 2, 2026, from https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/45087-doc-AU_STISA_2025-2034_Strategy_ENGLISH.pdf

⁷ Kaseya, J. (2025). Africa’s Health Security and Sovereignty agenda: a new way forward. *The Lancet*, 406(10518), 2394–2396.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(25\)02315-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(25)02315-3)

⁸ SGC Africa. (2025, July 17). *Science Granting Councils Initiative - SGC Africa*. <https://sgciafrica.org/>

⁹ The [Africa-Europe Clusters of Excellence led by The Guild and ARUA](#) is a recent initiative for harnessing the added value of networks, equally [Pasteur Network](#) has a long-standing history of interconnected research and innovation in partner countries with an anchoring in Europe and some European Universities Alliances have been established with partners from outside Europe.

¹⁰ Annex II.F 5 (d) to the Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing Global Europe

research, both as the primary focus of investments and as a 360-degree approach that adds value and sustainability to investments in other Global Gateway priority areas.

We propose that Global Europe adds a principle of brain circulation under Article 9, in line with the Union of Skills. Brain circulation should be a key principle of partnerships with low- and middle-income countries and European Union accession countries. This principle is not reflected in the proposal for Global Europe, even though the Proposal annexes include specific objectives in several regions for “supporting and promoting the use of legal channels of migration and mobility, and encouraging diasporas’ contributions to the development of the countries of origin”. Global Europe can better complement the Choose Europe initiative if it is more coherent with Erasmus + and Horizon Europe, both of which The Guild and other stakeholders in the sector have proposed to be implemented based on principles of brain circulation.¹¹¹² This additional principle will enable Europe to go beyond the strategic actions for attracting and retaining talent to also foster Europe’s mutually beneficial interaction with top research and innovation talent around the world through its international partnerships.

If the proposed Council Recommendation for Science Diplomacy is adopted, it should be added to the Global Europe Instrument recitals.¹³ This joint initiative of the European External Action Service and DG Research and Innovation could prove to be an important connective tissue that can support EU delegations’ collaboration with education and research actors where relevant and of added value.

Coherence with world-class European programmes and talent strategies

The Guild and ERASuD welcome the provisions under Article 13 of the proposal for Global Europe to contribute financially to the future Erasmus + programme. This provides the opportunity for Erasmus + to continue strengthening as a programme that can support international cooperation, adding value for Europe through increasing programme effectiveness and boosting the participation of third-country partners, as The Guild and the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) have recommended.

We reiterate the call by The Guild and its partners with the European higher education sector for Global Europe’s Article 6 to specify a contribution of €6 billion to Erasmus+. This will strengthen institutional partnerships, talent circulation and capacity building, including the added value of organisations education and research networks.

The Global Europe regulation should add text to Article 13 that provides for financial contributions to the Horizon Europe (FP10) programme, with additional principles set out in Recitals 32 and 60 that refer to the FP10 regulation. Horizon Europe is already primed to contribute to the Global Gateway, thanks to the EU’s Global Approach to R&I¹⁴ and specific international agreements such as the long-term AU-EU Innovation Agenda, which was endorsed by government leaders as part of the AU-EU Joint Vision 2030.

¹¹ Stakeholder organisations from across the European higher education sector. (2026). *Proposed joint amendments to the Erasmus+ programme*. https://www.the-guild.eu/publications/position-papers/erasmus%2B-joint-amendments_feb2026.pdf

¹² CESAER, Coimbra Group, EUA, EU-LIFE, The Guild, LERU, & YERUN. (2025). *Proposed joint amendments to the FP10 legal texts*. https://www.the-guild.eu/publications/position-papers/joint-fp10-amendments_nov2025.pdf

¹³ European Commission. (2026). *Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European Union framework for science diplomacy*. Retrieved April 2, 2026, from https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/9ef96e1f-dd81-4550-9eeb-47fd66453004_en?filename=ec_rtd_com-2026-97-science-diplomacy-recommendation.pdf

¹⁴ European Commission. (2026, February 27). *Global approach to research and innovation*. Research and Innovation. https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/europe-world/international-cooperation/global-approach-research-and-innovation_en

FP10 could help guide investments under Global Europe, including the Global Gateway, while Global Europe instruments could, in turn, support the scaling, deployment and anchoring of research results in partner countries where there is strong potential for impact and replication. We suggest two concrete ways for contributing Global Europe funding to Horizon Europe to achieve Global Europe objectives:

- **The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) programme** in Horizon Europe's Pillar 1 could be enhanced with Global Europe funds for additional allowances or funding top-ups from Global Europe for project participants based in Global Gateway eligible countries. These allowances would support extra costs related to the training, research expenses, networking of researchers and transfer of knowledge, costs of managing the action and indirect costs when the collaborating researchers are in unequal circumstances and contexts. Thus, Global Europe could harness bottom-up research and capacity building that comes from the local setting of partner countries and is implemented through a programme that is already the most international part of the Horizon Europe and preceding Framework Programmes.¹⁵ Global Europe's objectives for strengthening partnerships and addressing wider systemic challenges make it uniquely positioned to enhance intercontinental industrial doctorates, doctoral or postdoctoral networks, staff exchanges and fellowships that strengthen the knowledge ecosystems of European and partner countries. It would mirror the successful model of synergy with Erasmus +, by combining well-functioning bottom-up financial instruments with additional features that add contributions to European strategic interests for international partnerships.
- **Horizon Europe's pillar two projects** can be funded to transition into Global Europe investments. The Guild and other R&I stakeholders [recommend](#) an interface between FP10 generating knowledge, innovations and societal solutions and the ECF accelerating development and uptake, ecosystem building and investment in infrastructure. Our recommendation for Global Europe is for a similar interface with the Global Europe Investment Board on aligned topics where partner country needs, Global Gateway strategy, and cutting-edge results from Horizon Europe align. The Africa Initiative, under the auspices of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, is an example of projects that are funded with reference to the Global Gateway which Global Europe can leverage.

Architecture and scope of the Global Europe Instrument

The Guild and ERASuD **recommend provisions be made in the regulation to avoid reallocation of funds between geographic regions**, which would be detrimental to predictability and attractiveness of partnerships with Europe. It is important that financial flexibility mechanisms can respond to changes and ruptures in circumstances, but this should not be at the short-term expense of long-term partnerships. We welcome the proposed budget for the Global Europe Instrument and agree with the simplified programme structure and allocations divided into five geographic parts and one global.

Adopting the recommendations above to integrate the Global Gateway and foster meaningful coherence with world-class European programmes can counteract the risk of implementation challenges caused by the merger of several programmes into Global Europe. For example, this regulation must establish a legal

¹⁵ Woermann, R., & Woermann, R. (2024, October 31). MSCAdvocacy report presents MSCA participation trends across 26 countries and regions. MSCAdvocacy. <https://www.mscadvocacy.eu/qualitative-monitoring-report/>

basis for activities dedicated to European Union accession countries; a similar approach must be adopted regarding programmes for investment primarily linked to Official Development Assistance (ODA) for the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. For reasons explained in the previous section, the proposed change of programme architecture needs greater strategic implementation and interplay with other programmes. The outcome of such a process should be a clearer investment pathway for all stakeholders involved, including researchers who need a clear pathway and predictability to plan for impactful activities and partnerships.

Annex II.F Global (5) can be enhanced with an additional subclause that recognises the value for strengthening partnerships and strategic relations of these types of organisations. We welcome the recognition of education and research in the specific objectives of the geographic and global parts of the Global Europe Instrument. With the proposed addition of research-performing organisations and higher education institutions in the Article 2 definitions, scientific networks complement the existing Global Europe objectives to support networks of local authorities and civil society organisations.¹⁶

Governance, financial flexibility and equitable partnerships

The Global Europe Instrument needs to ensure predictability for long-term partnerships with two key amendments:

- **Deleting Article 6.6** to avoid the disruption to long-term partnerships that would be caused by the reduction of ODA expenditure percentages in the programme.
- **Delete Articles 12.2, 12.3, 12.4 and 12.5** to avoid the disruption of uncertainty and withholding of funds on the basis of migration and forced displacement shortcomings because it weakens the basis for equitable partnerships and mutual benefits.

The Guild and ERASuD are committed to strengthening equitable research and innovation partnerships, as reflected in [The Guild's joint position with ARUA](#), which informed policymakers in shaping the final AU-EU Innovation Agenda. The Global Europe Instrument should further strengthen the viability of such equitable partnerships without adding uncertainty that funds might be withdrawn unpredictably.

The instrument has the capacity to make long-term, sustainable investments in transformative infrastructure, designed according to partner country needs. While acknowledging the need for financial flexibility, Europe should not lose sight of its opportunity to make a unique offer with such a programme of this scale and with the ability to manage cross-border capacity and diversity effectively, to make long-term, sustainable investments in transformative infrastructure, designed according to partner country needs.

Research-performing organisations and higher education institutions representatives should be included as observers for the Article 25.6 Global Europe Investment board meetings. These representatives should also attend as observers in any relevant subgroups that might be established for this Board. As observers, R&I and higher education representatives can contribute evidence, expertise and facilitate successful

¹⁶ Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA), European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Association, The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities, & U7+ Alliance of World Universities. (2026). Scientific networks as strategic actors in EU science diplomacy. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18553595>

investments with their existing partnerships, thus supporting the quality, de-risking, steering and scrutiny of the programme.

The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities

[The Guild](#) has a long-term strategic commitment to develop equitable, mutually beneficial partnerships with African universities. Since 2018, The Guild has developed a close partnership with the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) to support sustainable partnerships between African and European universities. The Guild also builds upon its sector-wide advocacy for the international dimension in FP10, the European Competitiveness Fund and Erasmus +.

ERASuD

[The European Research Alliance for Sustainable Development \(ERASuD\)](#) brings together 12 leading European research institutions from 8 countries, committed to long-term and equitable research partnerships with Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). ERASuD is unique in its explicit commitment to Sustainability Science, equitable partnerships, interdisciplinary research, and science diplomacy. Launched in the European Parliament in 2024, the Alliance engages globally across Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.