

The Guild welcomes the opportunity to co-develop Europe's approach to research security

The European Commission's [recently announced package of new initiatives to strengthen economic security](#) is highly relevant for the research and innovation sector and The Guild is committed to co-developing enhanced systems of research security with Member States and EU-level policymakers. We are dedicated to providing them with recommendations for navigating these initiatives while safeguarding international collaboration as a core feature of our research and innovation system which is indispensable for building resilience in the face of global challenges.

A key initiative in the package announced by the European Commission is the [Proposal for a Council Recommendation on enhancing research security](#), which sets the scene for EU Member States to establish measures and practices in their respective countries through a common European approach. It also announces complementary actions that could be implemented at the European level.

We believe The Guild's [statement on Responsible Internationalisation](#), published in November 2023, offers a positive vision for enhancing research security effectively, and we are pleased to see how the Commission's proposal aligns with our own vision.

The proposal should guide the eventual co-creation of national action plans that can ultimately foster cultures of responsible internationalisation whilst enabling coherence at institutional and European levels.

A European approach for research security built by Member States and stakeholders for a level-playing field in R&I must consider fully and appropriately the risks of collaboration alongside the risks of non-collaboration. Research security can only be effective if researchers and institutions are entrusted to bear this responsibility with autonomy and academic freedom. Nevertheless, a commitment from the Member States to allocate investments to build capacity in research performing organisations should also be ensured in the final Council Recommendation and elaborated upon during any subsequent discussions between governments and R&I stakeholders. The cost and administration of novel measures without additional resources can hinder secure international collaboration and robust screening.

This proposal also envisages a European Centre of Expertise on Research Security at the EU level to support the policy actions of Member States. Resources made available for this support structure should not detract from [much-needed investments in excellent research and innovation](#).

Finally, policymakers' focus on what is ostensibly the most research-relevant initiative must not lead to losing sight of the other four initiatives for economic security. [Boosting dual-use technologies in Europe](#), [export controls](#), [outbound investment](#) and [screening foreign investment](#) consider a wide variety of activities across the economy. These initiatives prioritise critical technologies that are often

inextricably linked to the talent, facilities, and expertise of academic institutions for more stringent monitoring. Thus, they could have a disproportionate impact on the R&I sector and undermine the objectives of building trust and effective practices as proposed in the Council Recommendation. Due attention to the principles and values embedded in our [statement on Responsible Internationalisation](#) is needed to mitigate this risk when Member States seek to enhance research security through a whole-of-government approach.