

CESAER

The strong and united voice of universities
of science and technology in Europe



LEADING TOGETHER

Annual Report 2025

April, 2026



Table of contents

Letter from the President	3
Foreword from the Secretary General	4
Strong	5
United	5
Impact stories	6
Members	9
Areas of work	10
Task Force Sustainability	10
Task Force Openness of Science and Technology	11
Task Force Learning & Teaching	12
Task Force Innovation	14
Task Force Benchmark	15
Task Force Human Resources	16
Task Force Sustainable Funding	18
Governing Bodies	19
Presidency 2024-2025	19
Board of Directors 2024-2025	19
Resources	21
Secretariat	22

Rooted in advanced engineering education and research, [CESAER](#) is an international association of leading specialised and comprehensive universities with a strong science and technology profile that advocate, learn from each other and inspire debates. Our [Members](#) champion excellence in higher education, training, research and innovation, contribute to knowledge societies for a sustainable future and deliver significant scientific, economic, social and societal impact.



This document can be referenced using: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19351733>

Letter from the President

■ As we reflect on 2025, I am proud of the clarity, credibility and collective strength that CESAER has demonstrated in a year of fast-moving change for Europe and for our universities. This Annual Report is titled ‘Leading together’ because it captures what made that strength possible: leaders and experts from our Members combined deep technical capability, long-term academic responsibility and a practical understanding of how policy choices translate into real-world outcomes. That combination is precisely what Europe needs.

■ 2025 has reinforced a simple reality. Competitiveness, resilience and prosperity do not emerge from slogans. Necessary foundations for each of these are sustained investment in talent, excellent science and advanced technologies, and ecosystems that connect education, research and innovation with industry and society. Universities of science and technology are central to this effort. Our Members educate the engineers, scientists and innovators who will shape much of Europe’s future, while advancing the frontier knowledge that underpins strategic technologies and industrial transformation.

■ In this context, CESAER’s role as the strong and united voice of universities of science and technology has mattered. We have been present where the next generation of European frameworks is being shaped, consistently arguing for policies and funding programmes that strengthen scientific excellence while expanding Europe’s capacity for innovation and impact. This is visible in our sustained engagement on Europe’s next framework programme for research and innovation (FP10), where we have helped keep the case for a self-standing programme at the centre of political discussions. It is equally visible in our work on education and skills, including the future of Erasmus+, the Union of Skills and the conditions that enable hands-on science and technology education and mobility across Europe.

■ Our strength lies in connecting leadership with expertise. More than 1,500 representatives from our Members are connected through our association, including through the work of our task forces and governing bodies, translating institutional experience into shared intelligence and coordinated advocacy.

■ Several themes stand out from the year: the continued importance of excellence-driven research and innovation, even as Europe seeks faster delivery in strategic domains; the need to remain open and globally connected while managing knowledge security responsibly; the urgency of strengthening Europe’s talent base through modern research careers and supportive conditions for students and researchers; and the accelerating role of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, in research, education and innovation.

■ Our Annual Meetings in Brno in October captured the spirit that defines CESAER: constructive dialogue, practical exchange and shared ambition. Rooted in the autonomy of our Member universities and strengthened through collaboration, this is what it means to lead together.

■ Thank you to all who contributed in 2025—through leadership, expertise and sustained engagement. Together, we will continue to demonstrate what universities of science and technology make possible for Europe and ensure that European policies and programmes enable these universities to deliver, at pace and for the long term.

Orla FEELY

President of CESAER

President of University College Dublin



Foreword from the Secretary General

■ 2025 was a year of intensive activity for CESAER as European debates on research, education and innovation moved from broad strategy towards concrete programme design. As preparations for the next EU budget cycle accelerated, questions about funding architectures, talent development and advanced technologies moved firmly to the centre of European policymaking.

■ In this environment, universities of science and technology have a particularly important role. Our Members operate at the forefront of scientific discovery and technological development while educating the talent that drives innovation and growth. They connect frontier research with real-world impact at scale, working closely with industry, public authorities and societal partners. By integrating research, education and innovation, they strengthen Europe's capacity to remain competitive, resilient and prosperous.

■ A central task for CESAER is to ensure that this expertise informs European policies, strategies and funding programmes. Much of this work takes place through our task forces, which bring together experts from across our membership to exchange practices, identify emerging issues and translate insights into positions, reports and events. This is the operational backbone of the association and the engine behind our peer learning and coordinated advocacy. The Secretariat's role is to facilitate this process and help connect this work with the European policy process, support our governing bodies and ensure timely, coherent delivery across activities.

■ A major milestone during the year was the adoption of Strategy 2030 by the General Assembly in Brno. The strategy sets out a shared vision for leading transformation across science, technology and society and provides a clear framework for strengthening influence, learning and impact in the years ahead. It reinforces CESAER as the strong and united voice of universities of science and technology and strengthens our ability to contribute constructively as Europe's policy landscape evolves.

■ The achievements presented in this report are the result of a truly collective effort. More than 1,500 colleagues from our association's Member universities contributed their expertise through our governing bodies, task forces and activities during the year, supported by the Secretariat in Leuven.

■ My sincere thanks go to everyone who contributed to CESAER's work in 2025. Through this shared commitment, our association continues to operate as an effective platform for collaboration, peer learning and European impact — ensuring that the expertise of universities of science and technology helps shape the decisions that will define Europe's future.

Mattias BJÖRNMALM
Secretary General of CESAER





STRONG

47 Members participates in **14** European University Alliances supported by the **Erasmus+** programme

CESAER brings together **56** Members from **25** countries

Members employ more than **111,235** academic staff

Members educate more than **1.2** million students, including **252,603** international students

CESAER's work relies on the expertise and engagement of the community across our Member universities.

We produced **30 publications**, including positions, white papers, open letters and statements

More than **1,580** staff from our Members contributed as volunteers and leaders

Our governing bodies (General Assembly, Presidency and Board) met **10 times** during the year

The CESAER **Annual Meetings** took place in Brno from **22 to 24 October 2025**, fostering important debate and dialogue between policymakers, researchers, students and presidents of our Members

Our LinkedIn community grew to **3,300** followers in **2025** — almost **1,000** more than the previous year, signalling increasing exposure and outreach impact

15 task force meetings enabled coordinated advocacy and peer learning

UNITED

Shaping FP10 together: joint amendments for Europe's next framework programme

■ In 2025, CESAER worked closely with partner university associations to develop a coordinated package of joint amendments for Europe's next framework programme for research and innovation (FP10). By aligning positions and translating shared priorities into concrete legal proposals, we strengthened the sector's collective voice at a decisive moment.

■ "We made a significant joint advocacy effort with the other university stakeholder organisations to draft a coherent set of proposals for amendments on the proposal for FP10 as published by the European Commission. We provided proposals in legal wording, accompanied by clear explanations and this in an attempt to protect research excellence and the independence of the ERC, the EIC and the programme as a whole. We are confident these joint proposals raised the visibility of the sector and strengthened our ability to influence both the positions of the European Parliament and the Council."

Wendy SONNEVELD

Co-Chair of CESAER Task Force Sustainable Funding and Senior Policy Advisor European Affairs at Ghent University



European Affordable Housing Plan

■ In response to growing concerns among Members, CESAER prepared a timely position and input for the European Affordable Housing Plan to highlight the structural housing challenges facing students, researchers and academic staff across Europe.

■ "Preparing this position and input to the Commission's consultation came at a crucial moment, when student housing was not yet foreseen as part of the emerging European Affordable Housing Plan. We were one of the first university associations to raise this issue at the European level. Through CESAER, we were able to amplify the expert voices of our Members to ensure that the needs of our institutions were properly highlighted and to demonstrate why affordable housing is essential for Europe's talent strategies, education and research in the regional, national and European contexts. The positive response from colleagues at the European Commission, and the degree to which many of our priorities are reflected in the published European Affordable Housing Plan, show the real impact of speaking with one united voice and position us as strong contributors to the next steps for the implementation of this plan."



Justyna LUBOŚNA

Director of CESAER, Co-Chair of CESAER Task Force Learning & Teaching, and Rector's Representative for International Educational Programs at Gdańsk University of Technology



Collectively advancing and implementing research security across Europe

■ As research security has become an increasingly important challenge for universities across Europe, CESAER published a targeted input note drawing on a dedicated seminar series, and co-organised a plenary session at the European Commission’s flagship research security conference.

■ “Sharing the key messages, best practices, and ongoing challenges from CESAER Members at the conference highlighted how universities can begin and continue to advance the research security journey, as well as the importance of shared responsibility between national governments, the European Commission, and other stakeholders, at a crucial moment for shaping European research security policy.

“By bringing together experiences from universities of science and technology across Europe, CESAER created an effective space for collective discussion with policymakers going beyond what single institutions can achieve alone. The prominence of our key messages during the plenary demonstrates how collaboration within CESAER enables universities to exchange expertise, develop coordinated approaches, and engage collectively with European institutions, helping to guide the next steps in implementing research security across Europe.”

Jonathan SCOTT

Member of CESAER Task Force Openness of Science and Technology and International Governance Support Manager at University of Strathclyde



AI pathways for technology transfer

■ In 2025, CESAER examined how Technology Transfer Offices are using artificial intelligence through a Member survey and practitioner workshop. The findings were captured in the [report](#) ‘AI pathways for technology transfer’.

■ “This work helped us move from ‘trying tools’ to defining how we use them effectively and safely. Comparing practices across universities highlighted common red lines—especially around confidentiality and IP leakage—and confirmed where AI can add value today, for example by speeding up low-risk tasks like drafting, summaries and initial search triage. The workshop discussions also made the operating model concrete: keeping human-in-the-loop decision points, using validated patterns rather than ad-hoc prompts, and putting basic logging and governance in place so outputs can be checked and trusted.”



Tanja SOVIC

Member of CESAER Task Force Innovation and Head of innovation and knowledge transfer at TU Wien

Turning diversity of responsible research assessment approaches into strengths

■ In May 2025, CESAER organised a workshop to exchange concrete experiences on implementing the commitments of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), featuring case studies and pilot initiatives from Aalto University, TU Braunschweig, *Politecnico di Torino* and the University of Strathclyde. The discussion resulted in a CoARA workshop [report](#) compiling key lessons and recommendations. The workshop translated diverse institutional practices into practical strategies for responsible research assessment, demonstrating how diversity can strengthen coherent and actionable implementation across Europe.

■ “By comparing case studies and pilot approaches, the workshop turned different institutional practices into a shared set of evidence-based strategies for responsible research assessment, transforming diversity into a strength. Through CESAER, we were able to combine insights from multiple universities to define practical, cross-institutional pathways for reform, creating guidance that reflects the diversity of approaches across Europe.”



Alessandra CERATO

Officer, Strategy, Analysis, Reporting and Quality (STARQ) Area at *Politecnico di Torino*

Members



1. Aalborg University
2. Aalto University
3. Brno University of Technology
4. Budapest University of Technology and Economics
5. Chalmers University of Technology
6. Delft University of Technology
7. EPFL - *Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne*
8. ETH Zurich
9. Gdańsk University of Technology
10. Ghent University
11. Graz University of Technology
12. *Institut National des Sciences Appliquées Lyon*
13. *Institut Polytechnique de Paris*
14. *Instituto Superior Técnico*
15. Istanbul Technical University
16. Karlsruhe Institute of Technology
17. KTH Royal Institute of Technology
18. KU Leuven
19. *Leibniz Universität Hannover*
20. Lund University
21. National Technical University of Athens
22. National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”
23. National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest
24. Norwegian University of Science and Technology
25. ParisTech
26. *Politecnico di Milano*
27. *Politecnico di Torino*
28. Poznan University of Technology
29. Queen’s University Belfast*
30. RWTH Aachen University
31. Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava
32. Technical University of Cluj-Napoca*
33. Technion - Israel Institute of Technology
34. *Technische Universität Berlin*
35. *Technische Universität Braunschweig*
36. *Technische Universität Darmstadt*
37. *Technische Universität Dresden*
38. TU Wien
39. *Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*
40. *Universidade NOVA de Lisboa*
41. *Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya*
42. *Universitat Politècnica de València*
43. *Université Catholique de Louvain*
44. *Université Grenoble Alpes*
45. *Université Paris-Saclay*
46. University College Dublin
47. University of Belgrade
48. University of Porto
49. University of Sheffield
50. University of Southampton
51. University of Strathclyde
52. University of Stuttgart
53. University of Surrey
54. University of Twente
55. Warsaw University of Technology
56. Wrocław University of Science and Technology*

* Institutions who were invited to CESAER during 2025 and whose membership officially began on 1 January 2026.
The map is not fully geographically accurate for legibility reasons

Areas of work

■ In 2025, we worked in seven domains and operated seven corresponding task forces: Sustainability, Openness of Science & Technology, Learning & Teaching, Innovation, Benchmark, Human Resources and Sustainable Funding.

■ These task forces play a central role in identifying the challenges facing our Members, shaping the association's priorities and delivering activities. They provide a structured platform for collaboration, peer learning and coordinated advocacy.

Task Force Sustainability



Alberto GARRIDO

CHAIR

Universidad Politécnica de Madrid



Pillar Villegas MUÑOZ

SECRETARY

Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

■ In 2024-2025, Task Force Sustainability advanced its work across three themes: (i) following up on the 2023 sustainability declaration and leveraging it to boost achievements for the 2021 Call to Action, broadening advocacy from net-zero towards sustainability as a whole; (ii) monitoring progress and sharing best practices to fulfil the commitments of the declaration and white paper; and (iii) exploring monitoring frameworks and sustainability efforts within the association, such as measuring the carbon footprint of CESAER Annual Meetings.

■ The task force held two online meetings with Member presentations and workshop-style exchanges on greening research practices, institutional approaches and sustainability careers. Members shared strategies on recruitment trends, skillsets for sustainability, and whole-of-institution approaches, reinforcing the task force as a platform for mutual learning.

■ Key deliverables included a position paper on '[Universities of science and technology advancing the Clean Industrial Deal](#)' (April 2025), responding to the launch of the Clean Industrial Deal, and contributions to the revision of the MSCA Green Charter, with task force members participating in an in-person workshop at the European Commission and follow-up engagements. The group also engaged with UKRI's SPARK Hub to provide feedback on tools supporting sustainable research practices. Focused exchanges for peer learning throughout the year included best practices on recruitment trends, sustainability skillsets, and institutional strategies, reinforcing the task force's role as a peer learning and policy-shaping platform.

Task Force Openness of Science and Technology



Jennifer HEREK
CO-CHAIR
University of Twente



Simone REHM
CO-CHAIR
University of Stuttgart



Irna VAN DER MOLEN
SECRETARY
University of Twente

■ In 2025, Task Force Openness of Science & Technology focused on three themes: (i) responsible internationalisation in science and technology and maintaining openness in science amidst growing concerns about knowledge security; (ii) open access and open research; and (iii) citizen engagement in sustainability and technology topics with societal impact.

■ During 2025, the task force led work on key topics, including responsible internationalisation and the challenges in keeping science and STEM education open while safeguarding knowledge security. It organised a workshop on the challenges and opportunities of responsible internationalisation at the CESAER Annual Meetings 2025. Furthermore, the task force contributed to a Task Force Innovation workshop on AI in technology transfer, focusing on artificial intelligence tools used in Technology Transfer Offices, barriers to adoption, and the societal and ethical dimensions of their use.



Task Force Openness of Science and Technology workshop on the challenges and opportunities of responsible internationalisation at the CESAER Annual Meetings 2025.

■ The task force also led work on advancing knowledge security measures in universities of science & technology, through a seminar series and workshops given exclusively with our Members. These activities gave Members a platform to share and discuss their strategies, best practices, and the challenges they face in implementing knowledge security measures. Building on this work, the task force, on behalf of CESAER, [co-organised](#) a plenary session at the European flagship conference on research security.



■ The session, titled “Getting started with research security: safeguarding and advancing open and secure R&I through institutional practices”, was organised together with the Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN), and was well attended with over 200 participants. Ahead of the conference, the task force was at the forefront of leading discussions on enhancing knowledge security through a dedicated [input note](#) titled “Research security as a collective responsibility: empowering universities, enabling Europe” (October 2025), offering lessons learned and best practices for universities in advancing knowledge security, as well as strategic recommendations for EU and national levels.



Task Force Openness of Science and Technology meeting hosted by *Politecnico di Milano* (April 2025).

■ Additionally, the task force contributed to the launch of the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures ([contribution](#) by our Envoy in February 2025 and June 2025 [position](#)) and the development of the European Commission’s AI in Science Strategy (June 2025 Joint Research Centre [workshop](#) and June 2025 [position](#)). Through these contributions, the task force also advanced its key messages related to our third workstream, technology topics that have a societal impact.

■ On open access and open science, the task force explored open science developments, including rights retention, Open Research Europe and cOAlition S during its April 2025 task force meeting hosted by *Politecnico di Milano*. It also organised a seminar on the future role of universities of science and technology in the EOSC Federation, featuring a dedicated presentation and discussion with the President of the EOSC Association and CESAER’s EOSC Envoy Karel Luyben.

Task Force Learning & Teaching



Justyna LUBOŚNA
CO-CHAIR
Gdańsk University of Technology



Roberto ZANINO
CO-CHAIR
Politecnico di Torino



Mara BACCOLLA
SECRETARY
Politecnico di Torino

■ Task Force Learning & Teaching pursued two main themes in 2025: European University Alliances and industrial doctorates.

■ The task force organised a [high-level roundtable](#) on the governance and strategic vision of European University Alliances at the CESAER Annual Meetings 2025, which convened leaders and senior representatives from the European Commission, CESAER Members and key partners. The outcomes of this roundtable, together with interviews with senior leaders and consultations with Member institutions and students conducted in 2025, provide an evidence-based overview of how universities of science and technology experience participation in European University Alliances. The results are synthesised in a forthcoming report planned for publication in April 2026.



Task Force Learning & Teaching events at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

■ In line with the second theme, the task force held an event '[Industrial doctorates: shaping the future of Europe's high-skilled workforce](#)' at its meeting in Trondheim, kindly hosted by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in May 2025. The panel was supported by six Member case studies and a survey of 25 companies in Poland. Contributors included the European Commission (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Unit), the EUA Council for Doctoral Education, industry representatives, European University Alliances, Knowledge and Innovation Communities of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, and an industrial doctoral candidate. The insights from this work contributed to the report '[Industrial doctorates: strengthening Europe's research-industry talent pipelines](#)' (March 2026). This work also builds on earlier analysis conducted by Task Force Innovation and its [report](#) 'Models of engagement for PhDs with non-academic partners' (October 2024).



Task Force Learning & Teaching events at Aalborg University.



A high-level roundtable on the governance and strategic vision of European University Alliances at the CESAER Annual Meetings 2025.

■ The task force led advocacy activities on key topics for the association, including leading the development of three position papers: '[Erasmus+ for a prosperous, competitive and skilled Europe through science and technology](#)' (June 2025, jointly with Task Force Sustainable Funding), '[Union of Skills: Building a strong science and technology base for a competitive and prosperous Europe](#)' (June 2025) and '[European Affordable Housing Plan – housing Europe's talent](#)' (October 2025), which was accompanied by input to the European Commission's public consultation on the European Affordable Housing Plan.

■ The task force also engaged with the European Commission on the STEM Education Strategic Plan, leading to CESAER participation in an expert consultation (January 2025). It submitted an input note on the European Degree in engineering and regulated professions to the Commission (April 2025).



Tim BEDFORD
CO-CHAIR
University of Strathclyde



Toril HERNES
CO-CHAIR
Norwegian University of Science and Technology



Yvonne KINNAIRD
SECRETARY
University of Strathclyde

■ In 2024–2025, Task Force Innovation advanced its work across three main workstreams: (i) ethical applications of key technologies, (ii) entrepreneurship, and (iii) innovation ecosystems. The task force held two meetings — an online session in November 2024 and an in-person meeting at Institut Polytechnique de Paris in April 2025. It provided extensive contributions to the CESAER Annual Meetings 2024 through the high-level conference on innovation districts and the all-task-force interactive workshop on inclusive science engagement.

■ Major deliverables included the publication of the report ‘[Supporting diverse and inclusive entrepreneurship](#)’ (July 2025), showcasing practices from eight Members to strengthen gender equality and inclusion in innovation ecosystems, and the launch of a survey and report (October 2025) on the [ethical application of AI in technology transfer](#), developed through a workshop in Paris with the European Commission and expert contributions from Members.



Third meeting of Task Force Innovation 2024-2025 in Paris hosted by *Institut Polytechnique de Paris*.

■ The task force reinforced its influence in EU policy by leading the development of several positions: ‘[Strengthening interdisciplinarity in the European Innovation Council](#)’ (March 2025); ‘[Seizing Europe’s innovation moment: Empowering science and technology through the Innovation Act](#)’ (June 2025, following a dedicated exchange with the European Commission); and continued joint advocacy on the successor to Horizon Europe (FP10), the next EU long-term budget and the proposed competitiveness fund, together with Task Force Sustainable Funding. These activities helped frame the role of universities of science and technology in Europe’s innovation ecosystems and strengthened CESAER’s strategic advocacy for EU funding programmes and key policy developments such as the Innovation Act.



Peter ELSPASS
CHAIR
Leibniz Universität Hannover

■ Task Force Benchmark advanced its work across its three main workstreams in 2025: (i) engagement with ranking agencies, (ii) European Higher Education Sector Observatory (EHESO), European Universities alliances and the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), and (iii) peer learning.

■ In line with the first theme, the task force engaged with the European Ranking of Engineering Programmes (EngiRank), including a meeting with Waldemar Siwiński, the leader behind EngiRank (April 2025), and the submission of an input note (October 2025) to the team of EngiRank. Under the EHESO/Alliances/CoARA theme, the task force conducted a survey and organised a workshop at University Politehnica of Bucharest (September 2025) with contributions from the European Commission, FOREU4ALL and EHESO.



Task Force Benchmark events at POLITEHNICA Bucharest.



■ Throughout the year, the task force's Chair Peter Elspass provided regular updates to the task force on EHESO through his role on its advisory board. Members also contributed to the CoARA workshop hosted by Task Force Human Resources, which led to the publication of a CoARA report (December 2025 [report](#)).

■ For Task Force Benchmark, peer learning remained central in 2025, with institutional practices exchanged on rankings dashboards by the University of Strathclyde and key performance indicators by *Leibniz Universität Hannover*. A dedicated group on LinkedIn Talent Insights (LTI) held exchanges in March and June 2025, a workshop with LinkedIn (March), and a structured dialogue (September) on utilising LTI for the benefit of higher education institutions.



Task Force Benchmark events at POLITEHNICA Bucharest.



Tanya BONDAROUK
CO-CHAIR
University of Twente



Manuel HEITOR
CO-CHAIR
Instituto Superior Técnico

Janke RADEMAKER
SECRETARY
University of Twente

Lotte Sander
SECRETARY
University of Twente

■ In 2025, Task Force Human Resources advanced its work across its two main workstreams: (i) supporting modern and stable research careers in Europe and (ii) CoARA and the implementation of the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment.

■ As a follow-up to its [2024 research career report](#), the task force continued its work in supporting modern and stable research careers in Europe, most notably through the development of a set of dedicated research career case studies. These case studies will form the basis of the upcoming report, envisaged for publication in March 2026, showcasing best practices and highlighting the remaining challenges in advancing research careers across Europe.



Manuel Heitor during a European Parliament high-level event on the future of the European Framework Programme 10 (FP10).



Tanya Bondarouk at the MSCA Conference 2025. Tanya Bondarouk is to the far right in the photo, next to Claire Morel (Head of Unit MSCA at European Commission).*

■ In January 2025, Manuel Heitor, CESAER Envoy on Research Careers, Co-Chair of Task Force Human Resources and chair of the expert group on the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe gave an invited contribution during a [European Parliament high-level event on the future of the European Framework Programme 10 \(FP10\)](#), where he outlined a vision for transforming brain drain into brain gain through initiatives such as the "Choose Europe" programme, as one of the three key priorities for FP10.

*Photograph©: Frida Gregersen, DTU - Technical University of Denmark.



Furthermore, in May 2025, the task force discussed best practices for implementing CoARA commitments during a workshop hosted by *Instituto Superior Técnico* in Lisbon. Drawing on these exchanges, the task force published a [workshop report](#) in December 2025 highlighting lessons learned from the institutional level, as well as recommendations for European and national levels to further advance and modernise research assessment. Our Secretary General Mattias Björnmalm highlighted these messages while contributing to the Danish Presidency conference on research assessment (December 2025 [conference](#)).

In September 2025, Co-Chair Tanya Bondarouk (University of Twente) represented CESAER as an invited speaker at the [Danish Presidency MSCA conference](#) in Lyngby. In her intervention, she emphasised that the next phase of talent development should focus on building and supporting an ecosystem where researcher mobility is seamless, attractive and embedded within universities' wider talent strategies.



Task Force Human Resources in Lisbon, kindly hosted by *IST* in May 2025.

Through our Envoy on Research Careers Manuel Heitor, the task force also worked closely with the MSCA unit at the European Commission to strengthen the preparation of the “Choose Europe” programme via the MSCA co-funding mechanism. This collaboration included multiple sessions with European Commission representatives, as well as several advocacy initiatives engaging stakeholders across Europe.

As a follow-up to the research career work of Task Force Human Resources, co-chairs Manuel Heitor and Tanya Bondarouk submitted a research paper to the journal *European Review* (Cambridge University Press), which was accepted for publication in November 2025, reflecting the task force's continued efforts to advance insights and best practices in the field.

Throughout the year, the task force also advanced advocacy on talent and careers through contributions to position papers on AI in Science (June 2025 [position](#)), Research and Technology Infrastructures (June 2025 [position](#)), and the Union of Skills (June 2025 [position](#)).



Christian GERHARDTS
CO-CHAIR
Technische Universität Dresden



Wendy SONNEVELD
CO-CHAIR
Ghent University

Romy GINZEL
SECRETARY
Technische Universität Dresden

■ In 2024-2025, the Task Force Sustainable Funding advanced its work across two themes: (i) shaping EU funding programmes in research, education and innovation including Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ and the European Structural and Investment Funds, and (ii) shaping European research, education and innovation policies and strategies (especially towards the EU institutions), and contributing to the implementation of the European Research Area and the European (Higher) Education Area. The task force held three meetings: an online session in November 2024, an in-person meeting at Warsaw University of Technology in March 2025 and an in-person meeting in Brussels in June 2025.



Fourth meeting in Warsaw hosted by Warsaw University of Technology.

■ Peer learning included a workshop on Widening (October 2024), which informed CESAER's Widening guidelines for Research Support Offices, and a practical session on engaging with Members of the European Parliament (November 2024), which provided Members with concrete strategies to strengthen advocacy.

■ On funding programmes, the task force led CESAER's advocacy for the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2028-2034 (FP10). Its coordinated advocacy contributed to the unanimous endorsement of the Warsaw Declaration by European research ministers (March 2025), marking a major political step towards a self-standing FP10.

■ The task force also led the development of a key publication to help advance the European Research Area, titled '[A tool to implement the ERA in the framework programme](#)' (April 2025) and prepared an input note (September 2025) for the call for evidence of the European Research Area Act, which is expected to influence the upcoming legislative proposal on the ERA by the European Commission. Further advocacy included development of joint statements with stakeholder organisations on [Horizon Europe call deadlines](#) and [MSCA directionality](#) (June 2025).

■ Together with Task Force Learning & Teaching, the task force co-drafted a position paper outlining key recommendations to [shape Erasmus+ for 2028-2034](#) (June 2025). It also contributed to several positions led by other task forces, including on advancing the [Clean Industrial Deal](#) (April 2025), strengthening [interdisciplinarity in the EIC](#) (March 2025), [Europe's position in AI](#) (June 2025), the [Union of Skills](#) (June 2025), [research and technology infrastructures](#) (June 2025), and the [European Innovation Act](#) (June 2025).

Governing Bodies

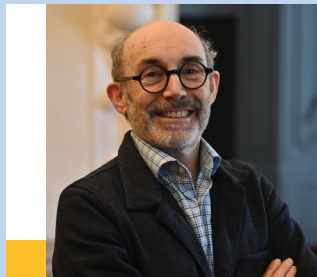
Presidency 2024-2025

The Presidency 2024-2025 consisted of:



Orla FEELY
President

University College Dublin,
Ireland



Tim BEDFORD
Vice-President

University of Strathclyde,
United Kingdom



Jennifer HEREK
Vice-President & Treasurer

University of Twente,
Netherlands

The General Assembly on 24 October 2025 re-elected Orla Feely as President for the second two-year term from 2026 to 2027.

Board of Directors 2024-2025

The Board of Directors 2024-2025 was composed of the members of the Presidency and:



Guillermo Cisneros Perez

*Universidad Politécnica
de Madrid, Spain*



Mihnea Costoiu

National University of
Science and Technology
POLITEHNICA Bucharest,
Romania



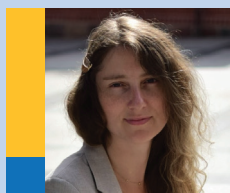
Katharina Füglistner

*EPFL - École Polytechnique
Fédérale de Lausanne,
Switzerland*



Toril Hernes

Norwegian University
of Science and Technology,
Norway



Justyna Lubośna

Gdańsk University of
Technology, Poland



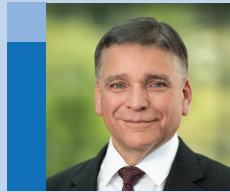
Mikael Östling

KTH Royal Institute of
Technology, Sweden



Karine Samuel

Université Grenoble Alpes, France



Ronald Tetzlaff

Technische Universität Dresden, Germany



Roberto Zanino

Politecnico di Torino, Italy

■ On 24 October 2025, the General Assembly re-elected Toril Hernes and Justyna Lubońska for a second four-year term from 2026 to 2029.

■ The General Assembly on 24 October 2025 also elected six new Directors to serve on the Board from 2026 to 2029:



Damien Fabrègue

Vice President for International Affairs at *Institut National des Sciences Appliquées Lyon, France*



Per Michael Johansen

Rector of Aalborg University, Denmark



Ilkka Niemelä

President of Aalto University, Finland



Simone Rehm

Vice Rector for Information Technology at University of Stuttgart, Germany



Michel Verleysen

Vice Rector of Science and Technology Sector at *Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium*



Ena Voûte

Pro Vice Rector International Affairs at Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands

Resources

The annual subscription in 2025 amounted to €13,914. The annual account for our fiscal year from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025 was:

TYPE OF COSTS	ACCOUNTS 2024-2025, €
INTERNAL BODIES	42 385
SECRETARIAT	74 758
EVENTS	1 000
INITIATIVES	31 993
ICT	23 942
ADMINISTRATION	62 984
SALARIES	484 356
TOTAL EXPENSES	721 418
TOTAL INCOME	737 160
TO RESERVE	15 742

Secretariat

■ The Secretariat ensures the execution and implementation of the decisions by the governing bodies and manages and supports the daily operations of the association.

■ As of 31 December 2025, the Secretariat has the following staff, supporting more than 1,500 volunteers and leaders from our Member universities in their engagement with the association.

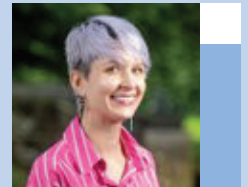
Indrė ANTANAČIŪTĖ
Operations Manager



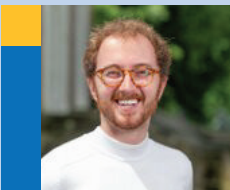
Mattias BJÖRNMALM
Secretary General



Louise DROGOUL
Senior Advisor for Innovation & Sustainability



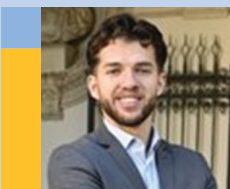
Vincent Klein IKKINK
Advisor for Research



Touko NÄRHI
Advisor for Benchmark & Higher Education



Julian-Alexis KASAPOV
Information and Communication Officer



CESAER

CESAER identification number in the transparency register of the European Union:

484959115993-15

Belgian business registry number:

KBO 0441894980

Kasteelpark Arenberg 1 Box 2200
3001 Leuven
BELGIUM



+32 486 41 17 56



cesaer.org

