

Statement

2 May 2022

Statement on the Initiative of the European Commission: Reforming Research Assessment

The Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany acknowledges the joint effort of hundreds of academic organisations across Europe and beyond to commit to responsible and quality-oriented research assessment. This is broadly reflected in their involvement in the European Commission's initiative "Towards an agreement on reforming research assessment", as part of the ERA Policy Agenda.

In this context, the Alliance underlines that the European research-performing and research-funding organisations share a set of common values and principles that allow them to respect national distinctions rooted in the respective legal and organisational settings. In Germany, such values are firmly anchored at the institutional, strategic and operational level, particularly in terms of the principles of research integrity, principles of good scientific practice and procedures of research assessment. However, evaluation, assessment and review procedures are not static but continuously evolve to keep pace with the ever-changing realities of research. They are constantly reflected, reviewed and adapted both at the national level and – bilaterally or multilaterally – within the strong collaborative network of European academics, research organisations and funders.

The Alliance, represented by its members DFG and Helmholtz, participates in the core group advising the EC's initiative on reforming research assessment. We regard this initiative as an opportunity to deepen the common understanding of the principles and values of responsible research assessment and to strengthen the sharing of best practices between the multitude of research-related actors that constitute the ERA. Such a process must, nevertheless, recognise essential requirements: the valuable diversity of research systems (e.g. in terms of topics, goals, practices, outcomes, career paths etc.), the autonomy of academic organisations, the freedom of research and the need to secure input from academic communities to ensure mutual learning. The Alliance's vision for research assessment in a renewed ERA is to share best practice as to achieve functional interoperability of specific research assessment systems and a strengthened process of mutual learning, and not to create one general Europe-wide harmonised system.

The Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany is an association of the most important German research organisations. It regularly publishes statements on central issues of research policy. The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) is a member of the Alliance and has taken the chair for 2022. Further members of the Alliance are the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the Leibniz Association, the Max Planck Society, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, and the German Science and Humanities Council (WR).

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