

INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE

From Barriers to Bridges – Roundtable discussion Academia Europaea Budapest Knowledge Hub



THE CHALLENGE

Despite substantial EU investment in frontier research, Europe's scientific landscape remains fragmented and unevenly competitive.

- Data from the European Research Council (2013–2024) highlight this imbalance:
- More than 96% of ERC funding is concentrated in just 16 countries, primarily in Western and Central Europe,
- While the remaining 27 ERA countries, including those in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, collectively receive less than 4% of supported projects.

This disparity poses a serious risk to Europe's long-term position in global science, particularly in comparison with the United States and emerging research leaders in Asia (China, Hong Kong, Singapore).



THE NEED

To address this imbalance, Europe requires a more cohesive and competitive European Research Area (ERA) – one that:

- strengthens research capacity in underrepresented regions,
- empowers talented scientists to initiate and lead world-class projects,
- and ensures a sustainable distribution of excellence across the continent.



A PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

The roundtable discussion will consist of three parts:

1. Experiences from within widening – experts from the EU and national academies who have already participated in widening programmes will share their insights – by invitation.
2. Lessons from success stories – representatives from countries that have successfully bridged the gap will present their best practices – by invitation.
3. Open forum for new ideas – contributors with fresh proposals and perspectives will be invited to present their visions – by open call.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The discussions will be summarised into a joint consensus document, reflecting the areas of agreement among participants. This document will be circulated both within the EU and to national stakeholders, providing concrete recommendations for fostering convergence in the ERA.



YOUR CONTRIBUTION

We warmly invite you to contribute your ideas, proposals, and perspectives that may help shape this new convergence mechanism.

Please send your contributions to hegyi.peter@semmelweis.hu by **20 October 2025**.

All submissions will be carefully reviewed and will serve as the basis of a structured programme among stakeholders.

As the concluding step of this process, and within the framework of the **Hungarian Academy of Sciences' 200th anniversary programme series**, the consensus will be presented and consolidated at the event on **5 November 2025, 09:00–12:00**.

Together, we can lay the foundations for a more cohesive, inclusive, and globally competitive Europe.



PÉTER HEGYI
MAE Director of AE
Budapest Knowledge Hub