

**EUA WORKSHOP SERIES: NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON  
REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT**

# **National perspectives on reforming research assessment**

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Organised by Open Science Austria (OSA) and EUA  
5 December 2022



## Outline



Launch of CoARA



The Agreement



# Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment

Our vision is that the assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. This requires basing assessment primarily on qualitative judgement, for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.

# COARA CHAIR AND STEERING BOARD

- Rianne Letschert (Maastricht University, UNL, YERUN) - **Chair**
- Elizabeth Gadd (INORMS Research Evaluation Group) - **Vice-Chair**
- Karen Stroobants (Marie Curie Alumni Association; EuroScience) - **Vice-Chair**
- Lidia Borrell-Damián (Science Europe)
- Paul Boyle (European University Association)
- Yensi Alejandra Flores Bueso (Global Young Academy)
- Matthias Koenig (German Research Foundation - DFG)
- Eva Mendéz (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)
- Menico Rizzi (Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes - ANVUR)
- Sylvie Rousset (French National Centre for Scientific Research - CNRS)
- Toma Susi (Initiative for Science in Europe - ISE)

# ELECTION OF THE COARA STEERING BOARD

✓ Type of organisation:

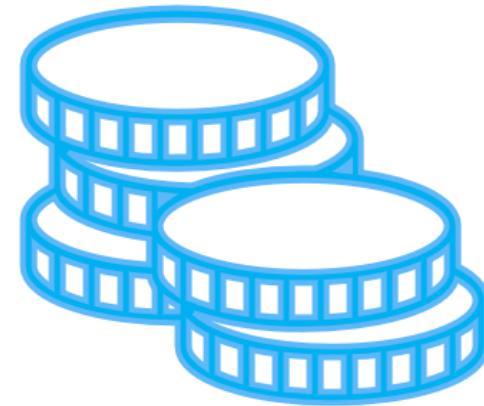
UNI	Universities, and their associations	3
RPO	Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations	1
ACA	Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers	3
FUN	Public or private research funding organisations and their associations	2
AUTH	National/regional authorities or agencies	1
OTH	Other relevant not-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations	1

✓ Gender:

Women	Men
7	4

# A WORD ON COALITION FUNDING

- **The preliminary work plan and budget of the CoARA were endorsed by the Constitutive Assembly.**
- The document describes the tasks foreseen for the CoARA during the period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the corresponding budget necessary and available, and the fundraising strategy.
- **No membership fee will be applied to CoARA members.**
- **The Secretariat has been tasked with fundraising. It will engage with public funding organisations, philanthropies, and other organisations within and outside the Coalition. It will also apply to relevant calls for proposals.**



# DOCUMENTS ON GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION OF THE COALITION

- Governance Document - Describes the guiding principles of the Coalition, its structures, their powers, authority and responsibilities, and their relationship
- Rules of Procedure for Working Groups - Describes the conditions and procedures for the creation and management of Working Groups (WGs) within the Coalition
- Rules of Procedure for the Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and Steering Board - Describes the processes governing the establishment and renewal of the Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and Steering Board members of the Coalition
- Code of Conduct

# MEMBERSHIP

- Organisations that have **signed the Agreement** on Reforming Research Assessment, and that are:
  - Universities, and their associations;
  - Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations;
  - Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers;
  - Public or private research funding organisations and their associations;
  - National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations; and
  - Other relevant **not-for-profit** organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations.
- Membership **approved by the Steering Board** (Interim Chairs before the Constitutive Assembly)
- Members **may leave** the Coalition at any time



# COALITION BODIES

- **General Assembly of Members** - All Members. The organ representing all the members of the Coalition. The **highest-level decision-making body**, that meets at least once a year (at least three times during the first year)
- **Working Groups** - **Voluntary participation**. To exchange knowledge, learn mutually, discuss and investigate any topic to advance research assessment and help with the implementation of the Members commitments
- **Steering Board** - **Elected**. A collegial body, responsible for the overall oversight, strategy, business plan and sustainability of the Coalition. Taking decisions by mutual agreement
- **Coalition Secretariat** - **Supports** the administrative, managerial, logistical, communication, engagement, networking, outreach, leadership and other activities of the Coalition

# WORK OF THE COALITION

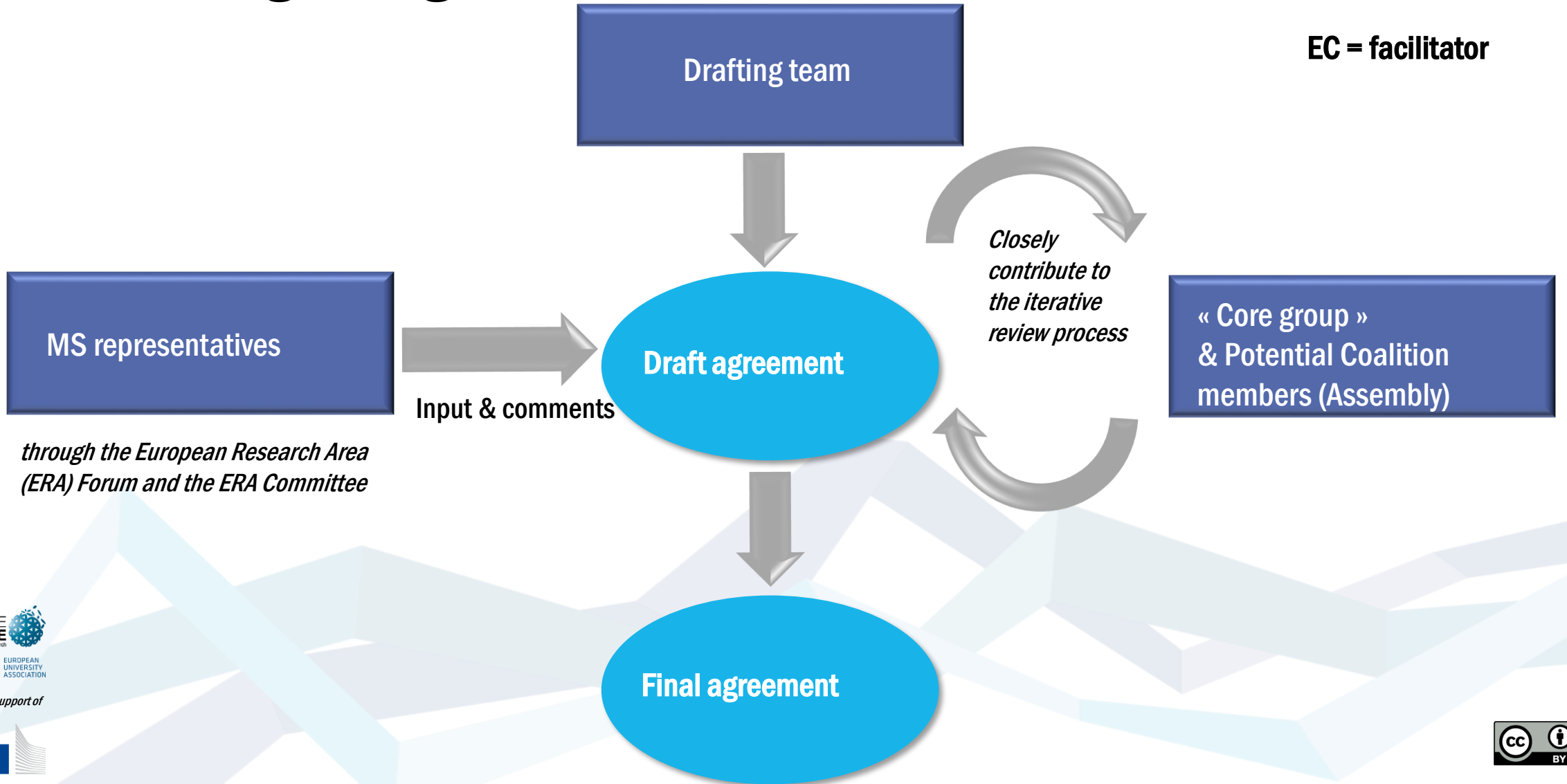
- **Working Groups** operating as '**communities of practice**' and offering space for mutual learning and collaboration. Examples:
  - "**Interest communities**", on ad-hoc horizontal topics
  - "**Discipline communities**", on approaches to tailor criteria and processes by discipline, inter-disciplinary field, thematic area
  - "**Institution communities**", on topics specific to a given type of organisation
  - "**National communities**", on issues specific to different types of organisations of a given country or group of countries
- **Other complementary means** like workshops, webinars, (annual) conferences, seminars, trainings, etc.

# PUBLICATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON 20 JULY



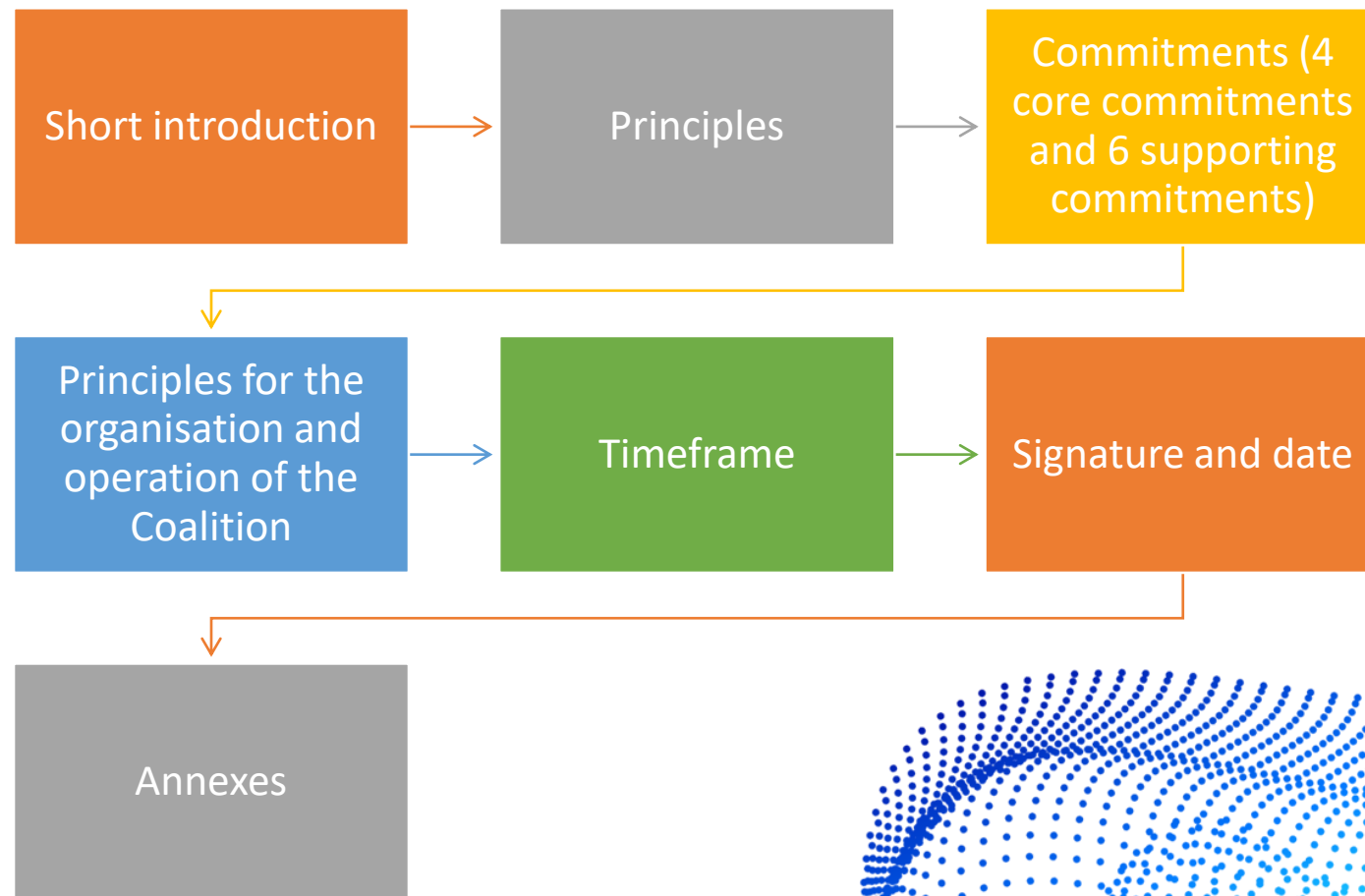
<https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/>

# Drafting an Agreement, a co-creation exercise





<https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/>



# Introduction

As signatories of this Agreement, we agree on the need for reform of research assessment practices.

**Vision:** The assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. [...]

**Scope:** RPOs and research units, research projects, individual researchers and research teams. [...]

This Agreement establishes a **common direction** for research assessment reform practices, while respecting organisations' **autonomy**.

We commit to realise reform through a **coalition** of RFOs, RPOs, national/regional assessment authorities and agencies, as well as associations of the above organisations, learned societies and other relevant organisations, that is **global in scope**.

We will **work together** to enable **systemic reform** on the basis of **common principles** within an **agreed timeframe**, and to facilitate **exchanges of information and mutual learning** between all those willing to improve research assessment practices.

# Core commitments

1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators
3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index
4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment



# Supporting commitments (1)

5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to
6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes

## 6.1 Criteria for units and institutions

With the direct involvement of research organisations and researchers at all career stages, review and develop criteria for assessing research units and research performing organisations, while promoting interoperability

## 6.2 Criteria for projects and researchers

With the direct involvement of researchers at all career stages, review and develop criteria, tools and processes for the assessment of research projects, research teams and researchers that are adapted to their context of application





## Supporting commitments (2)

7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use
8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition
9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments
10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research



# Timeframe

**Year 0 (2022)**

Signature

**Year 5 (2027)**

At least one cycle of review and development of own assessment criteria, tools and processes

**Year 1 (2023)**

Start the process of reviewing or developing criteria, tools and processes

NB: Organisations can sign the Agreement at any point in time beyond 2022. The timeline for organisations signing after 2022 will be adjusted accordingly.

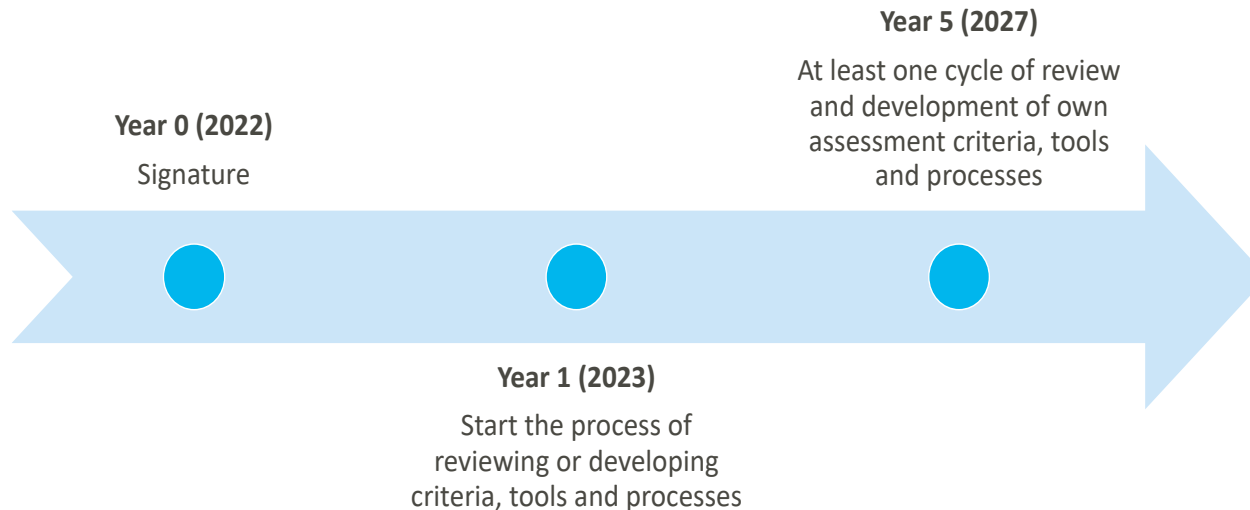
# Annexes

- Do not form an integral part of the Agreement.
- Annex 1 outlines the need for reform.
- Annex 2 clarifies the terminology used.
- Annex 3 suggests a reform journey.
- Annex 4 provides an initial toolbox.



# Signing the agreement

## *What does it mean for my institution? (1)*



- Concrete steps and activities to be developed in Year 1 and up to Year 5 will be decided by each institution.
- Each institution will develop its own path in the implementation of the Agreement.
- No benchmarking with other institutions.

*Participants will keep full control on the steps they make to implement the Agreement and the speed of their reform journey, which can vary from one organisation to another depending on many factors (...)*

*Organisations commit to share information on the progress made and lessons learnt in their reform journey, according to the timeframe included in the agreement. Sharing of information shall be done on the basis of **self-assessment and by no means the progress of individual organisations will be validated by the Coalition.***

(cf. [FAQ](#))

# Signing the agreement

## *What does it mean for my institution? (2)*

### **POSSIBILITY TO BECOME MEMBER OF COARA**

#### **RESOURCE ALLOCATION:**

**Commitment 5:** Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to

**Purpose:** “This commitment will ensure that organisations allocate the necessary resources, whether in the form of budget or staff capacity, to improve research assessment practices within their agreed timeframe.”

“Resources should be allocated as is needed for each organisation to achieve the changes that will enable adherence to the Principles and to implement the Commitments.”

**Each institution will be autonomous in deciding the type and amount of resources they will commit to implement the Agreement. There is no minimum requirement.**

# Is this Agreement legally binding?

- Not legally binding, but...
- It is an Agreement, with clear commitments.
- Signing the Agreement is a precondition for joining the Coalition.
- Participation on a voluntary basis.
- Full autonomy of organisations, full control on the steps towards the implementation of the Agreement and the speed of the reform journey.
- More of a morally binding signature, towards peer organisations and own community.
- Organisations and their staff can leave the Coalition at any time.





## Sign the Agreement

While acknowledging that this Agreement does not have any legally binding effect, it represents a public commitment to contribute actively and constructively to reforming research assessment. The Agreement is open for signature by organisations from across the world, including organisations without legal personality. However the Agreement is not open for signature by individual persons.

First Name \*

Last Name \*

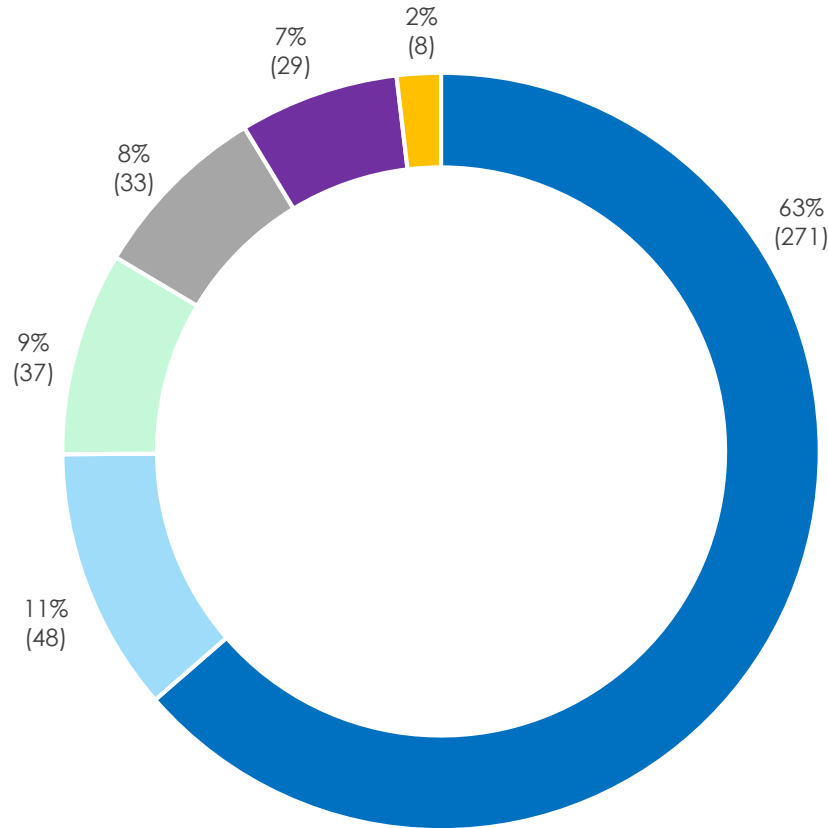
Full name of organisation \*

Position with organisation \*

[www.coara.eu/sign](http://www.coara.eu/sign)

# SIGNATORIES UPDATE

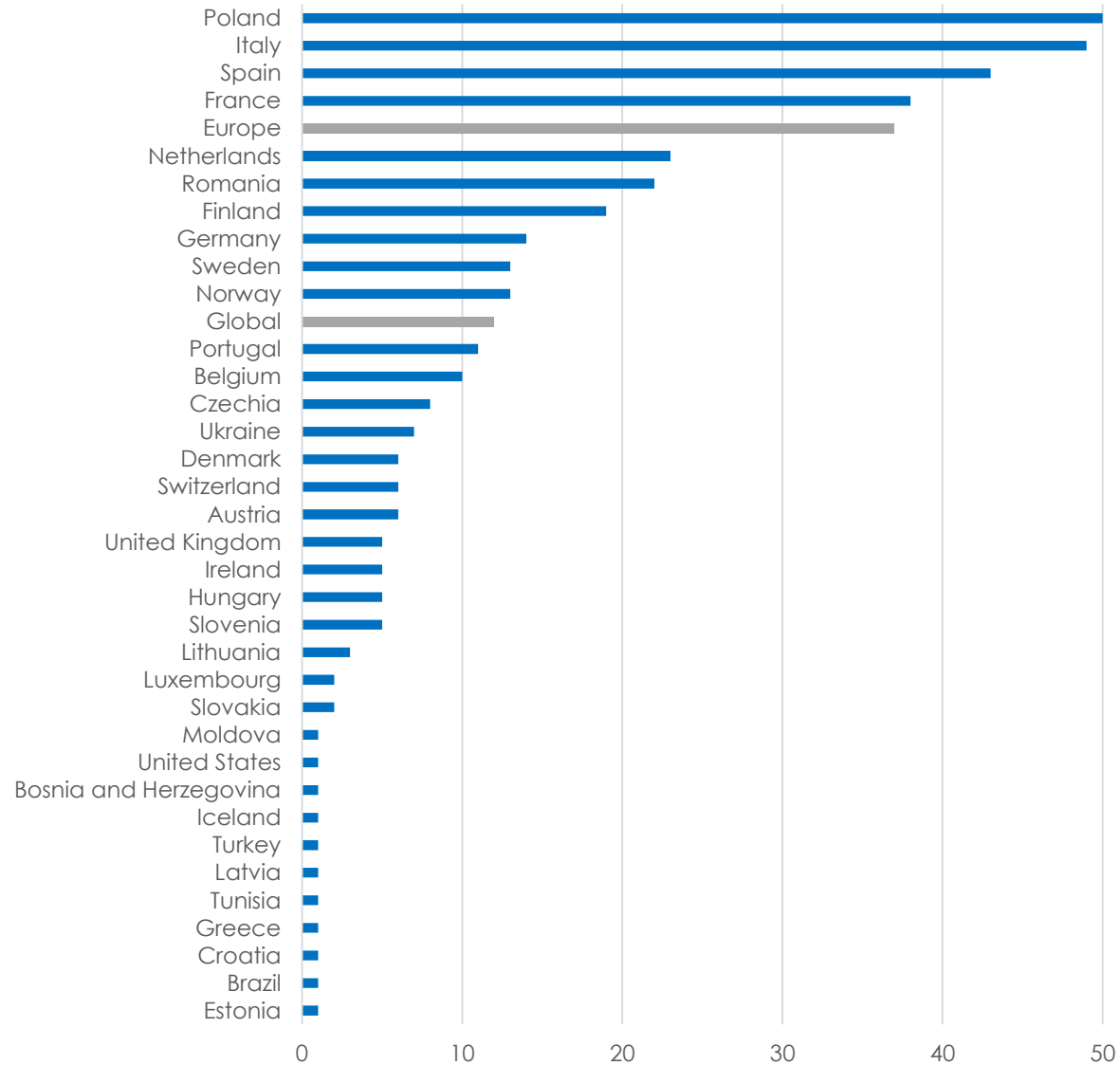
426  
signatories



- Universities and their associations
- Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations
- Public or private research funding organisations and their associations
- Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers
- Other relevant non-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations
- National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations

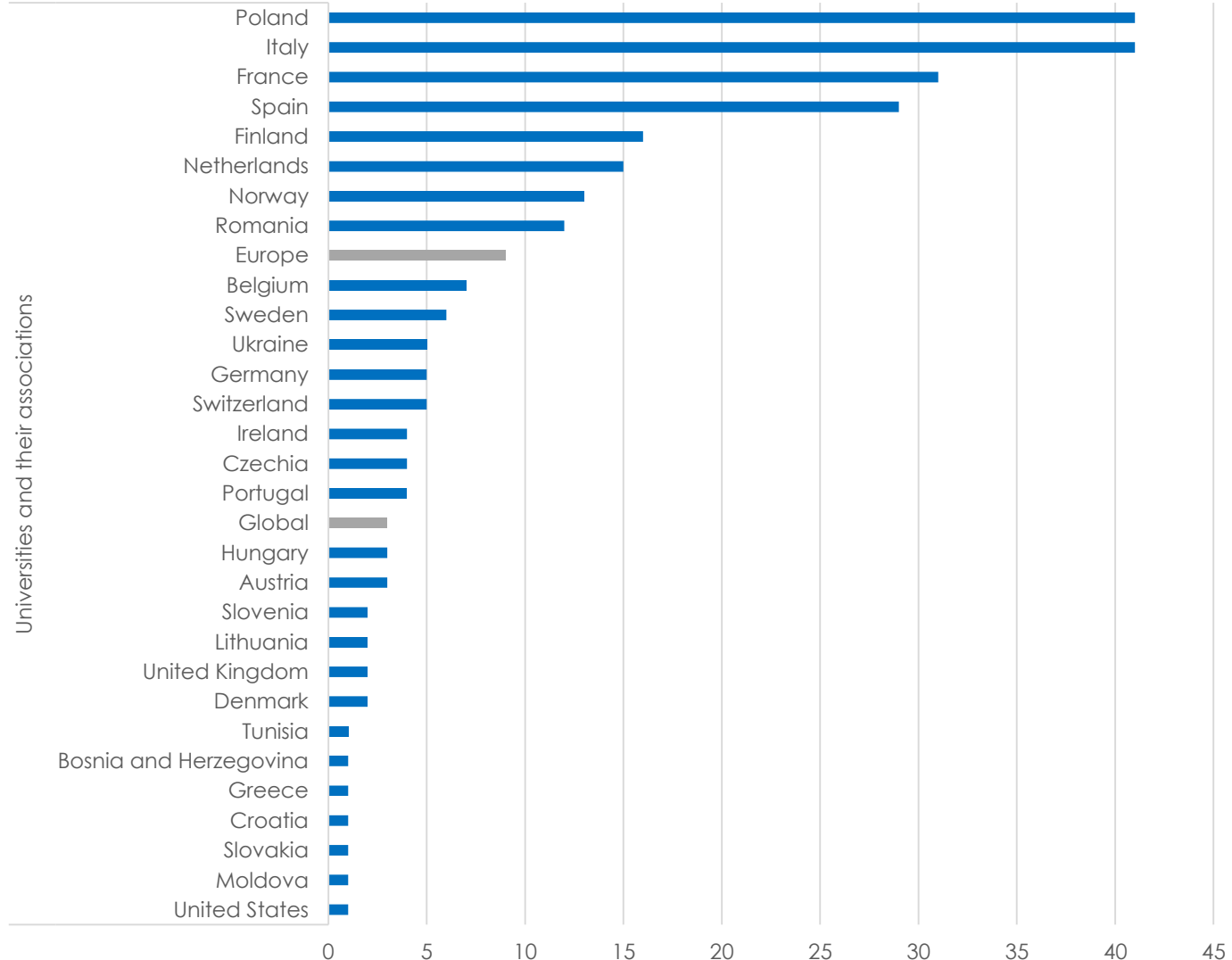


# SIGNATORIES – COUNTRY DISTRIBUTION



# SIGNATORIES – UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

**253 universities**  
**9 NRCs**  
**9 other univ networks**  
**(271 in total)**



# Universities needed to bring about change



It is crucial that universities are actively involved in the reform of research assessment



Universities should make an informed decision on this process



Universities should be properly represented in the future coalition and its governing bodies



Only a substantial number of universities joining the coalition will guarantee that the interests of the sector are taken into account in the reform process

# Thank you for your attention

