

People-to-People dialogue: Consolidating insights from the MCAA Annual Conference 2026 and Policy Impact Day

Date: 29 April 2026
Time: 13:00–15:00 CEST

Format: Online (World Café Style)
Online access: [Link](#)

Background and context

Following the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) Annual Conference 2026 in Brussels and online—celebrating “Research careers beyond borders: 30 years of the MSCA”—and the MSCA-GLOPOL Policy Impact Day satellite event, there is a critical need to digest, consolidate, and act upon the insights generated.

Objectives

- **Synthesise takeaways:** Distil the core messages from the Policy Impact Day and the Annual Conference into actionable policy recommendations.
- **Foster cross-border dialogue:** Provide an interactive space for researchers, alumni, and policymakers to exchange ideas directly.
- **Enhance connections:** Connect researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders, fostering dialogue and collaboration on MSCA-related opportunities.

World Café Format Agenda

The World Café format allows participants to rotate through different thematic breakout rooms, building upon the ideas of previous groups to create a comprehensive dialogue.

| Time | Session | Details |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|
| 13:00–13:15 | Plenary: Welcome & framing | Introduction to the MSCA-GLOPOL project, recap of the MCAA Annual Conference/Policy Impact Day, and explanation of the World Café norms. |
| 13:15–13:40 | World Café: Round 1 | Participants are divided into 3 breakout rooms (topics A, B, and C). Facilitators guide the initial discussion. |
| 13:40–13:45 | Break | Participants switch rooms. Facilitators remain to welcome the new group. |
| 13:45–14:10 | World Café: Round 2 | Participants tackle a new topic. Facilitators briefly summarise round 1 insights so the new group can build upon them. |
| 14:10–14:15 | Break | Final room rotation |



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| 14:15–14:40 | World Café: Round 3 | The final group refines the ideas and identifies concrete next steps or policy recommendations. |
| 14:40–15:00 | Plenary: Harvest & closing | Facilitators report the key takeaways from their respective topics. Open floor for final remarks and outline of the next steps. |

World Café topics and specific questions per breakout room

Topic A: Translating research into real-world impact (sectoral synergies)

This table will focus on insights into climate action, health innovation, and artificial intelligence (AI), and will aim to foster direct dialogue with policymakers and industry.

- **Translating knowledge:** In fast-moving and critical fields like AI, health, and climate action, what are the most effective ways for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) researchers to translate their complex findings into actionable advice for policymakers and industry leaders?
- **Industry integration:** What are the most significant barriers preventing MSCA fellows from transitioning their research into industry applications, and how can these be mitigated?
- **Direct dialogue:** If you had a dedicated 15-minute meeting with an industry leader or policymaker in your field, what is the single most important message or request you would convey based on your current research?

Topic B: Building research careers (inter-programme synergies)

This table directly addresses the synergies between the MSCA, European Research Council (ERC), Erasmus+, and European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), focusing on aligning these opportunities.

- **Bridging the gaps:** Drawing from the Policy Impact Day discussions, where are the biggest disconnects when a researcher tries to transition from an Erasmus+ or an MSCA grant to securing larger funding like an ERC grant?
- **Administrative alignment:** What specific, practical changes could funding bodies (MSCA, ERC, COST) implement to align their administrative processes and make cross-programme participation easier for researchers?
- **Leveraging networks:** How can researchers better utilise networks like the COST Association to build the international collaborations necessary to advance their careers to the next funding level?

Topic C: Overcoming barriers in global cooperation (closing policy gaps)

This table captures the overarching objectives of the GLOPOL project: identifying policy gaps in bi-regional cooperation, reviewing the state-of-the-art global MSCA cooperation, and reducing participation barriers.

- **Identifying gaps:** From a researcher's grassroots perspective, where do current international research and innovation (R&I) policies lag the most behind actual, on-the-ground research priorities?
- **Tackling complexity:** "Administrative complexity" and "low awareness" are cited as major barriers to MSCA participation globally. What are two concrete steps the MCAA or the European Commission could take to simplify access for international talent?
- **The MCAA's role:** Looking at the global policy landscape, how can the MCAA better serve as a bridge to ensure that the everyday challenges faced by global researchers are clearly communicated to The Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) and other policy bodies?
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The event is open to the public. Link to connect [here](#). For more information, please contact:

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