

August 14, 2026

To
The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG)

Subject: Application for EHEA Partner Status

Dear Bologna Follow-up Group,

I, Gian Maria Greco, Chair of the Marie Curie Alumni Association ([MCAA](https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu)), hereby submit to the Bologna Follow-up Group, on behalf of the Association, this application requesting that the MCAA be granted partner status with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

In accordance with Annex 4 of the Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area (RoP-EHEA), the present application documents how the MCAA fulfils the criteria for association with the EHEA as a partner organisation and outlines the contribution it can bring to the work of the Bologna Process and the Bologna Follow-up Group.

Alignment of the MCAA with BFUG Partner Criteria

1. Added Value to the Bologna Process

The Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) brings a distinct and complementary perspective to the Bologna Process by representing a large community of internationally mobile researchers trained within European higher education systems.

The Association contributes added value to the work of the BFUG in several ways:

- **A European and global community rooted in higher education**
 - MCAA members have been trained through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), a programme that operates across universities, research institutions and other sectors throughout Europe and beyond. Many alumni have pursued doctoral and postdoctoral training in European higher education institutions, thereby contributing to the development of the European knowledge base and the international attractiveness of European higher education.
 - Through this community, the MCAA provides direct insight into the mobility of highly skilled graduates and researchers, a central element of the Bologna Process and of the EHEA objective of enabling seamless mobility of students and staff.
- **Strengthening the link between higher education, research and society**
 - The MCAA community spans academia, industry, policy organisations and civil society. As a result, the Association can contribute to strengthening the

- connections between higher education and the labour market, an area identified as relevant for BFUG stakeholders.
- MCAA members contribute to innovation ecosystems, entrepreneurship, policy development and societal engagement. Their professional trajectories illustrate how higher education can equip graduates with skills relevant to addressing global challenges and supporting economic and social development.
- **Supporting innovation and future-oriented higher education**
 - The Tirana Communiqué emphasises the importance of responding to societal, technological and environmental transitions through innovation, flexible learning pathways and lifelong learning.
 - The MCAA actively supports these priorities through initiatives that promote:
 - interdisciplinary collaboration
 - skills development for researchers
 - responsible research and innovation
 - engagement between academia and industry
 - international research cooperation
 - Through these activities, the Association contributes practical perspectives on how higher education and research training can respond to evolving societal needs.
- **Complementarity with existing stakeholders**
 - The MCAA complements the perspectives of existing consultative members and stakeholders by representing research alumni and internationally mobile researchers, a group that is not otherwise directly represented within the BFUG structure.
 - Its contribution therefore adds a unique dimension to the policy dialogue by connecting doctoral and postdoctoral training, research careers and higher education policy.

2. Relevance of the Stakeholder Group

Higher education and research training are central to the mission of the MCAA and to the activities of its members.

The Association represents alumni who have undertaken advanced training within European higher education institutions and who maintain strong professional links with universities, research organisations and innovation ecosystems across Europe.

Through its activities, the MCAA engages with several key policy priorities of the Bologna Process, including:

- the internationalisation of higher education
- mobility and recognition of qualifications
- innovation in learning, research and knowledge transfer
- lifelong learning and career development
- cooperation between higher education institutions and other sectors.

By representing researchers at different stages of their careers, including those working both within and outside academia, the Association contributes to discussions on the evolving role of higher education in preparing graduates for diverse career paths and societal engagement.

This perspective aligns with the broader objective of the European Higher Education Area to strengthen the contribution of higher education to society and to foster cooperation across education, research and innovation systems.

3. Representativeness

The Marie Curie Alumni Association is a global network representing a large and diverse community of researchers connected through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme.

The Association includes thousands of members located in Europe and worldwide, many of whom are affiliated with universities and research institutions within the European Higher Education Area.

The MCAA membership reflects:

- a wide geographical distribution across EHEA countries and beyond
- representation across all scientific disciplines
- engagement across multiple sectors including academia, industry and public administration.

The Association operates through a democratic governance structure with elected leadership and working groups that involve members in policy discussions and community initiatives.

The MCAA is an **independent organisation** and is not a sub-organisation of any existing member or consultative member of the Bologna Follow-up Group.

4. Organisational Form

The Marie Curie Alumni Association is an **independent non-governmental organisation (NGO)** registered under Belgian law and headquartered in Brussels.

The Association's statutes define its mission as supporting the professional development and collaboration of MSCA fellows and alumni while contributing to European and international research and higher education policy discussions.

Through its governance structure, the MCAA is able to represent the interests and perspectives of its members in policy debates related to higher education, research training and mobility.

5. Contribution to the Work of the BFUG

As an EHEA Partner, the MCAA would actively support the work of the BFUG by contributing expertise and perspectives from the international research and alumni community.

In particular, the Association can contribute to BFUG discussions on:

- mobility and international cooperation in higher education
- recognition of qualifications and career pathways for highly skilled graduates
- the relationship between higher education, research and innovation
- the development of future-oriented skills and lifelong learning
- strengthening collaboration between higher education institutions and other sectors of society.

Through its extensive network and policy engagement activities, the MCAA is well positioned to help disseminate and promote the objectives of the Bologna Process among the international research community.

Yours sincerely,

Gian Maria Greco, Chair of the Board

