European Forum for Studies of Policies for Research and Innovation (Eu-SPRI)

Newsletter, Autumn 2026

Message from The President

Message from the President of the Eu-SPRI Forum, Matthias Weber

Dear colleagues, partners and friends of the Eu-SPRI community

I hope you have all returned refreshed after the summer break. I also hope that our colleagues at Universidad Politecnica de Valencia have had time to recover after hosting this year's Eu-SPRI Annual Conference. With almost 450 participants, it was one of the largest conferences ever organised by the Forum and attracted particularly strong participation from outside Europe, especially Latin America. The keynote speakers offered fresh perspectives and plenty of food for thought, while the conference tracks brought together established and emerging areas of research. Together, they demonstrated the Eu-SPRI Forum's continuing commitment to research that is relevant to policy and wider societal challenges.

You can read more in the conference report included in this newsletter.

Eu-SPRI will have a busy schedule of activities in the coming months with training and early career activities organised by the member organisations, including the regular early career and PhD circulation scheme. This will be complemented by a **Thematic Conference** on Transformative Innovation in Times of Tensions, organised by our friends from **Vaasa University**, and our **2027 Annual Conference**, which will take place in Leiden, organised by **TNO VECTOR** in collaboration with the University of Leiden.

The coming months will also be very interesting from a European policy perspective. The preparations for the EU's next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation are entering the final negotiation phase between Commission, Parliament and Council to ensure a timely start of the programme in 2028. A critical role in these negotiations will be played by the governance of the relationships between the European Competitiveness Fund and the Framework Programme; an issue where positions of the three institutions still diverge quite significantly. The recently released Innovation Act emphasises the importance of demand-side measures, including research and development procurement and regulatory sandboxes. It also highlights the effective exploitation and management of intellectual property, as well as the critical role of capital markets and financial instruments in helping innovative firms and solutions to scale.

All of this is unfolding in a highly volatile geopolitical and geo-economic context. Research, innovation and technology are increasingly viewed as critical strategic assets in the competition between major economic powers, while the scope for international collaboration on challenges of global significance is coming under growing pressure.

Eu-SPRI and its members play an important role in helping political decision-makers understand the

challenges and tensions ahead, as well as in developing policy and governance options to address them. These close links to current policy debates also strengthen our early-career training, mobility and research activities, helping to ensure that our scientific work remains relevant in practice.

Warm regards,

Matthias Weber

President, Eu-SPRI Forum, Head of the Center for Innovation Systems and Policy, AIT Austrian Institute of Technology & Professor of Innovation Policy, Université Gustave Eiffel

Upcoming Eu-SPRI Events and Opportunities

Forthcoming opportunities for training, mobility and early-career engagement across the Eu-SPRI community:

11 October 2026 | Early Career and PhD Circulation Programme
The deadline for the next mobility scheme call is **11 October 2026.**

19-23 October 2026
Early Career EU-SPRI Autumn School 2026: Responsible AI for Science, Technology, Innovation and Policy, at CIRCLE in Lund, Sweden

16–19 March 2027 | Science–Policy Dialogue Training, Berlin
The third edition of the Science–Policy Dialogue Training will be held in Berlin, with pre-events planned for February 2027.

5–9 April, 2027 | The Manchester Academy, Manchester
The Manchester Academy on Science and Innovation Policy: Connecting Research and Policy in a Transforming Global Landscape

13 April 2027 | Early Career Conference, Vaasa
Navigating Academic Careers in Times of Tensions will take place at the University of Vaasa, Finland, alongside the thematic conference.

14–16 April 2027 | Eu-SPRI Thematic Conference, Vaasa
Transformative Innovation in Times of Tensions will be hosted by the University of Vaasa, Finland.

9–11 June 2027 | Eu-SPRI Annual Conference, The Hague
The 2027 Eu-SPRI Annual Conference will be organised by TNO and is taking place at The Hague Campus Wijnhaven of Leiden University, with the VECTOR symposium taking place in the afternoon of June 8.

See the Eu-SPRI website for further details of planned events and call deadlines.

Save the Date: Manchester Academy 2027

Planning is underway for the next Manchester Academy for Innovation Research, expected to take place from 5-9 April 2027. Aimed at later-stage doctoral researchers, the Academy will bring

together participants from across the Eu-SPRI network and the wider international innovation studies community, including colleagues from Georgia Tech, KAIST and the University of Johannesburg.

While the programme is still in development, some potential themes include innovation policy, sustainability transitions, place-based innovation and research impact. The Academy is intended to support research development, foster international collaboration across regions and disciplines, and create opportunities for participants to explore the links between research, policy and practice.

Further information will be shared in the coming months, with **applications expected to open in January 2027.**

Open Calls

Eu-SPRI Early Career and PhD Researcher Circulation Scheme Submission deadline: 11 October 2026

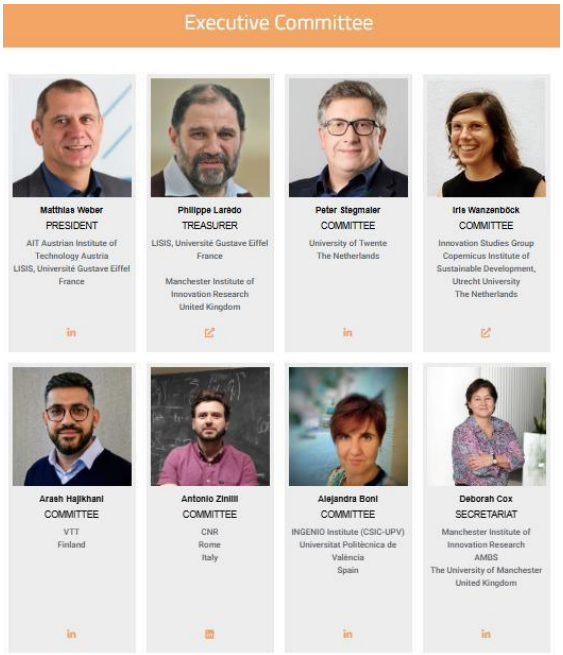
The Eu-SPRI Forum is inviting applications for its Early Career and PhD Researcher Circulation Scheme, supporting short- and long-term research mobility between member institutions across Europe.

The scheme is open to PhD researchers in their second year or beyond and early career researchers within 36 months of completing their PhD. Successful applicants can undertake research visits at partner organisations, build international networks and collaborate with scholars working in science, technology and innovation (STI) policy.

Two options are available: short-term mobility (minimum 1 month) and regular mobility (minimum 3 months).

Applicants must be affiliated with an Eu-SPRI member institution and have research interests related to STI policy, innovation or entrepreneurship.

Applications should be sent to the Secretariat (deborah.cox@manchester.ac.uk) by **11 October 2026**.



Eu-SPRI Executive Committee Members 2026-27

Introducing the Eu-SPRI Forum Executive Committee 2026–2027

The Executive Committee members are selected to serve by the General Assembly. They play a central role in the governance and strategic direction, guiding the overall mission and strategic priorities of the Forum.

Eu-SPRI has welcomed Alejandra Boni as a new member of its Executive Committee for 2026–27. We would also like to thank Stephanie Daimer who stepped down in 2026 for her service and contributions to the Committee.

President

Matthias Weber – AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, Austria / Université Gustave Eiffel, France

Having worked for many years at the interface of R&I policy research and EU policymaking, one of my ambitions for Eu-SPRI is to strengthen the links between research and policy practice. This includes preparing the next generation of researchers to work effectively at this interface. I would also like to help shape emerging agendas for R&I policy research in Europe, informed by the latest scientific developments within and beyond our field and by evolving policy needs.

Treasurer

Philippe Larédo – LISIS, Université Gustave Eiffel, France / Manchester Institute of Innovation Research, UK

Renée van Dis will assume the role of Treasurer of the Forum from January 2027. Renée works as a research engineer at INRAE within UMR LISIS (Laboratoire Interdisciplinaire Sciences Innovations Sociétés) in France. Her work focuses on research impact assessment and transformative science

Committee Members

Peter Stegmaier – University of Twente, The Netherlands

Within the Eu-SPRI Forum Executive Committee, I value the exchange on emerging developments in our field. In terms of content, I continue to support the exploratory initiatives, new members and partnerships, as well as the updates to the recommendations on the organisation of conferences, also based on practical insights from the 2024 conference in Twente. Furthermore, I would like to continue encouraging us all to do our bit to foster a sense of Eu-SPRI Forum community within our member organisations, actively

engaging those who have previously shown an interest and sparking interest among new people

Iris Wanzenböck – Innovation Studies Group, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

I am glad to contribute to the Eu-SPRI Executive Committee, supporting a community where researchers, early-career scholars and policy practitioners can connect and generate insights that matter for science and society. Looking ahead, I am especially keen to strengthen opportunities for early-career training and development, creating dedicated moments for learning and exchange among the next generation of STI scholars.

Antonio Zinilli – CNR-IRCrES, Rome, Italy

I am pleased to contribute to the Eu-SPRI Executive Committee. Within this community, my work

centres on how research infrastructures, such as RISIS, can become shared and sustainable resources for the study of science, technology and innovation. Looking ahead, I want to strengthen training for the next generation of STI scholars through dedicated opportunities for learning and exchange, including AI and network science approaches that can help the Eu-SPRI community analyse complex innovation systems.

Alejandra Boni – INGENIO Institute (CSIC-UPV) Universitat Politècnica de València Spain
I bring hands-on experience, collaborative project leadership and practical know-how to the Eu-SPRI Executive Committee. I actively connect our members with external partners through initiatives such as TRIP-EuHub and the P2D project, helping to turn collaboration into funded opportunities, including our current multi-institution industrial doctoral programme application. Having organised the 2026 annual conference, I also offer practical operational insights to help the committee make events smoother, boost training opportunities, and keep the network thriving.

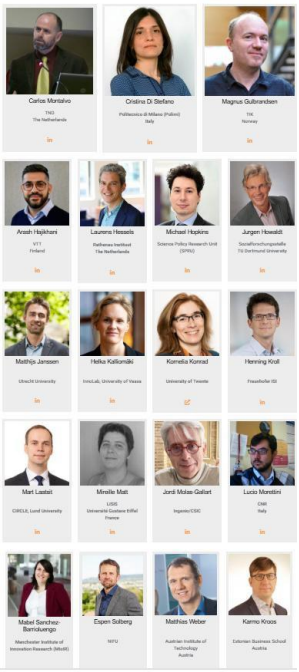
Arash Hajikhani – VTT, Finland.
My motivation for serving on the Eu-SPRI Executive Committee is to contribute back to a community that has been important to my own academic development and to help strengthen collaboration across the innovation studies community. I am particularly interested in supporting emerging research themes, creating opportunities for early-career researchers, and helping connect our community more closely with new methodological and policy developments. Social Media presence is also important angle for me. With the help of the Secretariat, we are trying to highlight main events in our community. View the latest post.

Secretariat
Deborah Cox – Manchester Institute of Innovation Research, AMBS, The University of Manchester, UK

This diverse and experienced team brings together leading voices from across Europe's STI policy landscape. Their collective expertise will be instrumental in advancing Eu-SPRI's mission to foster interdisciplinary research, support early-career scholars, and shape transformative innovation policies.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead under their leadership!

General Assembly of the Eu-SPRI Forum 2026-27



Meet the Eu-SPRI General Assembly Representatives for 2026–2027
We are pleased to introduce the members of the Eu-SPRI Forum General Assembly for the 2026–2027 term.

Representing our member institutions in the Forum. These individuals play a vital role in shaping the strategic direction of the Forum and ensuring the dissemination of information from Eu-SPRI and enhancing network collaboration.

These representatives bring a wealth of experience and insight from their respective institutions and countries. Their collective efforts will help guide Eu-SPRI's mission to foster interdisciplinary research, support early-career

scholars and advance transformative innovation policies across Europe.

We thank them for their commitment and look forward to a productive and inspiring term!

Eu-SPRI Annual Report 2025

Eu-SPRI Forum Annual Report of Activities 2025

Highlights from the Eu-SPRI Annual Report 2025

The Eu-SPRI Forum Annual Report of Activities 2025 reflects another successful year for the network, marked by strong international engagement, vibrant early career activities and continued collaboration across member organisations. With 18 full members, the Forum maintained a broad programme of activities.

Supporting early career researchers remained a central priority. Across 2025, members delivered two training schools, two early career events and funded 18 international research visits through the mobility scheme, strengthening connections and knowledge exchange across the network. Eu-SPRI invested €41,000 in circulation awards, enabling researchers to build collaborations and develop new research opportunities.

A key milestone of the year was the 15th Eu-SPRI Annual Conference, Shaping Societal Futures with STI Policies, hosted by TU Dortmund. Bringing together around 370 participants from 31 countries, the conference provided a platform for discussion on the role of science, technology and innovation policy in addressing pressing societal challenges, from sustainability and social inclusion to resilience and digital transformation.

The report also highlights the growing contribution of the Stakeholder Advisory Board in strengthening links between research and policymaking, alongside new collaborations with partner networks and emerging initiatives focused on inclusive innovation and innovation under conditions of tension and uncertainty.

Looking ahead, the Forum is well positioned to build on this momentum through new collaborations, upcoming conferences and a continued commitment to supporting the next generation of researchers and policy scholars across the Eu-SPRI community.

Read the report here

Eu-SPRI Annual Conference 2026

Eu-SPRI Annual Conference 2026: Questioning the contributions of Science and Innovation to Society

The **2026 Eu-SPRI Annual Conference**, hosted by **Ingenio (CSIC-UPV)** at the **Universitat Politècnica de València** from 10–12 June, brought together 445 participants from Europe, Asia and the Americas to examine a timely and challenging question: what contributions should science and innovation make to society? Across 362 papers, 23 tracks and 15 special sessions, the programme explored how science, technology and innovation policy can respond to pressing societal concerns including climate change, biodiversity loss, inequality, responsible AI, health innovation and sustainability transitions.

Keynotes from Asunción Lera St. Clair, Andy Stirling and Amir Lebdioui, alongside policy roundtables and sessions such as The Dark Side of Innovation, encouraged participants to think critically about directionality, public value and the governance of innovation. The conference reaffirmed the strength of the Eu-SPRI community as a space for open, interdisciplinary debate on how research and innovation can be shaped more reflexively, democratically and responsibly in response to today's major societal challenges.

2026 Eu-SPRI–EIBA PhD and Early Career Summer School

Reflections from the 2026 Eu-SPRI–EIBA PhD and Early Career Summer School

PhD researcher **Aynur Temel** reflects on her experience at the **2026 Eu-SPRI–EIBA PhD and Early Career Summer School** at **Villa del Grumello, Lake Como**. Bringing together PhD researchers and senior scholars from across innovation and international business, the week provided an opportunity to explore different research approaches and engage with leading academics in the field.

As a second-year PhD student, Aynur particularly valued the depth of the methodological sessions, which explored approaches ranging from qualitative research to mathematical modelling and encouraged participants to critically reflect on their own research methods.

The programme also featured expert talks on topics including biomedical patenting, the OLI paradigm and mathematical modelling, alongside “How to Publish” sessions offering practical insights into academic publishing. Aynur also made use of the daily one-to-one sessions with faculty, receiving valuable feedback on her PhD projects and wider academic development.

The summer school provided an opportunity to deepen methodological knowledge, gain new perspectives and build connections with fellow researchers and leading scholars in innovation and international business.

Read the full article here

Blogs

Bridging AI Regulation and Transformative Innovation Policy

In her new blog, **Gabrielle Canalli,** a PhD researcher at Gran Faculdade, Brazil reflects on a one-month **Eu-SPRI Early Career Researcher and PhD Researcher Circulation Scheme** visit to **INGENIO** at the Universitat Politècnica de València. The placement provided an opportunity to deepen her doctoral research on artificial intelligence regulation in Brazil, while exploring how the Transformative Innovation Policy framework can help understand the broader goals and societal impacts of AI governance.

During the visit, Gabrielle worked closely with researchers at INGENIO, refining the theoretical foundations of her thesis and developing a new chapter focused on analysing AI regulation through multiple conceptual lenses. She also took part in research discussions and colloquia that broadened her understanding of how complex policy challenges can be approached across different contexts. The experience strengthened the theoretical framework of her research and highlighted the value of international collaboration in addressing contemporary innovation and policy challenges.

Read the blog here

Advancing Sustainable Fashion Research with SPRU

In his new blog **Lin Lin,** a PhD Candidate at Politecnico di Milano, reflects on a three-month **Eu-SPRI Early Career Researcher and PhD Researcher Circulation Scheme** visit to the **Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU)** with the University of Sussex. The placement provided an opportunity to deepen research on sustainable business model innovation in the fashion industry, while strengthening links with sustainability transitions, innovation policy and consumer engagement.

During the visit, Lin developed several academic outputs and took part in seminars and research discussions with the

University of Sussex. These activities helped broaden perspectives on sustainable fashion and its connections to wider social, cultural and policy challenges, while highlighting the value of international collaboration in advancing sustainability research. The experience also laid the groundwork for future collaborations and further research into how sustainability-focused practices can support innovation within the fashion industry.

Read the blog here

Measuring Social Innovation Orientation: My Eu-SPRI Circulation Experience at MIoIR

Dr Katrin Bauer, Assistant Professor at TU Dortmund University's Social Research Center, recently completed a three-month Eu-SPRI Early Career Researcher Circulation Scheme visit to the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research (MIoIR), hosted by Mabel Sanchez-Barrioluengo. During her stay, Katrin advanced her postdoctoral research on public-sector social innovation, public entrepreneurship, innovation ecosystems, and science, technology and innovation policy. Her work focused on developing and refining a scale for measuring social innovation orientation, exploring how individuals and organisations, particularly within the public sector, enable and support social innovation in response to complex societal challenges. Feedback from MIoIR researchers, practitioners and international collaborators helped strengthen the scale's conceptual clarity, international applicability and transferability across different institutional contexts, while also contributing to its artificial intelligence and policy-related dimensions.

As part of the circulation, Katrin delivered a workshop at MIoIR on 15 June titled 'Social Innovation Orientation: A Measurement Approach in the Public Sector – Pre-Test', attended by 25 researchers and practitioners. The session presented the

conceptual foundations of the project and tested an initial pool of items for a multidimensional scale designed to measure public-sector social innovation orientation. The proposed framework includes five dimensions: the external environment, ecosystem collaboration, organisational structure and culture, individual motivations, and technology, with a particular focus on artificial intelligence. The workshop formed an important stage in the scale-development process, enabling Katrin to gather expert feedback and assess the relevance and clarity of the proposed measures before a further round of testing. The longer-term aim is to create a robust and generalisable tool that can help researchers and practitioners better understand the conditions that support social innovation across diverse

ecosystems.

Alongside her research, Katrin participated in seminars, workshops, policy evaluation training and exchanges with MIoIR academics and visiting researchers. She also presented collaborative work at the R&D Management Conference in Manchester. The circulation has already contributed to a short paper and laid the foundations for a full journal manuscript, while opening opportunities for future collaboration with MIoIR and the wider Eu-SPRI community. Katrin plans to present the next stage of the research at the International Social Innovation Research Conference in Vietnam and hopes to share the completed work at the 2027 Eu-SPRI Annual Conference in the Netherlands. Researchers and practitioners working in local public administration or social innovation who are interested in supporting the ongoing scale-development process through interviews or future surveys are encouraged to contact Katrin directly.

Read more here