

7 April 2026

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **The MCAA Annual Conference takes on Brussels, with Commissioner Ekaterina Zaharieva as keynote speaker**

**Brussels, Belgium.** The Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA), a global community of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) fellows and alumni, will organise its Annual Conference on **22–25 April 2026** in Brussels, Belgium, and online. The MCAA is pleased to announce that the European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation, **Ekaterina Zaharieva**, will deliver the opening keynote address of the conference on Wednesday, **22 April 2026, at 16:30–17:00 CEST**.

Other high-level speakers of the conference include Member of the European Parliament **René Repasi** and Chair of the Horizon Europe Expert Group and former Minister for Science, Technology, and Higher Education of Portugal, **Manuel Heitor**. Both will speak in a plenary session on **Friday, 24 April, at 10:30–11:30 CEST**, focusing on the 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10) and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

This year's edition of the MCAA's flagship conference is titled "**Research Careers Beyond Borders: 30 Years of the MSCA**." The event will gather hundreds of researchers, innovators, and policymakers in Brussels and online to shape the future of the European Research Area.

### **Key event details:**

- **What:** MCAA Annual Conference 2026
- **Theme:** Research Careers Beyond Borders: 30 Years of the MSCA
- **When:** 22–25 April 2026
- **Where:** Brussels, Belgium and online (hybrid)

### **Conference themes**

As the MSCA celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, the MCAA Annual Conference serves as a critical juncture for the research community. Beyond the keynote address, the four-day programme will tackle the most pressing challenges facing the global research and innovation landscape, including:

- **The future of research:** Impact of AI, Open Science, and sustainable research practices.

- **Science policy and diplomacy:** Researcher careers, reforming research assessment and the role of science diplomacy in a fragmented world.
- **The human element:** Mental health in academia, career development, and entrepreneurship.
- **Innovation:** Bridging the gap between research and industry stakeholders.

#### **More information about the conference:**

Conference website: <https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/events/mcaa-annual-conference-2026>

#### **Media accreditation:**

Representatives of the media are invited to attend in person or virtually. To request media accreditation or to express interest in interview opportunities with MCAA leadership or select speakers, please contact:

**Media contact:** Kira Keini, MCAA Communication Manager

**Email:** [communication.manager@mariecuriealumni.eu](mailto:communication.manager@mariecuriealumni.eu)

#### **About the MCAA:**

The Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) is a global network of researchers who have benefited from or are benefiting from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA). The MCAA supports and contributes to advancing knowledge for a global, diverse, and informed society. Its primary focus is to support its members' career development, offer networking opportunities, and contribute to shaping research and innovation policies in the EU. Currently, the MCAA has over 24,000 members from more than 155 countries, at all career stages and from diverse research fields.