

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002892/26
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(13 July 2026)**

Subject: Mobilisation of precarious researchers at the National Research Council's Palermo and Catania institutes and implementation of the European framework for research careers

Precarious researchers and technologists working at the Palermo and Catania institutes of Italy's National Research Council are mobilising in protest at the failure to open pathways to permanent employment and the insufficient resources allocated to recruitment. Many of these professionals have been working in research for years, including on projects funded by the EU. Persistent precariousness risks affecting the ability of public research institutions to attract and retain talent, as well as ensure the continuity of scientific activities, thus making it harder to achieve the objectives pursued in Council Recommendation C/2023/1640 and the European Research Area.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does it consider the systematic and prolonged use of precarious employment contracts in public research bodies to be consistent with the objectives of Recommendation C/2023/1640 and of the European Research Area?
2. How does it check whether the entities receiving EU funding apply the principles of the European framework for research careers, particularly with regard to the working conditions of researchers?
3. Does it believe that the persistent precariousness of staff working also on EU-funded projects could undermine the objectives of the European Research Area and, if so, what steps does it intend to take?

Submitted: 13.7.2026

**Answer given by Ms Zaharieva on behalf of the European Commission
(24 September 2026)**

The Commission considers that the systematic and prolonged use of precarious contracts for research staff is not in line with Council Recommendation C/2023/1640 and European Research Area (ERA) objectives ⁽¹⁾.

The recommendation, annexing the revised European Charter for Researchers ⁽²⁾, calls for open, transparent and stable career paths and identifies persistent precariousness as an obstacle to attracting and retaining talent and ensuring continuity of scientific work.

The recommendation is not a legally binding instrument. The Commission monitors voluntary uptake of Charter and Code principles through the HR Strategy for Researchers and the HR Excellence in Research award ⁽³⁾, held by 22 Italian organisations, including the University of Palermo.

Adherence is also a condition of participation in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. EU law permits fixed-term employment contracts, but Clause 5 of the framework Agreement on fixed-term work (Annex to Directive 1999/70) ⁽⁴⁾ requires Member States to adopt effective measures preventing misuse of successive fixed-term contracts, including for researchers. Enforcement remains a Member State responsibility.

The Commission agrees that persistent precariousness undermines the ERA's objectives of attracting and retaining talent and supports Member States' efforts to improve research careers.

Under the ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027 ⁽⁵⁾, all Member States committed to a structural policy on research careers, co-creating guidelines to implement the recommendation and reduce precarity.

The Commission is also preparing the ERA Act, a legislative instrument to further develop the European Research Area and therefore improve research careers.

⁽¹⁾ Case C-326/19, *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca — MIUR and Others (Academic Researchers)*, Judgment of the Court (Seventh Chamber) of 3 June 2021, ECLI:EU:C:2021:438. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:62019CJ0326>.

⁽²⁾ https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2025-12/EC-European%20Charter%20for%20Researchers%20FINAL_WEB.pdf.

⁽³⁾ <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/hrexcellenceaward>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31999L0070>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/era-policy-agenda-2025-2027>.