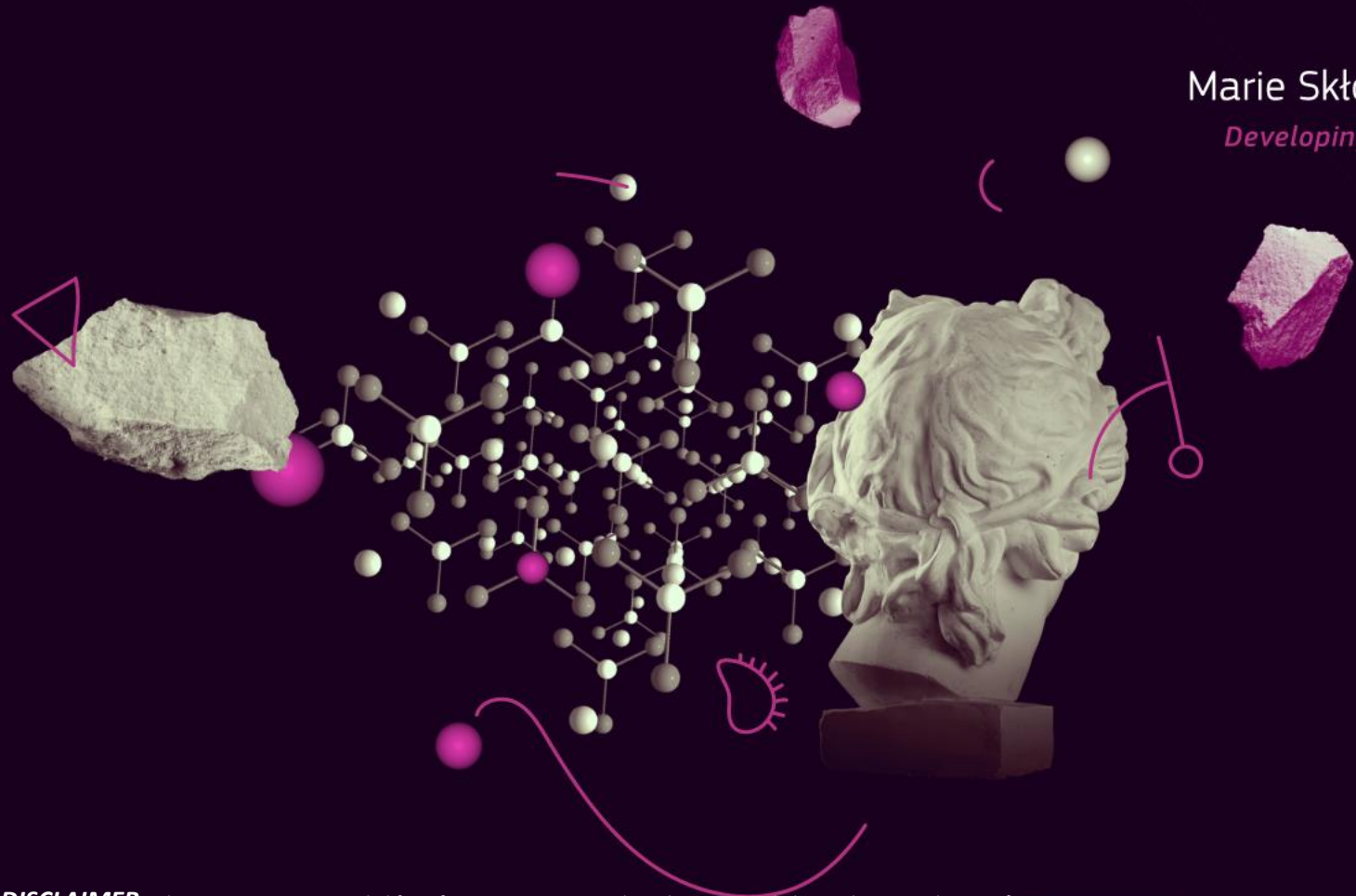




MSCA
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
Developing talents, advancing research

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships

Dr Theodoros STAIKOS
European Research Executive Agency (REA)
23 April 2024



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Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

image source: iStockphoto.com

Objectives

- What are the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (or “MSCA”)
- Introduction to Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF)
- Explain the main objectives and eligibility criteria applicable to the PF 2024 call
- Talk through what is required of applicants (incl. evaluation criteria)
- Some data on Greek/Cypriot applications

What are the MSCA?

- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (or “MSCA”)
- EU-level researcher mobility programme since 1996
- Highly competitive and prestigious fellowships
- All career stages
- More than 120,000 researchers supported

The MSCA under Horizon Europe

Doctoral Networks

*Doctoral programmes
in and outside
academia incl. joint &
industrial doctorates*

Postdoctoral Fellowships

*Support to excellent
postdoctoral
researchers*

Staff Exchanges

*Support for research
and innovation staff
exchanges*

COFUND

*Co-funding doctoral
and postdoctoral
programmes*

MSCA and Citizens

*Public outreach events
(Nights)*

Total budget 2021-2027: €6.6 billion

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF)

Budget (2024): **417.18 €mn** (€354.60 mn European, €62.58mn Global)

Call deadline: **11 September 2024**

Objective

➤ *“[E]nhance the creative and innovative potential of researchers holding a PhD, wishing to acquire new skills through advanced training, international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility.”*

- **Monobeneficiary:** One researcher, one host organization
- **Two types: European** and **Global** Fellowships
- Host organization must be in **EU or Horizon Europe Associated Country**
- Open to **all research domains**, including Euratom
- Open to *“excellent researchers of **any nationality**”* (restrictions for GF and Euratom)

* As of 1 January 2024, UK became an Associated Country to Horizon Europe

European vs Global Fellowships

European Fellowships

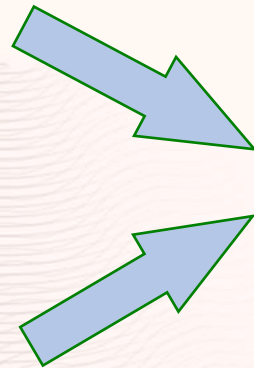


EU MS/AC



Third Country

Duration: 12-24m



EU MS/AC

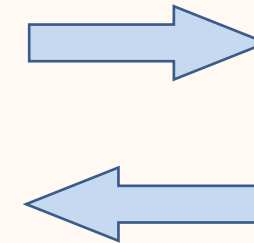
+ Non-Academic Placement
Max. 6m

Global Fellowships

Outgoing phase: 12-24m



EU MS/AC



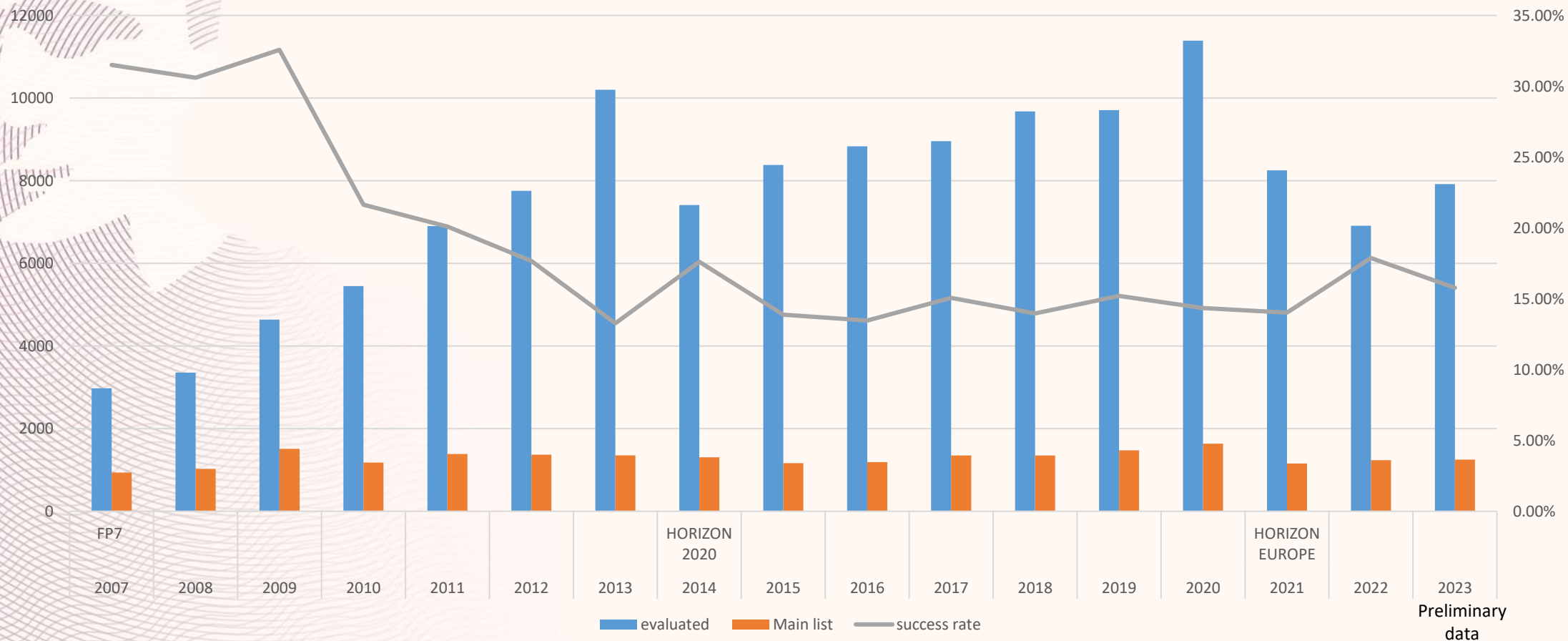
Third Country

- mobility must start at the beginning (excluding secondment);
- no more than 12 months at the return phase can be asked

Duration: 24-36m

Very popular programme

success rate



Preliminary data

Key points about MSCA-PF

Postdoctoral researchers only [*ELIGIBILITY*]

Max. 8 years FTE postdoctoral research experience [*ELIGIBILITY*]

Researcher mobility scheme [*ELIGIBILITY*]

Training and career development through research

Non-Academic Placements possible (up to 6m at end of project)

Secondments encouraged (worldwide, up to 1/3 of project duration)

12-24m (EF) or 24-36m (GF) + Non-Academic Placement (max. 6m)

Eligibility Criteria

Postdoctoral Researchers only

- Must be “*in possession of a doctoral degree*” before call deadline
- If not yet awarded, must be “*unconditional*” defence before call deadline

Max. 8 years FTE postdoctoral research experience

- Measured from date of PhD award (time outside research not counted)

Researcher Mobility

- Must not have resided or carried out their main activity in country of the beneficiary (EF) or the host for the outgoing phase (GF) for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before the call deadline
- For GF, must be “long-term residents” of EU/AC

Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF)

Eligible researchers – European Fellowships:

Nationality	Any
Mobility	The researcher cannot have resided or carried out his/her main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the beneficiary for more than 12 months in the three years immediately prior to the call deadline
Research experience (FTE)	<p>Maximum 8 years from date of award of the (first) doctoral degree</p> <p>This limit can be extended for the following reasons (to be encoded in the submission forms):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maternity leave (18 months – i.e. 548 days) per child born after the PhD award date, or exact duration of leave taken, whichever is longest);- Paternity leave (exact duration per child born after the PhD award date);- Research in a non-associated TC (only for nationals or long-term residents of MS or AC, wishing to reintegrate in Europe);- Compulsory national service;- Time spent not working in research (also applies to part-time contracts);- Long-term sick leave (periods longer than 30 days).

Doctoral Degree (or, date of successful defense) should be obtained before call deadline. The successful defense must be unconditional (no further requirements/corrections that need to be addressed) and take place before the call deadline.

Supporting documentation may be requested.

Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF)

Eligible researchers – Global Fellowships:

Nationality	Nationals or long-term residents of EU MS or HE AC.
Mobility	The researcher cannot have resided or carried out his/her main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the associated partner (in the third country) for more than 12 months in the three years immediately prior to the call deadline
Research experience (FTE)	<p>Maximum 8 years from date of award of the (first) doctoral degree</p> <p>This limit can be extended for the following reasons (to be encoded in the submission forms):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maternity leave (18 months – i.e. 548 days) per child born after the PhD award date, or exact duration of leave taken, whichever is longest);- Paternity leave (exact duration per child born after the PhD award date);- Compulsory national service;- Time spent not working in research;- Long-term sick leave (periods longer than 30 days).

Doctoral Degree (or, date of successful defense) should be obtained before call deadline. The successful defense must be unconditional (no further requirements/corrections that need to be addressed) and take place before the call deadline.

Supporting documentation may be requested.

Secondments & Non-Academic Placements

- **Secondments:** possible worldwide, up to 1/3 of the project duration (i.e. max 8m for a 24m project)
- Secondments can be divided into several shorter periods
- Inter-sectoral secondments encouraged

- **Non-Academic Placement:** up to 6m *at the end of the project* in a MS or AC non-academic institution
- Not a big take-up so far... (ca. 6% of proposals)

Example 1

European Fellowship

- Greek researcher awarded a PhD in 2017 in the UK, remains resident there. Applies for a European Fellowship in the field of nanotechnology together with a host institution in Greece.
- **ELIGIBLE?** *Awarded a PhD before the Call deadline; less than 8 years since award of PhD; has not resided in Greece for more than 12 months in previous 3 years.*



Example 2

Global Fellowship

- Indian researcher living in Cyprus for previous 3 years, PhD in 2023, applies for a Global Fellowship in the field of thermodynamics with a host in Cyprus, and outgoing phase in the US.
- **Eligible?** Awarded a PhD before the call deadline; less than 8 years since award of PhD; not more than 12 months in the US in previous 3 years...but “long-term resident” in EU/AC?



The MSCA-PF Evaluation

Large-Scale Evaluation

Due to large number of proposals

Standard Peer-Review

≥ 3 experts per proposal

Bottom-up Programme

Proposals and Experts from all disciplines

Expert Balance

of experience, nationality, gender, age, sector, etc.

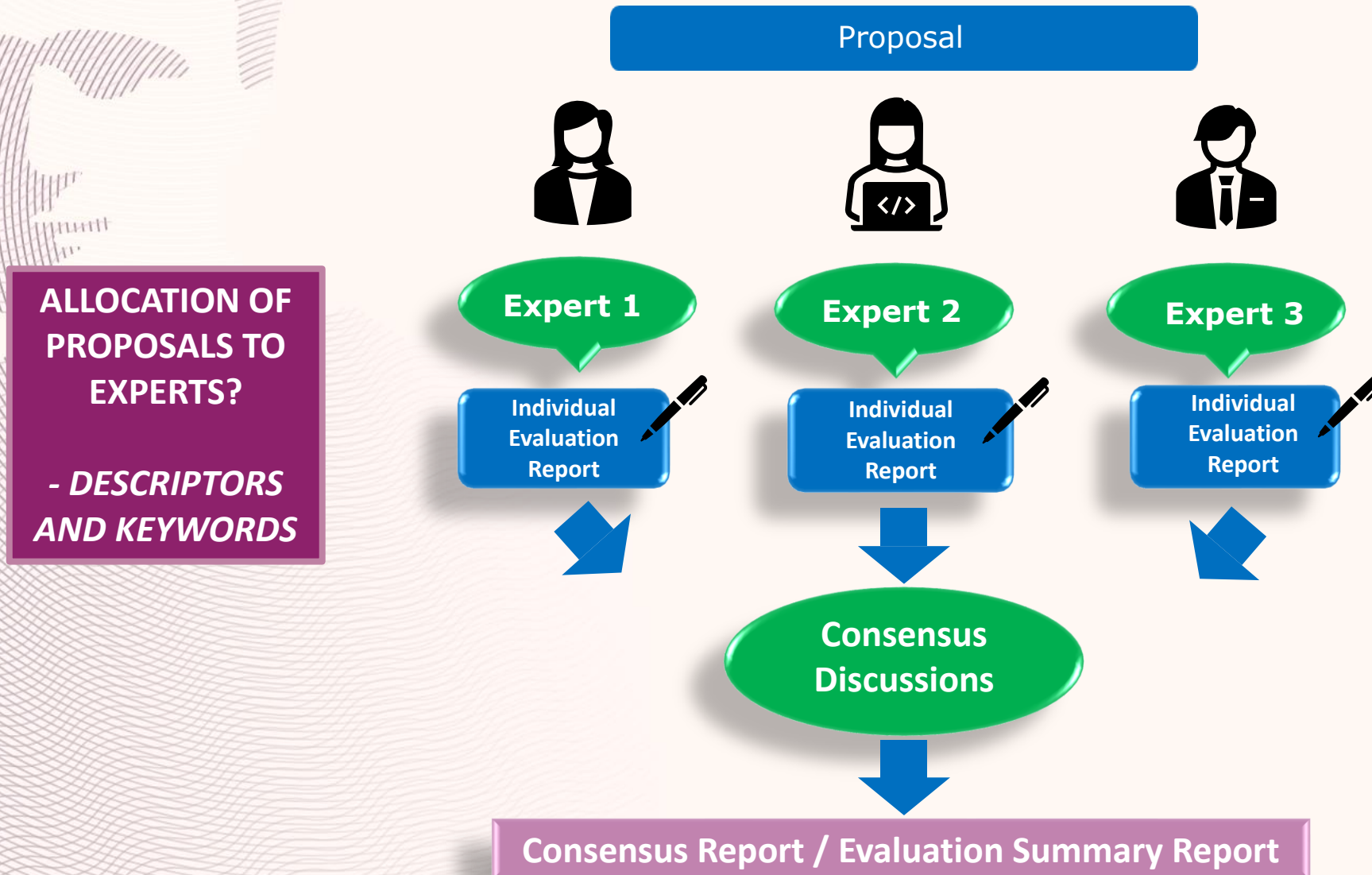
8 Scientific Panels

CHE, ECO, ENG, ENV, LIF, MAT, PHY, SOC

Single-Stage Evaluation

Call deadline to funding decision:
5M (+3M to GA signature)

Evaluation Process



ALLOCATION OF PROPOSALS TO EXPERTS?
- DESCRIPTORS AND KEYWORDS

Proposal Ranking

- Proposals ranked – and funding allocated - **by Scientific Panel**
(NB. *separate ranking for European and Global Fellowships*)
- ***Seal of Excellence***: awarded to proposals which score $\geq 85\%$
- ***New in HORIZON EUROPE***: Resubmission restriction for proposals with same researcher and same host scoring $<70\%$ in previous evaluation
- **Evaluation Review procedure**

Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) 2023 Call

MSCA-PF-2023: Cumulative percentage of proposals above threshold, with a given score or higher (funding range marked in green)																
Number of eligible proposals	1074 proposals	121 proposals	1016 proposals	750 proposals	1575 proposals	160 proposals	808 proposals	1580 proposals	57 proposals	8 proposals	73 proposals	84 proposals	130 proposals	9 proposals	76 proposals	397 proposals
Cut off score for funding*	93,0	89,0	94,0	95,2	94,4	92,2	92,8	94,6	95,6	96,2	95,8	97,6	95,6	97,2	94,8	96,0
Score equal to or above	EF-CHE	EF-ECO	EF-ENG	EF-ENV	EF-LIF	EF-MAT	EF-PHY	EF-SOC	GF-CHE	GF-ECO	GF-ENG	GF-ENV	GF-LIF	GF-MAT	GF-PHY	GF-SOC
100	0,47%	1,65%	1,18%	1,33%	1,46%	0,00%	0,25%	1,52%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	1,19%	2,31%	0,00%	0,00%	3,02%
99	1,02%	1,65%	1,87%	2,13%	3,17%	0,63%	1,24%	2,97%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	4,76%	3,08%	0,00%	3,95%	5,04%
98	3,91%	2,48%	4,63%	5,87%	6,67%	3,13%	3,47%	6,77%	5,26%	0,00%	4,11%	15,48%	6,15%	0,00%	7,89%	8,56%
97	6,33%	4,13%	6,89%	8,93%	8,44%	3,75%	4,83%	9,56%	10,53%	12,50%	8,22%	19,05%	10,00%	11,11%	9,21%	12,34%
96	8,47%	4,96%	9,74%	12,93%	11,56%	5,63%	6,81%	12,22%	12,28%	25,00%	13,70%	27,38%	14,62%	11,11%	10,53%	16,88%
95	10,34%	8,26%	12,30%	16,80%	14,48%	6,25%	10,27%	15,00%	21,05%	37,50%	21,92%	28,57%	20,00%	11,11%	15,79%	19,40%
94	13,31%	9,09%	15,55%	19,33%	17,65%	10,00%	13,24%	17,66%	26,32%	37,50%	23,29%	38,10%	23,08%	11,11%	19,74%	24,69%
93	15,92%	9,92%	18,60%	22,13%	19,75%	13,13%	15,47%	20,19%	29,82%	37,50%	28,77%	39,29%	27,69%	11,11%	26,32%	27,46%
92	19,18%	10,74%	21,46%	25,07%	22,60%	18,13%	19,55%	23,16%	29,82%	37,50%	35,62%	42,86%	29,23%	11,11%	31,58%	29,97%
91	21,97%	12,40%	24,02%	28,00%	26,41%	20,00%	23,64%	24,87%	33,33%	37,50%	42,47%	45,24%	32,31%	11,11%	34,21%	33,00%
90	25,79%	14,05%	26,87%	31,07%	29,40%	24,38%	26,36%	27,28%	35,09%	50,00%	46,58%	45,24%	35,38%	11,11%	36,84%	35,26%
89	28,49%	16,53%	29,92%	33,33%	31,87%	26,88%	28,47%	29,68%	36,84%	62,50%	49,32%	46,43%	42,31%	22,22%	42,11%	38,29%
88	31,38%	16,53%	33,86%	34,93%	34,98%	29,38%	31,31%	32,03%	45,61%	75,00%	57,53%	46,43%	44,62%	33,33%	48,68%	40,55%
87	34,45%	17,36%	35,73%	38,53%	38,29%	35,63%	35,15%	33,92%	49,12%	75,00%	61,64%	48,81%	48,46%	33,33%	52,63%	42,82%
86	37,24%	19,83%	37,70%	41,47%	41,71%	37,50%	37,75%	37,03%	50,88%	75,00%	64,38%	52,38%	52,31%	33,33%	56,58%	45,09%
85	40,22%	21,49%	39,86%	44,00%	44,83%	41,88%	41,34%	40,06%	57,89%	75,00%	65,75%	54,76%	56,15%	33,33%	59,21%	47,86%

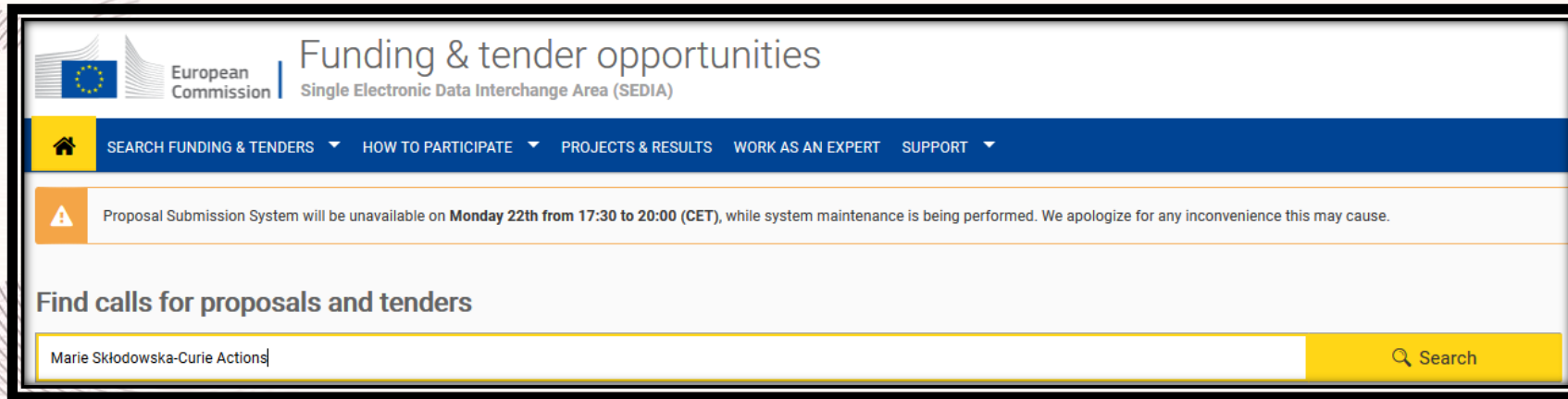
Evaluation Criteria

Excellence	Impact	Quality and efficiency of the implementation
Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art)	Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher and contribution to his/her skills development	Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages
Soundness of the proposed methodology (including interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of the gender dimension and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices)	Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities	Quality and capacity of the host institutions and participating organisations, including hosting arrangements
Quality of the supervision, training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host	The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts	
Quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences and skills		
50%	30%	20%
Weighting		

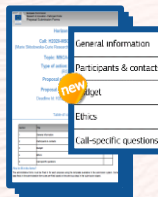
See MSCA Work Programme 2023-2024 (C(2022)7550 of 6 December 2022)



Proposal Submission



Part A
(Application Forms)



Part B
(Technical Description - PDF)



Part A (Application Forms)

- Structured data entered into the IT system
- **Acronym and Title** for the project (*NB title is not the same as acronym*)
- Select the **Scientific Area** (i.e. panel) which is the “best fit”
- **Up to 5 “Descriptors”** which best characterise the content of the proposal, in descending order of relevance
- First 3 descriptors linked to selected panel, others unrestricted
- Free keywords
- **Abstract:** maximum 2,000 characters
- **Resubmission?**

Part A

Researcher Information, including:

- PhD award date (or date of successful defence)
- If PhD more than 8 years ago, complete table for extensions
- Countries of residence for past 5 years

Beneficiary Information, including:

- Participant Information Code (PIC)
- Outgoing host (for GF)
- Non-Academic Placement host (if applicable)

Proposal Part B1

Part B of the Proposal is comprised of *two documents* (**Part B1** and **Part B2**), uploaded as separate PDF files

Part B1

- Technical description of the project
- **Limit of 10 pages** (excess pages will not be visible to evaluators)
- **Minimum font size 11 points***, with standard spacing
- Use the **Part B template** available on the MSCA-PF Call page and structure your proposal accordingly

* including tables

Proposal Part B2

Part B2 (no formal page limit)

- CV of the Researcher (ca. 5 pages)
- Capacity of the Participating Organisations (max. 1 page per organisation, ½ page for associated partners)
- Letter of Commitment (only for Global Fellowships, outgoing phase)

See [Part B template](#) on MSCA-PF call page for more information

Funding levels

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023-2024	Contributions for the recruited researcher					Institutional unit contributions	
	Per person-month					Per person month	
	Living Allowance	Mobility Allowance	Family Allowance	Long-term leave allowance (if applicable)	Special needs allowance (if applicable)	Research, training and networking contribution	Management and indirect contribution
	€5,990	€710	€660	<i>€6,700 x % covered by beneficiary</i>	<i>Requested unit x (1/number of months)</i>	€1,000	€650

Living Allowance corrected by a country correction coefficient (recently updated)



Common Errors

Missing the Call deadline

Not respecting eligibility requirements (i.e. PhD, mobility or max 8 years research experience)

Exceeding the page limits

Missing Letter of Commitment (for Global Fellowships)

Confusing Secondments and Non-Academic Placements

Requesting an ineligible Non-Academic Placement or secondment

Using too small font

Call Planning

<i>Call Opening:</i>	23 April 2024
<i>Call Deadline:</i>	11 Sept 2024
<i>Evaluation Period:</i>	Oct 2024 – Jan 2025
<i>Inform Applicants & Launch Grant Preparation:</i>	Feb 2025
<i>Project Starting Dates:</i>	Apr 2025 - Sept 2026

ERA Fellowships*

- Widening activities: “ERA Fellowships”
- **No separate application or evaluation** – integral part of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships call application form
- For specific countries – available in Work Programme
 - Only for European Fellowships, Global Fellowships do not qualify
 - **Attention:** *“call specific question” to be completed in the PF submission for EF (Part A - 5: Other Questions) to indicate willingness to participate in this call (only if host organisation is a qualifying country)*
 - Only proposals scoring over 70% in the PF call will be considered
 - Timing aligned with PF call

* ONLY FOR WIDENING COUNTRIES: Bulgaria, Croatia, **Cyprus**, Czechia, Estonia, **Greece**, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and all Associated Countries with equivalent characteristics in terms of R&I performance (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Morocco, Tunisia, Ukraine, Faroe Islands) and the Outermost Regions (defined in Art. 349 TFEU).

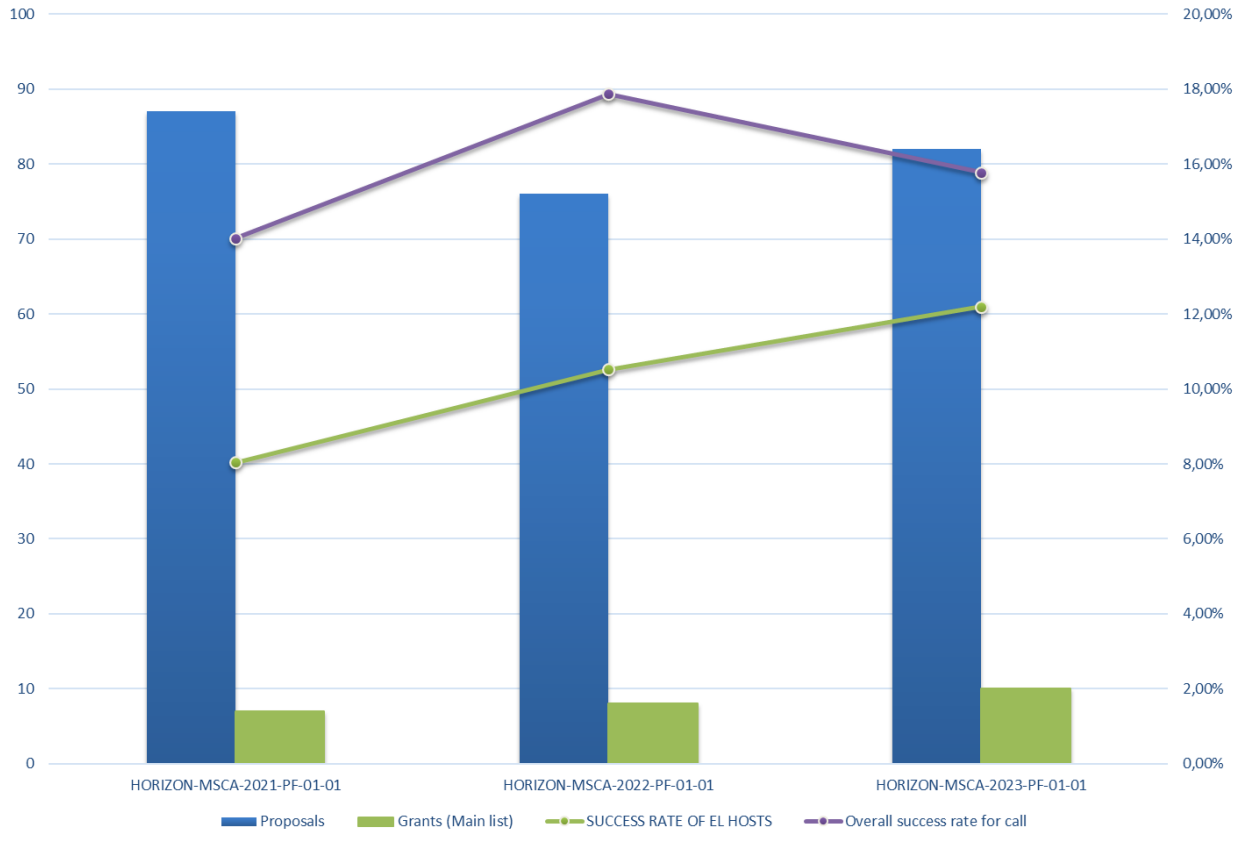
Resources and Guidance

- [MSCA Work Programme 2023-2024](#) (New WP should be coming out soon)
- [MSCA-PF Guide for Applicants \(PF-2023\)](#), just as an example. GfA 2024 coming soon!!!
- [Proposal templates \(PF-2023\)](#), just as an example. Mandatory use of 2024 template.
- [Q&As \(PF-2023\)](#). 2024 link coming soon
- [Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement](#)
- [Horizon Europe Annotated Model Grant Agreement \(DRAFT\)](#)

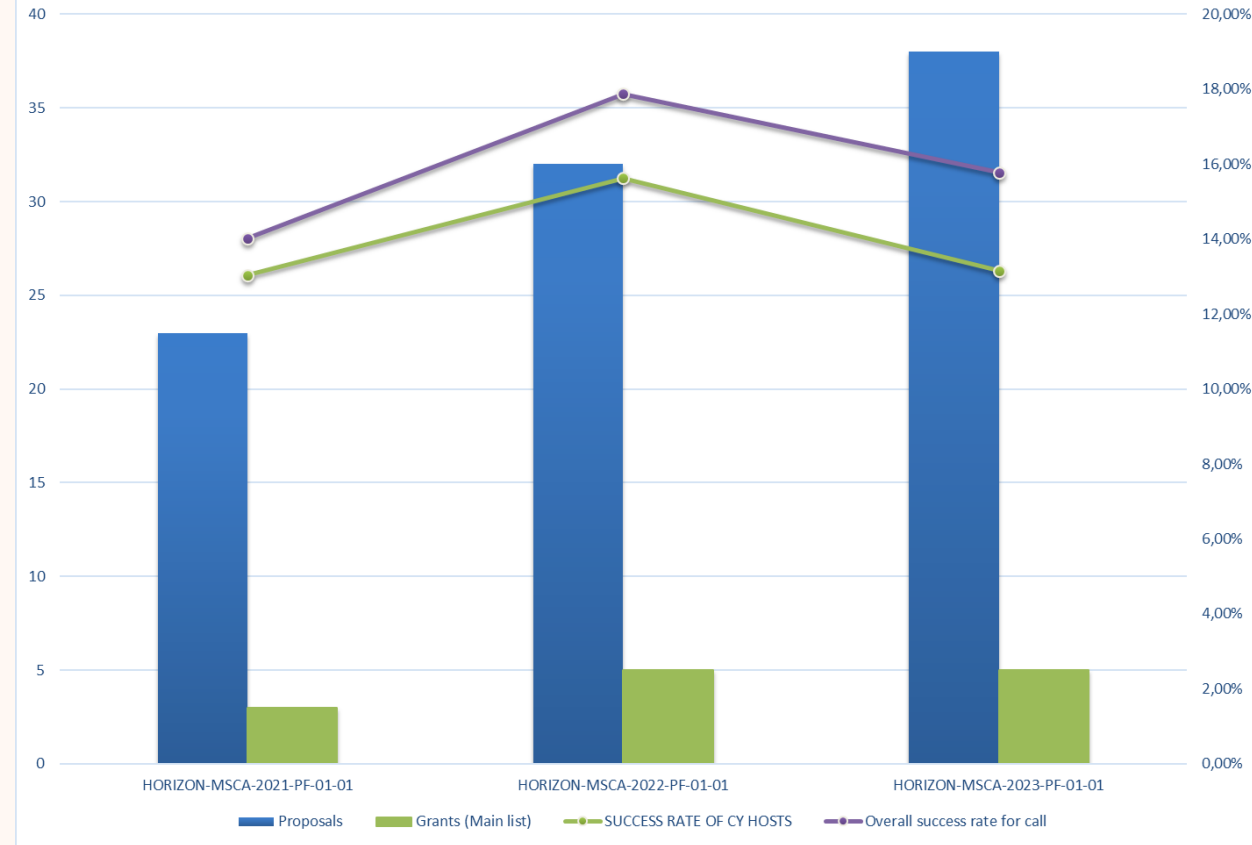
- [MSCA Website](#)
- [Research Enquiry Service](#)
- [National Contact Points](#)

Success rate for Greek & Cypriot institutions (HORIZON EUROPE)

SUCCESS RATE OF EL HOSTS



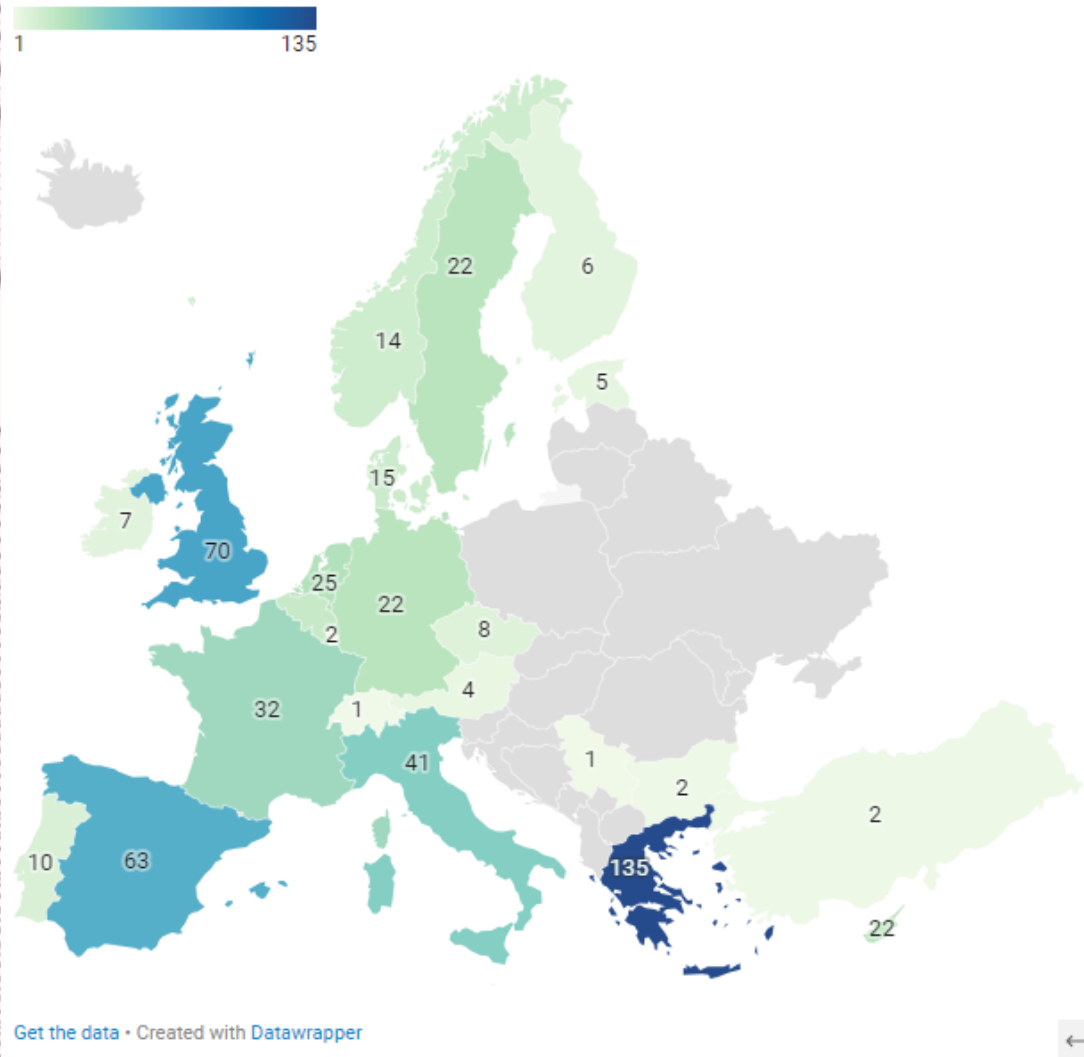
SUCCESS RATE OF CY HOSTS



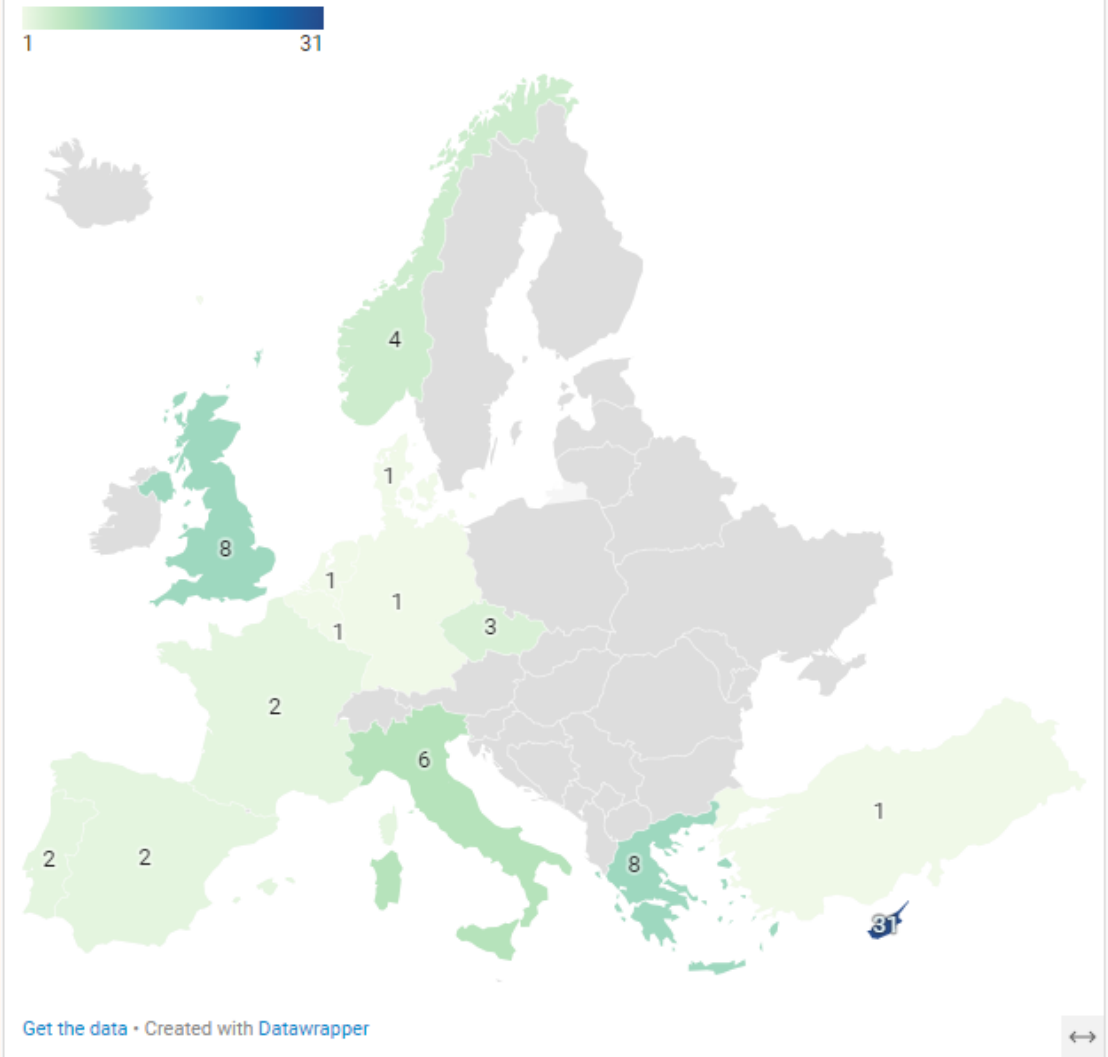
Preliminary data for PF2023

Greek and Cypriot in MSCA-PF

EU destinations for EL nationals (submission stage)



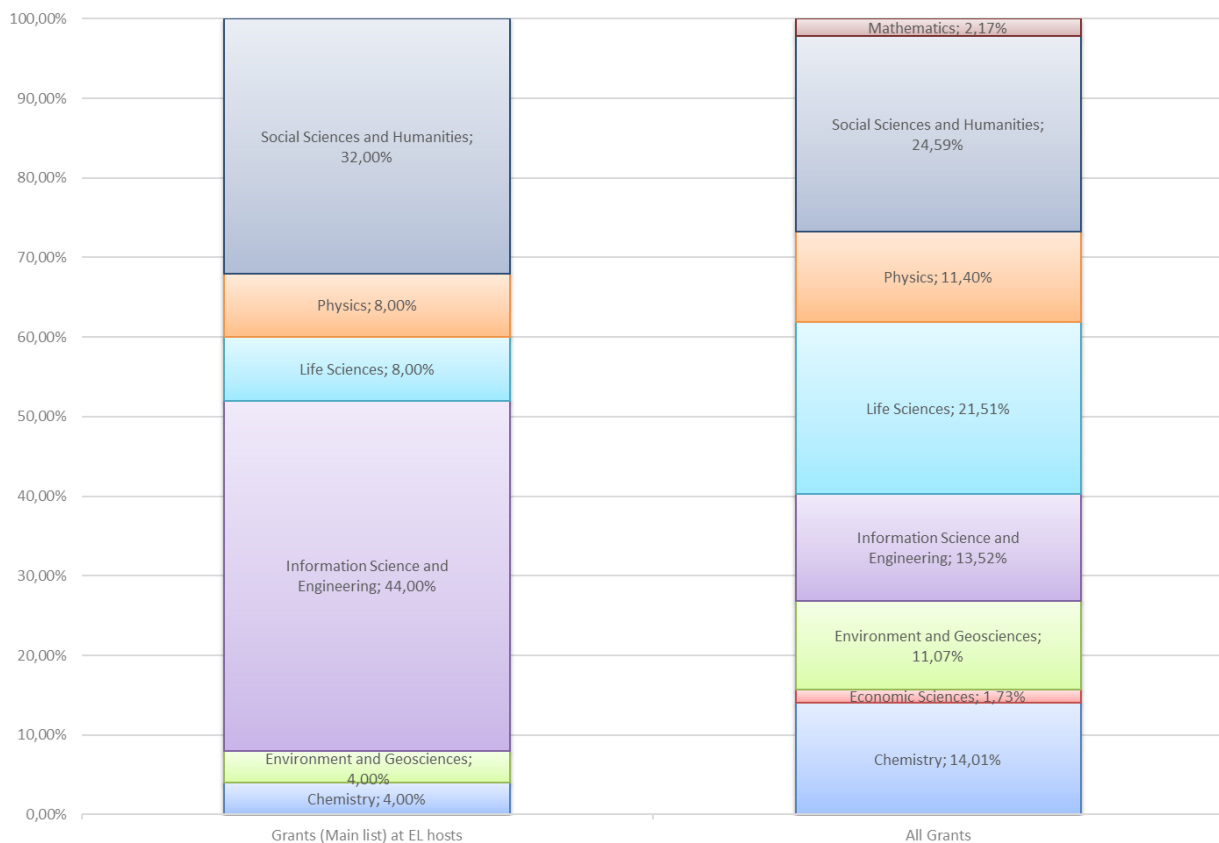
EU destinations for CY nationals (submission stage)



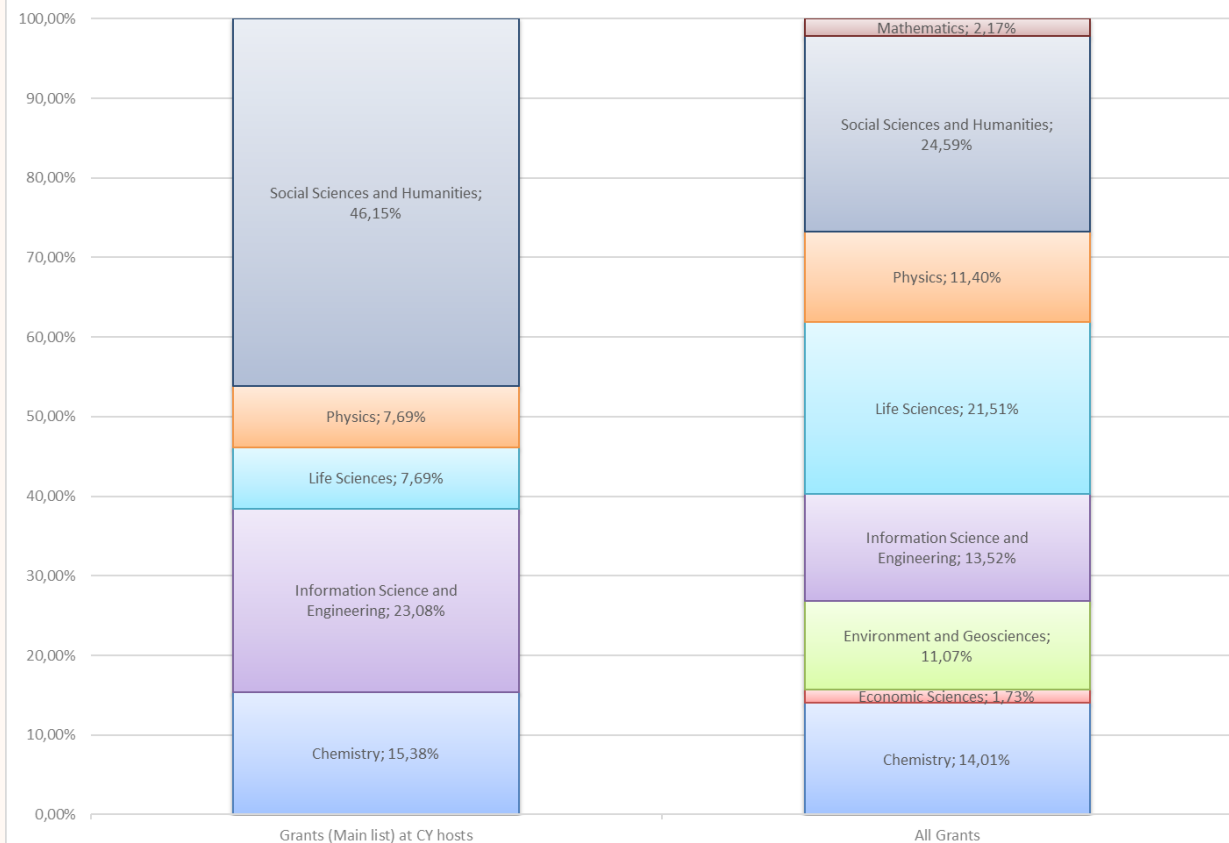
(EF destinations only: aggregate data for PF2021, PF2022 and PF2023)

Greek & Cypriot hosts: MSCA-PF (submission)

SCIENTIFIC AREA -EL HOSTS COMPARED TO ALL CALLS

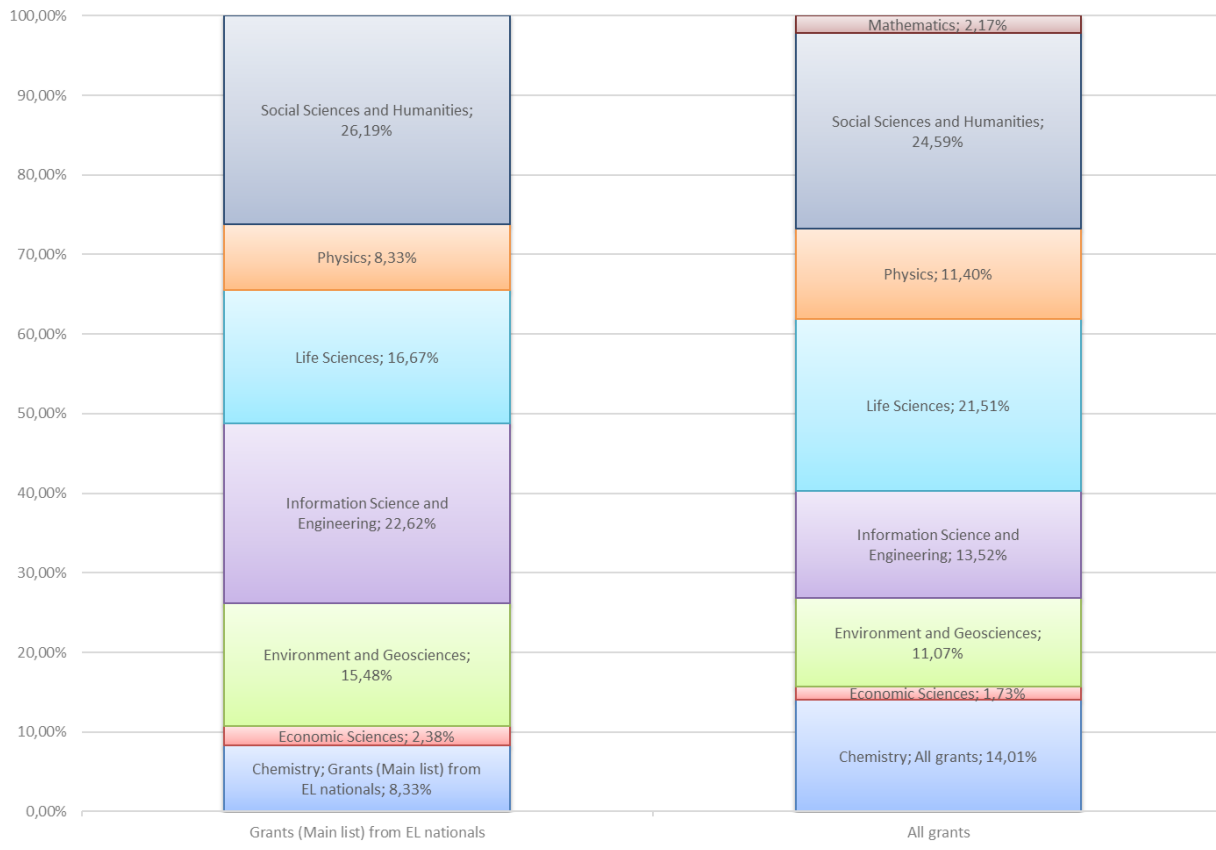


SCIENTIFIC AREA -CY HOSTS COMPARED TO ALL CALLS

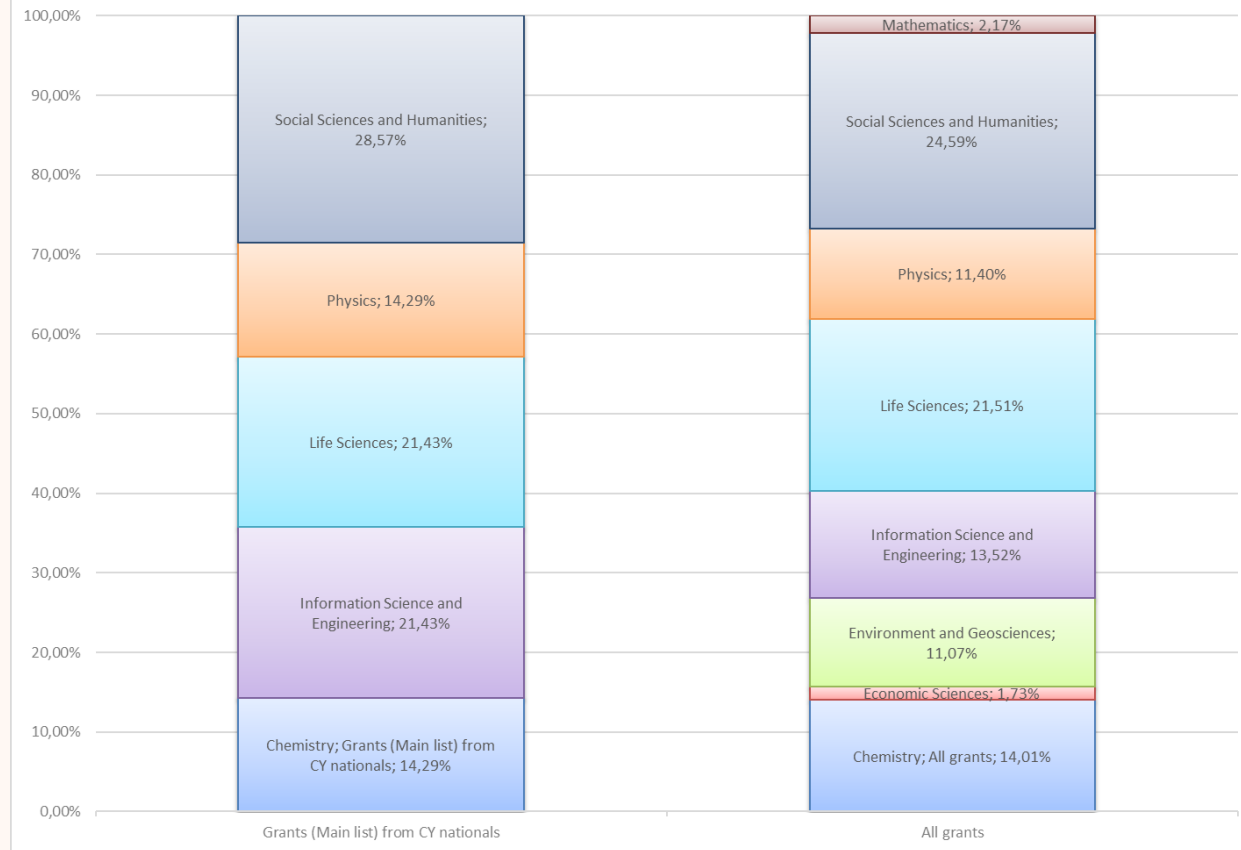


Greek & Cypriot Researchers: MSCA-PF (submission)

SCIENTIFIC AREA - EL NATIONALS COMPARED TO ALL CALLS



SCIENTIFIC AREA - CY NATIONALS COMPARED TO ALL CALLS





**Thank you for your
attention!**