



CEE
CONGRESS
FOR RESEARCH
MANAGERS

PROGRAMME

Dates: **4–5 November 2025**

Location: **Arts56, Avenue des Arts 56, Brussels**



VIRAG ZSÁR

DAY 1: SETTING THE STAGE FOR RESEARCH MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

10:00 – 10:30

Registration & Welcome Coffee

OPENING SESSION

10:30 – 10:50

**Welcome Speech from Representative
of the V4 Offices**

10:50 – 11:20

**Keynote speech:
Advancing Research Excellence in CEE through
professional research management**

Speaker: **VIRAG ZSÁR**, Hétfa Research Institute

This keynote will reflect on the evolving and increasingly vital role of Research Managers and Administrators (RMAs) in shaping the scientific landscape of Central and Eastern Europe. Drawing from regional experience and strategic insight, the address will explore how RMAs contribute to institutional performance, enhance research excellence, and drive innovation across borders. Special emphasis will be placed on building professional communities, strengthening peer networks, and promoting wider recognition of RMAs as an essential part of the research ecosystem. This keynote aims to inspire and empower attendees by positioning RMAs as both enablers and shapers of impactful research in the CEE region. A moderated Q&A session will follow, providing participants with the opportunity to engage directly with the speaker and reflect on the themes raised.





MAGDA DE CARLI

PLENARY SESSION I: RMAs advancing ERA

11:20 – 11:35

Opening Speech: Building a Stronger ERA from strategic perspective

Speaker: **MAGDA DE CARLI (TBC)**, Head of ERA, Spreading Excellence & Research Careers, European Commission

This keynote addresses the European Commission's strategic perspective on how institutional collaboration, capacity building, and professionalised support structures – including RMAs – are vital to unlocking the full potential of research in Europe. Drawing from the ERA Policy Agenda and recent EU-level initiatives, it will explore mechanisms that foster convergence and excellence, from national RMA development to crossborder institutional alliances. This intervention will contextualise the CEE Congress within broader EU ambitions, highlighting how aligning regional strategies with ERA priorities can elevate both scientific impact and institutional resilience. Special attention will be given to the importance of sustainable RMA support structures, peer learning, and EU instruments that can help bridge gaps in research capacity across the continent.





MAGDA DE CARLI



PETER CUNINKA



LENKA CHVOJKOVÁ



EWA MENDEC



**DÓRA PIVARCSINÉ
FEKETE**

11:35 – 12:35

Panel Discussion Unlocking CEE's Research Potential: The Role of Institutional Collaboration and National RMA Support

Moderator: **HENNING RICKELT**, Center for Science and Research Management

Panel guests: **MAGDA DE CARLI (TBC)**, European Commission; **PETER CUNINKA**, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, **LENKA CHVOJKOVÁ**, Technology Center Prague, CZARMA; **EWA MENDEC**, Silesian University of Technology, PoLARMA; **DÓRA PIVARCSINÉ FEKETE**, National Research, Development and Innovation Office

Following the keynote, this session shifts focus to concrete strategies for building robust research management capacity across the CEE region. The panel will bring together experienced research managers, institutional leaders, and representatives from national RMA initiatives to share hands on insights into implementing support structures that elevate institutional performance. Discussions will highlight national and regional strategies for developing the RMA profession, showcasing practical models for collaboration, in-house capacity building, and talent retention. From structured training programmes to interinstitutional partnerships, panelists will offer tested approaches to making research management a sustainable and recognised pillar of the academic ecosystem. A moderated Q&A session will conclude the panel, opening space for participants to engage directly with the speakers, share perspectives, and explore ways to scale successful practices across borders.



JIŘÍ SÝKORA

12:35 – 14:00

Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:15

Parallel Sessions facilitated by an invited moderators with co-contributions from V4 Alumni

Pre-Pre Award – RMA Talent Development: Building the next generation of professional research managers in CEE

Speaker: **JIŘÍ SÝKORA**, Visegrad Fund

This interactive session is dedicated to the earliest and most foundational stage of the research support lifecycle: talent development, yet with a particular focus of recognizing and strengthening professional capacities across RMAs. Focused on strengthening institutional capacity from the inside out, the session explores strategies for identifying promising research management professionals, designing clear career pathways, and building environments that support long-term growth and retention. Participants will learn from realworld case studies and institutional experiences across the CEE region. The session will equip attendees with tools to foster futureready RMA teams – from early-career onboarding to strategic upskilling. Whether you're building a new support office or scaling existing capacity, this session offers actionable models and peer-tested insights tailored to the regional context.



JUDIT FEKETE



TONI SKEEN



DAVID KURZ

Pre Award – Application Scoping: From idea to proposal

Speaker: **JUDIT FEKETE**,
Corvinus University of Budapest

This session peeks into the crucial transition from research idea to competitive proposal. With an emphasis on aligning project concepts with EU funding priorities and institutional goals, the session supports RMAs and project teams in navigating the complex landscape of Horizon Europe and other European programmes. Participants will explore key importance of strategic scoping, including how to match institutional strengths to funding calls, craft compelling objectives, and plan proposal architecture from the start. Through shared regional experiences, this session aims to enhance participants' ability to act as trusted advisors during the proposal preparation phase – bridging the gap between scientific vision and fundable strategy.

Post Award – Implementation: Efficient project execution

Speaker: **TONI SKEEN** and **DAVID KURZ**,
European Research Council

This session focuses on the post-award phase, where solid project planning meets operational reality. Designed for RMAs supporting active projects, the discussion will centre on ensuring smooth and compliant project execution – from kick-off through final reporting. Participants will explore essential tools and strategies for budget management, risk planning, and reporting procedures under EU-funded frameworks. Peer discussions will provide hands-on experience in solving common implementation challenges and navigating funder expectations. Whether working on large consortia or institution-led grants, this session aims to sharpen participants' skills in project oversight, communication with partners and funders, and ensuring delivery of both outputs and impact.



SIMON CULLEN



**MIGUEL GARCÍA
GONZÁLEZ**

15:15 – 15:45
Coffee Break

FOCUSED SESSION I: Digital tools for RMAs

15:45 – 17:00
Showcase & exchange on networking & collaboration tools for competent RMAs

Contributors: **SIMON CULLEN**, VIDATUM,
MIGUEL GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, Kronis

This session spotlights digital platforms that enable effective and scalable collaboration in research management across institutional and national borders. Aimed at equipping RMAs with practical solutions, the session will feature demonstrations and testimonials from leading tool providers and institutional users. Participants will gain insights into how commercial platforms and in-house solutions facilitate communication, project coordination, and network building across diverse stakeholders. The discussion will also address implementation considerations, user experience, and adaptability to different organisational needs. With a focus on regional relevance and operational efficiency, this session is both a showcase and a dialogue - encouraging participants to exchange experiences, identify opportunities for integration, and strengthen digital readiness in their institutions.

17:00 – 20:00
Networking Reception: Informal evening session



DAY 2: **DEEP DIVES INTO RESEARCH** **MANAGEMENT PHASES**

09:15 – 10:00

Morning Coffee & Croissant

10:00 – 11:15

Parallel Sessions facilitated by an invited moderators with co-contributions from V4 Alumni



DAGMAR VOKOUNOVÁ
FRANZEOVÁ

Pre-Pre Award – Developing soft skills for successful RMAs

Speaker: **DAGMAR VOKOUNOVÁ FRANZEOVÁ**,
University of West Bohemia in Pilsen

This session focuses on one of the most overlooked but essential components of professional growth: soft skills. Effective communication, leadership, and negotiation abilities are key for RMAs navigating complex institutional landscapes and cross-cultural research environments. Participants will engage in practical and interactive exercises designed to enhance confidence and interpersonal agility. The session encourages reflection on how soft skills directly contribute to building trust, managing teams, and driving collaborative research success across the CEE region.



JOANNA
BOSIACKA-KNIAT



DAVID KURZ

Pre Award – Budgeting & financial planning for research proposals

Speaker: **JOANNA BOSIACKA-KNIAT**, Poznań Science and Technology Park, Horizontal Contact Point, Western Poland

A strong budget is more than numbers – it's a strategic blueprint that reflects a project's credibility and feasibility. This session focuses on empowering RMA's to guide researchers in building comprehensive, funder-aligned financial plans that stand up to scrutiny. Participants will explore principles of strategic budgeting, including aligning expenditures with project objectives, understanding cost eligibility, and crafting convincing budget justifications. The format offers practical skills and insights directly transferable to the proposal preparation process. Whether you're new to financial planning or looking to refine your approach, this session will provide essential tools to enhance your institution's competitiveness in EU and international funding calls.

Post Award – Ensuring impact effectively

Speaker: **DAVID KURZ**, European Research Council

This session focuses on a critical yet often underappreciated element of project success: impact delivery and reporting. As expectations grow for measurable outcomes and transparent communication with funders, RMA's play an increasingly strategic role in demonstrating value and long-term results. Participants will explore techniques for monitoring outcomes, interpreting funder expectations, and applying strategic impact metrics. A hands-on workshop will guide attendees through real-world reporting challenges, complemented by peer exchanges on successful approaches to both qualitative and quantitative evaluation. Whether managing large consortia or local projects, RMA's will leave this session with enhanced capacity to turn data into meaningful narratives that support institutional visibility and sustained funding success.

11:15 – 11:45

Coffee Break

**PLENARY SESSION II: Practical approach
to RMA's capacity building**

11:45 – 12:00

**Keynote Speech: The Unicorns of Research
and Innovation**

Speaker: **EDWIN KANTERS**, Utrecht University



EDWIN KANTERS

In the evolving landscape of research and innovation, success is rarely a solo achievement—it is built upon the dedication, vision, and expertise of research managers. This keynote will shine a light on the remarkable skills, adaptability, and leadership that define RMA's. Far from being support actors, RMA's are the catalysts who translate strategy into impact, nurture collaboration, and create the conditions for projects and researchers to succeed. This energizing session invites participants to reflect on their own journeys, recognize their collective contributions, and take pride in being the cornerstone of a vibrant research environment.



TEODORA KONACH



EDWIN KANTERS



LINDA KAPUSTOVÁ
HELBICHOVÁ



JACEK KUŹNICKI

12:00 – 13:00

Roundtable Discussion on cross-border collaboration, regional support & shared solutions

Moderator: **TEODORA KONACH**, EARMA

Panel guests: **EDWIN KANTERS**, Utrecht University;
LINDA KAPUSTOVÁ HELBICHOVÁ, Visegrad Fund;
JACEK KUŹNICKI, International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw

Building on the insights from the preceding keynote, this roundtable brings together a diverse panel of stakeholders – including research management professionals, digital infrastructure experts, and European Commission representatives to explore how cross-border collaboration can be scaled and adapted across Central and Eastern Europe. The discussion will centre on shared challenges and regional strategies for strengthening research support, with a particular focus on cooperation across institutions and countries, and on integrating AI-driven tools into RMA practices. The panel will examine how institutional differences can be bridged, and how collaborative models can boost research competitiveness while respecting local contexts. Designed as an open peer exchange, this session offers participants the opportunity to engage with experienced voices, share institutional needs, and co-develop ideas for deeper regional integration and innovation in research management.



LARS DE NUL



KRISTJAN ZEMLJIC



TOMASZ PARKOŁA



GERGELY SZERTICS

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch Break

FOCUSED SESSION II: AI in research

14:30 – 15:15

Panel discussion on practical tools and strategic readiness

Moderator: **LARS DE NUL**, Deputy Head of the AI in Science & Critical Technologies Unit, European Commission

Contributors: **KRISTJAN ZEMLJIC**, Global Disruption; **TOMASZ PARKOŁA**, Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Centre; **GERGELY SZERTICS**, HUN-REN Hungarian Research Network

This focused session offers a hands-on exploration of how Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the research landscape. Designed to bridge policy, technology, and day-to-day practice, the session brings together experts from the European Commission, AI tool developers, educators and institutional users to showcase real-world applications of AI in relation to research. Participants will gain insight into (1) how AI tools can assist research managers and scientists, (2) the ethical and governance challenges linked to AI integration in academic environments and (3) the readiness required to adopt and leverage AI solutions responsibly and strategically. The session also addresses policy implications, drawing on EU-level perspectives, and invites the audience to contribute through an interactive Q&A. Whether you're curious about emerging tools or actively testing AI in your institution, this session offers both inspiration and practical direction.



NIK CLAESEN

CLOSING SESSION

15:15 – 15:45

Keynote Speech: Future directions for research management in CEE region

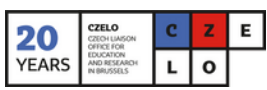
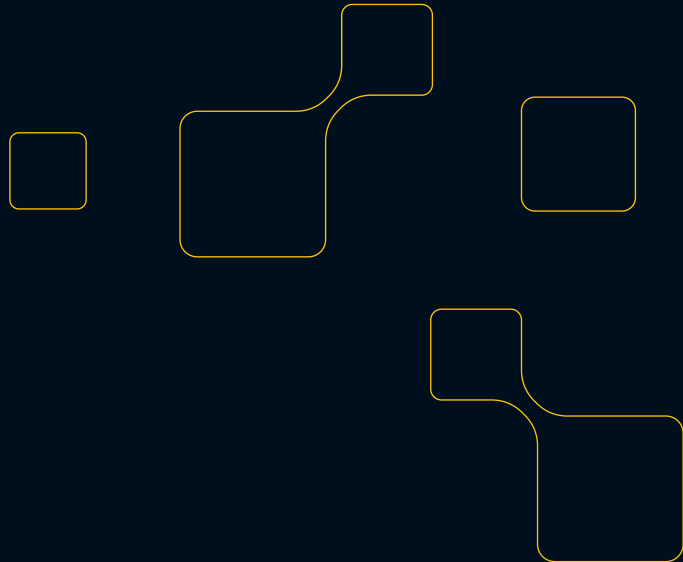
Speaker: **NIK CLAESEN**, EARMA

As the CEE Congress draws to a close, this forward-looking keynote explores the emerging trends and long-term strategies that will shape the future of research management in Central and Eastern Europe. Delivered by a leading strategic consultant, the session will chart a course for the sustainable development of the RMA profession, addressing everything from evolving skillsets and institutional career pathways to broader European integration. Participants will be invited to reflect on how their roles may evolve in response to changing expectations, how to foster resilient and well-supported research management structures, and how CEE RMAs can position themselves as active and influential contributors to the European Research Area and global networks. Framed as a moment of reflection and projection, the keynote encourages participants to think beyond their current contexts and engage in shaping a collective vision for the next decade of research support. A Q&A session will offer space for final insights, questions, and forward-thinking dialogue.

15:45 – 16:15

Closing Remarks from Representative of the V4 Offices

16:30 Informal city tour with best guide in Brussels: A walk offering a cultural experience in heart of EU!



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