

Call 2026 for ERNs Affiliated Partner

Health monitoring and coordination, health networks

Directorate for 'Public Health, Cancer and Health Security'

European Commission, Directorate-General for Health & Food
Safety

Stefano Vettorazzi & Natalia Zampieri

Luxembourg, 30 March 2026

AGENDA

1. General overview on Affiliated Partners
2. Overview of the Call text
3. Overview of the IT platform supporting the application
4. Q&A

Call 2026: General overview on Affiliated Partners

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Natalia Zampieri

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AFFILIATED PARTNERS

Associated National Centres:

Healthcare provider, with some special expertise matching the global thematic domain of a given reference network, that concentrates primarily on the provision of healthcare directly related to the activities and services of this specific network, including any type of diagnostic contribution supporting this provision of healthcare. *(Statement adopted by the BoMS on the definition and minimum recommended criteria [...], Nov 2017, pg. 7).*

National Coordination Hubs:

Any type of institution with the appropriate knowledge and the legal and organizational capacity to link the national healthcare system to a number or all European Reference Networks. National Coordination Hubs function as interfaces between the national healthcare system and those networks where a given Member State is neither represented by a full member nor by an Associated National Centre. National Coordination Hubs do not need any specific medical expertise or knowledge in rare diseases. *(Statement adopted by the BoMS on the definition and minimum recommended criteria [...], Nov 2017, pg. 12).*



PURPOSE OF HAVING AFFILIATED PARTNERS

- To ensure a high level of inclusion and broaden geographical coverage when the Member State has no Full Member in a given **Network** (*Statement of 2017, page 5, “Inclusiveness of the affiliation process”*)
- **Relationship with Full Members:**
- **Situation 1:** once an Affiliated Partner becomes a Full Member, if there are other Affiliated Partner(s) from the same Member State, the latter lose(s) their membership in the relevant ERN. (*Statement of 2017, page 14, “Termination of the affiliation”*)
- **Situation 2:** if, via a call for Full Members, a HCP (not yet part of ERNs as Affiliated Partner) becomes a Full Member, all Affiliated Partners from the same Member State lose their membership in the relevant ERN.



TASKS, RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- i. support the ERN objectives established in Article 12 of Directive 2011/24/EU;
- ii. fulfil the minimum recommended criteria described in the BoMS Statement of 2017,
- iii. respect the rules of the ERN;
- iv. act as a hub-node at national level in the area of expertise of the ERN to which the Affiliated Partner is linked,
- v. contribute through their relationship with the ERNs to pool and disseminate expertise;
- vi. follow the rules and strategies established in an ERN-Affiliated Partner bilateral cooperation agreement.



AFFILIATED PARTNERS - OBLIGATIONS

- **The bilateral cooperation agreement should describe how the Affiliated Partner interacts, participate and contribute to the specific ERN** (*Statement of 2017, page 13, “Tasks, rights and obligations of the Affiliated Partners”*)
- Considering that the bilateral cooperation agreement is a document that concerns the Affiliated Partner and the concerned ERN, the Commission and the BoMS are not recipients of the agreement and do not have any evaluation/control role.
- The bilateral agreements regulating the relationships of Affiliated Partners within different networks will be different which means that Affiliated Partners may have different roles, rights, obligations and status within different networks.



CRITERIA AND CONDITIONS FOR APPLICANTS FOR MEMBERSHIP TO A NETWORK

- General and specific criteria apply to Affiliated Partners (*Statement of 2017, pages 7-11, “Associated National Centres”*)
- General criteria are specified in the ERN legislative acts (*Delegated Decision 2014/286/EU*)
- Specific criteria are Network-specific, established at the level of specific Networks (*Delegated Decision 2014/286/EU*)



Call 2026: objective, scope, application & selection procedures, timeline

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Luxembourg, 30 March 2026



European
Reference
Networks



Virtual networks of healthcare
providers (2026 brochure available on:
<https://op.europa.eu/s/AdUQ>)

1 605 specialised clinical centres
located in 375 hospitals
of 27 EU Countries and Norway

Key players:

EU Commission

Member States

Healthcare Providers: Hospitals,
medical centres

Patient Organisations

WHY THIS CALL: ERNs COVERAGE

ERN Centres	AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	GR	HR	HU	IE	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	TOTAL	Mbrs	APs	MS not covered	
BOND	1	2			1	6	3		4	1	5			1	1	10	2	1		1	4	1		2		1	1		48	42	6	9	
CRANIO	1	3			1	2	2		3	1	3			2	1	7	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1		3	1		42	35	7	7	
Endo-ERN	2	7	2	1	2	13	3	1	5	1	9	3	2	1	1	20	1	1	2	1	8	2	4	3	4	2	1	2	104	92	12	0	
EpiCARE	2	2		1	2	4	2	2	3	2	6		2	1		7	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	50	38	12	4		
ERKNet	2	3			2	11	3	2	5	1	7	1		1	1	15	1	1	2	1	6	1	3	1	1	1	1	73	64	9	4		
ERN-EYE	3	3			1	8	2	2	7	1	6		1	1	1	9	1	1	1	1	4		1	1	1	1	1	59	51	8	4		
ERNICA	4	3			1	6	2	1	3	1	6		1	1		6	2	1	1	1	5	1	2			3	1	52	39	13	7		
ERN-LUNG	3	6		1	4	11	2	1	4	1	5		1	2	1	23	2	1	1	1	7	1	2	3		2	1	87	78	9	3		
ERN-RND	1	4	1	1	4	9	2	1	8	1	5	1	1	3	1	9	1	1	1	1	6		2			2	1	67	63	4	4		
ERN-SKIN	2	3			4	8	2		1	1	6		1	3	1	12	1	1	1	1	5				1	1	1	56	52	4	8		
EURACAN	1	6		1	4	8	1	2	6	2	12	1	2	1	1	26	2	1	1	1	8	1	3	3	1	3	1	99	90	9	2		
EuroBloodNet	2	6	2	1	3	10	2	1	4	1	11	4		1	1	32	1	1		1	5		2	2		1	1	96	89	7	4		
eUROGEN	1	3			2	11	2		7	1	2		1	1		7	1	1	1	1	6		2	1		4	1	56	51	5	8		
EURO-NMD	1	5	1	1	2	10	2	1	7	2	9	1		1	1	20	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1		2	1	80	73	7	3		
GENTURIS	2	4		1	2	6	2	1	2	2	2	1		1		9	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	3		1	1	51	44	7	5		
GUARD-HEART	2	3			2	2	2	1	7	1	5		1	1	1	9	2	1		1	4		1	3	1	1	1	53	44	9	5		
ITHACA	1	5		1	1	9	3	1	3	2	7		1	2	1	13	1	1	1	1	6	1	3	2	1	1	1	70	65	5	2		
MetabERN	4	6	1		1	11	1	1	7	1	10	1	1	1	1	18	1	1	1	1	6	2	3	6	1	2	1	91	85	6	1		
PaedCAN	1	4	1	1	2	19	2	2	6	4	7	1	3	2	1	12	1	1	1	1	2	1	6	2	2	3	1	90	79	11	0		
RARE-LIVER	1	4			1	10	2	1	3	1	5	1	2	2		13	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	2		2	1	62	52	10	5		
ReCONNET	1	3			1	4	1	1	3	1	7	1	1	1		20	1	1	2	1	6		1	3	1	1	1	63	54	9	5		
RITA	3	2			2	11	2	1	4	1	5	2	1	1	1	14	2	1	1	1	5	1	3	2		2	1	70	61	9	3		
TRANSPLANTCHILD	1	2			2	2	1	6	1	2		1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	3		3		40	33	7	7		
VASCERN	2	5		1		5	3		2	1	4			1	1	7	1	1		1	6	1		1		2	1	46	40	6	9		
Full Members	9	94	7	4	45	196	46	5	110	32	146	18	7	27	18	323	17	1	6	0	121	14	44	48	13	45	13	5	1414				
Affiliated Partners	35	0	1	7	0	0	4	19	0	0	0	0	16	6	0	0	14	23	18	24	0	6	1	0	2	0	10	5		191			
Current situation	44	94	8	11	45	196	50	24	110	32	146	18	23	33	18	323	31	24	24	24	121	20	45	48	15	45	23	10	1605				
Areas not covered	0	0	18	13	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	12	7	0	6	0	0	0	4	0	0	7	3	3	13	0	1	15					



OBJECTIVE

- **Improve geographical coverage** of ERN expertise across Member States and Norway
- **Facilitate access to specialised care** in countries or disease areas where full ERN membership is not yet established
- **Support cross-border knowledge exchange** and clinical collaboration
- Strengthen the integration of ERNs into national healthcare systems



MINIMUM RECOMMENDED CRITERIA

- For **Associated National Centres**, the potential applicant is required to meet **general and specific criteria***, e.g. (see Annex 1):
 - evidence of a clear and well-defined organisation (e.g., governance, definition of one representative as contact person);
 - measures in place related to respect patients' rights (e.g., informed consent procedures, personal data protection, complaint procedures)
 - measures in place related to patient safety (e.g., infections control, safe surgery, etc.)
 - equipment and facilities (e.g., radiotherapy laboratories or hemodynamic facilities)
 - processing of patient data, coding and participation in patient registries (e.g., technical capacity to handle, store, print, and transmit secure information in biomedical imaging).
 - ...

* As defined in the [BoMS Statement November 2017](#)



MINIMUM RECOMMENDED CRITERIA

- For **National Coordination Hubs**, the potential applicant is required to meet only the following **general criteria***, considering the broad range of non-specialised institutions eligible as National Coordination Hub (see Annex 2):
 - evidence of a clear and well-defined organisation (e.g., governance, definition of one representative as contact person);
 - listing of the different ERNs the coordination hub should be linked to;
 - description of the capacity and the ways to link the different ERNs with the national healthcare system, in particular to centres dealing with rare diseases

* As defined in the [BoMS Statement November 2017](#)



SCOPE

- This Call is directed at **countries that do not yet have full coverage** across all European Reference Networks (ERNs), either as members or affiliated partners
- For this Call, the following countries are eligible to apply:
 - **Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia**
- Eligible countries may submit, indicatively, **up to three** Affiliated Partner applications for each missing ERN



TASKS, RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- i. **Support the ERN objectives** established in Article 12 of Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare.
- ii. **Fulfil Minimum Recommended Criteria** described in the BoMS Statement of 2017.
- iii. Respect the rules of the Network to which the Affiliated Partner will be linked and participate and **share the tasks and work** related with the cooperation activities of the Network.
- iv. Act as a hub-node at national level in the area of expertise of the ERN to which the Affiliated partner is linked, including the **referral of patients to the ERN Clinical Patient Management System (CPMS)**.
- v. Contribute through their relationship with the ERNs to **pool and disseminate expertise** for the benefit of patients and Member States.
- vi. Follow the rules and strategies established in the bilateral cooperation agreement that should describe how the affiliated partner will interact, participate and contribute to the specific ERN.



APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- **Interested applicants :**
 - **fill in the technical annex** provided (Annex 1 or Annex 2).
 - **send the technical annex to** their respective **National Competent Authority**.
- **The National Competent Authority:**
 - **coordinates** at national level **the identification of candidates** for Affiliated Partner membership, considering the national situation and planning
 - **consolidates the applications** received from the interested applicants
 - **selects the applications** received
 - **issues a designation letter** for each application (Annex 3 or Annex 4)



APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- **The National Competent Authority:**
 - **submits** electronically the **applications selected and** the corresponding **designation letters** using the dedicated IT application platform supporting the Call [link available when the Call opens]
- **To be considered completed**, the submission entails:
 - uploading the applications selected (either Annex 1 or 2)
 - uploading the corresponding designation letters (either Annex 3 or 4)
 - filling in the administrative information requested by the IT application platform [see later]
 - clicking on the button ‘submit’.
- **DG SANTE** undertakes an eligibility check of the documents submitted.



SELECTION PROCEDURE

- **ERNs Coordinators:**
 - **assess the applications submitted** by the National Competent Authorities. **In case of clarifications regarding the applications**, the ERN Coordinators are invited to **contact the relevant National Competent Authorities** to clarify the matter.
 - following the assessment of applications, **record a final evaluation** (positive or negative) in the IT application platform. Optionally they may attach supporting documents to justify their assessment.
- **DG SANTE submit the assessment** performed by the ERN Coordinators **to the National Competent Authority**.



SELECTION PROCEDURE

- The **Board of Member States** meets for final approval of applications, considering the assessment of the ERN Coordinators.

TO NOTE

In the event of a disagreement between the National Competent Authority of a Member State that endorsed an Affiliated Partner application and the ERN assessment, **the Board of Member States will take the final decision** on the approval of this candidate Affiliated Partner into the concerned network.

- **DG SANTE** publishes the outcome of the Board of Member States approval on the DG SANTE website, at the following link:

https://health.ec.europa.eu/rare-diseases-and-european-reference-networks_en



SELECTION PROCEDURE

- **ERNs Coordinators:**

- **sign a Bilateral Cooperation Agreement** (Annex 5) **with the approved Affiliated Partner**, once the outcome of the Board of Member States approval has been published by DG SANTE.
- **upload the signed Bilateral Cooperation Agreement in the** dedicated **IT application platform**.

TO NOTE

The Bilateral Cooperation Agreement (Annex 5) is signed between the Chief Executive Officer/representative of the Healthcare Provider and the concerned ERN Coordinator.



INDICATIVE TIMELINE

PHASES	TIMELINE
Information sessions	30 March, 9 April, 20 April (if necessary)
Publication of the Call	13 April 2026 – 09:00 CET
Deadline for submission of applications	1 September 2026 – 23:59 CET
Eligibility check	September 2026
ERNs Coordinators assessment	October 2026 – January 2027
BoMS meeting to vote on outcome	March 2027
Submission of signed bilateral cooperation agreements	April 2027



CALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

ANNEX	DESCRIPTION
Annex 1	Technical Annex: Associated National Centres
Annex 2	Technical Annex: National Coordination Hubs
Annex 3	Template: National designation letter - Associated National Centre
Annex 4	Template: National designation letter - National Coordination Hub
Annex 5	Bilateral cooperation agreement ERN-Associated Partner
Annex 6	ERN Strategy for the Integration of Affiliated Partners
Annex 7	One-pager: key information regarding the application to the 2026 Call
Annex 8	Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Technical assistance regarding IT application platform:**

SANTE-ERNSD-ITSUPPORT@ec.europa.eu

- **Any other type of questions:**

SANTE-ERNCALL2026@ec.europa.eu



ERN AND RARE DISEASES: EUROPA WEBSITE



EN

Public Health

[Home](#) > [Rare diseases and European Reference Networks](#)

Rare diseases and European Reference Networks

Rare diseases

Between 27 and 36 million people in the EU live with a rare disease. There are between 6 000 and 8 000 distinct rare diseases in the EU.

European Reference Networks

The European Reference Networks (ERNs) are cross-border networks that bring together European hospital centres of expertise and reference to tackle rare, low prevalence and complex diseases and conditions requiring highly specialised healthcare.

EU4Health funding

Since its inception, the ERNs have received continuous funding from the Commission.

Latest updates

News announcement | 5 March 2026

[Agenda and registration - Patients' rights on cross-border healthcare and the European Reference Networks \(26 March 2026\)](#)

🕒 1 min read

News announcement | 27 February 2026

[European Reference Networks - Working for patients with rare, low-prevalence and complex diseases \(2026 edition\)](#)

🕒 1 min read



AP Call 2026: Overview of the IT platform supporting the application

Health monitoring and coordination, health networks

Directorate for 'Public Health, Cancer and Health Security'

European Commission, Directorate-General for Health & Food Safety

Stefano Vettorazzi

Luxembourg, 30 March 2026

APs DATA COLLECTION WEB-FORM: HCP DETAILS

ERN AFP data collection web-form
AFP

Form data

Form for ERN AFP

Hospitals

HCP Official Name: *

This field is required

HCP Official Name (en): *

This field is required

Country: *

Language: *

This field is required

Latitude: *

This field is required

Longitude: *

This field is required

Website: *

This field is required

Mailbox: *

This field is required

DPO Functional Mailbox: *

This field is required



APs DATA COLLECTION WEB-FORM: HCP DETAILS

Address line 1: * <input type="text" value="Enter Address Line 1"/> <small>This field is required</small>	Address line 2: * <input type="text" value="Enter Address Line 2"/> <small>This field is required</small>	Address line 3: <input type="text" value="Enter Address Line 3"/>
Address line 4: <input type="text" value="Enter Address Line 4"/>	Comments: <input type="text" value="Add a comment"/>	

Hospital CEO

First Name: * <input type="text"/> <small>This field is required</small>	Last Name: * <input type="text"/> <small>This field is required</small>	Title: <input type="text"/>
Telephone: <input type="text" value="0032XXXXXXXX or +32XXXXXXXX"/>	Primary Email: * <input type="text"/> <small>This field is required</small>	Backup Email: <input type="text"/>
Profession: <input type="text"/>		



APs DATA COLLECTION WEB-FORM: DESIGNATED ERN

Designated ERN

Designation

Network: * ▼ **Centre Type: *** ▼

This field is required This field is required

Representative

First Name: * 100 **Last Name: *** 100 **Title:** 15

This field is required This field is required

Primary Email: * 100 **Backup Email:** 100 **Telephone:** 18

This field is required

Profession: 70



APs DATA COLLECTION WEB-FORM: DESIGNATED ERN

Sub-representative

First Name: * <input type="text"/> <small>This field is required</small>	Last Name: * <input type="text"/> <small>This field is required</small>	Title: <input type="text"/>
Primary Email: * <input type="text"/> <small>This field is required</small>	Backup Email: <input type="text"/>	Telephone: <input type="text"/> <small>0032XXXXXXXXX or +32XXXXXXXXX</small>
Profession: <input type="text"/>		

DESIGNATION LETTER >

Designation letter is mandatory.

TECHNICAL ANNEX >

Technical Annex is mandatory.



APs DATA COLLECTION WEB-FORM: MANAGEMENT

DESIGNATION LETTER ∨

Would you like add some attachments to this dossier?

No Yes

Designation letter is mandatory.

TECHNICAL ANNEX >

Technical Annex is mandatory.

OTHER DOCUMENTS >

Clear Form

Close Form

Opened 12 minutes, 17 seconds ago.

Save Form

Submit

Delete

Duplicate Dossier

Download PDF



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Additional information available at:

https://health.ec.europa.eu/rare-diseases-and-european-reference-networks_en



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