



Annual Plan 2024 – 2026 ARENA Centre for European Studies

ARENA – Centre for European Studies is a multidisciplinary research centre at the University of Oslo studying the direction, dynamics and sustainability of the evolving European political order. The Annual Plan sets out ARENA’s main goals and priorities in the medium term. It provides a basis for the continuing development of the Centre, in line with the principles and regulatory frameworks of the University of Oslo.

The Annual Plan is decided by ARENA’s Board and reviewed annually for a rolling three-year period. [Last revision: 2023-02-13]. It is grounded in the overall goals and priorities specified in Strategi 2030 of the University of Oslo and in the Annual Plan of the Faculty of the Social Sciences.

ARENA’S PURPOSE AND VISION

ARENA shall be a leading academic environment on political integration and cooperation in Europe.¹

ARENA’s core purpose is to provide *excellent research on the evolving multilevel European political order*. ARENA’s research shall provide innovative and credible answers to significant questions. By significant questions, we mean research questions that contain theoretical and/or empirical puzzles of high scientific and societal relevance. Such questions have the potential of raising interest and addressing concerns both within and outside academia. By credible answers, we mean answers based on purposeful research designs that provide sound arguments in favour of the propositions we make. Innovative answers provide new insights beyond the expected.

ARENA’s research shall have *impact*, by which we mean that our findings are being acknowledged and have long-term effects on research and in society. Scholars, students, policy practitioners and/or the general public should pay attention to what we find.

Besides its core purpose of research excellence, ARENA shall be *a leading hub for informed public debate on the transformation of the European political order*. Since ARENA started its activities in 1994, European political, economic, social and legal integration has deepened, both within the European Union (EU) and between Norway and the EU. The societal issues that Norwegians care most about – including welfare, climate, migration, security, trade, human rights – are to an increasing extent determined by decisions made in Europe.

¹ *Administrasjonsreglement ved ARENA Senter for europaforskning*, passed by the Faculty board 27.10.2023.



ARENA responds to the need in Norway for an easily accessible reservoir of research-based knowledge useful for navigating the changing European landscape.

PRIORITISED GOALS AND MEASURES 2024-2026

The Annual Plan specifies ARENA's priorities and measures for the coming three-year period under four headlines: Research, Dissemination and Outreach, Teaching and Organisation.

Research

ARENA has developed a distinctive way of organising research with a strong integration between researchers and administrative staff. ARENA is a research collective, where senior researchers, junior researchers and administrative staff work together as a team to develop, implement and disseminate our research.

ARENA's specific research agenda should be evolving based on the creative ideas of its researchers and along with the developing European political order. It should be continuously evaluated, with the overall vision in mind of providing innovative and credible answers to significant questions relating to the evolving multilevel European political order. The combination of normative and positive theory, methodologically sound research designs, and a multidisciplinary profile should be distinctive features of ARENA's research.

Priority: *Strengthen ARENA's procedures for developing new projects.*

Measures:

- specify and pursue a plan for working with project ideas and applications, including timelines, guidelines to project leaders and seminars to support ideas and applications.

Priority: *Stimulate inspiring and useful discussions of ongoing research*

Measures:

- evaluate and develop the Tuesday and Research in Progress seminars



Dissemination and outreach

ARENA should disseminate research and research-based knowledge in ways that amplifies its impact in the scholarly community and among students, practitioners and the general public, including publishing our research at a highly competitive level. The specific communication goals of ARENA for the time period 2024-2026 are:

- To contribute to an informed public debate
- To be a source of knowledge for stakeholders and decision makers
- To create dialogue with stakeholders
- To be perceived as an attractive cooperation partner by other academic institutions
- To increase knowledge about ARENA's research and European Studies in general among students and young scholars.

Priority: *Reinforce ARENA's activities and visibility in Norwegian and European public debates*

Measures:

- Outreach events in 2024 aimed at a broader general public and stakeholders marketed as ARENA 30 Years.
- Further pursue opportunities in traditional media (op-eds and interviews)
- Increase knowledge about ARENA among students and younger people (e.g. ARENA student grant, target younger audiences in public outreach).

Priority: *Strengthen ARENA's communication activities and profile*

Measures:

- Create a more detailed overview of opportunities, channels and target groups for ARENA

Teaching

ARENA's staff contributes to teaching at the UiO and elsewhere, primarily at the PhD and Masters level. There are good reasons for striving to increase ARENA's engagement in teaching: ARENA's research is enriched from the meeting between scholars and students. ARENA has important knowledge to contribute relating to the evolving European political order and Norway's relation to Europe. Interdisciplinary research programs are attractive to students. Teaching opportunities are attractive to ARENA's staff, both for intrinsic motivational reasons and for future career prospects in academia. However, so far ARENA's efforts to seek support for developing an interdisciplinary and internationally competitive Master programme in European Studies have been rejected by the Faculty.



Priority: *Develop opportunities for teaching for ARENA's staff*

Measures:

- facilitate for ARENA's staff to contribute to the existing educational programmes at UiO

Organisation

ARENA shall have an organisation that is well suited for fulfilling its purpose, including a competent and content staff, a viable economic model and a stable position as an independent research centre within the Faculty of Social Sciences. We shall provide a stimulating, collaborative, welcoming and open work environment. ARENA's staff shall be informed and involved in the organizational business of the Centre. Another ARK survey will be carried out in 2024, and we will welcome new employees.

The financial model of the Faculty of Social Sciences implies that all employees at ARENA are in effect externally funded, and therefore need to contribute to the future funding of their own position. The model includes strong incentives for prioritising EU funding, because of the built-in financial reward (RBO) from the University attached to such funds. ARENA is well placed to take advantage of these incentives due to our competences and experiences in managing EU-funded programs. However, the present financial model of the UiO is expected to change in the next years, which may have important implications for ARENA.

Priority: *Secure funding to expand ARENA's level of activity*

Measures:

- closely monitor the reform of the financial model of the UiO and assess implications for ARENA
- continue to investigate other sources of funding, besides the main research funding institutions

Priority: *Secure long-term recruitment of research staff competent of leading new research projects*

Measures:

- support and recruit emerging top-level scholars (e.g. through collaborative projects and individual grants such as ERC and Researcher Project for Young Talents)
- announce new permanent position(s) when economy allows

Priority: *Offer employees an academically stimulating, safe and comfortable work environment.*



Measures:

- Improve welcoming package to all new employees
- Offer all employees competence development
- Follow up of ARK survey findings