ECSS 2026 Community Session: From Shared Challenges to Collective Action

Outcomes of the discussions | Porto, 26–27 October 2026

During **ECSS 2026**, the Informatics Europe (IE) Community Session invited participants to reflect on the future of the association and how IE can best serve its members, address shared challenges and strengthen the collective impact of the European informatics community.

Participants proposed topics on 26 October, which were grouped into seven thematic areas and discussed in smaller groups the following day. The discussions generated a range of ideas, recommendations and potential initiatives, summarised below.

These are proposals emerging from the community, not yet agreed IE actions. The IE Board will review them at its January 2027 meeting and consider concrete actions for 2027 and beyond, including opportunities to build on existing Working Groups and Task Forces or establish new ones. A call for participation will follow.

The report also includes an annex summarising additional topics proposed by participants that were not explored in the group discussions. These suggestions will likewise be available for the Board's consideration when identifying future priorities.

1. AI Integration in Teaching and Curricula

The discussion focused on adapting informatics education to AI, identifying essential skills and sharing effective teaching practices.

Proposed contributions from IE:

- **Curriculum guidance:** Identify essential AI skills and concepts for informatics programmes, distinguishing between core competencies and course-specific requirements.
- **AI in teaching:** Provide guidance on appropriate AI use according to course level and content, including when its use should be restricted.
- **AI across disciplines:** Develop recommendations on AI competencies needed in other university disciplines.
- **Assessment practices:** Collect examples of effective homework assignments and assessment methods in the age of generative AI.
- **Faculty development:** Survey current practices and gaps in upskilling university teaching staff.

2. Student Motivation, Recruitment and Skills in the AI Era

Participants exchanged experiences on the drop in interest in informatics studies, changing student expectations and the need for greater adaptability through institutional and curricula flexibility.

Proposed contributions from IE:

- **Curriculum renewal:** Share good practices for adapting (refocusing) programmes to emerging fields such as cybersecurity, AI and robotics, and developing interdisciplinary offerings.
- **Greater flexibility:** Identify and promote approaches to more flexible curricula and accreditation processes, allowing institutions to respond faster to evolving needs.

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- **Student recruitment:** Collect successful strategies for attracting students, including programme positioning, branding, specialisation options and communicating evolving career opportunities.
- **Guidance for institutions:** Develop recommendations and practical resources to support programme directors in curriculum development and student recruitment.
- **Policy advocacy:** Advocate for more adaptable education policies and accreditation frameworks, engaging national academic and industry associations to amplify IE's position.
- **Better data:** Expand comparative data on student demand, including applications to informatics programmes, to identify trends and support institutional decision-making.

3. Emerging Research Topics and Paradigms

Discussions addressed Europe's research competitiveness, emerging technologies, research infrastructures and the role of IE in shaping strategic research priorities.

Proposed contributions from IE:

- **Knowledge exchange:** Promote the sharing of research and teaching practices on emerging trends among members.
- **Partnerships:** partner with established research organizations to strengthen the community voice on how research and teaching in emerging topics should be conducted.
- **European research infrastructures:** Map existing infrastructures and capabilities, identify strengths and gaps, and advocate for sustained investment in AI and other emerging technologies, including the possibility of CERN-like European initiatives.
- **Strategic research agenda:** Organise workshops and foresight discussions to identify emerging research directions and advocate for investment in high-risk, long-term research.
- **Industry engagement:** Further involve industry in IE activities to exchange perspectives, strengthen mutual understanding and help steer research and innovation investments towards shared strategic priorities.
- **Digital sovereignty:** Explore how IE can help strengthen Europe's technological independence, openness and competitiveness.
- **Responsible AI:** Encourage research into AI risks, misuse and manipulation, ethical AI models and guidelines, and raise awareness of AI's societal implications.

4. Evolving Publishing Practices: Integrity, Ethics and AI

Participants discussed how generative AI is changing scientific publishing, peer review and research integrity.

Proposed contributions from IE:

- **Research integrity guidelines:** Develop common principles for transparent and responsible GenAI use in research and publishing, including disclosure requirements and unethical practices.
- **Peer-review practices:** Explore approaches to AI-assisted reviews, reviewer responsibilities, submission quality and the protection of intellectual property.

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- **Reviewer training:** Promote training on responsible reviewing, particularly for early-career researchers.
- **Reproducibility:** Encourage good practices for replicability, drawing on Open-Source Programme Office (OSPO) approaches.
- **Community-wide adoption:** Engage European conference chairs in adopting shared principles and recommendations, while considering how compliance could be encouraged or verified.

Discussions also highlighted unequal access to AI resources across institutions and the importance of coordinated approaches.

5**. Community Expansion, Inclusion and Support**

The discussion explored how IE could broaden its reach, strengthen engagement and make its community more inclusive.

Proposed contributions from IE:

- **Geographical expansion:** Increase engagement with underrepresented countries, particularly in Southeast Europe.
- **Industry engagement:** Explore new ways to involve industry representatives in IE activities and encourage sustained participation.
- **Expertise Network:** Further promote the IE Expertise Network as a means of connecting experts with conferences, workshops and other initiatives.

6. Collaboration, Networks and Mobility

Participants identified opportunities to facilitate institutional cooperation, particularly in joint education programmes and research infrastructures.

Proposed contributions from IE:

- **Joint degree programmes:** Promote greater use of the IE Research and Education Directory to facilitate institutional partnerships and joint degree programmes, encouraging members to keep their programme information up to date.
- **Research infrastructure:** Explore ways to improve the visibility and accessibility of informatics research and computing infrastructures across Europe, building on existing initiatives and identifying opportunities for collaboration among IE members.

Next Steps: Shaping IE's Agenda for 2027 and Beyond

The ECSS Community Session provided valuable input on the challenges facing informatics institutions and opportunities for collective action.

The **IE Board will discuss these outcomes in January 2027**, considering how to translate selected proposals into concrete initiatives, build on ongoing activities and mobilise the expertise of member institutions. Following this review, **members will be invited to contribute to the relevant Working Groups and Task Forces**, helping turn shared ideas into coordinated action.

We thank all participants for their contributions and look forward to continuing this work together.

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Annex – Additional Topics for Future Consideration

Alongside the proposals developed during the group discussions, ECSS 2026 participants raised several additional topics that were not explored in detail. These are summarised below, following the same thematic structure as the main report, to ensure that potentially valuable ideas remain available for future consideration by IE.

1. AI Integration in Teaching and Curricula

- **Academia–profession gap:** Widening gap between university curricula and professional practice
- **AI in university governance:** AI's role in university management and decision-making, including digital twins of universities.

2. Student Motivation, Recruitment and Skills in the AI Era

- **Foundational skills:** essential mathematics and informatics competencies needed by all citizens, including the critical skills required to assess AI-generated information.
- **Data on early informatics education:** Consider extending the IE Data Portal to cover informatics education at primary and secondary levels.
- **Perception of informatics careers:** spark the curiosity/passion for the field. Address concerns about AI replacing informatics professionals and communicate the continuing value of an informatics degree.

4. Evolving Publishing Practices: Integrity, Ethics and AI

- **Research funding:** More inclusive European research funding mechanisms, enabling broader participation in research initiatives.

5. Community Expansion, Inclusion and Support

- **Inclusive participation:** Consider support mechanisms, including scholarships, to facilitate engagement from institutions in less-resourced countries.
- **Early-career researchers:** Strengthen communication and connections among them.

6. Collaboration, Networks and Mobility

- **Academic mobility:** International mobility protocols for students, faculty and staff.
- **Joint doctoral activities:** further use the IE Job Portal for joint PhD research topics and doctoral internships with industry.
- **Stronger Voice in EU:** more visibility of IE activities at the EU level.

7. Academic Careers and Work Sustainability

- **Academic workload:** sustainability of academic work in the face of increasing responsibilities and limited resources. Need of recommendations for institutions and policymakers.
- **Career development:** Supporting career progression for the next generation of academics.
- **Research funding:** funding challenges affecting academic careers and research.
- **Academic recruitment:** Impact of AI on the evaluation of candidates for academic positions.