

March 2026

Monthly Membership Update



Welcome to the latest edition of the HERSA monthly newsletter, bringing you key updates and insights to keep you abreast of national and international developments in research and economic security.

This Month's Highlights

HERSA 2026: Registration Opening Soon!

NSI Act: Consultation Outcome on NSI Sector Updates

Thank You to All Applicants for the UK-Canada Exchange

European Commission Releases First Research Security Monitor

China Outlines Strategic Priorities in its 15th Five-Year Plan

HERSA & EECARO: Strengthening Research Security Together

Rebrand Event Q&A Informs New FAQ Page

New Vacancies

With several core pieces of work underway, including preparations for the HERSA 2026 Conference and ongoing international collaboration, this month's newsletter places a greater emphasis on updates related to HERSA's recent and upcoming activity.

This edition highlights the developments most relevant to members at this stage.

While the focus leans more towards organisational updates this month, we will continue to share wider national and international security developments in future editions as this work progresses.



HERSA 2026: Registration Opening Soon!

Registration for the HERSA 2026 Conference will **open in the coming week** and we encourage members to look out for the announcement. The conference will take place on 3 and 4 June in the Midlands, with the venue confirmed once registration goes live.

All members signed up to receive HERSA communications, including this newsletter, will receive an email as soon as registration opens!

This June, we will convene our trusted community of practitioners from across the UK higher education sector for two days of open discussion, collective learning and opportunities to connect. Building on previous years, the conference will explore the evolving security landscape in higher education and offer opportunities to deepen knowledge and strengthen networks.

In keeping with previous programmes, this year's agenda brings together input from UK Government, funders, industry experts and international partners to support informed discussion and shared understanding.

International members are also welcomed, including practitioners from EECARO, AUECO and Team Canada (including those looking to join outside of the UK-Canada conference exchange).

Follow us on LinkedIn!

To help grow our page and the wider HERSA network, [follow us](#) and keep up to date with the latest news and events.



NSI Act: Consultation Outcome on NSI Sector Updates

The Government has published the outcome of the 2025 consultation on proposed updates to the sector definitions within the National Security and Investment (NSI) Act 2021 regulations. The **NSI Act Notifiable Acquisition Regulations (NARs)** set out the considerations that bring an acquisition into scope of mandatory notification requirements, covering sensitive sectors and areas of critical national infrastructure.

The 12-week consultation sought views from stakeholders across industry, academia and the wider national security community on a series of refinements to these schedules.

Following this process, the Cabinet Office has confirmed a number of changes that will be taken forward, including **further amendments to the Critical Minerals, Semiconductors, Artificial Intelligence and Communications schedules** to reduce the volume of low-risk notifications, as well as the updated **Advanced Materials and Synthetic Biology schedules maintained** to continue to reflect emerging technologies and their varied applications.

Implementing the changes will require secondary legislation, which the Government will bring to Parliament in due course, together with updated guidance. Read the full announcement at GOV.UK.



Thank You to All Applicants for the UK-Canada Exchange

Applications for the UK-Canada Conference Exchange initiative have now closed. We are grateful to all those who have applied and for the thoughtful interest shown across the community.

HERSA will now work in partnership with Canadian colleagues to review the submissions, with outcomes expected in due course. **All applicants will be notified by email once decisions have been confirmed.**

The exchange will support participation across both the 2026 Canadian Research Security Conference and the HERSA 2026 Conference, **reflecting our shared commitment to strengthening collaboration and broadening engagement across the research security community.** We look forward to updating members once the review process is complete.

European Commission Releases First Research Security Monitor

The **European Commission** has released its first **Research Security Monitor**, following the Council Recommendation on enhancing research security, adopted back in May 2024. The publication marks an important step in establishing a shared European understanding of how research security policies and practices are developing across Member States.

The Monitor **provides a qualitative baseline of national approaches**, outlining the current threat landscape, assessing levels of policy maturity and highlighting where further work may be needed to strengthen safeguards in international research collaboration. It also **shares examples of emerging practice** intended to support institutions, funders and policymakers in managing risks more consistently.

Alongside the Monitor, the Commission has published **a supporting factsheet offering an accessible summary of key findings, themes and recommendations.** Together, these publications form part of wider EU efforts to reinforce research security, including the development of a European Centre of Expertise on Research Security and forthcoming due-diligence tools for international cooperation.



China Outlines Strategic Priorities in its 15th Five-Year Plan

China has approved its **15th Five-Year Plan (FYP) for 2026–30** following discussions at the Two Sessions – the annual gathering of delegates from the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. The new FYP sets out the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) developmental objectives for the next five years and **reaffirms long-standing ambitions around technological advancement, self-reliance and strengthening national innovation capability.**

The plan sets a target for R&D spending to grow by more than 7% annually and **outlines new models for innovation in areas including multimodal intelligence, AI, quantum, biotechnology and new energy.** It also supports the development of several ‘new-type’ research-orientated universities and specialist training programmes in emerging disciplines, including those linked to AI and advanced technologies.

Read a full breakdown and analysis of China’s 15th Five-Year Plan by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) here.



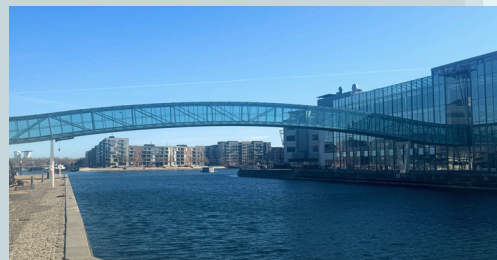
HERSA & EECARO: Strengthening Research Security Together

Over 18–19 March we joined colleagues at Aalborg University's Copenhagen campus for this year's **European Export Control Association for Research Organisations (EECARO)** General Assembly and Annual Conference. The event brought together research security and export control practitioners from across Europe for two days of focused discussion, practical insight and shared learning.

We were pleased to support our sister organisation and to provide an update on the UK's latest work in economic and research security.

It was also a welcome opportunity to share more about our transformation to HERSA and the work underway to strengthen our support for the sector. The commitment

across Europe to advancing research security remains strong, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the months ahead!



Thank you to EECARO colleagues for the invitation to support.

Rebrand Event Q&A Informs New FAQ Page

Following our recent online event to launch the HERSA rebrand, we had committed to sharing an anonymised version of the Q&A for members who were unable to attend on the day. After reviewing the questions submitted, we have decided to use the Q&A as the foundation for an updated HERSA FAQ on our website. The breadth and relevance of the questions provided a strong basis for helping members, and the wider community, understand more about HERSA's role and work.

The updated FAQ page is now available and we encourage you to explore it and share it with colleagues who may find it useful!



New Vacancies

Brunel University (Uxbridge Campus)

Trusted Research Manager

Closing date: Monday 20th April 2026

[Apply now](#)

Have a vacancy you'd like us to feature? **[Get in touch!](#)**

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