

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UPDATE

December 2012 Issue 30

INFORMATION FLASH ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DIRECTORATE

POLICY

Meeting with Diplomatic Corps to discuss the new international cooperation strategy

On 27 November, the European Commission presented its new strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation to representatives of the Brussels-based Diplomatic Corps. In her speech, Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn presented the new strategy which was adopted on 14 September 2012. She stressed that Horizon 2020, the new EU funding programme for research and innovation, will continue to be open to researchers' participation from across the world, while at the same time, targeted activities with key partners will be developed to generate sufficient scale and scope.

Her speech was followed by a presentation by Sylvia Schwaag Serger, Executive Director for International Networks and Strategy at VINNOVA (Sweden), and Chair of the Expert Group set up by the Commission to provide advice on international cooperation in research and innovation. Ms Schwaag Serger presented the Group's key recommendations which provided key input into the preparation of the new strategy. In the ensuing discussion, participants expressed broad support for the new strategy and a strong commitment to cooperate with the EU under Horizon 2020.

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European Union and South-Africa celebrate 15 years of S&T Cooperation in Cape Town

2012 marks the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the European Union and South Africa. Over the past fifteen years, a rich and diverse partnership has developed. Both parties remain committed to its future growth, with, in particular, the objective of harnessing knowledge and innovation for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in the region. Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn and DG RTD Director-General Robert-Jan Smits travelled to South-Africa to take part in a series of events organised by the

European Commission and South Africa's Department of Science and Technology (DST). The 11th Joint EU-South Africa S&T Committee meeting confirmed both sides' commitment to existing flagship initiatives (EDCTP, GEOSS and Research Infrastructures) and considered possible new initiatives, including the Atlantic Partnership, and reinforced cooperation in the areas of bio-economy, mining and ICT.

Highlights of this visit included: the launch of €1.8 million EU-SA bilateral cooperation project [ESASTAP Plus](#); commitments from European and African countries, industry and charitable organisations to the second European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership programme ([EDCTP](#)) with up to €1 billion from the EU; the signature of the ERAfrica implementing Agreement in which participating Member States committed €11 million for a joint call for proposals.

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EU-China Research and Innovation Collaboration Week, Beijing, 12-16 November 2012

A series of events and high-level meetings on science, technology and innovation took place in Beijing during the week of 12-16 November 2012.



These included: the EU-China Joint S&T Committee meeting co-chaired by Vice-Minister Cao Jianlin and DG RTD Deputy Director-General Rudolf Strohmeier (*picture above*); a separate meeting with Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Wan Gang; the first EU/MS-China Joint Lab Workshop; the first EU-China Joint Innovation seminar; and the Euraxess Links event. These high level meetings demonstrated the importance and strong potential of EU-China links in research and innovation and the willingness of both sides to develop a solid partnership, with an increasing emphasis on innovation and on balanced cooperation activities with scale and impact.

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10th Meeting of the Joint EU-China Science and Technology Committee

The 10th EU-China Science and Technology Cooperation Committee meeting took place on 16th November 2012 in Beijing and was co-chaired by DG RTD Deputy Director-General Strohmeier and Chinese Vice-Minister for Science and Technology Cao Jianlin. The meeting reviewed the remarkable progress achieved in research and innovation cooperation with China. It clearly illustrated that R&I cooperation is a strategic element in the overall EU-China relations. China expressed its wishes to see an increase in the level of [bilateral EU-China cooperation](#), and called for the setting up of a platform for innovation cooperation in a global perspective.

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EU-CELAC research funding Agencies meet in Brussels

Following the March 2012 meeting of EU-CELAC Senior Officials in Concepción, Chile, the European Commission, in close concertation with Chile as CELAC chair, invited senior representatives from research funding agencies in the EU Member States, Latin America and Caribbean countries to a meeting in Brussels on 26-27 November 2012. Objectives included: to familiarise participants with the opportunities afforded under the EU-LAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation; to foster exchange[s] and share good practices; to discuss funding instruments for bi-regional STI initiatives.

Representatives from 19 research funding agencies from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Romania and Spain supported a Joint Statement to reinforce cooperation. Several major research organisations and the European University Association, present as observers, also pledged cooperation in the context of the Joint Initiative.

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EU and Kazakhstan to strengthen cooperation, launch projects with strong innovation potential

At the initiative of Kazakhstan Industry Minister Asset Issekeiev, Kazakh President Nazarbayev met with DG RTD to discuss innovation policy and research cooperation. Commission representatives reported on the Policy Mix Review performed for the INCONET CACS project. They also presented the successful FP7 project EU PEARLS. The Kazakh President expressed strong interest in the project which may lead to setting up a new industry to produce natural latex derived from a Kazakh plant called "Russian Dandelion". Kazakhstan considers investing initially €150 million to develop this industry, in partnership with EU researchers and tire manufacturers.

Innovation policy is a prime concern for Kazakhstan. A recent law requires that Kazakh state enterprises invest a minimum percentage of their turnover into new products development. This has triggered substantial interest in the FP7 cooperation programme, as well as in the CIP database with its 13,000 technologies on offer. To support further cooperation in the innovation sector, the INCONET CACS project will organise an exhibition of FP7 research projects at the Astana Economic Forum in May 2013. Projects interested in participating in this event should contact [George Bonas](#).

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EVENTS

European Commission participates in the 'Open Innovations' Forum in Moscow

The [International Forum for Innovative Development 'Open Innovations'](#) took place in Moscow on 31 October-3 November 2012. Convened by the Russian Ministry of Economics, this Forum is by far the largest innovation event in Russia, with some 4000 participants from around the world and a technology and innovations exhibition. It was opened by Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who stressed that Russia should not remain on the side-lines of global technological developments. The event featured high-level speakers from business and academia, and prominent European and Russian entrepreneurs. The forum was part of Russia's overall effort to internationalise its science and innovation sector, demonstrating the country's high level of ambition for technological innovation.

Peter Dröll, Head of the Innovation Policy Unit at DG RTD, intervened in the Forum on behalf of the European Commission. In the margins of this event, informal discussions were held with the Russian Ministry of Education and Science and the Russian Ministry of Economy on future cooperation opportunities in research and innovations.

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First EU-China Innovation Seminar

The first EU-China Innovation Seminar took place in Beijing on 15 November, and was opened by Vice-Minister Cao Jianlin and Deputy Director-General Rudolf Strohmeier. The event involved representatives from academia, industry and government from both Europe and China.

The aim was to exchange views on ways to work together on cooperative endeavours in the areas of energy, health, ICTs, and urbanisation. Vice-Minister Cao stressed the Chinese government's commitment to create a more open and more equitable environment to develop innovation. He referred to constant increases in R&D funding as a percentage of Chinese GDP, a trend which will continue in the future.



First EU-China Innovation Seminar in Beijing

Debates emphasised the key role of SMEs in innovation, the growth of original innovations and associated applications, the progress in IPR protection, as well as strengthened laws and enforcement in this area. Academic and industrial representatives from both sides expressed their willingness to engage in a number of specific cooperative projects, including joint research collaboration in the health area, and EU-China energy demonstration projects.

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Successful launch of the first EU-Member States-China Joint Labs Workshop

On 14 November 2012, Deputy Director-General Rudolf Strohmeier inaugurated the first EU-China Joint Labs Workshop in Beijing. The event was hosted by the Italian Embassy and organised by the EU Delegation in Beijing with the support of the French and Dutch Embassies. The workshop was the first of its kind and gathered some 70 participants representing 25 joint laboratories run by EU Member States and Chinese institutions, public authorities and stakeholders from Europe and from China. The event raised awareness of joint research and innovation activities conducted by such Joint Labs. Participants exchanged views on how to promote a stronger European dimension.

Options discussed included: better interaction among Joint Labs; opening up joint labs to participation from other Member States; and setting up multilateral Europe-China Labs.

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EURAXESS Links holds global event in Beijing

The first [EURAXESS Links](#) global event was successfully held on 15 November at the Regent Hotel in Beijing. The event brought together some 150 participants, including Chinese and Europeans researchers based in China, Chinese researchers living in Europe, international researchers, and private and public research employers and stakeholders. Dr Markus Ederer, the EU's Ambassador to China, opened the event, followed by a video message from European Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn.

They highlighted the political importance of international collaboration in linking researchers worldwide and stressed the services which EURAXESS provide to improve researcher's mobility. The meeting was articulated around the main sessions of "Linking Europe and China" and "Linking Europe and the World". Participants debated various aspects of career development and mobility experiences in a researcher's career. A highlight of the event was the opening of the "Jobs" section on the EURAXESS Links websites, a new tool which will contribute to widen opportunities for European researchers abroad.

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Eastern Partnership Platform holds regional science evaluation workshop in Moldova

On 6 November 2012, in the context of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Platform 4, the Academy of Science of Moldova hosted a regional workshop on "Science evaluation as a prerequisite for promoting excellence in research". Its main objective was to disseminate best practices on science evaluation in the EaP countries.

Speakers and participants came from the European Commission, EU Member States and the EaP countries. The Workshop adopted a resolution encouraging the national bodies of the EaP countries to align their evaluation procedures to those used by the European Commission and to EU Member States' best practices. The national bodies were also invited to establish a permanent platform for the STI policy dialogue and networking, in order to take full advantage of new opportunities in Horizon 2020.

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EU Korea cooperation in food, nutrition and health research

The EU-Korea [FOODforce](#) network met in Brussels on 29 October. FOODforce is a network of leading European and Korean research provider organisations from 22 countries active in the areas of food, nutrition and health who all share a common interest in multidisciplinary science. Meeting twice a year, the network provides an active forum to share best practices in food and nutrition research, to assess its societal impact, and to facilitate international knowledge and innovation exchange, both within and outside the EU.

The meeting focussed on identifying partnerships for projects and exchange of expertise in food and health research. FOODforce hosted the meeting together with the South Korea National Food Cluster, the Korea Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and [Korea University](#). Korea's ambition is to become one of world's top 5 countries for investments in food science by 2020, and will be a key partner for EU research in this field.

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Workshop on EU Research and Innovation policy with Enlargement Countries

With the support of DG ELARG, a workshop was organised on 6-7 November in Brussels to inform enlargement countries (Iceland, Turkey and the Western Balkans) of the latest developments in EU research and innovation policy.

A key focus of the workshop was the Self-Assessment Tool which requires appropriate administrative capacity to be used. The workshop made clear that it was in these countries' interest to assess their R&I strategies, in order to make the necessary adjustments to take into account EU actions and objections. Enlargement countries were also encouraged to apply the Smart Specialisation Strategy which represents a useful tool for programme support towards R&I capacity building under the Pre-Accession Instrument (IPA). Participants expressed a keen interest in the Innovation Union's commitments, and an eagerness to improve knowledge and awareness through expert advice and sharing of best practices.

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The Balkans in a regional context: Research and Innovation strategy and actions

On 19 and 20 November Western Balkans countries met in Tirana under the auspices of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The objective of the meeting was to identify actions to be undertaken at a Regional level on Research and Innovation. Making the Region's countries more competitive represents a challenge.

Research and Innovation capacity at national level are still generally weak and many key framework conditions to ensure a competitive environment are still missing. A number of interesting ideas for actions at regional level emerged from the workshops. These included setting up a Fund for Scientific Excellence; a programme for networking centres of excellence; a facility to support transfer of technology, and a facility for Innovation. A reform of national policies on R&I were also recommended.

In this context, the European Commission's objective is to ensure that reforms and actions adopted are in line with the EU *acquis* or inspired by it. The meeting was also a good opportunity to prepare projects for funding by the regional component of the Pre-Accession Instrument (IPA). The EC insisted, however, on the need to avoid duplication and create synergies with other regional initiatives in particular with the work carried out by the WBC.INCO.NET.

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Addressing S&T challenges for Pacific nations: STAR conference held in New Caledonia

The Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) organised its 2012 conference "*The science of a changing world: addressing Pacific issues through the 21st Century*" on 3-6 November in Noumea.

The event, attended by over 200 participants, was hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD). The STAR network was founded in 1984 as a vehicle to help the international research community provide advice to Pacific Island Applied Geosciences Commission (SOPAC). As an independent and voluntary body, it has played an important scientific and advisory role, mobilising research to address the needs of Pacific island nations. The 2012 STAR Conference focused on ways in which Pacific island nations can improve their development through better linking the science of changing natural systems with policy and political changes taking place in the region and globally.

A key objective of this year's event was to broaden the discussion beyond geoscience into other fields. Over 30 scientific papers on Pacific issues were presented including oceanography, meteorology, energy, minerals, natural hazards, coastal environments, agriculture and forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, biotechnology, health and social science. The European Commission presentation of the new international strategy for international cooperation, which opened the conference, was particularly well received by participants and the media present at the event.

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PROJECTS

EU-China 'DRAGON STAR' project kicks off

The EU-China DRAGON STAR Project kick off meeting took place in Beijing on 11-12 November. DRAGON-STAR aims to support the Chinese participation in Horizon 2020; to enhance reciprocity in access to respective research and innovation funding programmes; and to promote bilateral cooperation in research and innovation with particular focus on technological cooperation between industrial players.



Dragon Star is coordinated by the Foundation for Research and Technology (Greece), and includes seven EU and four Chinese Research and Innovation institutions, notably the China Science and Technology Exchange Centre (CECO/CSTEC). The project's deliverables include producing original studies and expert reports; organizing information and brokerage events; setting up trainings for NCPs; and providing support services for the creation of Joint Labs.

Participants at the meeting expressed their commitment to actively support on-going EU and Member States initiatives and to contribute to the further development of bilateral cooperation activities.

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EU-US 'BILAT-USA-2.0' project launched

The Coordination and Support Action BILAT-USA 2.0 held its kick-off meeting on 7-8 November in Washington DC. The project has three main goals: to support the political dialogue within the framework of the EU-US STI Cooperation Agreement and within the SFIC pilot initiative; to enhance cooperation between scientists and innovation actors and disseminate information on funding possibilities; to analyse and track progress of bilateral science and technology cooperation.

In addition, the project aims to strengthen networks between innovation actors, including through setting up a single, digital access exchange platform as a knowledge base for innovation. The project consortium gathers 13 partners and is coordinated by the German Aerospace Centre (DLR).

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS (DECEMBER 2012)

Joint Committee Meetings

| | | |
|-------------|--------|----------|
| 17 December | Israel | Brussels |
|-------------|--------|----------|

Regional Dialogues

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|------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 4 December | Eastern Partnership | Brussels |
| 6 December | Western Balkan Countries | Belgrade |

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