

Brussels, 28 October 2009

Strategic Partnership signed between the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

**Dr. Alan I. Leshner, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Executive Publisher of the Journal, *Science* gives
*Inaugural JRC Annual Lecture:***

<p>Europe and the United States: A crucial moment for science cooperation</p>
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To better explain how science impacts on us all and to remove barriers between the world of scientific discovery and public understanding, the European Commission's *Joint Research Centre* has introduced an Annual Lecture. The aim is to attract a keynote speaker working at the frontline of a current controversial issue or representing a large membership organisation that can ignite passion for scientific discovery in both specialists and non specialists and encourage curiosity-driven learning.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the European Commission's first research site in Ispra (Italy), European Commissioner for Science & Research, Janez Potočnik, introduced keynote speaker Dr. Alan I. Leshner to a crowd of over 350 invited guests at Hotel Renaissance, Brussels. Praising the initiative, Commissioner Potočnik commented: "*The science community needs to better engage in the societal and political debate, and its challenge is to make science understandable to all*". He added that: "*International S&T cooperation is one of the Commission's priorities for putting EU science higher on the global map and addressing common global challenges. I welcome the launch of this partnership, which will help to promote the JRC and its partners' research activities for a safer, cleaner and healthier planet*".

Dr. Leshner sees elevation of science in policy-making to tackle global issues

Addressing the audience, Dr. Leshner underlined that in the United States, despite being on the rebound from what some observers have described as a "Great Recession", the new Obama Administration has increased science and technology investment and elevated the role of science in policy-making. He commended European efforts to boost science, too, noting the European Commission's 40% increase in its research budget, the creation of a frontier-free European Research Area, the European Research Council and more recent initiatives such as the new position of Chief Scientific Adviser. "*Increased international research cooperation to address pressing global problems should of course be a primary goal for scientists everywhere,*" Leshner noted. "*Although every country has a tendency to compare its own progress in science and technology with other high-performing nations, it isn't a race – except to improve human quality of life and economic prosperity worldwide.*"

Dr. Leshner advocated the development of a: "*truly global scientific enterprise to improve international relationships while addressing global challenges facing all countries*". On a

cautionary note, he stressed the need to do more to: *"incorporate rising scientific communities such as China and India into our currently Western-oriented scientific structure"*. Advancing science also requires attending to the *"science-society relationship,"* Leshner added, particularly concerning issues at the interface of science and personal values such as human embryonic stem cell research, neuroscience, evolution, climate change, and more. At AAAS, he has launched a series of efforts intended to engage the public with science and technology while promoting bi-directional dialogue between scientists and laypeople.

Greater public engagement through science is crucial

During the audience debate that followed, common EU-US challenges in terms of how science is viewed and used were evident. *"From stem cells to GMOs and climate change, there continues to be a tension between scientific information and societal and political directions"* stated Dr. Leshner. *"We at the American Association for the Advancement of Science realise that current American and European attitudes and perceptions about science, ranging from issues at the nexus of religion and politics, and competitiveness and immigration, may sometimes seem antithetical to science-based progress. But we must never waiver in our resolve to tackle such misperceptions while keeping the public on-board."*

AAAS-JRC sign first Memorandum of Understanding (See Annex)

Following the Inaugural Lecture, Dr. Leshner and Dr. Roland Schenkel, Director-General, *Joint Research Centre* concluded the first Memorandum of Understanding between their respective organisations. Whereas the European Union and the United States have already concluded S&T agreements in 1998 which have been subsequently renewed in 2004 and on 17 July 2009, the scope of the cooperation has been enlarged and the list of sectors for cooperative activities now includes security and space research.

Broad aims include greater partnering at own or international scientific events; to include EU/US authors, when appropriate, in the publication of scientific reports; and to facilitate greater scientist-to-scientist basic information sharing. Discussions between the Parties resulted in the identification of *nuclear forensics technology for combating illicit trafficking of nuclear material* as a first primary area of common interest. This new relationship will be underpinned through the creation of a permanent contact point.

Background Information:

The *Joint Research Centre* (JRC) is a Directorate General of the European Commission. It provides customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of EU policies. As a service of the European Commission, the JRC functions as a reference centre of science and technology for the Union. Close to the policy-making process, it serves the common interest of the Member States, while being independent of special interests, whether private or national: <http://www.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is the world's largest general scientific society, and publisher of the journal, *Science* (www.sciencemag.org) as well as *Science Signalling* (www.sciencesignaling.org), and *Science Translational Medicine* (www.sciencetranslationalmedicine.org). AAAS was founded in 1848, and includes some 262 affiliated societies and academies of science, serving 10 million individuals. *Science* has the largest paid circulation of any peer-reviewed general science journal in the world, with an estimated total readership of 1 million. The non-profit AAAS (www.aaas.org) is open to all and fulfills its mission to "advance science and serve society" through initiatives in science

policy; international programs; science education; and more. For the latest research news, log onto EurekAlert!, www.eurekalert.org, the premier science-news Web site, a service of AAAS.

The *Association's* 176th Annual Meeting being held from 18 – 22 February, 2010 in San Diego, California brings together a diverse array of leading scientists, engineers, educators, and policy-makers from over 50 countries. The JRC and partners will host 9 sessions ranging from renewable energy potentials, verifying nuclear activities and food allergies; to biogenomics, privacy in a new global context and Earth Observation for fighting hunger.

Contact Persons:

- Elena González Verdesoto, JRC Press Officer: elena.gonzalez-verdesoto@ec.europa.eu
Tel. +32 2 299 98 62
- Ginger Pinholster, AAAS Director, Office of Public Programmes: gpinholster@aaas.org
Tel. + 001 202-326-6421

ANNEX

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

No JRC.BXL.MOU.31521-2009

between the

European Communities

and the

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

on

Enhanced Trans-Atlantic S&T Cooperation

The European Communities, represented by the European Commission, represented for the purpose of signing this agreement by Dr Roland Schenkel, Director-General of the Joint Research Centre (hereafter referred to as "the JRC"), having its headquarters at No 8 Square de Meeus, 1049 Brussels, Belgium;

on the one part,

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (hereafter referred to as AAAS), having its office at 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA, represented by Dr Alan Leshner, Chief Executive Officer;

on the other part

Hereafter referred to as 'the Parties', agree as follows:

Preamble

Whereas the European Union and the United States have already concluded S&T agreements in 1998 which have been subsequently renewed in 2004 and on 17 July 2009, the scope of the cooperation has been enlarged and the list of sectors for cooperative activities now includes security and space research. Science and Technological Cooperation Agreements constitute a framework and a privileged forum for policy dialogue, to identify common interests, priorities, and the necessary tools for S&T collaboration.

On 28 October 2009, representatives of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) met in Brussels, Belgium to strengthen the international cooperation between their scientific and technical communities.

This followed the organisation of a first joint initiative at the JRC's Ispra site, namely the "*High-level Trans-Atlantic Science for Policy Workshop*". It was agreed that the JRC and AAAS will jointly present the conclusions of this workshop during a session at EuroScience Open Forum 2010, Turin.

The JRC served as host and organiser of meetings with representatives from the AAAS to discuss possible collaborations concerned with public engagement with science and technology and the advancement of science.

This agreement provides an instrument for furthering cooperation between AAAS and the JRC's Institutes and network of stakeholders.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to advancing science around the world by serving as an educator, leader, spokesperson and professional association. It meets its goals by connecting scientists and engineers in the service of society, promoting science to the public, and monitoring issues which affect the scientific community.

In addition to organising membership activities, AAAS publishes the journal *Science*, as well as many scientific newsletters, books and reports. Founded in 1848, AAAS serves some 262 affiliated societies and academies of science, serving 10 million individuals. *Science* has the largest paid circulation of any peer-reviewed general science journal in the world, with an estimated total readership of one million.

The mission of the JRC is to provide customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of European Union policies.

As a service of the European Commission, the JRC functions as a reference centre of science and technology for the Union. Close to the policy-making process, it serves the common interest of the Member States, while being independent of special interests, whether private or national.

The JRC has seven scientific Institutes, located at five different sites in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, with a wide range of laboratories and unique research facilities. Through numerous collaborations, access to facilities is granted to scientists from partner organisations.

ARTICLE 1: SUBJECT AND SCOPE OF THE COLLABORATION

The JRC and AAAS agree to work together to identify thematic sub-agreements to this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that help advance issues such as science and technology for safety, security and sustainability; public understanding of and communication and engagement with the science and engineering communities; international science cooperation; opportunities for women in science and technology; and other issues of mutual interest and concern that may arise during further deliberations. This agreement enables the signatories to enter into such sub-agreements.

The Parties have expressed their intention in principle to hold an annual review meeting for presentation of the respective activities undertaken. The place and date will be defined by mutual agreement.

Broad aims of the collaboration are:

- To build trans-Atlantic cooperation in the form of basic information sharing amongst JRC Institutes and AAAS policy networks and their respective international partners;

- To utilise each Party's initiatives, such as the AAAS Annual Meeting, the JRC Annual Lecture, JRC Open Days, etc., as platforms for strengthening such trans-Atlantic bonds;
- To provide assistance to high-profile international initiatives organised by third parties where a joint JRC-AAAS approach may be mutually beneficial and cost-effective. Examples include proposing joint sessions or visibility-raising events at the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF), the World Congress of Science Journalists (WCSJ), and the World Science Forum (WSF), etc.
- To reflect a trans-Atlantic approach, when appropriate, in the production, publication and dissemination of in-house thematic reports;
- To underpin this new relationship through the creation of a permanent contact point within their respective organisations.

Discussions between the Parties have resulted in the identification of *nuclear forensics technology for combating illicit trafficking of nuclear material* as a first primary area of common interest. Immediate areas of possible cooperation are described in Annex 1. As further areas for collaboration arise, Annex 1 may be updated without necessitating an amendment of this MoU.

ARTICLE 2: COSTS

- Each party shall bear its own costs in connection with the implementation of this MoU.
- There will be no transfer of money between the Parties in connection with this MoU.
- The MoU does not establish legally binding obligations on the part of any of its signatories. All cooperative activities undertaken by the Parties are subject to the availability of appropriate funds.
- The Parties are entering into this MoU with the express understanding that the MoU itself does not give rise to a claim for compensation for services against any of the respective Parties.

ARTICLE 3: CONFIDENTIALITY

- With respect to all information concerning the activities of the Parties relating to this MoU (whether in oral, written or electronic form) disclosed in confidence to one Party by the other, the said Party will not use any such information for any purpose other than the implementation of its obligations under this MoU.
- Each Party will keep and/or treat the information as confidential and not disclose it to any outside third entity without a prior written consent of the concerned Party, except as required by court order or other similar legal mechanism.
- Confidentiality of information exchanged in connection with this MoU shall be maintained for a period of five (5) years after the termination of the MoU.

- In the case of material already in the public domain, this Article no longer applies.
- In the case of accidental disclosure of the information by unforeseen matters such as robberies, the Party concerned shall not be held liable according to this Article.

ARTICLE 4: ENTRY INTO FORCE, DURATION AND RENEWAL

- The MoU will take effect for a period of three (3) years following the date of the signature by the last Party. It can be prolonged or modified only by written amendment signed by the duly authorised representatives of each Party.

ARTICLE 5: TERMINATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- Where a Party to this MoU wishes to end its collaboration, it may do so by providing the other Party written notice to that effect at least 2 months before the intended date of withdrawal.

ARTICLE 6: ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

- All correspondence concerning the performance of this MoU shall be sent in two copies to the following addresses:

<p><u>For administrative questions</u></p> <p>European Commission Joint Research Centre Square de Meeus 8 1049 Brussels Belgium</p> <p>To the attention of Dr Ulla Engelmann</p>	<p><u>For administrative questions</u></p> <p>American Association for the Advancement of Science 1200 New York Avenue, NW Washington, DC 2005 USA</p> <p>To the attention of Dr Vaughan Turekian</p>
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Signed, in two originals, on 28 October 2009, by

 Dr. Roland Schenkel
 Director-General, JRC
 Date _____

 Dr. Alan I. Leshner
 CEO, AAAS
 Date _____

ANNEX

Stemming from broad aims outlined above, first joint thematic initiatives may include:

Nuclear Forensics

- Around the JRC's San Diego 2010 AAAS session entitled "*Working together for public safety: Challenges for the verification of nuclear activities*", the JRC's Institute for Transuranium Elements (ITU) and the AAAS Center for Science, Technology and Security Policy (CSTSP) would partner to host a meeting of speakers on the annual programme dealing with security-related topics.
- Given the topicality of nuclear forensics, AAAS and JRC can partner to host further workshops.
- CSTSP will invite the JRC to nominate an author to input into a follow-up report to the recent "*Nuclear Forensics: Role, State of the Art, and Program Needs*". This may focus on needed international work to improve nuclear forensics, both on sample libraries and databases and on sharing best practices, tools, and technologies.

Verification, compliance, and monitoring for arms control treaties

- As we move from the bilateral US-Russian arms control of the past to the broader, multilateral arms control required to continue to decrease nuclear arsenals, new verification, compliance, and monitoring protocols, tools and technologies must be invented and put in place to count existing nuclear weapons and stockpiles and to verifiably dismantle and down-blend weapons and weapons-grade fissile material. In addition, if nuclear power is to expand without an expansion of weapons proliferation, the nuclear fuel cycle will require better monitoring tools.
- AAAS and JRC can host a series of workshop and produce a report that would hopefully culminate in the creation of joint centers for verification and monitoring technologies.

Detection technology in the field of nuclear and radiological security

- New technologies are emerging on which the JRC and AAAS can partner, for example:
 - Exchanging the latest S&T information through dedicated seminars and workshops;
 - Developing/testing/validating new security systems, including new detectors.
- AAAS and JRC can also partner to inform the scientific and industrial communities in the US and EU about alternative production technologies, for example, developing He-3 replacements.