

Main outcomes of the 10th EU-South Africa Joint S&T Cooperation Committee meeting

Brussels, 8 December 2011

The tenth Joint Committee meeting with South Africa took place in Brussels on 8 December 2011. The meeting was co-chaired by Robert-Jan Smits, Director General of Research and Innovation at the European Commission, and by Phil Mjwara, Director General of the South African Department of Science and Technology.

The meeting reconfirmed the excellent level of cooperation, which have made science and technology cooperation one of the flagships of the South Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership.

Recent developments in R&I

Both sides exchanged information on recent developments in policy and programmes relating to research and innovation.

- The EU side provided information on Europe 2020, the Innovation Union, Horizon 2020 and the development of a new international strategy for research and innovation.
- South Africa highlighted its focus on finalising implementation plans for the grand challenges prioritised in its Ten-Year Innovation Plan, which would spell out specific focus areas for SA-EU cooperation.

Current Cooperation

- Discussion was focused on a report of current cooperation prepared jointly in advance of the meeting.
- South Africa is currently the **5th most active third country partner in FP7**, directly after Russia, the US, China and India, involved in 141 signed grant agreements. The highest levels of cooperation are in Health, Environment, Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Biotechnologies, and ICT.
- South Africa does not currently systematically collate statistics on EU participation in their national programmes, but will endeavour to do so for future meetings.

Increasing Cooperation

The International Cooperation objectives of DG Research and Innovation that aim to increase relevance and impact were discussed:

Both sides shared information on priorities in the areas of **Pharmaceutical research and innovation**, more specifically, the links between the European and Developing countries Clinical Trial Partnership-EDCTP- and the African network for drugs and diagnostics innovation-ANDI; **Mining and Minerals research**, more specifically raw materials innovation partnership; **Global change and Earth observation**, more

specifically the strengthening of research cooperation within the Group on Earth Observations-GEO-with a view to strengthen mutual efforts to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems-GEOSS.

The outcomes of the discussion in each area were as follows:

- Good degree of **synergy in priorities in the pharmaceutical research area**, a **thematic workshop** on public-private partnerships for pharmaceutical innovation in Africa is in preparation: "**Innovation in healthcare without borders**" to be taking place on 18/19 April 2012.
- Strong interest of South Africa in research and innovation collaboration in the area of **mining and mineral processing**, and in the proposed **European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials**.
- Crucial role of the **Global Earth Observation System of Systems** in providing **Earth Observation data** and information for decision makers at local, national and global levels. Important to strengthen **Africa's engagement with GEO**.

Other Areas of Discussion

- **Frontier research** and the ERC recent initiatives to **increase the international dimension of their programme** and opportunities for researchers from outside the EU.
- **Mobility, training and career development** and the increasing interest of South Africa in the Marie Curie Actions, **IRSES** in particular.
- Implementation of the **EU S&T Sector Budget Support for South Africa**, a 30 MEUR budgetary envelope under the EU Development Cooperation Instrument meant to support the South African Department of Science and Technology to bolster its interventions to contribute to poverty alleviation and support economic growth and employment creation.
- Promotion of **cooperation at bi-regional level**, in particular use of the strategic role of South Africa to boost the **Joint Africa-EU Strategy-JAES**- and the **EU-Africa Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space**.

Next Meeting

- It was agreed that the **next meeting** would be held in South Africa in November 2012, and would be the opportunity to **celebrate the 15 years of the EU-SA S&T agreement** since its entry in force.

<http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/news/cooperation-science-and-technology-south-africa>