

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH *January 2016*

EU cooperation with Israel and Palestine

To begin 2016, on the twentieth anniversary of Israel's association to EU's Framework programme for R&I, Carlos Moedas visited the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He also had several meetings with officials and participated in a seminar on research, science and innovation matters at the National Institute for Education Training in Ramallah. Read more on page 2.



*The motto of big head
thinking is challenge
the chief!*



Carlos Moedas

For full speech please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/moedas/announcements>

Dear Reader,

The United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP21), took place in Paris at the end of 2015.

The [Paris Agreement](#) aims to help the world move towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. Keeping the average global surface temperature increase below 2°C above pre-industrial levels is an internationally agreed yardstick for avoiding dangerous climate change. The agreement is due to enter into force in 2020.

Worldwide research was represented at the EU flagship event - "[Research and innovation: our energy for a low-carbon future](#)".

Best regards,

The Editors

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Tunisia joins Horizon 2020

On 1 December 2015 Tunisia became the first northern African country to become formally associated to Horizon 2020. The [Association Agreement](#) was signed by Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, and Chiheb Bouden, Tunisian Minister for High Education and Scientific Research. The agreement, allowing for enhanced cooperation in Research and Innovation between the EU and Tunisia, enables research institutes, universities and individual researchers from Tunisia to access all funding opportunities offered by Horizon 2020. The association is also expected to give the necessary impetus to Tunisia to strengthen its national R&I system with the aim of rendering it more competitive. In this regard, Commissioner Moedas reiterated the EU's commitment to contribute to this process with capacity building and technical assistance. At political level, he described the agreement as «a historic one», which «shows that through research and innovation, the EU is supporting the young Tunisian democracy and helping to invest in knowledge as a foundation of future development.» Tunisia remains among the most active countries in the Southern Neighbourhood in the field of Research and Innovation. This is well illustrated by Tunisia's overall performance in FP7, the EU's previous framework programme on R&I, with 103 successful participations in a total of 88 retained proposals. The association of Tunisia to H2020 constitutes a step forward in the bilateral cooperation in Research and Innovation between the EU and Tunisia, following the signing of the Scientific and Technological cooperation agreement between the two parties in 2003. Although the Association Agreement still needs to be ratified by the Tunisian Parliament, Tunisian legal entities are encouraged to apply under 2016 calls. However, grant agreements with the Tunisian entities having the status of entities from a country associated to Horizon 2020 will only be signed when the proper legal framework is in place.



Photo: Exchange of the Horizon 2020 association signed agreement between Chiheb Bouden, on the left, and Carlos Moedas

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Commissioner Moedas's first visit to Israel and Palestine

On 10-12 January 2016 Carlos Moedas carried out his first visit to Israel and Palestine as European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation. His trip was organised on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the EU-Israeli cooperation in science and technology. Commissioner Moedas is the first Research, Science and Innovation Commissioner to pay an official visit to Palestine.

During his trip Commissioner Moedas had high-level meetings with Israeli officials, (including, among others, President Rivlin and the Israeli Minister of Science, Ofir Akunis), innovators, venture capitalists and other relevant stakeholders. He also had the opportunity to meet representatives of outstanding Israeli universities and Horizon 2020 research grantees, including Nobel Prize winner Ada Yonath. Israel ranks first among the Associated Countries to H2020 in terms of requested EU contribution and second in number of applicants. In the context of regional Science Diplomacy, Commissioner Moedas met with Eliezer Rabinovici, Vice-President of the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East ([SESAME](#)), who reiterated Israel's commitment to the initiative.

In Palestine he had a series of meetings with the Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Sabri Saidam, the Deputy Minister Abu Zaid and the Prime Minister's Adviser Ms Kheiria Rasass. The Palestinian officials expressed the need to invest more in capacity building with a view to enhancing Palestine's participation in H2020.

Despite the challenging situation on the ground there have been 29 applications from Palestine in the first calls of proposals of H2020. Commissioner Moedas' trip to Israel highlighted that Science and Technology are able to transcend political boundaries and establish reliable channels for cooperation between the two partners. This was reflected by Israeli President Rivlin, who emphasised that "Cooperation between Israel and the EU benefits the whole world, and this cooperation speaks louder than any labelling or boycott". Commissioner Moedas said: "The drive and energy that you have in this country to create businesses is unique and is an example to Europe. I am here to tell you that I hope this cooperation between Israel and Europe will increase. For us and for our scientists, it is extremely important"

Photo on cover page: Commissioner Moedas with Hebrew University ERC grantees – Left to right: Professor Elisheva Baumgarten, Dr Michael Schapira, the Commissioner, Dr Rami Aqeilan, Professor Orit Kedar

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From cell biology to geophysics: ERC on the US West coast in 2015

For the third year in a row, the European Research Council (ERC) attended the annual meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) which took place in San Diego on 12-16 December 2015. More than 6000 delegates gathered in South California to discuss the latest relevant scientific papers in this field of research.

Visitors to the ERC booth in the ASCB Career Centre could get first-hand information from an ERC representative about funding opportunities for top researchers willing to conduct their ground-breaking research project in Europe. ERC grant holders, Dr Guillaume Charras from University College London, and Dr Danijela Vignjevic from Institut Curie, answered questions from participants and shared their experience with the grant application process.

EURAXESS North America teamed up for the first days before heading to UCSD and north to San Francisco where a joint two-hour Career Advice Workshop with ERC and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions was organised for early career researchers at the American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall Meeting taking place on 14-18 December 2015. At the ERC town hall session where Dr Krasa presented the ERC grant schemes and where Dr Richard Harrison from the University of Cambridge shared his experience with his Advanced Grant, ERC Scientific Council member and outgoing ERC Vice-President Prof. Sierd Cloetingh emphasised that the ERC funding strategy is designed “by scientists for scientists”.



Photo: Prof. Sierd Cloetingh at the AGU 2015

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EU Delegation to the US promotes participation in Horizon 2020

Since the H2020 Work Programme for 2016-17 was adopted in October 2015, a number of actions have been undertaken by the ST&I Section at the EUDEL-US to draw attention to the new round of collaboration and funding opportunities available to U.S.-based scientists and innovators. An [event dedicated to H2020](#) was held at the EU Delegation in December which was attended by 70 participants from universities, companies, federal agencies and research institutions in the Washington DC area and surrounding States (Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania). Many of the participants were newcomers which bodes well for possible increase in US involvement in H2020. The event and ensuing discussion also benefited from the fortuitous presence of a number of European H2020 project partners who are actively involved in transatlantic cooperation including the EU Nanotechnology Characterisation Lab project and the Ocean observation project AtlantOS. In addition to this dedicated event, the delegation made a number of other H2020 presentations focusing on the 2016-2017 Work Programme at the [Destination Europe event in Chicago](#) and at the [Fall Meeting of the Materials Research Society](#) in Boston. The delegation also promoted H2020 at the [First Annual Meeting of the European Scientific Diaspora Initiative](#) in Washington DC and the annual [Norway-U.S. Transatlantic Science Week](#) conference (focusing specifically on marine & Arctic science) in Boston. The delegation also collaborated closely with Euraxess North America for the promotion of Horizon 2020 at Neuroscience 2015 in Chicago; at the American Society for Cell Biology annual meeting in San Diego and at the American Geophysical Union Fall meeting in San Francisco.



Photo: J. Gavigan at the H2020 presentation

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First Call launched for the EU-China Research and Innovation Co-Funding Mechanism

Further to the political agreement reached at the 2nd EU-China Innovation Cooperation Dialogue and the Summit of 29 June and the conclusions of the EU-China Joint Steering Committee on S&T Cooperation of 30 October, on 16 December the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) published its first call for proposals under the EU-China Co-Funding Mechanism (CFM) for Research and Innovation.

The CFM is intended to support mainland China-based research and innovation organisations participating in Horizon 2020 projects. This first call covers a variety of thematic areas including food, agriculture, biotechnology, information and communication technology, space, aviation, energy, health, transportation, water resources, energy conservation, advanced manufacturing, new materials, sustainable urbanization, and exchanges of young scientists.

Two deadlines are foreseen for 2016: 31 March and 31 July. The total budget is 200 million RMB or 28 million euro for 2016. Please check the MOST call (details below) for eligibility and other information.

The EU-China CFM is the last of a series of support schemes put in place by EU international partner countries to enable stronger and more balanced collaboration between their universities, research institutes and enterprises and European ones under Horizon 2020. Within the Horizon 2020 work programme for 2016/17 published in October 2015 a number of topics specifically encourage cooperation with China (see [list here](#)).

More information on the EU-China Co-funding Mechanism

- MOST call ([Chinese version](#)) | MOST call ([English translation](#))
- Horizon 2020 [topics targeting China](#)
- [Q&A on EU-China Co-funding Mechanism](#)
- EU-China [Research and Innovation Cooperation](#)

More information on support available from other non-EU international partners

- [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Japan](#), [Mexico](#), [Republic of Korea](#), [Russia](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Taiwan](#)

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The EU-China Forum on Sustainable Urban Development in Foshan

The EU-China Forum on Sustainable Urban Development took place in Foshan, Guangdong Province, on the 18th and 19th of December, with the theme of “Cooperation and Practice”. The Forum was organized by the China Center for Urban Development of the National Development and Reform Commission. The Delegation of the European Union to China acted as a special supporter of the event.

The Forum convened around 300 participants including government officials, representatives from cities and enterprises, and experts and scholars from both China and European countries. Xu Shaohua, Standing Committee Member of the Guangdong Provincial Committee and executive Vice Governor of Guangdong province and Fan Hengshan, Deputy Secretary General of the National Development and Reform Commission, gave the forum’s opening speeches and joined the field-trip. Diego Sammaritano, Policy Coordinator for Research and Innovation cooperation with China, and Christos Fragakis, Deputy Head of Unit for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources from the European Commission, introduced concrete EU-China cooperation opportunities on Sustainable Urbanization under Horizon 2020 through a video message.

The Forum facilitated discussion on an urban cooperative mechanism between China and the EU, and promoted pragmatic urban cooperation between China and EU Cities with 13 project agreements signed between Chinese and European cities. Panel discussions focused on Sub-regional Integration, Investment and Financing with PPP, Technology Innovation and Smart Cities, Green Growth and Low-carbon Cities. The Forum also facilitated improvement of the EU-China Paring Mechanism through a round table between Chinese mayors and European stakeholders.



Photo: EU-China Forum on Sustainable Urban Development in Foshan

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“European Research Council: Opening New Frontiers in Academic Research between Europe and China” – a public talk by ERC Starting Grantee Dr Manuel Pérez-García

On 12 January 2016, the EU Delegation China and EURAXESS Links China hosted their first public activity of the year. Dr Manuel Pérez-García, currently Associate Professor at the Department of International Politics, School of International Studies, Renmin University China, is the first China-based Grantee who was awarded an ERC Starting grant.

He shared his experience and tips with around 50 fellow Beijing-based researchers and research professionals. After a first introduction to the European Research Council, its grant structure and the recent implementing arrangement between the ERC and the Chinese National Natural Science Foundation by Dr Laurent Bochereau, Head of the S&T Section of the EU Delegation, Dr Pérez García introduced his „road to the ERC“. As a global historian with a speciality in economic and knowledge transfer between East and West, he explained how he independently developed this project over the course of several years and elaborated on how to build an ERC project from China, how to prepare the proposal, and shared his personal experience. He also outlined existing support structures for researcher networks in China, e.g. EURAXESS.



Photo: (l-r) Andrea Strelcova, EURAXESS Links China, Dr Pérez-García and Laurent Bochereau after the successful talk at the EU Delegation

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CHOICE Final Conference 2015

CHOICE Final Conference was held on 19th October 2015 in the Associação Industrial Portuguesa/Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Headquarters in Lisbon, Portugal, one day before the ICT 2015 event organized by the European Commission. The event provided access to the latest information on future opportunities for EU-China collaboration in ICT RDI within the framework of Horizon 2020, showcased success stories and discussed priority topics in the field. The CHOICE Conference also highlighted the latest information on future opportunities for EU-China collaboration in ICT RDI within the framework of Horizon 2020 and provided attendees with an opportunity to discuss and exchange best practice related to EU-China cooperation in the field of ICT RDI. The CHOICE Final Conference had more than 150 registrants representing a wide array of stakeholders from Europe and China, including industry; Representatives of national, regional and municipal governments in China with responsibility for ecofriendly smart city initiatives, 5G, broadband and Future Internet/Internet of Things; Policy makers from Europe and China; Researchers in the ICT field from universities and research institutes; and Consultancies specialised in service design and deployment. This conference is part of the CHOICE project which aimed to provide timely input and follow-up on common ICT R&D priorities and future cooperation opportunities between the EC and China by assisting in focusing dialogue meetings and increasing their visibility through the delivery of workshops and events based around priorities identified in current dialogue meetings and providing inputs for subsequent dialogue meetings originating from the workshops, webinars and events.

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EU-Canada S&T cooperation explained in a video

ERA-Can+ promotes [cooperation between the European Union and Canada](#) in science, technology and innovation with a broad range of activities. Watch the brand new [video](#) to know more about ERA-Can+ activities.



Horizon 2020 Funding Opportunities Dissemination Seminar in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi

These two seminars organised by the European Commission in collaboration with Hanoi University of Science and Technology (HUST) and Ho Chi Minh City University Of Technology (HCMUT), were held on 3 and 4 November 2015 with the support of the SEA-EU-NET II Project represented by Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação (SPI). The main objective was to bring together the different stakeholders from local Government institutions, R&D and innovation centres, research institutes, academia, SMEs and Start-ups to discuss cooperation. The exchanges proved the usefulness of seeking cooperation on research issues of common interest, where EU-ASEAN added-value is clearly recognised. Testimony by participants involved in existing joint-projects showcased success stories from both European and Vietnamese perspectives across a range of areas from ICT to Health and Food research. Several new opportunities exist under Horizon 2020 to build-up consortia involving teams in Europe, Asean and beyond, or using the various mobility schemes for promoting the exchange of scientists. The European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (Eurocham VN) was closely associated to the events, as the EU business presence in ASEAN and especially in Vietnam is growing. For further dissemination events organised in the Asean countries, visit the SEA-EU-NET-II project [website](#). The next regional event will take place in Hanoi on 10-12 May 2016 and will feature several thematic workshops and involve key leaders on Research & Innovation.



Photo: Kostas Glinos making a presentation at the «Horizon 2020 Funding Opportunities Dissemination Seminar» in Vietnam

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Symposium on Power Electronics in Tokyo

About 130 participants from Europe and Japan gathered at the EU Delegation in Tokyo to discuss the wide bandgap semiconductors technology developments in the EU and Japan and the prospects for research collaboration. European participants included the European Power Electronics Research Network ECPE headed by its President Professor Leo Lorenz, F.J. Ibáñez, Deputy Head of Unit A4, DG CONNECT, the Delegation's S&T Section, as well as members of European industry and academia. From Japan there were representatives from practically all major industries in power electronics, as well as top academic researchers. The event was organised by JEUISTE (FP7 BILAT project) and the Wide Band Gap Power Device System Integration Consortium of Osaka University. The series of presentations and discussions throughout the two days, showed that power electronics is of strategic importance to both the EU and Japan and that there is genuine potential for research collaboration both in the area of materials and of component technologies. However, finding the right modalities is a delicate issue, given the highly competitive nature of the area.

The symposium was opened by EU Ambassador V. Isticioaia-Budura, and Y. Yagi, Executive Vice President of Osaka University. In the first part of the event, L. Karapiperis (S&T Counsellor, EU Delegation) and S. Takegami (Director, METI) presented EU-Japan STI cooperation policies from the EU and Japan perspectives, respectively. Next, F.J. Ibáñez presented Power Electronics related research in Horizon 2020, while S. Lambrecht (EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation) presented overall EU-Japan cooperation in Horizon 2020. Following this, presentations addressed developments and expectations on next generation power electronic devices. The second day featured more technical discussions on WBG semiconductors and modules, bonding materials and technology and reliability and process technologies. The symposium was concluded with a rich final panel discussion on possible cooperation areas and modalities. JEUISTE will produce a summary of the symposium and European and Japanese consortia present will develop concrete proposals for possible future cooperation.



Photo: participants at the symposium on Power Electronics

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EU-Africa Cooperation - The latest developments in Science, Technology and Innovation

Africa's participation in Horizon 2020

There are now 107 participants from 25 African countries involved in 48 projects, for a total EU contribution of €17 million. The cooperation covers areas ranging from health and food production to peace and security. The most successful country is South Africa with 33 participations in 24 projects receiving €5 million, followed by Kenya with 14 participations.

3rd ERA-NET-Cofund meeting in Pretoria

On 7th December the African and European Funding Parties and ERAfrica partners held the third meeting to advance preparations with a view to launching a joint call for projects in the field of Resilience and continue work on promoting the management of a proposal for the H2020 ERA-Net Cofund (SFS-41-2016). The proposals are expected to enhance coordination and facilitate synergies between national, international and EU research programmes relevant to Resilience and Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA), as well as underpin the progress towards an EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on FNSSA, with emphasis on local multi-stakeholder action.

Science Forum South Africa - «Igniting conversations about science»

The first [Science Forum South Africa](#) (SFSA) took place on 8-9 December in Pretoria with the aim of exploring the role of Science, Technology and Innovation in society, strengthening SA international partnerships, as well as creating a platform for interaction among representatives from the government, academia, industry and civil society in the field of STI. South African Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, opened the event by highlighting the decisive role of science in achieving sustainable development, as well as the need to invest more in research development and innovation for addressing key societal challenges. As she

stated, «science is still at the margins of government attention. It is seen as less important than issues like water scarcity or food insecurity, yet all those things can be addressed through science and innovation». Along the same lines African Union chairwoman Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma reiterated the AU's commitment to strengthening the role of science in fostering prosperity in the continent, by making reference to Agenda 2063, the AU's 50-year strategy for sustainable development.

Inauguration of Science Diplomacy Awards

SFSA also launched the Science Diplomacy Awards recognising South Africa's international partners for outstanding achievements in the field of STI cooperation as well as for their contribution to strengthening the link between STI and international peace, solidarity and sustainable development. The [European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership](#) Partnership (EDCTP), committed to the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as against neglected infectious diseases in sub-Saharan Africa, received an award in the category recognising «an international science partnership which has made an outstanding contribution to human capital development». EDCTP's second programme (2014-2024) is being implemented as part of Horizon 2020. The [Group on Earth Observations](#) (GEO), a voluntary partnership of governments and organizations in which the European Commission participates as a founding member, also received an award in the category recognizing «an international science partnership which has made an outstanding contribution to advancing global sustainable development». GEO has been working on the development of a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOS) that will link Earth observation resources world-wide across multiple Societal Benefit Areas.

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What's next?

- African Union Research Grants 2016 & 2017

The African Union Commission is preparing to launch the first calls of the African Union Research Grants (AURG) programme which is supported through the Pan African Programme funded under the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The first two calls, with a budget of 8 billion EUR each, are expected to be launched in early 2016 and 2017 and gather together partners from Africa and Europe, interested in the field of Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA). These calls will also underpin the process towards an EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on FNSSA, with emphasis on local multi-stakeholder action.

- 4-5 February, Pretoria: CAAST-Net Plus workshop with African Regional Economic Communities
- 21-23 February 2016, Addis Ababa: [Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation in Africa](#)

Deadline for submission of papers: 30/01/2016

Deadline for registrations: 30/01/2016

- 1-31 March 2016: [Sci-GaIA Winter School](#) online

Application deadline: 22/01/2016

- 13-14 April 2016, Addis Ababa: EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue on STI

- 14-15 April 2016, Addis Ababa: Implementation of an EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture: stakeholder forum in association with the EU-Africa HLPD on STI.

- 11-13 May 2016, Durban, South Africa: [IST-Africa 2016 Conference](#)

Deadline for submission of papers: 18/01/2016

- 17 - 20 May 2016, Umhlanga, South Africa: [SARIMA conference](#)

Application deadline: 30/01/2016

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 5/02/2016

Upcoming events

Conference

4-5 February 2016 - Brussels

Directorate-General for Research and Innovation organises a two-day conference to explore and demonstrate how European research can support policy makers in designing effective and sustainable migration policies.

More info [here](#)

H2020 Calls update

Topic: Centres/Networks of European research and innovation

ENG-GLOBALLY-09-2016

Closing date: 14-04-2016 - 17:00

(Brussels local time)

For more information on this call and other calls click [here](#)

Fourth Call to be launched by Mexico under the EU-Mexico Research and Innovation Co-Funding Mechanism

The Conacyt-H2020 co-funding mechanism, in place since 2014, was the first support scheme put in place by EU international partner countries providing a source of financing for «project-by-project participation» of Mexican partners in successful Horizon 2020 projects covering all thematic areas under Horizon 2020.

This complementary funding mechanism has the objective of reinforcing EU-Mexico STI cooperation by increasing the participation of Mexican research institutions and companies in Horizon 2020 to work closely with European partners.

To this end, the National Council for Science and Technology of Mexico (CONACYT) will publish in March 2015 the fourth call under the co-funding mechanism covering thematic areas, such as renewable energy, health, environment, ICT and climate change Within the Horizon 2020 work programme for 2016/17, published in October 2015, a number of topics specifically encourage cooperation with Mexico.

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Follow the latest news on EU research and H2020 calls [here](#)

News on the Euratom Work programme 2016-2017

In October 2015 the European Commission launched a call for proposals (indirect actions) related to the 'EURATOM research and training programme on nuclear energy' complementing the Horizon 2020 Framework programme for Research and Innovation. The Euratom Work Programme 2016-2017 defines the main directions and priorities of the Euratom nuclear (fission and fusion) research and training activities. The Call is open for submission of proposals from 11 May to 5 October 2016 and a link to the referred Calls with detailed description of all topics and actions (on the Research Participant Portal) is available [here](#).

The Euratom programme is traditionally open to international participation and entities from third countries (39% of the Euratom FP7 projects – 2007/2013 – included entities from third countries). They are eligible to participate in the present call, in particular through European consortia. In order to establish contacts and interaction with European stakeholders, entities from third countries can benefit from existing European nuclear research networks.

In this respect, international partners can profit from several Euratom technological platforms (TPs), initiatives and associations mainly in the fields of reactor systems, management of radioactive waste and radiation protection. The technology platforms are industry-led stakeholder forums, recognized by the EC as key actors in driving innovation, knowledge transfer and competitiveness. These collaborative frameworks are composed of European stakeholders and could be particularly beneficial for third country entities, in terms of mutual information and networking:

- SNE-TP, [Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform](#), with its pillars NUGENIA, (NUclear GENeration II and III Association), NC2I (NUclear Cogeneration Industrial Initiative) and ESNII (European Sustainable Nuclear Industrial Initiative): The sites of NUGENIA, NC2I and ESNII are accessible via the same link.
- IGT-TP, [Implementing of Geological Disposal of Radioactive Waste Technology Platform](#)
- MELODI, [Multidisciplinary Low Dose Radiation Initiative](#)
- ENEN, [European Nuclear Education Network](#)

Furthermore, the [Strategic Energy Technologies Information System](#) (SETIS), provides further information on potential partners from the European R&I landscape:

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Brazil-EU Workshop: Coordinated Call on Advanced Lignocellulosic Biofuels

On 8 December a workshop to present the Brazil-EU coordinated call on Advanced Lignocellulosic Biofuels, launched under Horizon 2020, was held at the São Paulo Research Foundation - FAPESP. The event aimed to exploit the synergies between Brazil and Europe in terms of scientific knowledge and resources related to advanced biofuels by implementing coordinated projects.

The purpose of the call is to promote the advancement of technologies capable of producing, in large-scale, biofuels made from lignocellulosic biomass - represented mainly by plant fractions that do not serve as human food, such as cellulose and lignin. The European Commission will invest 3 to 5 € million and there will be an equivalent counterpart in the research effort on the Brazilian side. Co-financing companies will be required for the Brazilian proposals.



Photo: P. Venturi presenting the Brazil-EU coordinated call on biofuels

The proposals will focus on three sub-challenges: gasification of bagasse to syngas and advanced liquid fuel production, including biofuels for aviation; applied research into biomass

production logistics and applied research for feedstock diversification for advanced biofuels; and development of new fermentation and separation technologies for advanced liquid biofuels and applied research to increase the energy efficiency of advanced biofuel processes.

The meeting was attended by a large European representative. Researchers and Officials also participated in visits and technical meetings at educational and research institutions that develop research in advanced biofuels.

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EU – Gulf cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation

INCONET-GCC2

The event took place on 7-9 December in Muscat and was hosted by the Research Council of Oman (TRC). It gathered around 150 participants from the EU and the 6 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries with the aim of strengthening cooperation in research and innovation. The participants sought to explore opportunities for cooperation based mainly on two thematic priorities: smart cities (with specific emphasis on energy efficiency, water management and ICT) and health (with emphasis on diabetes).

MEDRC Executive Council meeting

DG RTD participated in the Executive Council meeting of the Middle East

Desalination Research Center (MEDRC), which took place on 9 December 2015 in Muscat, and provided an opportunity to discuss the potential for future synergies between the EU and MEDRC in the light of Horizon 2020.

Background

The MEDRC was established in 1997 in Muscat, Oman, with the aim of finding solutions to the challenge of fresh water scarcity in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Its mission is to contribute to the peace process in the Middle East and raise the standard of living of the peoples residing in the MENA region by improving the technology used in water desalination. To this end, it implements Research, Training and Development Cooperation Programmes, through which its members lead applied research in environmentally and financially sustainable water desalination methods. In addition, by bringing together regional and global scientific excellence, MEDRC promotes technical training and knowledge exchange among its members and assists them in capacity building so as to improve water technologies. The function and activities of MEDRC constitute a successful example of Science Diplomacy in a region marked by historic rivalry. It shows that the role of Science is instrumental in balancing conflicting interests, building trust among parties involved in trans-boundary resource disputes, as well as in fostering peace and stability.

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Presenting EU ICT policies at Science Council of Japan Symposium on Informatics in Tokyo

On 12 January the S&T Section of the Delegation participated in the 9th Science Council of Japan Symposium on Informatics organised by the expert committee in the Science Council of Japan (SCJ). SCJ is Japan's representative body for over 2,000 researchers and scientists, and often acts as advisory body to the government. With an audience of around 300 predominantly senior Japanese researchers, the event addressed issues pertaining to research trends, issues, and future directions of informatics. EU Delegation S&T Section Head Leonidas Karapiperis was one of the two keynote speakers invited to address the international aspects. He introduced the EU's strategy and research programmes in ICT, covering the Digital Single Market initiative and the presence of ICT across Horizon 2020. He concluded by highlighting the strong EU-Japan cooperation on ICT, in the context of the growing EU-Japan partnership in Research and Innovation. From the Japanese participants, Kazuo KYUMA, Executive Member of the Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (CSTI) in the Cabinet Office, introduced Japan's forthcoming 5th Science and Technology Basic Plan, especially as it relates to ICT noting that one of its objectives is to nurture a hyper-connected society. Representing the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Tsuyoshi ENOMOTO introduced a new initiative to be unveiled in fiscal year 2016, called the Advanced Integrated Intelligence Platform Project (AIP). This will combine big data analytics, IoT, and Cyber Security and will support innovative scientific and technological research as well as demonstration and applications in these areas.

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Horizon 2020 information conference in Chelyabinsk

In December the EU Delegation to Russia presented the Horizon 2020 programme in the Southern Urals at a dedicated conference organised jointly by the World Trade Centre Chelyabinsk, the Ministry of Economic Development of the Chelyabinsk Region, and the Regional Integrated Centre of the Chelyabinsk Region, in coordination with the National Research South Ural State University and Chelyabinsk State University. The event included over 70 participants. The general presentations of the H2020 programme and its cooperation opportunities were accompanied by special presentations about the co-funding mechanism for EU-Russia S&T cooperation which has been set up by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science. The conference was followed by a meeting with representatives of Chelyabinsk regional authorities which was a good opportunity for the Delegation to establish initial contacts and to discuss possible ways of cooperation with universities and enterprises.

The VUZPROMEXPO 2015

The EU Delegation to Russia took part in the round-table "EU-Russia innovative cooperation in view of the current challenges and priorities" held in the framework of the III National Exhibition-Forum VUZPROMEXPO 2015. The session aimed at identifying opportunities and mechanisms for expanding EU-Russia cooperation in science, education and industry. The Delegation presented R&I cooperation opportunities available and other EU and pan-European programmes and initiatives, including the Enterprise Europe Network – Russia and EUREKA. The main topics that were covered at the VUZPROMEXPO 2015 were Russian import substitution policies and innovative development programmes, engineering work and industrial design, advanced production technologies, technology platforms, technological forecasting, the public-private partnership model for implementing major projects. A particular focus was innovative cooperation between universities and companies.

The EU Delegation to Russia took part in the Moscow Science Week

The EU Delegation to Russia took part in a round table "Science and education internationalisation strategies: Approaches and implementation" organised by the Moscow office of the Helmholtz Association in the framework of this year's Moscow Science Week. At the round table, representatives of the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, of Russian and European universities, research institutes and funding organisations, as well as the EU Member States' embassies discussed national, regional and institutional approaches to the internationalisation of the research and education sectors, compatibility of national strategies of internationalisation, the potential of the Russian science and education system as a partner in such internationalisation processes, and other related issues. This year's Moscow Science Week was the second annual interdisciplinary scientific forum organised by the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Russian Federal Agency for Scientific Organisations and the Moscow City Government. The forum included educational, policy and research programmes and saw over 50 events.

Horizon 2020 presented at the 2nd meeting of the R&D Club of the French Embassy in Russia

The Horizon 2020 programme was presented at the 2nd meeting of the R&D Club of the French Embassy in Russia. The meeting was hosted by the Association of European Businesses in Russia (AEB). The R&D Club was set up on the initiative of the French Embassy in Russia for French companies and groups in Russia working in R&D and innovation. The club's objectives are to share best practice, increase synergy between groups, and to help French companies and groups working in R&D and innovation.

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Plankton as a biological sensor for climate change

By studying the impact of climate change on some of the ocean's smallest organisms, EU-funded researchers have identified trends that could have profound implications for the health of marine ecosystems and the global environment.

Plankton is not only the foundation of the marine food chain – it is also a major fixer of carbon dioxide and the world's primary producer of oxygen. Any environmental changes that affect it, potentially affect us all. Phytoplankton, for example, is responsible for half of the carbon dioxide that is naturally removed from the atmosphere and is the primary food source for the zooplankton on which all other marine organisms feed, directly or indirectly.

“Whatever happens to plankton has a cascading effect throughout the marine ecosystem, and potentially on the global environment,” explains Kjetil Lygre of the Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Center in Norway.

As project manager of the EU-funded GreenSeas project, Lygre helped oversee a landmark initiative to collect and analyse data on marine plankton from the Arctic, Atlantic and Southern oceans. Bringing together researchers from Europe, Brazil, Russia and South Africa, the GreenSeas consortium collected quantitative measurements of plankton responses to climate change in marine ecosystems to

develop a global plankton database and modelling system. Using state-of-the-art web-based data delivery systems, GreenSeas has made available both new and historical plankton data, information products and numerical simulations following the open and free data access policy implemented in the EU's Copernicus Programme.

The project has also made significant contributions to the establishment of the European Marine Observation and Data Network and the United Nation's Global Climate Observing System, providing data on ocean temperature, salinity and ocean colour as a marker of biological activity as well as carbon dioxide, carbon, nutrient and phytoplankton levels.

A GreenSeas Summer School held in South Africa helped PhD students learn how to use Earth observation data, environmental indicators and numerical simulations to obtain an integrated and cross-disciplinary understanding of global planktonic ecosystems.

Capturing the data

The team used a combination of observation data, numerical simulations and cross-disciplinary synthesis to develop a high quality, harmonised and standardised plankton and plankton ecology long time-series, data inventory and information service. Using historical data and information from ongoing ocean ecosystem monitoring programmes, they captured latitudinal gradients of species biodiversity from the poles to the tropics and biogeographical distributions of plankton species.

Applying mathematical modelling and analysis to the data allowed GreenSeas' scientists to generate simulations of phytoplankton behaviour in response to environmental stimuli, identifying, for example, how even small changes in phytoplankton mass and distribution can lead to significant changes in fish populations.

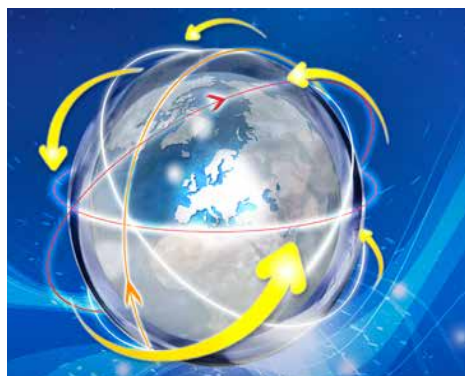
“Though there is still debate about the cause and effects, it is becoming clear that the inherent processes, feedback mechanisms and interactions involved in climate change can have unprecedented and dramatic impacts on marine ecology,” Lygre says. “By analysing the complex and diverse mass of data on planktonic marine ecosystems we are able to identify patterns and trends, and present the information in a way that can be more easily interpreted by stakeholders and policymakers.”

Since the project ended last year, the partners are continuing to work on the results and will maintain the GreenSeas database web-server for at least five years, providing open access to information on planktonic marine ecosystems to other researchers and policymakers. In addition, Lygre says a follow-up project aimed at further refining their research is being discussed.

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This page provides a regular update on recent Research and Innovation (R&I) policy news from our network of R&I Counsellors in the EU Delegations in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Russia, the United States (US) and the African Union (AU). With a particular focus on international cooperation, different policy related themes are highlighted in relation to different countries to illustrate trends, similarities and different approaches.

African Union Research Grants 2016/17 (funded through the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument) will focus on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture.

Australia - An EU-AUS Earth Observation Cooperation agreement was signed in November; New reports on boosting entrepreneurship and the Australian Innovation System were also published; Source IP - a portal to access IP generated by the public research sector - was launched.

Brazil - Commissioner Moedas' visit to Brazil in November was marked by the signature of a Declaration of Intent on EU-BR marine research cooperation, the announcement of an EU-BR coordinated call on second generation biofuels, and the first Destination Europe event in Latin America.

Canada - There are indications of an elevated role for S&T as the new Prime Minister appointed the first Minister of Science as well as a Minister for Industry, Science and Economic Development.

China - The 2015 EU R&I Tour of China attracted over 2200 participants in 16 cities. A UNESCO Report shows China's R&D spending is now 20% of the world total and its share of global science publications has risen to 20%.

Egypt - EU-Med R&I cooperation was reviewed at a meeting to mark the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona process; The Academy of Scientific Research and Technology and the German Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on research and technology cooperation, including the possibility for young Egyptian researchers to attend annual training programs in state of the art research facilities in Germany.

India - A visit by Director-General R-J Smits led to progress regarding a potential co-funding structure for Indian participation in Horizon 2020; the intention to renew the EU-IN S&T Agreement was confirmed. The 10th EU-India Joint Steering Committee on S&T cooperation took place in Delhi; India hosted the Carnegie Group meeting of G7 science ministers and advisers.

Israel - The 2016 budget sees a 12% increase in the budget of the Office of the Chief Scientist - responsible for industrial research; Israel is stepping up S&T cooperation with China and Australia.

Japan - New investment objective and outcome indicators will be included in the proposed 5th S&T Basic Plan including nurturing of young researchers, promoting women researchers and strengthening the

foundations of knowledge; Results of the public consultation on the proposed Plan were published in November.

Korea - €62m support was announced for the Bio Future Strategy with a focus on Stem Cell and Gene Therapy and the Convergence/Integration medical equipment sector; A Joint International Internet of Things Software Security Research Centre has been established with CH, UK and USA; A France-Korea Tech Hub is foreseen for 2016.

Russia - Rosneftgaz has donated some €214m to the Russian Science Foundation for research grants in any topic; Minister Livanov visited the US to work on extension of RU-US S&T Agreement.

USA - The National Science Foundation announced 4 new Big Data Hubs as part of the government's Big Data R&D Initiative; the Office of Science and Technology Policy issued a public consultation on Sources of Agricultural Innovation with a focus on roadblocks and research gaps over the next 10 years; OSTP also released the National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan.

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HORIZON 2020 - publication

A focus on patients - The Innovative Medicines Initiative in action

Patients are at the heart of the EU's innovative medicines initiative (IMI) that seeks to speed up the development of more effective and safer medicines. Created in 2008 as a public-private partnership, IMI plays a leading role in the EU's efforts to remove barriers to the discovery of new treatments.

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