

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UPDATE

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DG DIRECTORATE D: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MONTHLY INFO FLASH ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

POLICY

First EU-African STI Senior Officials Meeting

Following discussions in both the EU and the African Union it was agreed to establish a high-level policy dialogue on science, technology and innovation (STI) between the EU and Africa. The first such [Senior Officials' Meeting \(SOM\)](#) took place on the 10-11 October at the African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting created an opportunity to bring together STI experts, policy makers and diplomats from the two continents and for EU and African high level representatives to have a constructive and productive exchange on how to strengthen further STI cooperation. Several next steps were agreed upon, including: for the Joint Africa-EU Bureau to map existing initiatives and to identify effective financial mechanisms for cooperation. It was also agreed to hold a second SOM in one years time to explore the possibility of organising a Ministerial meeting before the next Africa-EU Summit in 2013. DG RTD Director-General Robert-Jan Smits represented the European Commission and, Jean-Pierre Ezin, Commissioner for Human Resources, S&T represented the AU Commission. The meeting also coincided with the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) 6th biannual Forum which presented recent advances in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in Africa.

For further information, contact Fadila Boughanemi, DG RTD, Directorate D or Gianpietro Van De Goor DG RTD, Directorate F (for EDCTP)

Fifth European Union-Brazil Summit

The Fifth EU-Brazil Summit was held in Brussels on 4 October. The conclusions of the summit included a Joint Action Plan to promote regional cooperation, in

particular to foster the EU-LAC process, in which the strategic importance of STI cooperation is noted. Both parties hailed the signature of a Letter of Intent on the establishment of a structured space policy dialogue paving the way for the possible establishment of an EU/Brazil cooperation agreement on Global Navigation Satellite Systems. A second Letter of Intent was signed aiming at strengthening the scientific cooperation between the JRC and the Brazilian STI Ministry in the areas of natural disaster prevention, crisis management, climate change, sustainable management of natural resources, energy, food security, biotechnology, nanotechnology and ICT. Both parties decided to enhance cooperation and develop a more strategic partnership by increasing the scale and scope of existing cooperation addressing key societal challenges, promoting reciprocal access to programmes and funding increasing regional cooperation where appropriate.

For further information, contact Luis Samaniego, DG RTD, Directorate D

11th SFIC Meeting

The Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SIFC) held its 11th meeting on 26 October 2011. The draft SFIC opinion on the ERA Framework was discussed and will be adopted by written procedure. This is a self-standing opinion but also contributes to the ERAC opinion, which will bring together all the opinions from the ERA groups. The plenary also looked at the progress in the three pilot initiatives: China (roadmap for a coherent EU/MS-China strategy and workshop in December), USA and India (further information on these two initiatives is given in articles later in this Update) and discussed information on the forthcoming strategy workshop, the need to share information on joint steering committees, the EU-Mediterranean

conference and the EU-ASEAN year of Science. The later was complemented by a best practice example from Germany which will actively contribute to the EU-ASEAN year of Science.

*For further information contact Sofie Norager, DG RTD,
Directorate D*

Preparing for Rio+20

The EU is currently preparing its participation and contribution to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20. On 10 October the Environment Council adopted the conclusion on the Rio+20 Communication 'towards achieving sustainable development by greening the economy and improving governance'. This highlights the role of the private sector in delivering green growth, including through R&D, and the importance of cooperation technology, and R&I. The EU will have firmed its proposals and ideas for Rio+20 by the end of October, and submit its contribution formally to the UN. The Environment Directorate in DG RTD is coordinating the inputs on the R&I aspects of the EU's submission. In order to accelerate the transition to a green economy, one of the operational outcomes at Rio+20 should be a green economy roadmap that sets out goals, objectives and actions at regional, national and international level. Rio+20 will take place in Brazil on 4-6 June 2012 to mark the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

*For more information, contact Luisa Prista, DG RTD,
Directorate I*

AGREEMENTS

Moldova becomes 14th country associated to FP7

A Memorandum of Understanding for the association of the Republic of Moldova to FP7 was signed on 11 October by Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn, and Academician Gheorghe Duca, President of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova. Moldova will be the 14th country associated to FP7: the first country from the Eastern Partnership and the second European Neighbourhood Policy country. FP7 will be the first EU programme in which Moldova will participate fully. The Agreement will enter into force from 1 January 2012, but in practical terms Moldova will be associated for all 2012 work programme calls; as grant agreements from these calls will be signed in 2012.

*For further information, contact Martin Penny, DG RTD,
Directorate D*

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Strategic R&I agenda for India taking shape

The SFIC India Group, involving interested Member States and DG RTD, has elaborated a working paper

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outlining the EU/MS Strategic Agenda (SA) for R&I cooperation with India. The paper, which was presented during the recent SFIC meeting, will be further developed and discussed with Indian authorities with the view of agreeing on priorities for enhancing cooperation between EU/MS and India. The SA builds on the India pilot initiative on water and also covers other strategic themes such as bio-resources, energy, health and ICT. The innovation dimension of Europe-India cooperation was the object of a dedicated workshop organised on 25 October by the Swedish Permanent Representation to the EU in cooperation with [TAFTIE](#) and the Swedish Innovation Agency [VINNOVA](#).

*For further information, contact Diego Sammaritano, DG RTD,
Directorate D*

STI cooperation with Vietnam

The 2nd meeting of the EU-Vietnam sub-Group on S&T Cooperation under the EU-Vietnam Joint Commission took place by videoconference on 7 October. Both sides exchanged information on the latest research and innovation policy developments and recognised the increasing importance of international STI cooperation to deliver sustainable growth for society. It was also agreed to discuss further possible initiatives under an action plan to advance EU-Vietnam STI cooperation, underlining the importance of integrating such initiatives into the broader policy objectives of each side.

*For further information, contact Jean-Michel Sers, DG RTD,
Directorate D*

Joint Committee boosts strategic-level research cooperation with Canada

A successful 10th EU-Canada Joint S&T Cooperation Committee (JSTCC) meeting took place on 3-4 October, in Ottawa. Among the main outcomes was an agreement on the knowledge-based bio-economy and health research as areas to develop strategic-level and multilateral cooperation, with a joint commitment to explore other potential areas. The Committee continued with more detailed reporting and discussion on plans for cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology, Health, ICT and Researcher Mobility, following a review of the status of cooperation under the EU-Canada S&T Cooperation Agreement.

*For further information, contact Errol Levy, DG RTD,
Directorate D*

EU-Egypt Year of Science 2012

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) of Egypt and the EU Delegation in Cairo have agreed that 2012 will be the EU-Egypt Year of Science. The main objectives of this year will be to: enhance STI cooperation in between the

EU Member States and Egypt; promote Egypt's and the other Mediterranean countries' research potential; promote synergies between the EU and Member States' activities; and work towards launching concrete initiatives that support STI in Egypt and the region; and create a platform for regional cooperation and the dissemination of information and research outcomes of projects that address common regional challenges. The European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument RDI II programme and the MHESR have agreed to organise a fair during 2012, with high-level participation from Egyptian and European officials.

For further information, contact Georges Papageorgiou, EU Delegation, Cairo

Sixth EU-Morocco Joint S&T Committee Meeting

The Joint Committee meeting with Morocco took place in Rabat on 28 September. In the morning, the launch conference took place of a project funded by DEVCO under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership (ENP) Instrument to improve the performance of the National Research System in Morocco with the view to accelerate its alignment with the European Research Area and its participation in the Framework Programme. The 6th Joint S&T Committee was held in the afternoon and was very constructive and positive. Despite a decrease in Moroccan FP7 participation, there appears to be a clear vision and strategy for future research policy and improvement in the country. Morocco expressed its wish to increase cooperation in Social Science and the Humanities as well as its participation in COST, CIP, EIT and the Marie Curie Actions. Morocco has undertaken an evaluation of S&T Cooperation with the EU: strong points included easy access to information and the positive project participation; areas for improvement include a lack of experienced researchers and administrative and coordination problems.

For further information, contact Nienke Buisman, DG RTD, Directorate D

Innovative Russia 2020

On 8 September the Presidium of the Russian Federation Government approved a project of the strategy of innovative development of Russia for the period until 2020. The strategy is similar to the EU Innovation Union Flagship, recognising innovation as the best means to tackle current challenges of the country and attempting to take a more strategic approach to innovation. The strategy foresees an increase in the share of innovatively active companies from current levels of 9.3% to 40-50% by 2020, as well as growth in Russia's share of the global high-technologies market. The total funding for innovation for the next ten years is estimated at

ca. \$530 billion, which includes expenses on education, S&T and a number of other fields. Overall expenditure on innovation foreseen by the strategy could reach \$1.3 billion in 2012 and \$1.7 billion in 2013. The strategy also aims to create effective incentives for increasing the flow of qualified specialists, active entrepreneurs, creative youth, into innovation-based economic sectors.

For further information, contact Martin Penny, DG RTD, Directorate D, or Manuel Hallen, EU Delegation, Moscow

Attracting leading researchers to Russia

The results of the second Russian Government call to attract leading world researchers to Russian Universities have been announced. The call was issued in April and is the only current research call issued by the Russian Government where applications are submitted in English and evaluated by international peer review. Some 517 researchers and 176 Russian universities submitted proposals for the call; the majority of applicants were non-Russian nationals. Thirty-nine applications were selected for funding and will receive grants of up to €3.6 million EUR to conduct research at Russian universities in 2011-2013, with a possibility to extend the research programme beyond 2013 for up to two years. Nineteen of the winners are Russian nationals, whilst 23 are European nationals, including six French, four German, and three Italians.

For further information contact, Manuel Hallen, EU Delegation, Moscow

New Zealand Chief Science Advisor in Brussels

On 18 October the New Zealand Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, Sir Peter Gluckman, met with DG RTD Director-General Robert-Jan Smits, the ERC President Helga Nowotny and members of the European Parliament research committee. The main areas discussed included: the [Global Research Alliance](#) (which concerns gas emissions from agriculture), multi partner initiatives under the [KBBE Forum](#) and joint activities in the area of diabetes. Under the Global Research Alliance, it was also noted that a current New Zealand [call on livestock emissions research](#) is open to international partners. Discussions also included New Zealand's role as current chair of the Pacific Island Forum which could prove useful for the EU in forging joint initiatives with the Pacific region.

For further information, contact Pierrick Fillon-Ashida, DG RTD, Directorate D

Progress on cooperation with Latin America

Co-leaders of the thematic and cross-cutting working groups established during the EU-LAC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) last March met via video-conference on 20 October. The purpose of the

meeting was to assess progress in combining national, regional and bi-regional cooperation instruments and to report back to all senior officials. Working groups have been established in the areas of climate change and biodiversity (led by Colombia and France), energy (led by Mexico and Spain), bio-economy including food security (led by Argentina and France), ICT for meeting societal challenges (led by Chile and Finland); and a cross-cutting group on good practice and funding (led by Mexico and Portugal). The working group meetings are part of the preparation of the next EU-LAC SOM.

*For further information, contact Cornelia Nauen, DG RTD,
Directorate D*

PROJECTS

Marie Curie international alumni platform

On 26-27 September, during the [Marie Curie Symposium](#), the Marie Curie Actions launched their first online international Alumni platform. In less than a month, 1100 former Marie Curie fellows have already registered. It is hoped that this number will rise to 3000 alumni by the end of the year. The alumni platform aims to further facilitate the careers of current and former Marie Curie fellows through networking and offering of a set of free alumni-type services. The Alumni platform will also enable the Commission to keep in touch with the Marie Curie Fellows and to trace their career developments after the end of their fellowships in order to further improve the Marie Curie programme.

For further information, contact Carmela Di Santo, DG EAC

Increased interest in IRSES

Interest is increasing, year on year, in the Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES) which supports staff exchanges between the EU and third countries. The Research Executive Agency is currently reviewing the 186 applications to the call, an 11% increase on 2010. To date under IRSES, the largest EU participation in IRSES has been from the UK, Italy, France, Germany and Spain, with the third countries China, US, Brazil, Russia and Australia being the most represented. However, in terms of exchanged researchers/year, the countries with the highest rates are: Italy, UK, China, Brazil, France, Germany, US and Russia.

For further information, contact Carmela Di Santo, DG EAC

Chinese views of the EU

As China grows in global power and influence, it is critically important for the EU to forge a close and cooperative relationship with it. Good EU relations are equally important for China, as the EU forms one of its two largest markets. Both sides say they are committed to a comprehensive strategic partnership

but EU-China ties have not always been smooth. A more effective EU China policy has to be based on a thorough understanding of the image of the EU in Chinese minds and China's behaviour in its interaction with the EU. The three-year FP7 research project 'Chinese views of the EU', held an [international conference](#) in Beijing on 29-30 October to present its results, provide new insights into EU-China relations, and help EU stakeholders develop more effective strategies for achieving productive relations with China.

*For further information, contact Simona Ardovino, DG RTD,
Dir B*

EVENTS

Second INCO Conference

The second INCO Conference: 'International Research and Innovation Partnerships to meet Global Challenges' was organised and hosted by the South African Department of Science and Technology on 27 September in Pretoria (South Africa) in the framework of the FP7 ['INCONTACT – One World'](#) project and network. The event contributed to enrich the debate on the enhancement of multilateral research and innovation partnerships to address global challenges. The Conference was attended by over 100 participants from more than 50 countries. It was followed by the annual meeting bringing together all INCO National Contact Points to share experiences and promote good practice in promoting networking and cooperation between the EU and third countries. The 2012 meeting will take place in Germany with a special focus on R&I cooperation between the EU and South-East Asia.

*For further information, contact Michele Genovese, DG RTD,
Directorate D*

Joint EU-EIB Mediterranean conference

Based on a joint collaboration between the European Investment Bank (EIB) (IT1 Programme), the Marseille Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) and DG RTD, a joint workshop on strategy for internationalisation and research valorisation was held in Marseille on the 3-6 October. The conference was attended by 23 Directors of Research Centres from the Mediterranean Partner Countries all of whom have current, or will shortly start FP7 ERA-WIDE projects. The aim of the workshop was to foster innovative practices in the Mediterranean region and the use of tools for elaborating strategies for internationalisation and research valorisation. The discussion was supported by the FP7 [MIRA project](#) and the ANIMA network. Discussion also focused on better communication between the research and industrial sectors and the need for banks and entrepreneurs to understand the needs and

constraints for the research community with respect to innovation and for researchers to understand better the views and expectations of investors.

For further information, contact Aurélie Pancera, DG RTD, Directorate D

Nanoscale VLSI in Jordan

A workshop on 'Current Trends in Nanoscale VLSI (Very Large Scale Integration) Design' was held on 24-27 October at the Jordan University of S&T (JUST) by the FP7 [ERA-WIDE 'JEWEL'](#) project. The workshop facilitated information and knowledge sharing between researchers from JUST and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in ICT and computer hardware, and aimed to enhance and strengthen JUST's capacities in ICT research areas, as well as raising the skills of their researchers in accessing FP7 projects and identifying appropriate international research partners. The workshop also helped JUST in identifying key research priorities, achievements, possible obstacles and overall scientific strengths.

For further information, contact Maria Isabel Rodriguez Valero, DG RTD, Directorate D

SFIC USA workshop in Brussels

In the context of SFIC, Member States and the Commission jointly organised a workshop 'From Common Challenges to Joint Responses – Adding a New Dimension to EU/MS Cooperation with the USA in STI' in Brussels 18-19 October. The main question addressed was how to achieve more of a structured and coherent cooperation of Member States and the EU with the USA, building on the rich experience of all partners and on established

platforms. Certain thematic areas were selected for discussion to identify common priorities: 'energy' in the context of the European Energy Research Alliance under the SET Plan and two Joint Programming Initiatives ('More Years and Better Lives', and 'Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life'). Discussions on horizontal issues including developing an innovation dimension, mobility and raising the attractiveness of Europe in ST&I stressed the importance of enhancing EU and Member States cooperation efforts when engaging with the USA.

For further information, contact Ludger Viehoff, DG RTD, Directorate D

EU Science Counsellors meet in Brussels

The annual meeting of the Science Counsellors seconded from the Commission to EU Delegations throughout the world was held in Brussels on 21-22 September. DG RTD Director-General Robert-Jan Smits outlined the priorities of the DG for the coming months and years (Innovation Union, completing the ERA and Horizon 2020) and recalled the preparation of the new International Cooperation Strategy. Detailed updates were provided on each of these priority issues by the relevant services. The alignment of the INCO calls in FP7 with the new strategic approach was also presented. The role of Counsellors following the Lisbon Treaty and the adoption of the Innovation Union, and in developing the partnership with Member States was also discussed.

For further information, contact Mary Kavanagh, DG RTD, Directorate D

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS (NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2011)

Joint Committee Meetings			Other Meetings		
4 Nov	USA	Brussels	9-10 Nov	Research Infrastructures Senior Officials Meeting	Cape Town
7 Nov	Albania	Tirana	11-13 Nov	Carnegie Group Meeting	Cape Town
17-18 Nov	Mexico	Merida	22 Nov	4 th SIRIC Plenary Meeting	Brussels
21-22 Nov	Brazil	Brasilia	1 Dec	Western Balkans Steering Platform Meeting	Sarajevo
23 Nov	Ukraine	Brussels	16 Dec	SFIC Plenary	Brussels
29 Nov	Israel	Tel Aviv			
Nov (date tbc)	Tunisia	Tunis			
2 Dec (tbc)	South Africa	Brussels			
2 Dec	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Sarajevo			
6 Dec	Chile	Brussels			