

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UPDATE

December 2011 Issue Nineteen

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

POLICY

ASEAN-EU Year of STI 2012

The [ASEAN-EU Year of Science, Technology and Innovation 2012](#) was officially launched on 16 November in Hanoi, Vietnam, by EU Ambassador Franz Jessen and the Vietnamese Deputy S&T Minister Lê Din Tiên, in the presence of several Ambassadors from EU Member States and high-level officials from the ASEAN Member States. The overall objective of the Year is to highlight, promote and extend EU-Southeast Asia STI cooperation. The 'Year' is the first of its kind, in which EU bi-regional cooperation with an emerging will be highlighted. Full information on activities under the Year will be regularly updated on a [dedicated website](#). DG RTD will be involved in a series of activities in support of the 'Year' including during the visit of Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn to Singapore in March 2012.

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

SIRIC Discusses new international strategy

The SIRIC (Strategic International Research and Innovation Cooperation coordination group) will act as the Commission Inter-Service Group for discussing the upcoming Communication on Enhancing and Focusing International Cooperation in Research and Innovation. Based on a provisional outline, on 22 November, the Commission Directorates-General and services welcomed the general approach and the links with Horizon 2020 and the ERA Framework. Clear and operational recommendations are expected to bring added-value to the work already carried out by the operational Directorates, including on thematic and geographic

priority-setting. Coherence with relevant ongoing or planned Commission initiatives (e.g. work on the post-2013 external funding instruments and the EEAS Country Strategies) is expected to maximise the final impact. There was strong support for consulting widely external stakeholders, particularly industry and civil society. The next discussion by SIRIC will be in March.

*For further information, contact Minna Wilkki, DG RTD,
Directorate D*

SFIC opinion on ERA Framework

On 21 November the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) adopted its opinion on the ERA Framework. The opinion outlines the Member States' priorities for the international dimension of ERA. This opinion was called for in the Council conclusions of 31 May on the development of the European Research Area (ERA) through ERA-related Groups. It has also been sent to ERAC as contribution to the ERAC opinion on the ERA Framework. The opinion can be downloaded on the [SFIC Council website](#).

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

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Joint Committee meeting with Brazil

The fifth EU-Brazil Joint Committee meeting took place on 22 November in Brasilia. Discussions took place in the areas of innovation, ICT, environment, social sciences and humanities and food, agriculture and biotechnology research, as well as researcher mobility. The following outcomes were agreed: to improve cooperation on environment and climate change by linking research networks especially in fields such as the mitigation and adaption to climate

change, prevention of natural hazards and the green economy; the involvement of Brazil and other Latin American countries in a partnering initiative on biodiversity in agriculture which is being developed by the EU; and improved dissemination of information on researcher mobility programmes including 'Science without borders' and the EU Marie Curie, Erasmus Mundus and Euraxess programmes, including through a seminar to be held in 2012. In order to deepen cooperation in ICT research it was agreed to develop a second coordinated call, building on the success of the first such call launched in 2010. Finally, it was also agreed to explore the possibility of creating networks between European and Brazilian social science and humanities research funding agencies.

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

Increasing cooperation with Mexico

The fifth Joint Committee meeting with Mexico took place on 17th November in Cancun. Both parties agreed to better focus collaboration on a limited number of key areas of mutual interest with the view of increasing the scale and scope of cooperation. In the area of food, agriculture and biotechnology research, a partnering initiative will be developed on biodiversity in agriculture with Latin American countries. An exchange of letters to formalise this agreement will take place shortly. A workshop on biodiversity will also be organised in spring 2012. In the area of social sciences and humanities research, it was agreed to examine ways of strengthening research cooperation with the principal European social sciences funding organisations, potentially through programme-level collaboration on specific thematic subjects. Finally, cooperation in renewable energy research will be explored with the Joint Research Centre.

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

Australian Chief Scientist in Brussels

On 23 November the Australian Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb was in Brussels for meetings with DG RTD and with the Cabinet of President Barroso. The meetings underlined the areas of successful R&I cooperation, including health and ICT as well as biotechnology research through the multi partner KBBE Forum initiative. Information was provided on the ongoing review of R&I in Australia, including: potential new tax incentives to facilitate business involvement in research, including for foreign operators; the need for increased sustainability in research areas such as mining; and

governance measures to increase public trust in science.

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

Joint EU-Australia Study on supporting the mobility of workers and learners

A study exploring the potential role of qualifications frameworks in supporting the mobility of workers and learners and the possible linkages opportunities between the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) has recently been finalised. The analysis shows that many factors may create an increasing demand for the use of systemic tools for the recognition of qualifications, such as frameworks. These factors include increasing and more diverse workers' and student mobility; stronger linkages between qualifications recognition and immigration rules; and continued growth in the demand for formal and informal recognition of foreign qualifications. The study also shows that there could be significant gains for both Europe and Australia in developing an appropriate relationship between the EQF and AQF, but that this would require solid and transparent quality assurance procedures to improve trust of qualifications frameworks and hence facilitate mutual recognition.

For further information, contact Bodo Richter, DG EAC

EU-China FAB taskforce

A meeting of the EU-China task force on food, agriculture and biotechnologies research was held in Beijing on 20 October. Tim Hall, Head of the Agriculture, Forest, Fisheries and Aquaculture Unit in DG RTD, and Gong Xifeng, Deputy Director General of International Cooperation Department in the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, co-chaired the meeting. The meeting discussed cooperation in animal health, management of natural resources and integrated pest management, as well as policy level cooperation (foresight and policy research), food safety and red palm weevil control.

For further information, contact Tim Hall, DG RTD, Directorate E or Philippe Vialatte, EU Delegation, Beijing

Discussing EU-US S&T cooperation

The EU-US Joint Consultative Group (JCG) met in Brussels on 3-4 November, to discuss future areas of cooperation under the EU-US S&T Cooperation Agreement. Thematic sessions were held on 3 November, with discussion on energy cooperation under the EU-US Energy Council's Technology Working Group; climate change and land use; critical raw materials; nanotechnologies, water resources management and coastal research; and fostering

greater research cooperation. The outcomes of the JCG meeting emphasised the importance of STI for economic growth and job creation and the possibilities to collaborate on societal challenges and key enabling technologies. It also discussed ways to develop more ambitious, larger scale joint efforts as well as addressing common values shared by US and EU researchers, such as merit review and open access to data.

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

Transatlantic study on emerging skills and competences

The results of the first comparative study on institutional and policy approaches to emerging new skills needs in Europe and the US have recently been published. The study shows that although there are considerable variations of both policies and institutional practices on both sides of the Atlantic, common trends can be identified. There is a growing concern on the adequacy of education and training systems to meet the demands of the 21st century workplace which has led to an emphasis on the development of key competences/21st century skills through outcome and competence based education approaches. As this shift will require changes in the design of teaching and learning processes, the study proposed a series of joint actions in the areas of key competence development, accountability and performance, entrepreneurship in education, and anticipation of skills.

For further information, contact Bodo Richter, DG EAC

EU-US Higher education cooperation

Mobility of students and the development of joint and double degrees have been important features of the EU-US cooperation in education and training. Aimed at identifying elements of good practice which facilitate successful recognition of credits and qualifications gained through this mobility, the European Commission and the US Department of Education commissioned two separate studies that resulted in a single set of conclusions and recommendations. The studies emphasise that higher education institutions and their staff are the key actors in enabling credit recognition and transfer and show that many obstacles related to credit recognition can be overcome with a better understanding of the different systems and by policy makers and stakeholders in the field supporting a trust building process between higher education institutions.

For further information, contact Bodo Richter, DG EAC

Joint Committee with Albania

The second EU-Albania Research Committee took place on 7 November in Tirana. It was noted that over the last year, Albania has organised several FP7 information days and workshops which has led to more FP7 applications. The Committee considered measures on which Albania should focus further cooperation in FP7, including smart specialisation, concentrating efforts on areas of regional interest, such as coastal research, and identifying success stories to stimulate R&I cooperation with EU partners. The meeting was followed by a conference on human capital building, which presented the range of EU actions for the mobility of researchers.

*For further information, contact Tania Friederichs, DG RTD
Directorate D*

First R&I dialogue with Ukraine

The first meeting of the Joint Committee established under the EU-Ukraine S&T Cooperation Agreement took place in Brussels on 23 November. The Ukrainian delegation was led by the State Agency for Science, Innovation and Informatisation. Ukraine is currently the 7th most active international cooperation partner country in FP7. Both sides reviewed the current levels of cooperation under both FP7 and through Ukrainian funding programmes and discussed ways of increasing cooperation notably in the areas of health, ICT and nanotechnology/materials research, including on a bi-regional level with the other countries of the Eastern Partnership.

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

PROJECTS

Discussing synergies between international cooperation projects, programmes and policies

The 5th meeting of the International Learning Network held in Brussels on 10-11 November revealed significant opportunities for international cooperation through FP7 ERA-NETs. Coordinators of regional ERA-NETs, funded under the FP7 International Cooperation programme, exchanged experiences with thematic ERA-NETs, INCO-NET projects, Joint Programming Initiatives, and projects funded through Article 185 actions. The common conclusion was that third country funding agencies should be further encouraged to join thematic ERA-NETs, and that the experience gained through the international cooperation regional ERA-NETs should facilitate the creation of such links. At present, only a very few of the thematic ERA-NETs have experience of cooperation with third country partners,

but this cooperation has largely been positive. The workshop demonstrated that the international opening of ERANETs represents an opportunity, particularly to address global societal challenges.

For further information, contact Jürgen Sanders, DG RTD, Directorate D

Matchmaking in China

A workshop on 1 November in Beijing, organised by the [ACCESS4EU China project](#), provided practical information on how to foster cooperation through both Chinese and EU R&I programmes. In addition to information on the EU funding programmes and the EURAXESS Links China activities, information was also presented on three fellowship programmes operated by the Chinese Academy of Sciences which target foreign researchers.

For further information, contact Michele Genovese, DG RTD, Directorate D or Jessica Mitchell EU Delegation, Beijing

FP7 Information event in Jordan

An information session on the ICT research opportunities in FP7 will be organised by the ERA WIDE [JEWEL](#) project in Amman on 7 December as part of a wider conference on applied electrical engineering and computing technologies. The workshop aims to create a network of scientists and faculty members from Jordanian educational institutions and industry in order to increase their involvement in the FP7 ICT Theme.

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

EVENTS

Seminar on doctoral studies in the EU's neighbouring countries and the Western Balkans

On 21 October doctoral studies specialists from the EU's neighbourhood countries and the Western Balkans gathered at a [seminar in Brussels](#) to discuss the findings of a study, commissioned by DG EAC, which aimed at mapping the organisation of doctoral studies in these countries. Workshops organised around geographical working groups allowed for exchange of views on key practices and developments, and encouraged discussions on how to improve future support of doctoral programmes in the region. A common need for structural reform, a lack of definition of research priorities, increasing research capacity, the issue of quality, accreditation and funding were amongst the challenges identified. The session ended with suggestions for further cooperation between the countries involved and the EU and emphasis was placed on the potential of existing EU tools, such as Tempus, Marie Curie and

Erasmus Mundus, that can be used to address the challenges identified.

For further information, contact Claire Morel, DG EAC

Latin America's new dynamic

A one day policy summit on EU-Latin America relations was organised on 21 November by [Friends of Europe](#) in collaboration with the [UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) and [@LIS](#). The audience participated in interesting and sometimes provocative panel discussions, which eliminated many a stereotype about the region, such as the perception that Latin America would have relations mostly with the Iberian countries. It was underlined that all 'large' and many middle-sized European countries had significant presence and that foreign direct investment from European countries in Latin America was at least twice as large as that in China, India, South Africa and Russia combined. DG RTD Deputy Director-General Rudolf Strohmeier spoke in a panel session on R&I and highlighted the strong mandate from the last EU-LAC Summit to develop cooperation through the Joint Initiative on R&I, engaging also member countries on both sides. He noted that cooperation was increasing, with 100 more current participations from LAC teams in FP7 than in the whole of FP6.

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

Global innovation roundtable in India

The EU Delegation in New Delhi attended a Global Innovation Roundtable, organised by the Indian National Innovation Council and chaired by Sam Pitroda (adviser to the Prime Minister of India on innovation), which brought together the heads of innovation from 15 Governments to discuss the role of innovation in improving growth and welfare. India is stressing inclusive innovation for reducing growing disparities in society, but it is also for improving competitiveness by lowering costs, expanding markets and opportunities for businesses. The '*More for Less for Many*' strategy calls for *more* performance products and services, created by using *less* and *less* resources and available to (and affordable by) *many* people. At the time of the roundtable, the Prime Minister of India released a report on Indian innovation strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to encourage, inspire and empower people to think, discover, innovate and implement novel solutions at the local and national level to put India on the path of growth and sustainable development.

For further information, contact Philippe de Taxis du Poet, EU Delegation, New Delhi

Launch of international initiative on traumatic brain injury

DG RTD, together with the US National Institutes of Health and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research launched the 'International Initiative on Traumatic Brain Injury' (InTBIR) during a dedicated workshop in Brussels in October. Traumatic brain injury affects some 1.2 million new patients each year in the EU alone and is today the main cause of disability in people under 40. The objective of InTBIR is to identify and support evidence-based interventions to improve outcome in traumatic brain injury patients. This will be achieved at the international level through data collection and sharing coupled to comparative effectiveness research. InTBIR is expected to be supported with at least €50 million from EU, Canada and the US. Any other public funding agency can join the initiative which is expected to continue for at least the next 10 years.

For further information, contact Patrizia Tosetti, DG RTD, Directorate F

ERC and neuroscience

Representatives from the ERC attended the annual meeting of the [Society for Neuroscience in Washington](#). The meeting is the world's largest annual gathering of professionals in neuroscience, attracting more than 30,000 scientists and clinicians from more than 150 countries to advance knowledge on functions and dysfunctions of the nervous system. The ERC organised a session entitled 'International Funding Opportunities' jointly with the [DFG](#) and the [Canadian Institutes of Health](#).

For further information, contact Samantha Christey, ERCEA

Education and science cooperation with Russia

The Russian National Research University 'Higher School of Economics' held a conference on international cooperation in education and science on 25-26 October in Moscow. The event was supported by the [FP7 BILAT-RUS project](#), and the Russian Ministry of Education and Science. Some 70 representatives from funding institutions, research organisations, universities, and industrial entities participated in the conference, which included a specific session on 'Russia-EU Cooperation in Academic Mobility' which focused on overall EU-Russia S&T cooperation and the opportunities available through the FP7 Marie Curie Actions.

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

Galileo into orbit

On 21 October the Russian Soyuz rocket took off from Europe's spaceport in French Guiana to lift into

orbit the first pair of satellites for the Galileo global navigation satellite system. This was the first ever launch of Soyuz from the European Spaceport. This historical event is one of the achievements of a strong EU-Russia space cooperation.

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

End of 'Mars' mission

On 4 November the simulated mission to Mars successfully ended after 17 months. Mars500, the first full-length, high-fidelity simulation of a human mission to Mars, started on 3 June 2010, at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Biomedical Problems in Moscow. The international crew of three Russians, two Europeans and one Chinese were isolated in an interplanetary spacecraft mock-up, following the phases of a real mission: a flight to Mars, insertion into orbit around the planet, landing, surface exploration, return to orbit, and return flight and arrival at Earth. During the 'flight', the crew performed more than 100 experiments, all linked to the problems of long-duration missions in deep space. Results shall become available in April 2012.

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

EU-Israel cooperation on climate change

On 2 November, the EU Delegation in Israel together with Haifa University and the Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection held a [workshop on EU-Israel cooperation on climate change](#). The aim of the workshop was to highlight current work and to encourage synergy between the different projects and programmes. The workshop included an R&D sessions devoted to the FP7, [Eureka](#) and [Eurostars](#), and on the regional [EuroMed](#) and [ENPI programmes](#). The workshop concluded with a roundtable discussion of gaps in current climate change research.

For further information, contact Alexandra Meir, EU Delegation, Tel Aviv or Andrea Tilche, DG RTD, Directorate I

'Going West' in China

On the invitation of EU Project Innovation Centre in Chengdu, representatives from the EU Delegation in China as well as Member State Science Counsellors and other representatives from several Member States visited Chengdu on 18-20 October. The purpose of the visit was to participate in a joint roundtable meeting with Sichuan and other western provinces, which was held during the 6th EU-China Business & Technology Cooperation Fair, to discuss potential opportunities for S&T collaboration at the province level in China. The visit offered a number of fruitful avenues to develop cooperation with Sichuan and

Chengdu, which is at the heart of the Chinese 'Go-west' strategy.

For further information, contact Philippe Vialatte or Jessica Mitchell, EU Delegation, Beijing

Risk communication during emergencies

On 1 October a high level conference 'Risk communication during emergencies: an informal exchange of views between Media, Science and Government' was held in Kyoto, to analyse the experience of the Fukushima accident and the role Technology Assessment and Science Advice had played. The EU Delegation in Tokyo together with EU Member States in Japan had taken this initiative together with GRIPS (the [Japanese National Graduate School of Policy Studies](#)) and 'Nature Café' in East Asia.

For further information, contact Barbara Rhode, EU Delegation, Tokyo

EU- Japan-US trilateral workshop on rare earths

On the invitation of the European Commission the first trilateral exchange workshop on rare earths was held on 4 October at the European Institute in Washington between the EU (DG RTD), Japan ([METI](#)) and US ([DoE](#)) to explore strategies on what kind of research collaboration will be necessary to secure, recycle or substitute rare earth materials for new technologies. An EU-Japan call on rare earths is currently being prepared. A bilateral preparatory workshop was held in Tokyo in 20-21 November, while the second trilateral meeting is expected to be held in Japan next spring.

For further information, contact Barbara Rhode, EU Delegation, Tokyo

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS (DECEMBER 2011 – JANUARY 2012)

Joint Committee Meetings			Other Meetings		
2 Dec	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Sarajevo	1 Dec	Western Balkans Steering Platform Meeting	Sarajevo
6 Dec	Chile	Brussels	12 Dec	Conference: Science and Technology Landscapes in a Changing World	Washington
8 Dec	South Africa	Brussels			
13-14 Dec	Tunisia	Tunis	16 Dec	SFIC Plenary	Brussels