

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

8th Joint Steering Committee Meeting of the Bilateral Agreement on Science and Technology between the European Union and the United States of Mexico

May 27th, 2016

The 8th Joint Steering Committee meeting was hosted by the European Commission in Brussels on 27th May, 2016. It was preceded by a series of productive preparatory meetings.

The Mexican delegation was led by Dr. Arturo Borja, Director for Evaluation and International Cooperation from the National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT) and Eloy Cantú Segovia, Ambassador of Mexico in Brussels, Martha Navarro, Director for Technical and Scientific Cooperation at the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Representatives of the Mission of Mexico to the European Union, the National Institute of Health (INS), the Fund of Sustainable Energy, the Mexican Technology Platform and the ICT National contact point also participated in the meeting.

The European delegation was led by Maria Cristina Russo, Director for International Cooperation, Directorate General of Research and Innovation, and was comprised of representatives of Directorate Generals for Research and Innovation; European External Action Services, Communications Networks, Content & Technology; Education and Culture and the Joint Research Center (JRC).

Both parties agreed to continue developing common principles and adequate framework conditions needed to create a level playing field for researchers from Mexico and the European Union to cooperate with each other on the basis of trust.

In this respect, CONACYT informed about the simplification of the evaluation procedure of the CONACYT-H2020 co-funding mechanism in place and confirmed its commitment to continue funding Mexican institutions and researchers participating in the Horizon2020 calls. The EC informed that the EU-Mexico cooperation activities are reflected in a comprehensive road map included in the 2nd biennial report on the implementation of the Inco strategy.

Both parties recognized the importance of reinforcing the links between industry and research and fostering the innovation process to stimulate job creation, economic growth and social welfare. To better use the existing tools and strengthen the areas of cooperation, both parties agreed to launch the "Tour of Mexico" and organize an awareness campaign on the possibilities offered by the Implementing Arrangement between CONACYT and the European Research Council (ERC), promote the Marie Skłodowska Curie Programme and health research opportunities within Horizon 2020. On the Marie Skłodowska Curie

Programme (MSCP), CONACYT announced its intention to appoint a specialized National Contact Point (NCP) on the near future.

Both delegations agreed to step up cooperation in the following key areas:

1. **Geothermal Energy Research:** Both parties welcomed a positive completion of the evaluation of proposals received under the coordinated call and agreed that the general interest raised by it should be maintained. The results will be announced at the highest level by Commissioner Moedas and Minister Coldwell during the Clean Energy Ministerial taking place in San Francisco on the 2nd of June. Strengthening and expanding scientific and technological research in geothermal energy remains of common interest and both parties agreed to explore options for further cooperation. This discussion will need to take into account the progress of the selected project which is planned to start before the end of 2016, as well as respective frameworks supporting research and innovation. Furthermore, both parties agreed to explore other areas of possible cooperation including smart grids, solar energy, energy storage, bearing in mind that prospective benefits need to be mutual and shared by the respective stakeholders.
2. **Information and Communication Technologies:** Building on the successful activities of the last 2 years, both parties agreed to intensify the collaboration on FIWARE technologies. Both CONACYT and the EC will support the recently selected projects *FIWARE Mexico* and *SmartSDK* in reaching their envisaged stakeholders (including start-ups and industry) in Mexico and the EU, including in the organisation of events and meetings. The EC will continue to encourage FIWARE-related projects to make available the technology, support, and training for the take-up of FIWARE technology in Mexico. It will encourage European industry to take a pro-active role in use of FIWARE in Mexico, especially in smart cities, health, and security. The Mexican Technology Platform will play a leading role to promote the participation of other Latin American countries.
CONACYT, in coordination with the Ministry of Economy, will coordinate the efforts towards the establishment of a network of Mexican FIWARE accelerators through the existing funding mechanisms of both institutions. CONACYT will support the dissemination of the FIWARE node across all relevant actors in Mexico. CONACYT and the EC will use the road mapping results of the projects *FIWARE Mexico* and *SmartSDK*, in order to include priority topics for the EU-Mexico collaboration in the forthcoming work programmes.

Both parties also agreed to explore collaboration in High-Performance Computing (HPC) research and development activities. HPC is one of the pillars of the "Open Data" and has strategic global dimension as highlighted in the recent communication on European Cloud Initiative (COM(2016) 178 final) with the

objective of unlocking the value of big data by providing world-class supercomputing capability, high-speed connectivity and leading-edge data and software services for science, industry and the public sector. The EC will explore the possibility to earmark funds aimed at supporting collaboration with Mexico in the area of High-Performance Computing in the Work Programme 2018-2020. Both parties also agree to explore other modalities for enhanced cooperation in the future, especially in High-Performance Computing applications, such as High-Performance Computing for energy (including various sub-fields like oil, renewables, wind, etc.), life sciences, earth sciences, air pollution and natural disasters.

3. **Marine research:** The EC and CONACYT have launched discussions in view of exploring possibilities for developing a strategic cooperation in Marine research involving the CONACYT's Public Research Centers System and extending it to other research entities in Mexico. Both parties welcomed the possibility that Mexico could join the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance and participate in a series of related events to jointly identify common priorities for possible future cooperation. The EC and Mexico will continue their dialogue to explore how the Mexican New "Natural Marine Lab" could provide a new opportunity for joint cooperation in terms of infrastructure. Moreover, the EC will explore with the coordinator of the AORAC-SA project the possibility to invite CONACYT to be part of the steering board as observer.
4. **Health research:** Mexico confirmed its fully commitment in the activities of the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) by hosting the 4th Annual meeting and preparing the coordinated launch of the 3rd call on mental diseases. Additionally, in the case of the Global research Collaboration for Infectious Diseases Preparedness (GLOPID-R), being part of this network will imply regular exchanges among the agencies and coordinated actions in case of outbreaks, which will allow quick exchange of information, avoiding duplication of research efforts in singles countries.
The EC extended an invitation to Mexico to join the International Rare Disease Research Consortium (IRDIRC) in order to maximize the output of rare diseases research at a global level. Both parties highlighted the importance of stepping up cooperation on health research including in the framework of the consolidation of the EU-CELAC Common Research Area.
5. CONACYT also confirmed its interest to explore becoming a full member of the **Belmont Forum** during the participation in the Qatar annual meeting because of the strategic importance of this Forum formed by funding agencies from 21 countries interested on global environmental change research and demonstrating the power of our collaboration, which is not limited to the participation in H2020 projects.

6. The EU and Mexico both acknowledged the relevance of international collaboration in developing **Research Infrastructures**. The Group of Senior Officials (GSO) on global Research Infrastructures has been recognized as a strategic forum set up at international level to discuss global collaboration opportunities. The EU role of secretariat of the GSO, will support Mexico in identifying the best approach to further promote the High Altitude Water Cherenkov (HAWC) observatory in the frame of the "case studies" exercise being currently conducted by the GSO.
7. **Joint Research Center:** The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) cooperates with Mexican institutions in several areas, among which are: water management, climate change, soils and disaster risk reduction. The JRC and the Mexican National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) have launched discussions in view of exploring possibilities for developing a more strategic and structured approach to their cooperation, involving the CONACYT's Public Research Centers System and extending it to other thematic areas, including biodiversity, metrology and food safety, using smart specialization; linking with the EU Reference laboratories (EURLs) coordinated by DG JRC.
8. On regional cooperation both parties also recognized the importance of the bi-regional approach and agreed on the need to ensure a regional partnership in research and innovation and committed to the creation of an EU-CELAC Common Research Area, focused on three commonly agreed strategic pillars, which are Mobility of Researchers, International outreach of Research Infrastructures, and increased thematic cooperation to address global challenges. In this level, the need to step up cooperation in infrastructure and health was highlighted.

At the end of the meeting, both delegations reaffirmed the importance of Science, Technology and Innovation cooperation in addressing shared economic, environmental and societal challenges within the context of the overall EU-Mexico relations.

The National Council for Science and Technology would be pleased to host the next 9th Joint Steering Committee Meeting, in the second Semester of the next year.