



**EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI)
Eighth Senior Officials Meeting on Science and Technology
30 October 2020**

JOINT PRESS COMMUNIQUE

1. The eighth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI) was held on 30 October 2020 as a virtual meeting hosted by Mexico, the current *Pro-Tempore Presidency* of CELAC.
2. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Maria Elena Alvarez-Buylla, Director-General of the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) of Mexico, representing the *Pro-Tempore Presidency* of CELAC, and by Mrs Maria Cristina Russo, Director for International Cooperation, Directorate General for Research & Innovation of the European Commission. Mrs. Laura Elena Carrillo Cubillas, Executive Director of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), and Mr. Javier Nino Perez, Acting Managing Director for the Americas, European External Action Service, participated in the opening session.
3. In total, more than 160 delegates from 40 countries participated in the meeting, hereafter referred to as 'the Participants'.
4. At its high-level segment, the meeting was addressed by Mr Marcelo Ebrard, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, in his capacity as *Pro-Tempore President* of CELAC, and by Mrs Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, representing the European Commission. They welcomed the consensus among the participants on the relaunch of the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation with ambitious Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) actions that would help bring about the best solutions to the most pressing global issues and achieve fair, inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.
5. The Participants acknowledged the importance of the strength of the EU-CELAC partnership, based on shared values and priorities and recalled the strategic role that Science, Technology and Innovation play in addressing the unprecedented challenges and upheavals facing the world, stressing the importance of joint work on these topics, for the benefit of our peoples and future generations. It is only by unity in purpose and determination that truly structural and long-term solutions can be found for the benefits of the citizens in the EU and CELAC.
6. The Participants underlined the importance of science and innovation cooperation on COVID-19, to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment, particularly in joining efforts to strengthen multilateral and bi-regional initiatives, such as in the framework of the WHO, PAHO, GAVI, and COVAX.
7. On this topic, the meeting included a special session entitled “The world post Covid-19: Joint response to a global challenge”, which underlined the essential need to confront the Covid-19

pandemic through common efforts and working together for a sustainable recovery. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, Ibero-American General Secretariat, Mr. Hugo López-Gatell Ramírez, Vice-minister of Prevention and Health Promotion of Mexico and Mr. Jorge de la Caballería, Head of Unit for Latin America and Caribbean, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission shared their perspectives.

8. The Participants highlighted the initiatives promoted through other multilateral mechanisms that promote international cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation, such as the STS Forum, the Ibero-American Knowledge Area (SEGIB) and the EU-LAC Foundation. They underlined the need for a better articulation of the actions promoted by the JIRI with these mechanisms in order to promote synergies, strengthen scientific links and contribute to the EU-CELAC Knowledge Area¹.
9. The Participants welcomed the relaunch of the JIRI and the organisation of three Preparatory Meetings for the SOM and the significant role of the Focal Points designated by the members in both regions. The Participants expressed their appreciation to the Focal Points for their work on ensuring synergies between the research and innovation ministries and contributing in definition of the draft 2021-2023 Strategic Roadmap for the implementation of the Brussels Declaration and EU-CELAC Action Plan on Science, Technology and Innovation.
10. At the meeting, based on the results of an intense, open and participatory preparatory process of consensus-building consultations, the Senior Officials reached a consensus on the future steps to be taken, which are reflected in the draft 2021-2023 Strategic Roadmap. This draft consensus [Strategic Roadmap](#) will now be submitted for approval according to the corresponding procedures. Once these procedures are completed, a joint announcement by the PPT-CELAC and the European Commission will confirm the status of the document.

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Background

The Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation brings together the countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Member States of the European Union and the European Commission. In the field of Research and Innovation it implements the mandate agreed by Heads of State and Government in the [2015 Brussels Declaration](#) and the [EU-CELAC Action Plan](#) on Science, Technology and Innovation. Cooperation is based on the creation of a Common Research Area consisting of three pillars – Researcher Mobility; cooperation between Research Infrastructures; and cooperation on efforts to find solutions to Global Challenges. Participants at the meeting reached a broad consensus on proposing the addition of a fourth pillar to focus on Innovation.

The Joint Initiative is steered by Senior Officials for Research and Innovation from the participating countries and the European Commission. The last meeting took place in 2017.

¹ Chapter 9 CELAC-EU Action Plan, 2015