The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is a department of the European Commission. Our mission is to support EU policies with scientific evidence throughout the entire policy process. We are independent of national, commercial or stakeholder interests.

Our 2,800 staff are based in Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. In addition to performing our own research, we make sense of collective scientific knowledge from multiple sources for smarter EU policies. Capacity building is one of our key roles. We often work in partnerships with universities, government offices, agencies and stakeholders.
Most of our scientific work is undertaken in direct support to EU policies. We add value by providing knowledge or services that others are less well placed to provide. And we strive for excellence in all our activities.

In carrying out our work, integrity is a core value: in our approach to science, in the way we treat people, and in avoiding conflicts of interest. We strive always to deliver on our commitments, to promote an open exchange of knowledge and to foster innovation.

Our scientific work covers a wide range of EU policy domains: energy and transport; sustainability and climate; migration; economic questions; education and employment; food, nutrition and health; digital transformation; and innovation. We endeavour to address new societal challenges as they emerge.

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### JRC priorities

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### Examples of cooperation

#### Preventing chemical accidents

The JRC has provided training on the use of sophisticated assessment tools for risk analysis of accidents at industrial sites, which has led to the establishment of a systematic chemical accident prevention and preparedness programme for Bulgaria.

#### Improving air quality

In an example with direct impact on citizens, the city of Sofia is actively involved in the European Forum for Air Quality Modelling, hosted by the JRC. Via the harmonised use of models, Bulgarian, regional and local data are integrated for mapping of emissions and pollutants. As a result, air quality maps can be produced, sources of air pollution can be identified and border effects can be estimated.

#### Internet usage for children – promoting best practices

The JRC and the Bulgarian authorities cooperate in the field of digital transformation and education. Specifically, the focus has been on raising awareness of the risks and opportunities linked to internet usage, and by promoting best online practices for children.
USING OUR LABS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Since 2017 the JRC has opened up 12 of its physical research infrastructures to academia, research organisations and industry (including small and medium enterprises). Scientists will have the opportunity to work in JRC laboratories dedicated to nuclear safety and security, chemistry, life sciences, physical sciences, ICT, and ‘foresight’ (the branch of scientific research that explores how the future will look).

SMART SPECIALISATION
The JRC hosts the Smart Specialisation Platform, which helps European countries and regions identify which research and innovation areas to invest in. The Platform takes into account a country or region’s existing strengths and upcoming challenges. We have provided science-based advice for policymakers, businesses and research institutions. And we have developed more than one hundred Smart Specialisation Strategies for various European regions and Member States, e.g. for the agri-food and energy sectors. The Platform has helped foster many partnerships both within the EU and beyond.

KNOWLEDGE CENTRES AND COMPETENCE CENTRES
The JRC hosts several Commission Knowledge Centres and Competence Centres. These Centres bring together experts, stakeholders and knowledge from both within and outside the European Commission. Knowledge Centres are built around topics, while Competence Centres focus on analytical tools. Together, they inform policymakers, stakeholders and the general public about the latest scientific findings that are relevant for policy. They provide contextualised evidence, reviews, data analysis and data visualisation.

JRC SUPPORT FOR STANDARDISATION
Standardisation and harmonisation promote innovation and competitiveness. They also build consumer trust and are essential for the European single market. For these reasons, more than 70% of the JRC’s projects involve work on standardisation and harmonisation. The JRC also participates in more than 160 technical committees linked to standardisation organisations. The JRC also plays a key role in the development of reference materials. The JRC carries out research to lay the scientific foundations before a standard is adopted, for example, by developing analytical methods.

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SCIENTISTS AND POLICYMAKERS
The JRC regularly organises or facilitates events known as ‘Science meets Regions’ and ‘Science meets Parliaments’. At these events, scientists and policymakers are brought together to learn about each other’s challenges, tackle issues specific to a given region or country, build relationships and promote a culture of evidence-based policymaking.

ACCESS TO OUR DATABASES AND MODELS
In line with our values of openness and transparency, we grant access to the JRC’s services, databases and tools, including more than 100 models.

COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL PARTNERSHIPS
In 2017, the JRC launched the Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships programme to work with universities to better understand what type of research is needed at different phases in the policy process. It places a special emphasis on the science-policy interface, including communication.
As a graduate student at a Bulgarian University you can apply for the “Danubius Award” and be selected for a job-shadowing stay at one of the JRC labs in Ispra, Italy.

The Severen Tsentralen region is participating in a smart specialisation project run by the JRC to define a strategy for harnessing local competitive advantages and creating growth and jobs.

The JRC has organised Innovation Camps in several Bulgarian cities to integrate scientific evidence and local knowledge to solve concrete policy issues.

The Bulgarian member of the JRC Board of Governors is Albena Vutsova, of Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”

During the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2018, the JRC and Bulgaria’s Ministry of Economy organised a conference on Technology Transfer and Smart Specialisation in the Western Balkans which gathered over 300 participants.

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