

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH *April 2015*

HORIZON 2020

Commissioner Moedas travelled to Kiev to sign the Agreement for the Association of Ukraine to Horizon 2020. The Commissioner then went to London where he met with several representatives of the British government and the scientific world and visited several centres that are distinguished by their scientific excellence.



«*Today, science cannot advance in only one discipline, one country or one university. Science must be freed from borders of any kind.*»

Carlos Moedas

For full speech please click [here](#)

Dear Reader,

On the occasion of International Women's Day the EU launched the 3rd edition of the EU Prize for Women Innovators. The prize will reward three women who have achieved outstanding innovations and brought them to market. Contestants can submit their applications until 20 October 2015. The winners will be announced in 2016. [More information.](#)

In this issue, you will be able to read how the European Commission has increased its focus on Latin American countries in order to strengthen the International Cooperation in Research and Innovation with this part of the world.

The Editors

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And many [more...](#)

Signature of the Association Agreement of Ukraine to Horizon 2020

The Agreement for the association of Ukraine to Horizon 2020 was signed in Kiev on 20 March 2015 by Commissioner Moedas and Serhiy Kvit, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, in the presence of Mrs Marite Seile, Minister of Education and Science of Latvia, representing the EU Presidency. The signing ceremony was held at the Cabinet of Ministers following a meeting with Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk. The Agreement will still need to be ratified by the Ukrainian Parliament to enter into force, but Ukrainian legal entities can already participate in all Horizon 2020 actions funded under the 2015 budget, as the agreement covers the years 2015-2020.

Following the signing ceremony, Commissioner Moedas delivered a keynote address at the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kiev and interacted with representatives from the Ukrainian S&T community about both opportunities and challenges related to this association, which is highly symbolic as it is the first time Ukraine has been associated to an EU programme. In his speech he stated: «In the EU we will make every effort to support Ukraine's sustainable and self-determined development, based on a relationship of mutual respect and reciprocal commitment. Your association to Horizon 2020 is, I hope, one of many joyful moments to come. Together we can learn from yesterday, we can hope for tomorrow, and we will never stop questioning. (...) Horizon 2020 is the biggest multinational research programme in the world, improving European knowledge every day. Ukraine is now part of that legacy, part of a huge multinational effort to push boundaries and improve lives.»

Commissioner Moedas also visited the Paton Electric Welding Institute, where he met Mr Borys Paton, the President of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.



Photo: Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation and Serhiy Kvit, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine signing the Agreement.

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«Building together knowledge-oriented and forward-looking EU Neighbourhood. Developing a Common Knowledge and Innovation Space» event

This event, organised by DG Research and Innovation, in cooperation with the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs (AFET) and Industry, Technology, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committees was held at the European Parliament on 31 March 2015. The event was opened by the Chairs of both committees (Elmar Brok and Jerzy Buzek respectively) together with EU Commissioner, Carlos Moedas, and the Latvian Minister for Education and Science, Marite Seile.

It included a conference with keynote speakers and round tables, an exhibition of posters and video testimonials of research projects involving ENP countries, and a reception for the participants to facilitate networking.

The different presentations and discussions illustrated the potential and results of EU-ENP cooperation in research and innovation towards the achievement of a Common Knowledge and Innovation Space between the EU and its Neighbours and identified future prospects for cooperation in this field, including fostering the strong involvement of the ENP countries in Horizon 2020.

Commissioner Carlos Moedas said: «Today we're here to talk about the EU Neighbourhood developing a Common Knowledge and Innovation space. Actually, we're talking about the only way we can maintain our leadership in a global market of ideas. The only option we have is to keep up with modern science. We're talking about irresistible cooperation. Europe faces the same questions as its neighbours.»



Photo: Commissioner Moedas opening the event held at the European Parliament

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EU and the Middle-East Building Bridges through Science Diplomacy

The EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation took a new step towards strengthening cooperation in the Middle East through science diplomacy. To mark this increased and pro-active EU engagement with science diplomacy activities in the region, Commissioner Moedas participated on 13 April in a high level conference in Jordan on «Addressing shared challenges through science diplomacy: the case of the EU–Middle East Regional Cooperation» and visited the Synchrotron light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) in Amman (Jordan). Commissioner Moedas said: «Cooperation in research and innovation with our Middle East partners is a priority for the EU. [SESAME](#) is a powerful example of how science and research can bring diverse nations together. Jordan's active engagement in regional science diplomacy in hosting SESAME is extremely valuable. I am also very pleased that the EU was granted SESAME observer status.» The Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) project is expected to have a broad socio-economic impact in Jordan and the region. It can be used for a wide range of applications from imaging of diseases, designing pharmaceuticals, and solar cell enhancements, to CO₂ capture and assessing archaeological artefacts. The EU has played a major role in the development of the initiative through technical and financial assistance provided by several EU Member States and the European Commission, amounting to more than EUR 12 million. EUR 5 million were granted by the EU 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. Owing to SESAME's nature as a widely-available 'scientific user facility', the EU will provide further support to training needs and staff exchanges with other European synchrotron infrastructures.



Photo: EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas learns about the Booster and Microtron during visit to SESAME International Research Center

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First EU Research & Innovation Day in Korea

The first EU Research & Innovation Day in Korea was held in Seoul on 25 March 2015. It attracted nearly 400 government officials, researchers and business people.

Sukjoon Lee, First Vice-Minister, Korean Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning, Cristina Russo, Director for International Cooperation, European Commission DG Research & Innovation, Tomasz Kozlowski, Ambassador and Head of EU Delegation to Korea, and Toni Schreibweiss, Vice President of European Chamber of Commerce in Korea all provided introductory remarks, and Hee-Gook Lee, President and Chief Technology Officer of LG Electronics, gave a keynote speech.

In subsequent sessions, the EU and its Member States shared information with Korean counterparts about their research and innovation policies, programmes and success stories. A final session presented and discussed challenges and business views on smart cities, covering thematic areas such as energy, mobility and ICT.

The event was highly successful in raising Korean awareness of science and technology excellence, programmes and initiatives in Europe and in creating cooperation opportunities and new networks between public and private science, technology and innovation actors from Europe and Korea.



Photo: (left) Participants to the EU Research & Innovation Day in Korea and (right) Cristina Russo, Director for International Cooperation at DG Research and Innovation

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EU-Latin America: R&I Cooperation growing

In March 2015, the European Commission has increased its focus to strengthening International Cooperation in Research and Innovation with Latin American countries. With the EU-CELAC Summit planned on 10-11 June and the EU-Chile, EU-Mexico and EU-Brazil Summits to follow later this year, International Cooperation in R&I is standing out once more as a major element of the EU relations with the region. In this context, Cristina Russo, Director for International Cooperation at DG Research and Innovation visited Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, to increase the scale and scope of Cooperation in R&I with Latin American countries, continuing to promote Horizon 2020 which is the largest R&I EU Programme fully open to the world. In addition to bilateral cooperation in R&I between European countries and Latin American countries, there is also an important regional cooperation through the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation.

Argentina

Meeting with Lino Barañao, Minister of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation

On Friday 13 March, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation organised a conference to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Argentinean-EU Liaison Office for Science, Technology and Innovation. Director Cristina Russo spoke at the conference where, accompanied by the Head of the EU Delegation to Argentina, Alfonso Diez Torres, she met the Argentinian Minister for Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (MINCYT) Mr Lino Barañao. An [Implementing Arrangement](#) under the EU-Argentina Science and Technology Agreement was signed by Director Russo and Minister Barañao, launching a new initiative to encourage top Argentine scientists to come to Europe as members of research teams lead by European Research Council (ERC) grant holders.



Photo: Director Cristina Russo and Mr. Lino Barañao, Minister of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation, Argentina.

The 8th Steering Committee of the EU-Argentina Agreement on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation

On Friday 13 March, Director Russo co-chaired the 8th Steering Committee of the Agreement on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation, together with Agueda Menvielle, National Director of International Relations at MINCYT. The agenda included cooperation in the priority areas of common interest, including health, bio-economy, renewable energy, marine research and transport. The Committee reviewed the EU-Argentina cooperation process and agreed to focus future cooperation on renewable energy, bio-economy, marine research, greening cities, and health, including the EU-led multilateral initiatives such as GLOPID-R on preparedness and response to infectious diseases. While in Argentina, Ms Russo also met Ambassadors and other representatives accredited in Argentina from EU Member States and from countries associated to H2020 to discuss how to enhance synergies amongst H2020 and their bilateral initiatives with Argentina.

Uruguay

Raising the profile of EU Research and Innovation in Uruguay

After visiting Argentina, Director Russo travelled to Uruguay on 15-16 March. Together with the Head of the EU Delegation to Uruguay, Juan Manuel Trigo, she met several government representatives, interested in stepping up R&I cooperation with the EU, namely Carolina Cosse, Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining; Alvaro Garcia Rodriguez, Director of the Office of Planning and Budget; Fernando Figueira Gabriel, Undersecretary of State for Industry, Energy and Mining; and Gabriel Aintablian, Director for Science, Technology and Innovation at the Ministry of Education and Culture. Director Russo delivered a speech on EU-Uruguay R&I Cooperation at a forum with around 100 participants from the country's top universities and research institutions. They were highly interested in the possibilities offered by H2020. At the forum, the government representatives confirmed Uruguay's willingness to strengthen its cooperation in R&I with the EU, particularly in the area of Excellent Science and in relation to R&I as a tool to foster the country's competitiveness. In Montevideo, Ms Russo also visited the Pasteur Institute, which is an interesting example of synergies between bilateral Member State cooperation, a DEVCO funded programme, and two FP7 projects.

Brazil

After a fruitful visit to Argentina and Uruguay, Director Cristina Russo moved to Brazil, where she started a very intensive programme of meetings in Brasilia and São Paulo from 17 to 19 March 2015. The meetings included the Brazilian Parliament, federal government institutions and representatives of State Foundations that are very active in International Cooperation in R&I.

Advocating for strengthened EU-Brazil cooperation in Research and Innovation at the National Congress of Brazil

On 17 March 2015, in Brasilia, Director Russo delivered a speech at the XXII EU-Brazil Parliamentary Forum, held in the Brazilian National Congress, on «The EU and Brazil – bridging the world through cooperation in Research and Innovation». At the Forum, two Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) gave speeches in different panels: Paulo Rangel, Chair of the EP Delegation for relations with the Federative Republic of Brazil and Francisco Assis, Chair of the EP Delegation for relations with Mercosur. At the Congress, Director Russo had a meeting with Senator Buarque, Chair of the Senate's Science and Technology Committee, who expressed a strong interest in exchanging ideas with EU representatives on methods to attract private investment in R&I.

The role of Brazilian State R&I Support Foundations in promoting Brazilian participation to Horizon 2020.

The following day, Director Russo visited the Foundation for Research of the State of São Paulo (FAPESP) together with the Head of the EU Delegation to Brazil, Ambassador Ana-Paula Zacarias. A letter of Intent with FAPESP was signed, fostering EU-Brazilian Cooperation in R&I. In São Paulo, Director Russo also met a delegation from the University of São Paulo (USP) which is the largest university in Brazil and a long-standing partner in several joint research FP7 projects. The USP showed particular interest in cooperating with Europe in Marine Research. Finally, Director Russo visited the Butantan Institute, internationally renowned for its excellence in anti-poison serums, vaccines and cancer-fighting studies. On the same day, she discussed, with the president and the vice-president of the Confederation of National State Foundations (CONFAP), how to enhance cooperation by mobilising the resources of State Foundations to support the participation of Brazilian Researchers in Horizon 2020.



Photo: Director Cristina Russo, speaking at the XXII Forum Brazil-Europa, National Congress of Brazil, Brasilia

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The 7th EU-Brazil Joint Steering Committee Meeting under the STI Cooperation Agreement

On 19 March, the Committee was hosted by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and took place at the Itamaraty Palace, in Brasilia. Director Russo co-chaired the meeting together with Ambassador Benedicto Fonseca of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Executive Secretary Armando Milioni, of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. The discussions covered bilateral scientific cooperation in priority areas such as Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture, Marine Research, Renewable Energies, including the coordinated call on Biofuels, Nanotechnology, Fusion Energy and Information and Communication Technology (TICs). In addition, other important areas were discussed such as Health, Sustainable Urbanisation & Renaturing Cities and Innovation. The Committee also discussed the important issue of mobilising Brazilian federal and state level financial resources to ensure participation of Brazilian researchers in Horizon 2020, along with respecting other framework conditions for R&I.

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JRC strengthens cooperation with Brazil

Liliana Pasecinic, Head of Sector for International Relations in the Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) attended the 7th EU-Brazil Steering Committee Meeting on 19 March in Brasilia, discussing new opportunities in the framework of the ongoing cooperation. The JRC representative also met with Embrapa, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). The JRC has started several cooperation initiatives with Brazilian institutions in Life Cycle Analysis, Smart Grids, Water Management under Climate Change, Nanotechnologies and Disaster Risk Reduction. In addition, under its cooperation with CNPq on the Science without Borders programme, the JRC will host Brazilian grant holders. The first fellows should reach Europe in summer 2015.

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EU-CELAC update

EU-CELAC 1st Joint ERA-NET LAC Call: results expected soon

The EU-CELAC Summit will take place on 10-11 June 2015 in Brussels. R&I is an important element of the event and the Science & Technology Joint Initiative for R&I has already held four Senior Official Meetings. In this context, the evaluation of the proposals submitted under the 1st Joint ERA-NET LAC Call will be finalised at a meeting of the participating funding agencies scheduled for 28-29 April in Bonn, Germany.

The call on R&I was launched on 16 September 2014, as a joint initiative of the Member States of the EU, the Associated Countries to FP7 and the Latin-American and the Caribbean Countries. The call aimed to create long-term cooperation through Collaborative Research and Innovation projects. It was open to public and private research institutes as well as to non-governmental organisations and other research entities. The deadline was on 27 November 2014. Under this call, around €10 million have been pre-committed by the participating funding agencies. In total, 90 proposals were submitted from entities in 17 countries. The call was announced at the 4th Senior Official Meeting of the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative for R&I, which was a result of the 2010 EU-CELAC Summit in Madrid. The results of this call will be known ahead of the EU-CELAC Summit of 10-11 June 2015 in Brussels.

EU-CELAC project managers discuss R&I Cooperation in Environment and Climate Change in Buenos Aires

On 9 and 10 March 2015 an EU-CELAC Environment Seminar took place in Buenos Aires, organised by the EU-CELAC support project ALCUE-NET. The seminar «Exchanging Bi-regional Experiences on Climate Services to Identify Joint Activities - Bi-regional meeting on Climate Services and Brokerage event» gathered some 40 programme managers from the EU and CELAC. The objectives of the event were to raise awareness of the open calls in Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 5 related to Climate Services, to share knowledge on International Cooperation opportunities and to promote consortium building for collaborative projects. Another objective was to improve ALCUE NET project activities related to the work package on Biodiversity and Climate Change. The discussions identified future strategic R&I priorities for H2020 on climate services and explored other possible synergies and joint activities (i.e. ALCUE NET, ERANet-LAC 2nd joint call).

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Stepping up EU-Paraguay Cooperation in Research and Innovation

On 24-26 March 2015, the EU Delegation to Paraguay, together with the National Council for Science and Technology (Conacyt), organised an event for the Paraguayan scientific community, in order to raise H2020 awareness and participation. Piero Venturi, Science Counsellor at the EU Delegation to Brazil was present.

Several meetings took place with the participation of the Vice-Minister for Agriculture and the Vice-Minister for Industry and Trade, who expressed their willingness to discuss the best options for Paraguay to get more involved in the international scientific networks. Conacyt is planning to increase the mobility of researchers, professors and professionals through the Fonaside programme with a total budget of approximately € 65 million. There is particular interest in cooperation in Bioeconomy and SMEs.

Constructive ideas emerged from the meetings fostering joint awareness raising and networking activities involving EU Member States and countries associated to Horizon 2020. Particular focus was put on the role of Paraguay in the context of the EU-CELAC S&T Joint Initiative for R&I and the forthcoming Paraguay Presidency of Mercosur which will start in July 2015.



From left: Piero Venturi, Science Counsellor at the EU Delegation to Brazil, Pierre Beviz, Head of Trade Sector, EU Delegation to Paraguay Lorena Méndez, SMEs Vice-Minister, Carlino Velasquez, Special adviser of the SMEs Minister

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3rd meeting of the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) Expert Working Group (EWG) on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture

The HLPD Expert Working Group met for the third time on 5-6 March in London to make progress on their input to a roadmap developing a long-term EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership with a particular focus, initially, on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture (FNSSA). This meeting followed an external consultation phase on the draft input that was launched in February 2015. The draft input focuses on three thematic pillars: sustainable intensification; agriculture and food systems for nutrition; and agricultural markets and trade, and some cross-cutting ones, such as innovation, social science, gender and capacity-building. The final input is expected to be presented to the EU-Africa HLPD Bureau on 27 April in Brussels. The EU-Africa HLPD Bureau (co-chaired by the European Commission (DG Research and Innovation) and Congo Brazzaville replaced at this meeting by Namibia; the African Union Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, DG International Cooperation and Development, South Africa, Latvia, Germany, UK, France and Portugal were present) also met. The HLPD Bureau will now work on transforming the input of the EWG into a final roadmap towards the EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership, specifically developing the potential modalities of cooperation and instruments to be used in the short, medium and long-term, before submitting it to the senior officials of the EU-Africa HLPD for their approval in March 2016 in Addis Ababa (tbc). On both sides, pre-meetings took place with those countries that do not currently sit in the EU-Africa HLPD Bureau (additional countries present were Belgium, Sweden, Kenya, Angola and Egypt). In addition, a first meeting with potential funders took place, building on the successes achieved with the FP7-initiated international ERANET, ERAfrica. ERAfrica enabled 15 European and African countries to pool financial resources through a virtual fund totalling 10.7 MEUR to fund collaborative research projects. Those funding agencies present (from France, Belgium, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, UK, Portugal, Switzerland, Italy, Angola, Kenya, South Africa, Egypt, Ivory Coast, and Namibia) indicated a clear commitment to the roadmap of the EU-Africa Research & Innovation Partnership on FNSSA.

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Strengthening cooperation in health research and innovation with Japan

Japan already participates in some key international initiatives in health research and innovation. The recent visit of Dr. Ruxandra Draghia-Akli, Director of the Health Directorate in DG RTD, to Tokyo was an opportunity to reinforce such cooperation and to explore new areas of mutual interaction. The series of events started with the launch of AMED, the Japanese Agency for Medical Research and Development, where Dr. Draghia-Akli gave a keynote speech. It was attended by more than 500 people and introduced by Akira Amari, Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy. During the following days Dr. Draghia-Akli, accompanied by Leo Karapiperis and Tom Kuczynski from the Tokyo Delegation, had a series of meetings with Japanese officials in public and private organisations. The meeting with the Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices (regulatory) Agency (PMDA) was an opportunity to push for harmonisation at international level of the validation of biomarkers, clinical trials, etc, and the possible participation of the PMDA together with other regulators in the Innovative Medicine Initiative (IMI) projects. Dr. Draghia-Akli met some company representatives, in particular from Takeda (vaccine development), the Japanese branch of EFPIA (the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations), and Hitachi (biomedical imaging, devices and big data infrastructure). There is a lot of interest in IMI because of the global resonance of the public health strategic research agenda, and such cooperation is possible since 30% of contributions to IMI2 can come from outside the European Union. A bilateral meeting with AMED President-elect Professor Makoto Suematsu confirmed the reciprocal interest in infectious diseases, rare diseases and the Human Brain Project. AMED is also interested in cooperating in the framework of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP2) and the Joint Programming Initiative on Anti-Microbial Resistance (JPIAMR). Dr. Draghia-Akli also met representatives of the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT), which is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Japanese government. The visit to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases (NIID) was an opportunity to share views, priorities and possibilities for collaboration on various infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and Ebola. Concrete steps have been made for Japan to become member of some of the multi-lateral initiatives that DG RTD already supports, such as the International Rare Diseases Research Consortium (IRDiRC) and the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Diseases Preparedness (GloPID-R). The next EU-Japan Joint Committee Meeting on S&T Cooperation of 18 May will be an opportunity to make an additional step towards a cooperation that is vital to tackle common health challenges.

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EU Research, Innovation and Education Counsellors joint mission to Western Australia

During the week 9-13 March, EU Research, Innovation and Education Counsellors in Australia had their first ever joint mission and visited the state of Western Australia (WA), together with the EU Economic and Commercial Counsellors (many cover both dossiers). With Perth over 4 hours flight from Canberra and Sydney, where most Counsellors are based, it is not visited as often as would be liked. The purpose of the mission was to learn more about the research strengths and opportunities in WA, highlight the opportunities in the EU and its Member States (see article on the information event), and demonstrate the critical mass of the EU. The week involved an intensive series of meetings, presentations and visits. The focus was around the four research universities in Perth – University of Western Australia, Curtin University, Murdoch University and Edith Cowen University, all of which have their own strengths and specialisations, but with medical & health, energy, minerals & mining, sustainability, agriculture and cybersecurity research particularly apparent. The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) will be partly based in WA, so the opportunities presented by the SKA, astronomy and ancillary infrastructure were another focus of the visit, including the Pawsey ‘petascale’ Supercomputing Centre.



Photo: Members of the delegation plus staff at the University of Western Australia

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European Research, Innovation and Education Information Event in Perth

On 11 March a European Research, Innovation and Education Information Session was held with close to 100 attendees. The event was opened by Professor Peter Klinken, Chief Scientist of Western Australia, who provided a WA perspective on collaborating with Europe. Participants benefited from case studies of previous cooperation under FP7. Prof Nigel Laing, Centre for Medical Research, University of Western Australia and Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research shared their positive experiences with the NEUROMICS collaborative project on Omics Research of Rare Neuromuscular and Neurodegenerative Disease. Meanwhile, Professor Lelia Green, School of Communications & Arts, Edith Cowan University and Aniek Boeijinga from the Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands spoke about the Narratives in Health Communication IRSES project. Not only were the opportunities under Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ showcased by the EU Delegation (Ivano Casella and John Tuckwell) but also some cooperative opportunities with EU Member States were presented by Antti Niemelä, Embassy of Finland; Dr Anne Braun, Embassy of Germany; Mrs Jana Grilc, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia; Ms Beatriz Jerez del Castillo, Centre for Industrial Technological Development, Spain; and Alison Hall, British High Commission. The information event was followed by a small networking reception.



Photo: Professor Peter Klinken, Chief Scientist of Western Australia

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Research publication

HORIZON - The EU Research and Innovation Magazine

You will find fresh news about Research and Innovation in this online magazine and an interesting monthly focus on a specific topic.

In April you will be able to read about Science diplomacy and research across borders.

To access the magazine, click [here](#)

European projects boosting innovation potential of Morocco



«The hardest thing is to get a match between offers and demands in terms of research and innovation partnership, but when our Moroccan researchers integrate EU

projects, cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean often results in great projects». These words, were pronounced by Mrs Loudyi, former National Contact Point of Morocco for EU environmental projects, during the Innovation Week, held in Casablanca from 3-5 March. The 3-day event offered training and a brokerage event, and succeeded in gathering, each day, more than 50 participants such as researchers, entrepreneurs and representatives from public administrations, from all over Morocco but also from abroad, including representatives from French, Tunisian, Lebanese and British organisations. All worked together towards local and sustainable development in different fields such as energy, forestry, and health, and on how to remove barriers to innovation. Mr Doblas, CREA researcher and coordinator of MENFRI, one of the EC funded Research to Innovation (R2I) projects, organising the Innovation week, explained how this idea was born. «Within our own project, we identified major problems for the Mediterranean forestry sector: climate change impacts, barriers to entrepreneurship, etc. and other partners from EU and Maghreb, working in other fields, also found similar barriers. So we decided to gather to create a platform where all kind of stakeholders could exchange knowledge on these identified problems. The «Innovation week» appeared to us as a crucial step towards stronger Mediterranean research and entrepreneurship in order to tackle common problems we are facing». «Strengthening EU cooperation in research and innovation in the Mediterranean is a way to create growth while tackling global challenges such as climate change together», said Mr Matraia, policy officer for «Southern European Neighbourhood and Africa» at DG RTD. «But it goes beyond that», he continued. «It is about investing in human capital, by sharing ownership and reinforcing mutual trust while building stronger relations around the Mediterranean basin. International cooperation in research and innovation therefore supports the EU external policy and promotes local and sustainable development. R2I projects such as MENFRI are effective tools to unite all stakeholders and make them work towards common objectives.»

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Selection of Israeli students to represent Israel at European Union Contest for Young Scientists

On March 10, the Head of the EU Delegation to the State of Israel Lars Faaborg-Andersen attended the 2015 Young Scientists and Developers Contest at the Bloomfield Museum.

This annual contest, which takes place close to the date of Albert Einstein's birthday, is based on projects designed, developed and researched by outstanding high school students from all over the country and from all sectors of Israeli society. Five of the twenty winners will represent Israel at the European Union Contest for Young Scientists which will take place in Milan in September 2015.

The subjects of the winners' projects were ImproApp a music programme which turns aural music into written notes; decoding the structure of the bacterial ribosome in the presence of antibiotics; and «combinatorial monsters» which examines mathematical questions raised by polyhex and polyiamond figures.



Photo: Head of Delegation Lars Faaborg-Andersen looks on as Guy Stutland, who will represent Israel at the EU Contest for Young Scientist, shakes hands with Shlomo Yanai, Chairman of the Board of the Bloomfield Museum

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Visit to China Electric Power Research Institute

On 26th March, invited by the China Electric Power Research Institute (CEPRI), the Delegation of the European Union to China visited CEPRI and its test facilities in Changping District, Beijing. CEPRI is a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary research institute directly affiliated to the State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC). CEPRI is dedicated to Research and Development, Technical Service and Consultation, Testing and Certification as well as Technical Standards Formulation. CEPRI is already collaborating with several EU partners, such as Dii (DE), EDF (FR) and Redes Energeticos Nacionais (PT).

The visit began in an exhibition centre that introduced CEPRI's research and testing facilities all over China, including the Ultra-High Voltage (UHV) Direct Current (DC) Test Base in Beijing, UHV Alternating Current (AC) Test Base in Wuhan, UHV Transmission Tower Test Base in Hebei and High Altitude Test Base in Tibet. Participants then visited the UHV DC Test Base, State Grid Simulation Centre and CEPRI Headquarters.

The Delegation of the European Union to China held a fruitful dialogue with Prof. Jianbo GUO, President of CEPRI and Dr. Liangzhong YAO, Vice President of CEPRI. The EU Delegation presented Horizon 2020 opportunities, encouraging CEPRI's participation. CEPRI reviewed their successful cooperation with Europe and expressed interest in participating in EU research and innovation programmes, especially Horizon 2020, in the future.



Photo: Staff of CEPRI introducing the State Grid Simulation Centre

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Launch of EU-CHINA Research and Innovation Partnership Programme

2015 sees the start of implementation of the EU-CHINA Research and Innovation Partnership Programme (ECRIP). Funded under the ICI+ programme of the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, ECRIP aims to create, strengthen and intensify EU-China research and innovation partnerships by supporting the mobility of EU researchers to China and strengthening people-to-people contacts, from both the public and private sectors. Five projects have been funded in the framework of ECRIP, gathering 26 European and Chinese research entities from 9 EU Member States and 8 Chinese regions and cities, aiming to increase researchers' mobility in various sectors: renewable energy, sustainable urban development, life sciences, and food security and water. From 2015 to 2019, the five projects will carry out targeted mobility schemes within the partnership and provide supporting actions to complement the mobility such as networking, language training, and short visits for supervisors and managerial staff. The global objective is for the EU to benefit from sustained intensification of research, development and innovation networks, partnerships and other forms of R&I interaction between the EU and China.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Upcoming events

Latvian Presidency Conference: First Innovative Enterprise Week

«Access to finance for research, innovation and smes 2015»

15-17 June 2015 - Riga - Latvia

Click [here](#) to access this event

H2020 Calls update

Europe as a Global Actor

Topic: The cultural, scientific and social dimension of EU-LAC relations - INT-12-2015

Deadline: 28-05-2015 - 17:00 (Brussels time)

European Expert Network on International Cooperation and Development (2015/S 058-101076)

Call for the Selection of an operator entrusted with the management of a network of researchers and experts in the domain of international cooperation and development together with the organisation of workshops and meetings. Technical assistance for the Commission (procurement contract).

Deadline: 27/05/2015 - 23:59 (Brussels time)

For more information on these calls and other calls click [here](#)

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The COSMIC malaria project

Malaria represents one of the most serious health threats to mankind, with millions of individuals becoming infected every year. It is caused by the parasite *Plasmodium falciparum* and is transmitted to humans through blood-feeding female mosquitoes. In countries where malaria is endemic, pregnant women have a higher risk of malaria than other adults. The risks are even higher for women who are pregnant for the first time, infected with HIV and/or if they have not had any acquired immunity before pregnancy. Malaria in pregnancy (MiP) can have severe adverse effects on both the mother and the child and is a major cause of poor development and mortality in infants. Consequences of MiP can be low birth weight babies who have a significantly higher risk of dying before their first birthday, preterm delivery, maternal death during pregnancy or during delivery, or severe complications from the malaria infection itself. In sub-Saharan Africa, over 30 million women living in malaria endemic areas become pregnant each year with malaria, causing an estimated >10,000 maternal deaths and 75,000 – 200,000 infant deaths each year. Malaria is also responsible for 2 – 15% of maternal anemia cases and up to 14% of low birth weight babies resulting in poor growth and development. Successful control of malaria in pregnancy saves the lives of mothers and babies and is an essential part of antenatal care in endemic areas. Prevention of MiP in sub-

Saharan Africa comes in the form of bed nets and treatment with sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine (IPTp/SP). However, the efficacy of these approaches is low, urgently necessitating more effective measures. Community-based disease management has been described and adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the most effective means of malaria control in Africa.



By combining existing rapid diagnostic tests with appropriate training of community health workers and combinatorial drug treatments, the consortium hopes to minimise MiP cases. The study will be performed in different malaria epidemiological settings to identify potential variations in effectiveness and cost considerations of the intervention. Participating groups on the EU-funded project COSMIC propose scheduled intermittent screening of pregnant women at the community level. If tested positive with rapid diagnostic tests, they should be treated with anti-malarial drugs scheduled screening and treatment (SST). This supplements current interventions, such as intermittent preventive treatment. It also offers community-based disease

management at a village level, extending from the community based care programs that are currently only focusing on children below the age of 5. It is estimated that COSMIC activities will benefit 25–30 million women and babies exposed to malaria every year. During the first period of the project the necessary protocols and forms have been prepared, and local staff has been trained to perform field work. The aim of COSMIC consortium is to reduce malaria during pregnancy and the harmful complications that arise from this infection for both mother and child. The consortium is studying how the work of the community health workers, involved in the general community case management of malaria, can increase the number of pregnant women screened and treated. The objective of the project is to determine the added value of this intervention, of monthly screening and treatment of pregnant women in an environment closer to their homes by the community health workers, identifying the potential bottlenecks of this intervention, determining the impact, the protective efficacy as well as to the cost effectiveness of the intervention, in order to be prepared to formulate policy recommendations for the implementation of this intervention in Sub-Saharan countries.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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This page provides a regular update on recent Research and Innovation (R&I) policy news from our network of R&I Counsellors in the EU delegations in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Russia, the United States (US) and the African Union (AU).

With a particular focus on international cooperation, different policy related themes are highlighted in relation to a number of countries to illustrate trends, similarities and different approaches. This issue covers policy news from Australia, Canada, China, Russia, the US and the African Union.

Policy News from the Delegations

In the **United States**, the FY2016 budget proposes a **5.8% increase for R&D** from \$138 billion (FY2015 enacted) to \$146 billion over all government departments. Most of the proposed increase would be due to a 9.2% increase in defence development expenditure. Basic and applied research would increase by 2.6 and 3.6% respectively. The budget also includes \$215 million for three Health and Human Services agencies to launch a **Precision Medicine initiative** to accelerate the ability to develop prevention, diagnostic and treatment approaches tailored to individual patients. A plan to double government investment in **combating drug-resistant infections to \$1.2 billion**, involving several federal agencies, has also been announced.

China has released a number of important documents and guidelines: (1) The State Council's annual «No. 1 Central Document», focused on «**Reinforcing Reform and Innovation to Accelerate Agricultural Modernization**», which includes boosting agricultural research and promoting innovation capacity; (2) the «National Comprehensive Pilot Programme for New Type of Urbanisation», by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), which contains a list of designated pilot cities and urbanisation priorities; and (3) Joint Guidelines by the **State Intellectual Property Office** and other related administrations, which aim at establishing an effective standardised IPR service system by 2020.

The «**Alliance for Accelerating Excellence**

in Science in Africa» (AESA), a platform created by the **African Academy of Sciences (AAS)** and **NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development)**, was endorsed by the **African Union Summit** in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The aim of AESA is to foster long-term sustainable funding and development of global health research leadership and scientific excellence in Africa. AESA also aims to serve as a think-tank in setting priorities and aligning them with funders and governments. Backing from three philanthropic organisations has been secured, and staff are being recruited to manage the programme. The focus is initially on health research, which later can be expanded to areas such as food and nutrition, energy and environment.

The Minister for Industry and Science in **Australia**, Ian Macfarlane, has announced \$A25 million (€17mn) in funding for research into **Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)** technologies at the Otway geological storage test facility over the next 5 years. The announcement was welcomed by the **Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Gas Technologies (CO2CRC)**, which indicated it will be matched by cash and in-kind contributions from CO2CRC members. Macfarlane has also **announced** the Chairs for three of the five new Industry Growth Centres, as well as an independent Advisory Committee. This is an important step in the governance arrangements of the initiative and the establishment of the centres. The **Industry Growth Centres** initiative is the \$A189 million (€130mn) centrepiece of the Government's new

industry policy direction and part of the **Industry Innovation and Competitiveness Agenda**.

In **Canada**, Saskatchewan's power utility says its \$1.4 billion **CCS project** launched in the autumn of 2014 is proving that the controversial technology works. The aim is to capture one million tons of carbon dioxide annually to be pumped underground. If achieved, this would represent 90% of the emissions the plant produces. The plant is apparently on target to meet that goal, but critics of the **Boundary Dam project** argue that it does not effectively address environmental concerns as it justifies the burning of fossil fuels.

Despite the current economic crisis, the Government in **Russia** has announced the prolongation until 2020 of two programmes aimed at further developing R&I activities in Russian universities: the '**mega-grants**' programme to attract leading scientists from around the world to Russian universities and research organisations, and the programme on state support for **cooperation of universities and state research organisations with high-tech companies**. The programmes were launched in 2010 and their prolongation until 2020 makes possible one more round of calls in 2015. Annual state funding for the two programmes amounts to around 9.4 billion Roubles (~€134mn).

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