

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UPDATE

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RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DG

DIRECTORATE D: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MONTHLY INFO

FLASH ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

POLICY

EU-India Joint Declaration on Research and Innovation Cooperation

On 10 February the European Commission and the Indian Government signed a Joint Declaration on research and innovation cooperation. The Declaration provides an opportunity to step up relations between Europe and India towards an 'Indo-European Research and Innovation Partnership'. The Declaration was signed at the EU-India Summit in New Delhi by Karel De Gucht the Commissioner for Trade and by Ashwani Kumar, Minister of State for Science and Technology. This Joint Declaration will further strengthen the existing cooperation under the umbrella of the EU-India S&T Cooperation Agreement signed in 2001. The Declaration will also move cooperation up a gear towards building an 'Indo-European Research and Innovation Partnership' by: (i) improving the scale, scope and impact of cooperation actions (ii) focusing on common societal challenges, and (iii) building on the synergies between India, the EU and its Member States.

For further information, contact Jean-Michel Sers or Diego Sammaritano, DG RTD, Directorate D, or Philippe De Taxis du Poet, EU Delegation New Delhi

The 14th EU-China Summit

The fourteenth EU-China Summit was held in Beijing on 14 February and was attended by Wen Jiabao the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China and by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council and by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. The EU-China Summit is officially structured in three 'pillars': political dialogue on strategic issues, high level economic and trade dialogue; and a new 'High Level People to People' dialogue (HPPD) which will also

address the mobility of researchers. Many of the Summit deliverables have impact on EU research cooperation with China, including the urbanisation partnership, the energy security dialogue, and the innovation dialogue.

The new HPPD will upgrade cooperation in this field and assemble a number of successful initiatives under a single umbrella. Existing policy dialogues in education, culture, multilingualism and youth have produced a large number of initiatives such as the reinforcement of student and teacher exchanges, the establishment of EU-China thematic years (e.g. 2012 is EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue) and the joint organisation of events and studies. The first round of the HPPD will be held in Brussels on 18 April and will have a great impact on future exchange programmes and mutual understanding of respective education systems. For example EU and China want to find ways to make China a more attractive study destination for EU students in order to ensure a higher level of reciprocity in student, academics and researchers' flows. The dialogue may also result in the launch of studies to further increase comparability and transparency of respective higher education systems.

For further information, contact Mario Catizzone, DG RTD, Directorate D or Graham Wilkie, DG EAC

Building an EU-Russia Strategic Partnership for R&I

At the end of January the Russian Vice-Minister of Science and Education Sergei Ivanets and DG RTD Director-General Robert-Jan Smits met in Brussels to exchange information on the plans for the new Russian and EU programmes for research and innovation and to open discussions on how best to increase cooperation through a new Strategic Partnership for research and innovation. Both sides

shared information on their new programmes for research and innovation: Horizon 2020 for the EU side and the new Russian State Programme for Research (2013-2020) and the potential opportunities within these programmes to increase the scale and scope of cooperation. Further working-level meetings will take place to develop the content of the Strategic Partnership. It is intended to develop a concept paper for agreement at the forthcoming meeting of the Joint Committee established under the bilateral S&T Cooperation Agreement, which will take place in Moscow on 6 July.

For further information, contact, Martin Penny, DG RTD, Directorate D or Manuel Hallen, EU Delegation Moscow

European Commission joins up with top academics in fight against poverty

The European Commission's new [Scientific Advisory Board for EU development policy](#) was launched in Brussels on 15 February. The Board will provide cutting-edge research and share the ideas of some of the most eminent experts in the sector. It is made of eight international academics with expertise in development issues. The scientists, under the leadership of Commissioner Piebalgs, will particularly focus on the priorities indicated in the 'Agenda for Change', how to achieve the goal of providing sustainable energy for all by 2030 by ensuring universal access to modern energy services for the poor and how to improve food security in the world and increase and sustain agricultural production for countries in the Horn of Africa and in the Sahel which are facing huge hunger problems. Improved resilience to the external shocks of these vulnerable regions will also be addressed.

For further information, contact Kevin McCarthy, DG DEVCO

Rio+20

Two decades after the first 'Earth Summit', the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or 'Rio+20') will gather Heads of State and Governments and stakeholders in Rio de Janeiro on 20-22 June to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development outcomes (Rio+10) and address new challenges. Discussions will focus on two topics: 'a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication' and the 'institutional framework for sustainable development'. The position of the EU on the two themes was submitted to the UN last autumn, which included research-related deliverables, such as the development of indicators complementing GDP, establishing a mechanism for international research cooperation and

strengthening GEOSS. Elements of all submissions received have been integrated in a 'Zero draft' prepared by the Conference Secretariat. S&T issues are addressed in several of the main sections of the Zero draft. This includes the following suggestions: 1) creating an international knowledge-sharing platform on green economy; enhancing international collaborative research on green technologies and strengthening local research capacities, technologies and local knowledge; 2) the establishment of a mechanism to monitor the progress towards proposed Sustainable Development Goals and development of beyond GDP indicators; and 3) strengthening international cooperation conducive to investment and technology transfer, development and diffusion.

For further information, contact Lieve Van Camp, DG RTD, Directorate I

SIRIC meeting

The Strategic International Research and Innovation Cooperation (SIRIC) coordination group, held its fifth plenary meeting on 14 February. In addition to the regular updates on recent and upcoming meetings and other initiatives, two specific points were discussed in more detail: 1) the various forms of multilateral cooperation in the field of environment and sustainable development research, including constraints for participation, its added value and the potential commitments; and 2) international cooperation in energy research and innovation. DG RTD also launched a survey on the existing cooperation between the Research DGs and international organisations and multilateral fora dealing with STI in order to obtain a clearer overview of the extent and nature of these cooperation activities and to identify future priorities in line with the Horizon 2020 and Europe 2020 policy objectives. The next meeting of SIRIC on 15 March will be dedicated to the forthcoming Communication 'Enhancing and Focussing EU International Cooperation in Research and Innovation: A Strategic Approach'.

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

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Research and Innovation Cooperation with Serbia

A meeting to monitor and review the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on the association of Serbia to FP7 was held in Belgrade on 6 February. It was noted that the overall level of Serbian participation in FP7 was good, but that it was uneven. Most of the current projects are Coordination

and Support Actions and there is no participation in major FP7 programmes, such as Ideas. Serbia expressed interest in association to Horizon 2020, but recognised that further efforts to strengthen R&I capacity are necessary, and in particular there is a need for a greater involvement of SMEs in the research and innovation cycle. It was noted that an Innovation Fund has been established with support from the Instrument for Pre-Accession and the European Investment Bank. Serbia also re-stated its interest in cooperation on nuclear research, potentially through association to Euratom FP7+. A second meeting on 7 February, in pre-accession context, took place to monitor the actions that Serbia has taken with respect to fulfilling the requirements of the EU accession chapter on research and innovation policy. The Commission underlined the need to implement fully the national strategy, particularly to increase the mobility of researchers and investment in research. Serbia aims to receive candidate status (with opening of accession negotiations) in 2012.

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

Taking stock of cooperation with Turkey

The annual monitoring meeting was co-organised by DG Enlargement on 9 February in Ankara, to assess the progress on the EU *acquis* in several areas including R&I policy. Turkey's participation in FP7 in 2011 has continued to increase and is particularly good in the Marie Curie actions and the involvement of SMEs, but remains absent in major FP7 programmes, such as Ideas. Investment in research has remained at 0.87% of GDP despite the national target to reach 2% by 2015. However, the number of researchers has continued to increase. The Commission underlined the need for both the quantity and quality of researchers, noting that no Turkish institutions have, for example, adhered to the Charter and Code of Conduct for researchers. Finally it was noted that Turkey will take up the EUREKA chairmanship as from 1 July 2012.

A separate meeting with [Tübitak](#) took place on 10 February. Following a re-organisation in Turkey, a new Ministry for Science, Industry and Technology has been created. This will change the role of Tübitak which is currently the principal interlocutor on both policy and funding. However, Tübitak will remain the main contact for FP7. Turkey aims to finalise, by the end of March, a new action plan to support further participation in FP7 and to prepare for Horizon 2020. The organisation of a major conference in Istanbul in May 2012 was confirmed, which will be a good opportunity to present Horizon 2020. Finally,

following the signature and ratification of an agreement to enable Turkey to second national experts to the Commission, the Turkish Ministry on European Integration and Tübitak indicated that working in DG RTD or its Agencies was one of their priorities.

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

The First EU-Azerbaijan PCA Sub-committee

The first meeting of the Subcommittee on 'Social affairs, public health, training, education and youth, culture, information society, audiovisual and science and technology' established under the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement took place in Baku, Azerbaijan on the 9-10 February. Azerbaijan has an average success rate in FP7 applications, but takes part in a relatively low number of proposals, despite support from the [Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#) and [Central Asia/Southern Caucasus](#) INCO-net projects and through the ERA-net '[Networking on science and technology in the Black Sea region](#)' project. It has, however, participated strongly in the two ERA-Wide calls. Azerbaijan recently appointed 12 Framework programme National Contact Points (NCPs) and plans to appoint People and Legal and Financial NCPs shortly. The meeting finished with a press conference held by the Azerbaijan co-chair, Deputy Minister Gulu Novruzov, and the EU co-chair, John Kjaer of EEAS, where cooperation in the research programmes was noted as providing concrete evidence of good interaction.

For further information, contact Martin Penny or John Claxton, DG RTD Directorate D

JRC Director General visit to Israel

Dominique Ristori paid a short visit to Israel on 31 January to 2 February to discuss existing and future cooperation between the JRC and Israel. The visit opened with a tour of the [Soreq Applied Research Accelerator Facility](#) and meetings hosted by Shaul Chorev, the head of the [Israel Atomic Energy Commission](#). The rest of the visit was devoted to a proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the JRC on energy and water research, and included meetings with the Water Authority, visits to an R&D water incubator, a water recycling plant and one of Israel's desalination plants, and concluded with discussions with Shaul Zemach, the Director General of the Ministry of Energy and Water.

For further information, contact Urska Grahek, JRC or Alexandra Meir, EU Delegation Tel Aviv

EU-Pakistan Joint Commission meeting

The annual EU-Pakistan Joint Commission meeting took place in Brussels on 7 February. The Joint

Commission covers several policy areas of the EU, including science and technology. Pakistan has a low participation in FP7 but has been keen to increase dialogue on R&I. The meeting noted that FP7 is fully open to participation from Pakistan and such participation is welcome. In order to help Pakistani entities to participate more effectively, it was suggested that Pakistan puts in place a series of contact points, and also that experts from Pakistani research organisations should be encouraged to register in the experts' database.

For further information, contact Martin Penny or John Claxton, DG RTD Directorate D

EU-Korea discussion on financing for SMEs

On 16 February Woo-sung Lee from the [Korean Science and Technology Policy Institute](#) a think tank attached to the office of Korean President visited the Commission services. Several issues were discussed including, notably, financing for SMEs. In December 2011, the Korean government announced new spending plans to bolster the R&D capabilities of SMEs in Korea with a target of 16.5% of overall R&D spending dedicated to SMEs by 2015. The EU side presented the financial instruments in the proposed [Horizon 2020](#) and [COSME programmes](#). It was agreed to continue the exchange of information on the future plans on both sides to improve the access to financing for SMEs.

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

Ministerial visit from Colombia

On 21 February, Colombian Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs responsible for Multilateral Relations, Patti Londoño Jaramillo, met with Anneli Pauli, DG RTD Deputy Director-General for Innovation and ERA. The two parties discussed recent policy developments: the upgrade of the STI Department [COLCIENCIAS](#) to ministerial rank and the allocation of 10% of mining royalties to R&I, the doubling of Colombian involvement in FP7 when compared to FP6, and the adoption of Horizon 2020. This was the start of the structured S&T dialogue foreseen under the Joint Declaration signed by COLCIENCIAS and DG RTD in 2010 in the margins of the EU-LAC Summit in Madrid. It was agreed that there would be merit in focusing cooperation on a few areas to make concrete progress. Colombia would like to develop cooperation in agriculture, mining and energy, with an emphasis on sustainable development. Bi-regional cooperation under the EU-LAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation is the preferred framework for developing cooperation. Colombia is already actively involved, for example as co-leader (together

with France) of the senior officials working group on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

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

PROJECTS

International cooperation for asteroid defence systems

On 1 January the [NEOShield project](#) started under the FP7 Space programme to assess mitigation methodologies for Near Earth Objects (NEOs) collisions with our planet. The project involves leading European, US and Russian research centres. In the forthcoming three and a half years the consortium will carry out detailed analysis of realistic options for preventing the collision of an asteroid with the Earth and provide detailed test-mission designs for the most feasible mitigation concepts. The NEOshield project is of large scientific and political importance, as it complements activities of the United Nations Action Team-14 (UNCOPUOS). With this project European actors are, for the first time, taking a strategic position in this global research field.

For further information, contact Hartwig Bischoff, DG ENTR

IDEAS Project in Hong Kong

[The IDEAS project on Integrating and Developing Asian Studies](#) funded under the FP7 SSH Programme organised a conference on 'National and Regional Identities: appropriating the past' at the Chinese University of Hong Kong on 4 February. The conference, which was part of the Year of [EU-China Intercultural Dialogue](#), was attended by around forty participants and was opened by Maria Castillo Fernandez, the Head of the EU Delegation in Hong Kong. The issues addressed included: migration and borders; ethnic minorities in Southeast Asia; the religious question in contemporary Asia; heritage conservation; sovereignty and conflict resolution in South Asia.

For further information, contact Angela Liberatore, DG RTD, Directorate B

Increasing EU-Russian Environmental Research Cooperation

On 27 January the EU Delegation in Moscow hosted a presentation of key results of the [E-URAL project](#) (EU and Russia Link for S&T cooperation in the area of environment). This project aimed to improve the quantity and quality of the participation of Russian researchers and SMEs in the FP7 'Environment (including climate change)' theme. Project participants from Germany, Greece, Italy, and Russia have worked

together in several areas, including on the creation of a database of Russian and European scientists specialising in environmental research. The project has also identified topics of common scientific interest, and contributed to the formation of joint research partnerships through organisation of brokerage events in the environmental sector for matchmaking and consortium building.

For further information, contact Manuel Hallen, EU Delegation Moscow

Cooperation between Botanic Gardens

The kick-off meeting of the [BOT-ERA](#) project, which reinforces cooperation between the Royal Botanic Garden of Jordan (RBG) and EU counterparts, was held in Amman on 15 February. The project aims to develop cooperation between RBG and European research and innovation organisations in three areas: mitigating the impact of climate change on plant genetic resources; biodiversity conservation and exploitation techniques to mitigate the impact of climatic change; and developing the RBG research strategy. The EU research organisations involved in the project are the School of Biosciences at the University of Birmingham (UK); Kew Gardens (UK) and Innoveo Consulting Sarl (Luxembourg).

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

Jordan ICT workshop

The FP7 [JEWEL](#) project, which aims to strengthen the research links of Jordan with the EU in the area of ICT research, will hold a second scientific workshop in Thessaloniki on 16 March. The workshop focuses on emerging technologies in: device and circuit modeling; design using organic transistors; digital systems design and embedded systems.

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

EU-Pacific Bi-regional dialogue

The [2nd Pacific EU bi-regional dialogue](#) and supporting stakeholder conference is scheduled to take place in Brussels on 20-23 March 2012. The conference will provide a forum for dialogue between representatives of the Pacific and the EU on joint research and capacity building activities in the Pacific. The aim is to strengthen the bi-regional cooperation and integration of Pacific countries in FP7 activities and support a renewed EU-Pacific development partnership. The conference will include practical training on FP7, thematic workshops on environment research, in particular climate change, best practice in bilateral and FP7 projects, as well as matchmaking and partnership building activities. Finally, key

information on the S&T systems in Pacific countries will be provided.

For further information, contact Armand Beuf, DG RTD, Directorate D

KORANET Joint call on green technologies

The second [KORANET](#) Joint Call is open for proposal submission from 6 February - 6 April 2012. It aims to bring together European and Korean researchers and scientists to carry out joint research on green technologies, and foster green growth and sustainable development. Proposals will be required to address one of the following sub-topics: reduction of carbon footprint; technologies for sustainable development; renewable energy and energy efficiency.

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

EVENTS

ERA-NET Climate Change Conference

In the framework of FP7 ERA-NET project [CIRCLE 2](#) (Climate Impact Research and Response Coordination for a Larger Europe), the Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection held, on 24-26 January, an international conference on Climate Change and Forest Fires in the Mediterranean Basin. The objectives of the conference were to share scientific knowledge, policy tools and practical experience for effective management for the prevention of forest fires and for ecological rehabilitation following fires under conditions of climate change. Guest lecturers and participants came from Jordan, Kosovo, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Canada and the USA.

For further information, contact Alexandra Meir, EU Delegation Tel Aviv

ERC President visits Singapore

Prof. Helga Nowotny, the ERC President, visited Singapore, to promote the ERC in the country. During her stay, Helga Nowotny met with [A*Star](#) – the main public research agency – and the [National Research Foundation](#). She visited [Nanyang Technological University](#), one of the two major universities in Singapore, a key player in Singapore's R&D. During these meetings, and in a speech she delivered at the EU Centre, Helga Nowotny introduced ERC's grants and ERC's new international strategy.

For further information, contact Christophe Forax, EU Delegation, Singapore or Samantha Christey, ERC

Helga Nowotny in New Zealand

ERC President Helga Nowotny visited New Zealand for the inaugural [Asia-Pacific Science Policy Studies Conference](#) in Wellington on 9 February. She gave a

keynote speech entitled 'What next? Frontier Research and Innovation for a Fragile Future'. During her stay, Professor Nowotny met with the recently appointed Minister for Science and Innovation Steven Joyce, and with key officials from the Ministry of Science and Innovation, the Royal Society of New Zealand, the Marden Fund Council, and Sir Peter David Gluckman, first Chief Science Advisor to the New Zealand Prime Minister.

For further information, contact Lucy Ross, EU Delegation New Zealand or Samantha Christey, ERC

ERC worldwide awareness raising campaign

The Secretary General of the European Research Council, Professor Donald Dingwell visited several organisations and universities in Canada during the [AAAS conference](#) which will be held in Vancouver from 16- 20 February. The visits, which included the cities of Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Vancouver,

were in the context of the ERC's increased effort to reach more top talent overseas (both European and non-European researchers). This trip was part of the new 'ERC goes Global' campaign which will run for two years, and will include visits to more than fifteen countries.

For further information, contact Massimo Gaudina and Samantha Christey, ERC

Five Years of Excellent IDEAS

The European Research Council celebrates its '[Five Years of Excellent IDEAS](#)' on 29 February - 1 March at the Albert Hall complex in Brussels. [A round table](#) has been organised on 'excellence and brain circulation in the global scientific landscape' with representatives from the US, Brazil, China, India, South Africa and Russia.

For further information, contact Beatrice Thiry and Samantha Christey, ERC

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS (MARCH – MAY 2012)

Joint Committee Meetings			Other Meetings		
20 or 22 March (tbc)	Jordan	Brussels	9 March	SFIC Plenary	Brussels
27 April	Switzerland	Geneva	15 March	SIRIC	Brussels
May (tbc)	Moldova	Brussels	20-21 March	EU-LAC SOM	Concepción, Chile
			May (tbc)	EU-ASEAN SOM	Myanmar