

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH March 2015

HORIZON 2020

Commissioner Moedas participated in the annual meeting of the Word Economic Forum in Davos. The Commissioner also delivered a keynote speech at a roundtable discussion organised by the European Investment Bank Group in Brussels and at the Committee of the Regions where he pleaded for a closer cooperation for the benefit of Research and Innovation.



Enhancing our efforts to see European science, research and innovation remain a force for global leadership and competitiveness, while tackling societal challenges.

Carlos Moedas



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Dear Reader,

The European Commission has launched a new [Policy Support Facility](#) (PSF) to help EU Member States reform their research and innovation policies.

The [2015 Annual Growth Survey](#) identifies research and innovation (R&I) as one of the seven priorities for Member State structural reforms to boost investment and growth. It highlights reforms to increase the impact of public funding through improved R&I strategies, programmes and institutions, as well as reforms to ensure an investment-friendly environment to stimulate business innovation.

The Editors

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ERC President Prof. Bourguignon visits Singapore

ERC President Prof. Bourguignon visited Singapore from 10 to 13 February. On an unofficial visit to the Lion City to attend the Mathemusical Conversations Conference organised by the National University of Singapore (NUS), Prof. Bourguignon also used the occasion to conduct several bilateral meetings with the aim of expanding the relationship between the EU and Singapore in the area of Scientific Research. One of the highlights of the visit was the Public Lecture organised by the EU Centre in Singapore, in which Prof. Bourguignon explained the activities, grant structure and selection criteria of the ERC to an audience of almost 200 researchers and other interested parties at the INSEAD campus. He also took the time to conduct a number of high-level government meetings, together with the EU Ambassador to Singapore, Dr. Michael Pulch. They met with Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), the Ministry of Education, some of the hierarchy of Singapore's leading universities, as well as the National Research Foundation (NRF). Through the SEA-EU-NET project, DG RTD was instrumental in organising a more grassroots-level meeting between Prof. Bourguignon and ERC grant applicants/future applicants based in ASEAN. The group of 11 researchers was brought together at the EU Delegation to Singapore for a chance to sit together with Prof. Bourguignon and voice their questions, concerns and thoughts on the ERC grant process and challenges they face as researchers in their field.



Photo: ERC President Prof. Bourguignon during his visit in Singapore

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Research and Innovation Counsellors meet in Brussels

At the biannual meeting of the EU's Research and Innovation Counsellors in Brussels on 2 and 3 March, Director General Robert-Jan Smits stressed the priority he places raising awareness of H2020 in the world, and the need to ensure appropriate framework conditions for cooperation. The importance of Science Diplomacy was highlighted throughout the meeting. A networking reception provided the opportunity to meet with the Science Counsellors of the corresponding international partner countries here in Brussels.

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Sir Peter Gluckman spoke about Science Diplomacy at DG RTD

Sir Peter Gluckman, Chief Science Adviser (CSA) to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, gave a presentation on Science diplomacy at a lunch time Seminar at DG RTD. Science, he told the audience: «has a critical diplomatic role in domains such as the Antarctic, space, climate change and disaster». He underlined the 'soft influence' of science and importance for small countries as NZ to play an 'innovative' role as small but effective players.

Sir Peter Gluckman advocated the role of science for development, for peace and in that respect the role of science between Western and Eastern countries. He pointed out that resource management is of utmost importance in case of public goods such as water or in security matters and the constructive role that science could play for management at global level.

Concerning innovation, he signalled the importance of the issue of social license for technologies and mentioned the on-going work done within OECD on this interaction. He referred to new genetic techniques and underlined how much the use of technology would be influenced by societal perceptions.

Regarding actions promoted by the EU, Sir Peter Gluckman mentioned the following examples as successes of science diplomacy:

- the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)
- the Square Kilometer Array (SKA)
- the 'grand challenges' under the Horizon 2020 programme.

Sir Peter Gluckman concluded his presentation saying that his country is willing 'to bring something different at the table of discussions'.

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Destination Europe events in San Jose and Boston

Wolfgang Burtscher, the Deputy Director-General of DG RTD, and Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, President of the European Research Council gave the keynote addresses at the latest Destination Europe events in San Jose and Boston on 12 and 20 February.

Some 350 participants, mostly young researchers, but also a number of 'multipliers' from universities, came to hear about funding and career opportunities in Europe. In addition to information about European Research Council grants and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, a great attraction of the Destination Europe events is the considerable presence of individual European countries presenting what they offer nationally. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Sweden, Germany, Portugal and Spain presented in San Jose, as well as the European Institute of Technology. In Boston, Belgium, France, Germany the Netherlands and Switzerland presented, as well as the Joint Research Centre and CERN. Presentations on the non-financial support provided by Euraxess rounded off the information at both events.

Participants are often astonished and generally very pleasantly surprised to realise how open Europe is to researchers of any nationality and at the broad spectrum of possibilities open to them. The informal exhibition space, where researchers can speak bilaterally with the speakers at dedicated information stands is also a bonus. Further information, including the presentations, is available on the [Destination Europe Website](#).



Photo: Deputy Director-General Wolfgang Burtscher gives the keynote address at the Destination Europe event in San Jose, watched by Dan Andree, Chair of SFIC and Mary Kavanagh, Moderator

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Cooperation with the League of Arab States

From 11-12 February, the Delegation of the European Union to Egypt participated in a workshop organized by the League of Arab States aiming at exploring cooperation opportunities in Research and Innovation between the Arab League and the EU Member States.

The two-day workshop took place at the LAS Headquarters in Cairo, with over 40 participants from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Jordan, Tunis, Morocco, and Egypt. In his opening remarks, Deputy Head of Delegation Reinhold Brender highlighted the successes Arab countries had in participating in EU Framework Programmes, and stressed the importance of cooperating with Arab states to address the common challenges in the region. Ambassador Badr al-Din Alaly Assistant Secretary General of the League of Arab States also highlighted the importance of building strong cooperation between the EU and the Arab League in research, as a necessary component of developing scientific capacity in the region. Building on this point, Egyptian Minister of Scientific Research Sherif Hamad focused on the need for strong Arab cooperation links. Also opening the event, Dr. Al-Majzoub, Secretary General of the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils spoke of the vast scope of Horizon 2020, and the opportunity this presents for Arab countries to cooperate with EU Member States.

The workshop presented [success stories](#) focusing on Arab participation in FP7 and showcasing the opportunities for cooperation under Horizon 2020. During the second day, several representatives from EU Member State Embassies shared their experiences and suggestions for building stronger relationships between the Arab and European scientific communities.



Photo: Participants at the League of Arab States Workshop

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Seminar of the Russian International Affairs Council «Higher education for greater Europe» - Moscow

On 10 February, the Delegation of the European Union to the Russian Federation took part in a seminar organised by the Russian International Affairs Council (a non-profit academic and diplomatic think tank founded by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science in 2010) devoted to academic cooperation between Russia and Europe. The event was for the heads of Russian universities – members and partners of the Council (around 20 leading universities). The EU Delegation took the opportunity to increase its outreach and to promote the possibilities of increasing the participation of Russian universities in EU higher education and research & innovation programmes, in particular through Horizon 2020 and the Erasmus Plus programme.



Photo: Participants to the seminar of the Russian International Affairs Council «Higher education for greater Europe».

Launch of the «French Tech» project in Russia

On 17 February, the Delegation of the European Union to the Russian Federation participated in the launch of the 'French Tech' initiative in Russia. The event was organised by the Business France Agency together with the Embassy of France to the Russian Federation and was hosted by the newly opened House of French Entrepreneurs in Moscow. The French Tech initiative was established by the French Government in late 2013 to unite the key actors working towards French start-ups' growth and to increase the attractiveness of France for foreign investments. The French Tech in Russia foresees shortlisting of ten French startups whose proposals will be presented for evaluation to the largest Russian companies and venture funds with the aim of establishing cooperation. The creation of French Tech Hub and a French Tech Tour in June are next on the agenda.

Information sessions on Horizon 2020 - Saint Petersburg

On 13 February, the Delegation of the European Union to the Russian Federation visited Saint Petersburg to hold information sessions on Horizon 2020 at two well-known universities – Saint Petersburg State Polytechnic University and the Saint Petersburg University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics (ITMO University). Both universities are among Russia's leading higher education and research institutions and are part of Russia's top «National Research Universities». The information sessions were very well attended and generated much interest among the audience. The general presentations of the Horizon 2020 programme and its cooperation opportunities were accompanied by special presentations about the co-funding mechanisms for EU-Russia S&T cooperation which have been set up by the Russian authorities. These presentations were delivered jointly with Irina Kuklina, Executive Director of the Analytical Centre of International S&T and Educational Programmes. The trip to Saint Petersburg also included visits to the Nansen International Environmental and Remote Sensing Centre and the Nokia Networks R&D Centre.

10-year anniversary of the Helmholtz Association office in Moscow

On 10 February, the Delegation of the European Union to the Russian Federation participated in the events marking the ten-year anniversary of the Helmholtz Association's representative office in Moscow. The festive events included a conference «Helmholtz-Russia Symposium on Scientific Collaboration: Current Highlights & Future Prospects» held jointly with the Russian National Research Centre «Kurchatov Institute», the opening of a scientific exhibition organised in partnership with the Moscow Polytechnic Museum, and an evening reception. The events were attended by top-level representatives of the Russian scientific and science policy-making communities including Aide to the Russian President Andrey Fursenko, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Vladimir Fortov, Russian Deputy Minister of Education and Science Veniamin Kaganov, Director of the Kurchatov Institute Mikhail Kovalchuk and others. On the German side, participants included the President of the Helmholtz Association Jürgen Mlynek and 43 other representatives of the Association, German Ambassador to Russia Rüdiger von Fritsch, and Member of the German Parliament Philipp Lengsfeld. An important part of the anniversary celebration was the Helmholtz Association signing cooperation agreements with the Kurchatov Institute and the Russian Science Foundation.

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Japan-EU Task Force Meeting for the enhancement of STI Cooperation

On 18 February, a joint Task Force meeting took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. It was co-chaired by MoFA Director Noritsugu Takahashi and DG RTD-C.1 Head of Unit Kostas Glinos. Over 30 representatives from 10 Ministries and Agencies participated from the Japanese side. The EU side comprised Kostas Glinos and Anne Haglund-Morrissey from DG RTD, as well as 4 members of the EU Delegation including Science & Technology Section Head, Leonidas Karapiperis, and Political & Economic Section Head, Alexander McLachlan. The purpose of the Task Force was twofold, provide inputs on STI cooperation to the forthcoming Japan-EU Summit in Tokyo and help prepare the EU-Japan Joint Committee Meeting on S&T cooperation in Brussels. The meeting was extremely constructive and allowed a thorough review of the existing broad range of cooperation, as well as an exploration of potential new areas for the future, both of a thematic and a «horizontal» nature. The usefulness of enhanced outreach to the broader public was also highlighted.



Photo: Japan-EU Task Force Meeting for the enhancement of STI Cooperation, MoFA, Tokyo

ELITES project on gravitational waves 3rd General Meeting in Tokyo

On 9 February, the EU Delegation hosted the first day of a two day meeting between EU and Japanese researchers collaborating in the context of the ELITES EU-funded project (a Marie-Curie scientific exchange action) on gravitational wave (GW) detection. The European scientists are working on the design of the next generation «Einstein Telescope», while their Japanese counterparts are in the final stages of the KAGRA GW detection facility. The first part of the meeting was devoted to a special outreach event for close to 40 students from 4 different Japanese high schools who joined the event and heard with great interest a layperson's explanation of gravitational wave detection and the meaning of being a researcher in general.

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6th International Symposium of Innovative BioProduction

On 3 and 4 February, Kobe University hosted the 6th International Symposium of Innovative BioProduction, where prominent academics from Japan, South Korea, the US and the EU presented the results of research in bio-production of biobased fuels and chemicals, microbial engineering, development of new enzymes and conversion of agriculture waste into value added products. Professor Rene Wijffeld from Wageningen University and Research Centre presented the developments of biorefinery of microalgae and research activities carried out under three FP7 projects in bioeconomy. On the second day of the symposium, JEUPISTE, an FP7 project aiming to enhance EU-Japan STI collaboration organised an academic workshop entitled 'Biobased Chemical production, for sharing ideas and experiences towards strategic partnership building'. During the half day meeting researchers and industrialists from Japan and the EU presented developments in Japan's and the EU's biobased production landscape. Bas Melssen from Novozymes presented opportunities and challenges in commercialization of BioFuels and BioChemicals in Asia Pacific. Tom Kuczynski from the S&T Section, EU Delegation shared information on how bioeconomy-related research and innovation is carried out at the EU-level, under Horizon 2020, through the Joint Undertaking Bio-Based Industry (a EUR 3.7 billion Public-Private Partnership), and through other initiatives and instruments.



Photo: ELITES 3rd General Meeting participants with the Japanese High School Students who joined the outreach event

EuroMED Cooperation – Inland and Marine Water Challenges

The Report of the Conference that took place on 3-4 November 2014 is now [available on line](#). The Conference Report aims to be a milestone in the evolving framework of international cooperation on research and innovation in the Mediterranean Region, with particular regard to the sustainable management of inland and marine water nexus and related social and economic implications.

French and Arabic versions of its [Executive Summary](#) are also available.

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DRAGON-STAR PLUS Project kicked off in Shenzhen

The new EU-China BILAT project «DRAGON-STAR PLUS» was successfully kicked-off in Shenzhen on 2 and 3 February.

DRAGON-STAR PLUS will follow its predecessor, the soon-to end Dragon-Star project, in its important mandate to provide support services to European and Chinese researchers and policy makers, and to offer a flexible platform to facilitate policy discussions between European and chinese stakeholders.

During the next 36 months DRAGON-STAR PLUS will provide the European Commission and the EU Member States with a toolset for developing a long term cooperation strategy in research and innovation with China. The project kick-off meeting in Shenzhen gathered all project participants and discussed how to streamline the tasks of the different work packages to best and most efficiently serve and enhance the EU China research and innovation partnership.

The DRAGON-STAR PLUS kick off was followed on 3 February by a Horizon 2020 info day organised by CSTE in the framework of the still-ongoing Dragon-Star project and hosted by the Shenzhen STI Exchange Commission. More than 100 participants actively participated in the session keen to know more about how to participate in the EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020. A former FP7 participant gave a positive testimonial about his cooperation with European partners. The events in Shenzhen were also an opportunity to consolidate the good relations with Shenzhen's S&T in view of a possible EU participation in the next China International Hi-Tech Fair, in November 2015.



Photo: Dragon Star PLUS Consortium meeting

R&D Stakeholder Meeting in Hong Kong to discuss opportunities offered by Horizon 2020

A Horizon 2020 Stakeholders Meeting held in Hong Kong on 4 February was very well received by the local research and higher education community.

The meeting was chaired by the Head of the Political, Press and Information Section of the EU Office to Hong Kong and Macau Mr. Asad Beg and saw the participation of local universities, governmental authorities, EU Member States Consulates and other stakeholders. Laurent Bochereau, Head of the Science, Technology and Environment Section at the EU Delegation in Beijing, and Epaminondas Christofilopoulos, Coordinator of the Dragon-Star Project, provided insights into Hong Kong and Macao participation in FP7 and Horizon 2020.

The lively discussions allowed for a constructive sharing of experience on research and innovation cooperation between both sides. A plea for possible matching funds from local authorities to successful Horizon 2020 projects was also considered necessary to ensure greater involvement of local institutions in European projects. Overall, collaboration with the EU in research and innovation was considered as greatly significant for the Hong Kong and Macau R&D community.



Photo: R&D stakeholder meeting in Hong Kong

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A more equal, coordinated research partnership between Africa and the EU

ERAfrica was created in late 2009 as the result of a number of European and African countries being desirous of consolidating and advancing their individual bilateral collaborative relations in science, innovation and technology. On the one hand the project, then known simply as "ERA-Net Africa", was aimed at implementing the European Commission's 2008 "Strategic European Framework for International Science and Technology Cooperation" and specifically its directive of formulating a common European agenda and approach in the continent's engagement with third parties (such as Africa) on the international stage. On the other hand, from the African point of view, the new ERA-Net aimed at realising the "First Action Plan" of the "Africa-EU Joint Strategy" adopted in Lisbon in 2007, seeking in particular to strengthen African capacities in the area of science, innovation and technology and to enhance the use of science and technology as a means of reducing poverty and advancing growth and development on the continent. African and EU countries have long worked together on science and technology research. The way they collaborate has been rethought by ERAFRICA which set up a new structure for a more equal, coordinated research partnership between the two continents.

Through ERAfrica, funding Parties from 15 African and European countries developed the joint creation of necessary funding mechanisms and processes leading up to a first call for research proposals where all partners participated on an equal footing and where all national and institutional demands were adequately satisfied and all voices heard and respected. These countries launched together a joint call for projects in three thematic fields - Renewable Energies, Interfacing Challenges and New Ideas- encompassing three types of collaborative activities, aiming, namely, bridge the gap between the outcomes of research projects and commercialisation. With a total amount of € 10.7 million available for funding the call generated 124 proposals of which 106 eligible proposals involving 560 organisations requested an amount of € 64.8 million. ERAFRICA selected 17 projects to be funded, 10 in the Interfacing Challenges theme, 5 in the New Ideas theme and 2 in the Renewable Energies theme. These selected projects represent a total amount of € 8.29 million and 65 institutions from 18 countries will jointly work together in these projects. At the end of the first phase of the project, there is a great desire among funding parties to see ERAfrica continue, and in particular for a second call to be funded as soon as possible.

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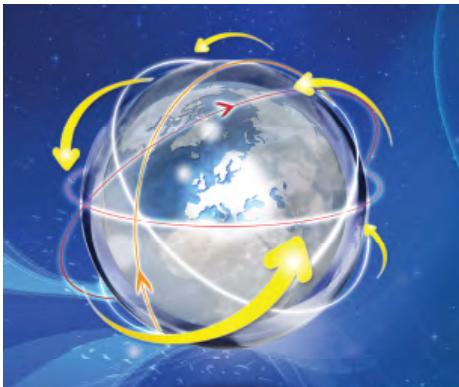
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This page provides a regular update on recent Research and Innovation (R&I) policy news from our network of R&I Counsellors in the EU delegations in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Russia, the United States (US)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

Policy News from the Delegations

Canada has launched an updated strategy «[Seizing Canada's Moment: Moving Forward in Science, Technology and Innovation 2014](#)», which builds on the foundation laid out in the 2007 framework, but goes further to ensure that Canada remains well positioned in the global arena for research excellence, talent and wealth. The strategy is guided by four core principles - promoting world-leading excellence, focusing on targeted priorities, fostering partnerships, and enhancing accountability. It will focus on attracting and retaining highly-qualified and skilled individuals and experts; strengthening support for excellence across discovery-driven and applied activities, and by investing in research and infrastructure; and making it easier for businesses to work with partners, including government. The Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning ([MSIP](#)) and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy ([MOTIE](#)) in **Korea** have announced their annual plans related to innovation for 2015. MSIP will invest 504.8 million € in commercialisation programmes, targeting convergence of ICT in Korea's core industries. MOTIE will invest 2.5 billion € in its technology R&D programmes for 2015. MOTIE has also announced its annual support plan for international joint research programmes and to increase its investment in the joint funding of R&D programmes with partner countries.

In **Egypt**, the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology has launched the JESOR-Development Programme,

which aims at developing stronger ties between Egyptian research organisations and the diaspora. The programme offers opportunities for collaboration between Egyptian researchers in European organisations and those in Egyptian organisations. It builds on the experience of “The Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals ([TOKTEN](#)) Programme”, which was able to attract and re-integrate 443 Egyptian expatriates from North America, Australia and Europe. Each proposal to the programme will involve R&D activities including experimental development and demonstration and/or innovation activities, technology transfer, acquisition of knowhow and valorisation of research results, in addition to capacity building and science, technology and innovation policies and strategies.

Aldo Rebelo, the new [Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation \(STI\)](#) in **Brazil** stressed in his inaugural speech that STI are activities directly related to the expansion of democracy and consolidation of national sovereignty, and that Brazil needs reinforced S&T autonomy. Energy, biotechnology and cyber defence were mentioned as key areas.

In **Japan**, the [2014 S&T Research Survey](#) by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication shows that total S&T research expenditure for the 2013 financial year increased for the first time in two years (+4.7%) and the rate of S&T research investment as a percentage of GDP was 3.75% (+0.10 points). Of the total research expenditure,

the industry sector counted for 70%, universities 20.4%, and government/non-profit organisations 9.6%.

In spite of a period of policy limbo until elections on 17 March, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space in **Israel** has emphasised the importance of «science as a bridge to cooperation» as it stands above other concerns. Two strategic initiatives, which have already been budgeted, have been presented. The first is the establishment of a foundation for applied sciences and engineering to cover a funding gap that has been identified in these fields. The second initiative will focus on research for the benefit of the ageing population.

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