



S&T International Cooperation
Network for Eastern European and
Central Asian Countries



Stakeholders Conference

"EU-EECA Cooperation in Research and
Innovation: The way towards 2020"



Warsaw, Poland
15 - 16 November 2011

Conclusions

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Introduction



The Conference was organized under the patronage of the Polish EU Council Presidency as part of the series of Policy Stakeholders' Conferences dedicated to the EU – EECA policy dialogue in RTD. The Conference was funded by the Capacities Programme of the 7th EU RTD Framework Programme in the context of the IncoNet EECA project (www.inco-eeca.net).

About one hundred policy makers and representatives of the academic and private sectors, from all the EECA countries and many EU Member States attended the Conference to share their knowledge and to express their interest and commitment in a closer bi-regional EU-EECA STI cooperation.

The White Paper



A major input to the Conference was the draft *White Paper on Opportunities and Challenges in View of Enhancing the EU Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and South Caucasus in Science, Research, and Innovation*. The White Paper is the result of a wide stakeholder consultation building on the conclusions of previous Policy Stakeholder Conferences and EU-EECA experts' meetings, as well as on dedicated information gath-

ering missions to all countries in Central Asia and South Caucasus. The White Paper provides a knowledge base on the *state of affairs in STI policies in EU and EECA*, identifies a series of *Challenges and Recommendations on Enhancing the EU-EECA STI Cooperation* and proposes a *Short-term Implementation Scenario* to a large variety of stakeholders.

The White Paper has been warmly welcomed by the Conference's participants who recognized it as a very valuable food for thought at national, regional and bi-regional level.

During the Conference several presentations and discussions addressed Challenges identified in the White Paper, providing additional input that will further enrich and consolidate the final version of the document, whose final delivery is expected beginning of 2012. The conclusions of the Conference addressing key challenges are summarized as follows:

Adjusting and implementing policy strategies

Strengthening the role of STI in response to societal challenges is in the core of policy debate in EU (Europe 2020, Innovation Union flagship) and EECA (national STI strategies fostering human capacity building and innovation infrastructure development, EURASIAN Union to be launched 2012). Advancement of national and regional STI strategies in both regions was jointly acknowledged and many commonalities were highlighted. To further consolidate national STI policy strategies and their implementation mechanisms bi-regional policy learning is highly recommended.

Due to the geographic proximity, close historical, economic and societal ties, dedicated cooperation strategies (Partnership for Modernisation –RUS/EU, Eastern Partnership EU/EE, EU-CA strategy) have been set up between EU and EECA. Acknowledging the added value of international cooperation in STI provides strong arguments for

embedding international STI dimensions in the aforementioned strategies.

The EU-EECA STI cooperation needs to be rooted on joint interest and common objectives. Core drivers for the cooperation are linked to

- i) the overarching globalization process affecting all policy dimensions,
- ii) the burning societal challenges EU and EECA are faced with,
- iii) strong and emerging STI players at global scale outside EU and EECA.

To pave the way towards advanced STI cooperation, the bi-regional STI policy dialogue should be continued and advanced in order to stimulate mutual policy learning, foster trust-building, generate a sound and evidence-based knowledge among the participants and contribute to joint scenario development.

Here existing frameworks within bilateral EU-EECA Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and S&T agreements as well as within bi-regional partnerships such as the Eastern Partnership between the EU and Eastern Europe need to be acknowledged and should be complemented. Building on the series of PSCs starting with Athens 2008 and acknowledging the experience with formal dialogue platforms as they are established between the EU and the Mediterranean as well the Western Balkan partner countries options for an institutionalization should be jointly explored in order to keep the present momentum. Existing multilateral formal dialogue frameworks should be analyzed to be built on.

However, the added value of any additional (formalized) dialogue format needs to be carefully analyzed, keeping also in mind that flexible dialogue formats contribute to a reduced fragmentation of stakeholders.

Joint policy learning should be fostered and new dimensions should be added. Among others the concept of EU-EECA policy mix reviews, as well as cooperation for the advancement of national STI statistics building on international standards have been highly welcomed.



Appropriate bi-regional cooperation frameworks need to be developed in partnership, fitting the needs of the science and innovation communities on a win-win basis. Particular attention should be given by policy stakeholders of both regions to:

- i) legal and regulatory standards for protection/ cross-border utilization of IP, cross-border mobility, access to infrastructures, taxation and custom issues linked to cross-border funding and transfer of materials and equipments within STI cooperation activities etc.;
- ii) a set of flexible funding instruments supporting mobility of individuals, planning and implementation of STI projects, the setting-up and running of joint STI infrastructures starting with joint labs;
- iii) overcoming the still existing digital divide due to less advanced electronic

broadband networks in the EECA and weak links to the European GÉANT network;

- iv) joint awareness raising campaigns on the role of science and of the international scientific cooperation targeting the public at large.

Optimum use should be made of the present RTD Framework Programme, although the participation of EECA seems to be far below the existing potential. While developing the up-coming EU's "Horizon 2020" Programme dedicated room should be given to a reflection on objectives and tools addressing the Eastern dimension of the ERA.

The role of STI for national and regional development should be reconsidered within the instruments for the European Neighbourhood Policy/Eastern Partnership (Eastern Europe) and the Development Cooperation Policy (Central Asia). Two dimensions need reflection:

- i) the creation of a knowledge base to policy, economic and the societal development and
- ii) exploitation of those instruments to strengthen the STI base in EECA (human potential, infrastructure, institution building).

The bi-regional coordination of national policies and instruments should be given stronger attention. Based on the results of projects such as the IncoNets, BILATs and ERANET which are funded within the EU RTD Framework Programme, support to the STI policy stakeholder dialogue should be given, as well as a closer coordination of national funding programmes (public and private). It should be acknowledged that multilateral coordination activities complement existing bilateral schemes, which have proven to be efficient tools.

Moreover, innovative approaches should be jointly considered such as the “Olympics for Young EU-EECA Scientists” proposed by Russia.



Strengthening Research Performing Institutions

The need to further strengthen research performing institutions through strategic institutional road maps, strong management capacities and high-quality national or regional science and innovation infrastructures was highlighted. Among others the planning and implementation of joint trans-national benchmarking exercises of S&T institutions, as well as advanced bi-regional twinning and networking of research institutions beyond the pure project-oriented cooperation formats are considered of high relevance. Here, the concept of the INCO-LAB instrument offered within the EU RTD Framework Programme has proven to be a valuable approach.

Emphasis was given to the need for joint development of STI infrastructure in order to share costs and increase efficiency. With this regard linking the EECA countries to the ESFRI process could be envisaged.



Strengthening of Human Resources



A particular effort is necessary for the development of the human potential in the research field in EECA, including training on managerial and language skills. The mutual acknowledgement of academic degrees is also an issue that needs further efforts.

The scientific diaspora can play a positive role in strengthening the bi-regional EU-EECA cooperation through fostering trans-national networking, contributing to mutual understanding but also to capacity building in EECA.

Strengthening the role of the private sector

Joint EU-EECA knowledge transfer and mutual learning initiatives for a stronger engagement of the private sector in STI should be given particular attention.

This includes among others

- i) the stimulation of entrepreneurship,
- ii) the development of an optimum legal and regulatory framework for academia-industry networking and
- iii) new bi-regional approaches to Public-Private-Partnerships including joint policy scenarios to be developed together with the private sector.

Along that line awareness raising and brokerage activities should be envisaged for the linking of EU initiatives such as the Knowledge and Innovation Communities, Joint Technology Initiatives and Technology Platforms to the

public and private innovation stakeholders in EECA.

Along that line, the widening of the European Enterprise Network (EEN), supported through the EU's CIP programme, to involve additional EECA partner countries is considered beneficial for increasing the competitiveness of innovative SMEs in EECA.



Next Steps

The White Paper already includes a Short-term implementation scenario addressed to a variety of stakeholders such as national STI policy makers, the science and innovation communities, the European Commission and the European External Action Service, the European Strategic Forum for International Cooperation (SFIC), etc.. It was highlighted that a challenging objective would be to develop a medium-term joint roadmap, as a result of close interaction of the aforementioned stakeholders. Such roadmap could involve the opening-up or the coordination of national policy instruments, an advanced Eastern dimension of European programmes, as well as (sub-) regional programmes in EECA and advanced joint initiatives with the private sector.

Meanwhile, several activities are already scheduled, addressing challenges and recommendations of the White Paper but also paving the way towards the development of the aforementioned roadmap:

- i) A pilot policy-mix peer review on national science, technology and innovation systems will be conducted jointly by experts from EU MS and EECA countries in Kazakhstan and Moldova in 2012.
- ii) A joint pilot benchmarking exercise of research performing institutions focusing on Nanotechnologies is also scheduled for 2012.
- iii) A workshop on Global Challenges will take place in Bucharest in spring 2012, paving the way for future joint EU-EECA activities in the field of climate change, global health and energy supply.
- iv) A workshop will be organized in Chisinau in March 2012 to investigate ways to support capacity building activities for STI as well as to utilize

knowledge based approaches within the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI).

- v) On invitation of Germany and with support of IncoNet EECA a dedicated STI Dialogue Forum among EU and EECA policy stakeholders and public programme owners is planned for mid 2012 to reflect on the results of past and present coordination activities in order to create a vision for coordinated STI policy instruments. Emphasis will be given to joint funding mechanisms.
- (vi) The EU-EECA policy dialogue in STI will be further supported by the current and forthcoming IncoNet type projects. In that respect and since the Policy Stakeholder Conferences proved to be a valuable tool to support the dialogue, other similar events will be

organized in consultation with the national authorities in EECA.

- (vii) Finally, to further consolidate and finalize the White Paper an open consultation process was implemented. The participants of the PSC as well as recipients of the IncoNet newsletter and the broad public through the IncrEAST portal were invited to provide comments or suggestions until January 2012. The final version of the White Paper will be released and widely disseminated in February 2012.



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