



## **EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI)**

### **VI Senior Official Meeting (SOM) on Science and Technology**

**Brussels, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

**- Concept Note -**

#### **I. SCENE SETTER AND OBJECTIVES**

Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean share deep-rooted and historical bonds that bring them close together. They are natural partners seeking to deepen their strategic bonds in the social, political and economic areas. Within the EU-CELAC process, cooperation in Research and Innovation (R&I) was confirmed as a political priority in all EU-CELAC Summit statements. It is also the first item on the Action Plan agreed by EU-CELAC political leaders in 2010 in Madrid and later updated in 2015 on the occasion of the EU-CELAC Summit in Brussels, where Heads of States and Government had called for a strengthened cooperation in R&I.

The EU-CELAC cooperation in R&I is governed by the Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI), which was endorsed at the 2010 bi-regional R&I Ministerial meeting in Madrid. Under the JIRI, Senior Officials from both regions meet on an annual base to update common priorities, encourage mutual policy learning and ensure the proper implementation and effectiveness of cooperation instruments.

At their last meeting in March 2016, the Senior Officials agreed on the EU-CELAC Common Research Area (CRA) around three key pillars: mobility of researchers, international outreach of research infrastructures and jointly addressing common challenges. The upcoming meeting which will take place on 14 March 2017 will seek the implementation of the commitments taken in 2016 and will be instrumental on agreeing on the appropriate mechanisms and instruments to allow the CRA to move forward and to strengthen bi-regional cooperation.

The main expected results of the meeting are the following:

- Launch of a Research Infrastructures (RI) working group to support policy coordination and exchange of information on RI;
- Launch of discussions about the development of EU and CELAC mobility portals, building on the existing Euraxess network and portal;
- Presentation of H2020 flagged cooperation actions for bi-regional cooperation as a follow-up of the commitments taken at the 2016 EU-CELAC SOM, in the area of health (non-communicable chronic diseases), climate action and sustainable urbanisation.
- Launch of an EU-CELAC Policy Advice (PA) mechanism to support CELAC countries in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals through research and innovation (R&I).



A preparatory meeting for the SOM between the European Commission and the EU Member States took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017, while the CELAC pro-tempore Presidency, El-Salvador, organised a parallel exchange with the CELAC countries on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

The SOM will be co-chaired by Ms. Cristina Russo, Director for International Cooperation at EC DG Research and Innovation and Ms. Erlinda Hándal, Vice Minister for Science and Technology of El Salvador. Based on consultations with the respective member states on both sides, the Co-Presidencies have agreed the meeting's agenda and proposed the following rationale for developing the content of the event. The structure of this concept note reflects the main blocks of the agenda.

## **II. EMPOWERING THE EU-CELAC COMMON RESEARCH AREA**

### **Launch of EU-CELAC R&I Policy Advice**

The EU and CELAC have a shared responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and R&I have a critical role in attaining virtually all the 17 SDGs. Bi-regional cooperation in R&I is increasingly based on common necessities determined by the global challenges and the EU-CELAC Common Research Area can play an important role in strengthening demand-led R&I for development.

In this context, the European Commission is putting forward an EU-CELAC R&I Policy Advice Initiative to mobilise independent expertise to support the participating countries in tackling the challenges posed to their research systems by the need to prioritise, develop a strong international dimension and ensure that R&I play their role in the implementation of the SDGs.

The Policy Advice is open to the participation of all the CELAC countries, in collaboration with EU Member States, and will be triggered on a voluntary basis, being fully demand-driven. It is targeting especially national administrations competent in the field of R&I. The Policy Advice will be implemented through various exercises of mutual learning and exchange of best practices, engaging a small group of countries interested in addressing specific topics of common interest.

This session is meant to open the space for exchange of views on this new instrument, its rationale, operation modalities and roadmap. As a concrete outcome, the session should allow to collect a first set of expression of interest from the CELAC countries and serve as a scoping platform to identify the participants in the first exercise to be launched in the first semester of 2017.

## **III. COMMON RESEARCH AREA PILLARS: THE WAY FORWARD**

### **Research Infrastructures**

#### Launch of a working group on policy coordination on research infrastructures

At the last meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Senior Officials committed towards the international outreach of research infrastructures as one of the three strategic pillars of the CRA. The establishment of a bi-regional Working Group on Research Infrastructures is a good way to enable a structured dialogue on policy making, based on the European experience with the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures.



Its main objectives are the following: i) exchange information on national and regional, EU and CELAC RI policies and on the respective medium to long term RI development planning; ii) identify RIs which are priorities for regional and bi-regional cooperation, building on respective strategic road mapping exercises.

Prior to the SOM, the CELAC countries have been invited to nominate their representatives, which are expected to be senior science policy officials, subject matter experts in the field of Research Infrastructures planning and governance, representing the Research Ministries or equivalent structures.

Following a preparatory meeting of the group on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March (involving the CELAC Delegates), Senior Officials will be informed on the outcome of the discussions and the next steps and are expected to endorse the establishment of the Working Group.

### **Mobility of Researchers**

The European Commission is keen in supporting a structured dialogue and exchange between research and academic stakeholders at bi-regional level, building on the success of the European programmes for research and mobility, as well as existing European tools and networks for mobility.

#### Towards a structured bi-regional academic dialogue

The EU-LAC Foundation will set the stage by presenting the latest initiatives in promoting synergies on EU-CELAC academic and scientific cooperation. Progress has been achieved both in Science, Research and Innovation (Chapter 1 of the EU-CELAC Action Plan) and higher Education (Chapter 9) through dialogue between stakeholders or with national authorities and common initiatives, benefiting from the steer of the European Commission.

However, there is still potential to reinforce the bi-regional dialogue by the identification of points of convergence and synergies between the two areas of interest. A first meeting between key actors for the bilateral dialogue was organised by the EU-LAC Foundation in cooperation with the European Commission on 17 November 2016 in Brussels.

#### EU-CELAC Researchers Mobility Portal

Discussions are expected to focus on the potential development of an EU-CELAC Mobility portal that would offer a common space for researchers in EU and CELAC countries and provide information on research funding, careers and cooperation opportunities of relevance for the research communities in both regions.

On the EU side, the existing Euraxess Portal lists thousands of research-related job vacancies, from more than 40 European countries, internship and hosting offers, training resources and funding opportunities. Through its support to researcher mobility and career development, the Euraxess network has turned into a valuable tool for enhancing scientific cooperation between Europe and the world. A similar tool could be an opportunity for the CELAC countries to increase their awareness on existing mobility programmes and foster transnational mobility and cooperation. The success of the



initiative would depend on national commitments in CELAC countries to set in place the necessary structures for collecting information and ensure content management for the portal.

SEGIB – *Secretaría General Iberoamericana* will present their initiative in developing *Campus Iberoamericano*, a web portal designed to offer information and support academic and scientific mobility in the Inberoamerican space.

This session will encourage reflection on the way in which the two initiatives can support and contribute to an EU-CELAC mobility portal. The Delegates are expected to offer the necessary mandate to move forward on this bi-regional endeavour.

#### Support to Mobility of researchers

The delegations will also discuss and identify synergies with the national and regional mobility programmes in the EU and CELAC in support to researchers, including ahead of the next Academic Summit back to back to the EU-CELAC Summit in October 2017 in El Salvador.

#### **Focusing thematic cooperation on common challenges and priorities**

Senior officials are expected to settle the priority areas for cooperation of common interest and capacity in CELAC, based on the activities conducted under the JIRI Working Groups on Health, Energy, Biodiversity and Climate Change, Bioeconomy and ICT.

Considering that the two bi-regional projects Alcue-NET and EraNet-LAC will come to an end in 2017, the delegates will discuss their outcomes and sustainability of the actions, as well as concrete initiatives stemming from them, such as the regional Horizon 2020 NCP network in CELAC and the EU-CELAC Funding agencies interest group.

Senior officials are expected to confirm their commitment towards more streamlined thematic cooperation implemented through joint activities. The new Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 is expected to contain a number of large scale topics specifically devoted to international cooperation, including with the CELAC region. The Round table should also help the definition of the scale and scope of these initiatives, as well as future R&I and support actions.

#### Renewable Energy:

Building on the achievements of the JIRI Working group on Energy to be presented at the SOM, Spain will present a proposal for a bi-regional Pilot Call on Ocean Energy and Research Infrastructures. Under the co-chairmanship of Spain and Mexico, the action is aimed at facilitating mobility and training for researchers by promoting transnational access to infrastructures, exchanging of best practices and increasing thematic cooperation, the three of EU-CELAC Common Research Area.

#### Bio-economy:

Apart from the cooperation opportunities opened-up by the International Bioeconomy Forum (IBF), the EC will present research areas in the agricultural domain with potential for mutual interest and



cooperation, focusing on plant-soil interactions for improved resource acquisition; alternatives to antimicrobials in animal production; nutrient recovery and reuse as fertilizers.

#### Health:

Cooperation in health has been agreed as a key priority for bi-regional cooperation at the last SOM in March 2016, supported also by an FP7 Coordination and Support Action, EU-LAC Health. The project, which will end in June 2017, aims at developing a strategic roadmap for cooperation in health and identified 18 topics of interest for a more strengthened cooperation in the following areas: chronic diseases, infectious diseases and anti-microbial resistance. The work conducted under the project can be a driver for more strengthened cooperation, as well as the multilateral health initiative such as GLOPID-R and GACD, already joined by several LAC countries. Against this background, the meeting will allow for launching discussions for a more enhanced cooperation on non-communicable chronic diseases.

#### Climate action and Sustainable urbanization:

CELAC are well represented in past and ongoing research and innovation projects linked to biodiversity, ecosystem services and nature-based solutions. Upcoming opportunities in the last years of Horizon 2020 relate to the restoration of urban ecosystems and climate and ecosystems. In addition, cooperation is also encouraged through the EC participation in the Belmont Forum collaborative research actions – "Scenarios of biodiversity and ecosystem services". The meeting will serve as a platform to define the scope of the envisaged cooperation and agree on the need to set up an informal platform for policy exchange on sustainable urbanisation.

Potential routes for EU-CELAC cooperation and participation will be also explored in the context of two transport-related international cooperation actions, specifically devoted to international cooperation and of large scale. The Delegations will be invited to contribute to the identification of the principal of cooperation, clarify the areas of common interest and inform on existing activities in CELAC. The two topics, whose content is yet to be defined, intend to:

- 'Urban mobility and sustainable electrification in large urban areas in developing and emerging economies': i) Develop large scale demonstrations of low-carbon transport solutions, in particular in the field of electro mobility, in medium size cities (1 to 5 million habitants) and mega-cities (more than 10 million habitants) in developing and emerging economies, including Latin America; ii) Twinning of EU and international projects on urban electric mobility; iii) Promote best practices, tools and models for policy making to facilitate sustainable transport and mobility solutions in urban environments, including land-use planning.
- 'Reduction of transport impact on urban air quality': i) Develop knowledge and evidence of the impact of transport on health, in order to identify vehicles related solutions to limit emissions' impact on health; ii) Measures to reduce emissions: ecodriving, elimination of tampering maintenance of the vehicles, etc.; iii) Develop improved instruments and methods for better measurement of the pollutants both in vehicle emissions and for air quality monitoring; iv) A coordinated approach to deepen broad common evidence of health effects of these particles from different sources.



#### Next steps: International Cooperation Service Facility support to the Common Research Area:

The session will inform on the objectives and activities of the Service Facility in Support of the Strategic Development of International Cooperation in R&I. The Facility will ensure coordination of all our international cooperation activities in view of a more strategic and strengthened policy coordination with our partners outside the EU.

Activities include amongst other: i) Training, mainly about Horizon 2020 and international cooperation opportunities; ii) Communication and Dissemination, based on a robust International cooperation communication strategy; iii) Support to dialogues with international partners and regions through the necessary mechanism which allow for increased R&I policy partnering..

The Facility will support the coordination of activities conducted under each of the three pillars of the Common Research Area ensure a proper coordination to the different regional initiatives which allow for the development and implementation of a truly bi-regional research area.

#### **IV. SIDE EVENTS**

##### **Preparatory meeting of the Research Infrastructures Working Group (only for the CELAC Delegates) (13<sup>th</sup> March, 14:00-16:30)**

The first meeting of the working group is expected to set the stage for its future operation. It will aim at recapitulating and ensuring a common understanding of the objective and mandate of the group and operational issues e.g. modus operandi (members, chair, secretariat, reporting) and timeline. Furthermore, the participants are encouraged to prepare and discuss some concrete examples of how national strategies and policies in support of research infrastructures have been developed. This could contribute to a first exchange of information between the members of the group in view of developing a regional understanding and exploring synergies.

##### **Joint Research Centre (JRC) seminar on the Study on Smart Specialisation in Latin America (15<sup>th</sup> March, 08:30-13:00)**

The Smart Specialisation approach requires looking beyond the national/regional administrative boundaries. Countries and regions should identify their competitive advantages through systematic comparisons, mapping their national and the international context in search of examples to learn from, or to mark a difference with, and performing effective benchmarking.

The objective of this event is twofold: first, it will allow presenting the main findings of the research study: "Smart Specialisation in Latin America" which has been conducted to analyse how policy makers and other territorial actors in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Chile and Argentina are designing and implementing the Smart Specialisation concept. Second, it will serve as an opportunity to establish active synergies between practitioners of smart specialisation in the European Union and Latin America.



**Launch of the EU-CELAC Funding Agencies Interest Group (15<sup>th</sup> March, 13:30-17:00)**

On the initiative of the German and Argentinean Funding Organizations BMBF and MINCyT, the group shall build on the collaboration experience established in the framework of the ERANet-LAC project and organize joint actions e.g. joint calls. The group is composed of funding agencies from CELAC, EU Member States and Associated Countries wishing to cooperate in bi-regional science, technology and innovation.