



EU-CELAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation
III. Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)
16 - 17 April 2013, Brussels (Belgium)

Final minutes

The third yearly meeting of the Senior Officials in charge of the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (JIRI) was convened in Brussels on 16 and 17 April 2013. Before the meeting the four thematic working groups had provided reports on their activities so far. Ahead of the plenary session, the representatives of the EU and the CELAC countries had separate meetings discussing a common approach for the respective regions.

Agenda Item 1: Opening

The meeting was opened by Ms Anneli Pauli, Deputy Director-General of DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD), European Commission and Mr Carlos Appelgren Balbotín, Ambassador of Chile to the EU. They highlighted the long standing relations between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean in science, technology and innovation. Furthermore they referred to the Santiago Declaration of Heads of State and Government of CELAC and EU, which adopts the Action Plan 2013-2015, continues the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (JIRI) and addresses the objective of creating an EU-CELAC Knowledge Area.

The meeting was co-chaired by Ms Sigi Gruber, Head of Unit D2 'Americas' of DG RTD, and Mr Gonzalo Arenas, Director of International Relations of the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT), Chile. The co-chairs adopted the agenda and approved the minutes of the II Senior Officials Meeting in Chile in 2012. The Guidelines of the SOM were recalled as a context for the discussions. The rapporteurs were Mr Indridi Benediktsson, Unit D2, DG RTD for the EU and Ms Maria Mesonero, CONICYT, Chile for the CELAC.

Agenda Item 2: Exchange of Information

This first part of this session consisted of three independent presentations with relevance for the regional cooperation:

- A brief overview of the Innovation Policy adopted by the European Union was provided by Mr Florent Bernard, Unit "Innovation Policy", DG RTD, European Commission. The Innovation Policy is focused on the removal of obstacles for innovation at the regional, national and international levels, promoting favorable framework conditions for innovation through initiatives such as a unitary patent system, improved conditions for venture capital,



promotion of innovative public procurements, faster standard setting and the creation of a risk sharing investment instrument with the European Investment Bank. Policies such as European Innovation Partnerships, Smart Specialization and innovation market activities to be funded by Horizon 2020, the future EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, were presented.

- Ms Bettina Trueb of the EU-LAC Foundation in Hamburg presented the four working programmes of the newly created foundation to support the bi-regional strategic partnership: Explore, Connect, Venture and Communicate. Research and innovation is transversal to the four programmes and with the aim of creating connections between stakeholders and researchers, the Foundation supported the Academic Summit held in Santiago in January 2013. The Foundation was presented as a network of networks, aiming at gathering the different ongoing initiatives in different bi-regional areas and mechanisms. She offered help in dissemination of information from the SOM through the website of the Foundation.

- Ms Tiina Vihma-Purovaara from the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland presented the newly adopted Finnish Action Plan for Latin-America and the Caribbean. This is a product of the cooperative work of 'Team Finland'¹ gathering all ministries and stakeholders involved in the relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. The Action Plan includes a specific chapter on research and innovation with emphasis on energy, biofuels, forest industry, environment, higher education, and exchange of students and the support of the JIRI. To this extent, the Ministry of Education and Culture has created a specific fund for implementing the JIRI.

The second part of this session focused on short presentations of EU funded regional networking projects running or about to be launched. First the three INCO-Nets that cover the CELAC region or parts thereof were presented. Then four thematic networks, covering ICT, KBBE, Environment and Health were presented. These presentations highlighted the wide array of EU funded initiatives that support the EU-LAC political dialogue and exchange between researchers:

- Ms Monica Silenzi from the Argentine Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation presented the newly initiated ALCUE-Net project, which constitutes a main support instrument of the bi-regional political S&T dialogue and of the thematic working groups through the strategic and thematic support of the implementation of the JIRI activities. The 19 partner INCO-Net project covers the whole of the LAC and EU regions and involves different stakeholders as well as civil society.

¹ A network promoting Finland and its interests abroad



- Ms Monique Bossi from Agencia per la Promozione de la Ricerca (APRE) shared the results of the two INCO-Net projects for the Central American and the Caribbean regions, ENLACE and EUCARINET, respectively, which will finish in early 2014. ENLACE – with a focus centered on the researchers – has significantly strengthened the NCP network in the Central American and Caribbean regions, developing thematic dialogues and promoted training, staff exchanges and travel grants, all aiming at strengthening the ties between researchers from the regions and enhancing international cooperation. It was highlighted that even though the activities have been similar and – where possible – combined, the results vary between the Central American and Caribbean regions. The work of ENLACE and EUCARINET will be closely linked with ALCUE-Net, which will also continue the work of these INCO-nets after their termination.

- Mr Guy Henry from Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) presented the ALCUE KBBE project, which on the basis of the long tradition on cooperation on food and knowledge based bio-economy supports the political dialogue of the SOM in this area. Specific activities such as the coordination of stakeholders, mainstreaming topics in the political agendas, identification of road maps and the production of a wide array of position papers, policy briefs and concept notes has generated a stakeholder community in the bioeconomy area in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. This community will be further gathered through a bioeconomy platform, which will be closely linked with ALCUE-Net and the SOM process.

- Ms Yolanda Ursa from Inmark Estudios y Estrategias, Spain, presented the AMERICAS project, which supports the political dialogue in the field of ICT and shares the initiatives put forward by the Working Group on ICT for Societal Challenges, especially by supporting the implementation of the findings of the working group and linking these with the ICT communities in EU and CELAC. The stakeholder workshops have been synchronized with the SOM meetings since the beginning of the project, which has created an opportunity for updating ICT priorities in both regions and identifying funding mechanisms.

- Mr Mark Morris from Samui, France, presented the ENSOCIO-LA project, which is due to begin on the 1st of May 2013 and provides support for the political dialogue on three environmental areas: climate change, resource efficiency and raw materials. The project seeks to gather ongoing and past EU-CELAC research projects in environment and feed the results into the political dialogue, mapping the gaps, linking initiatives and proposing strategic actions to support the JIRI. The online platform for EU-CELAC researchers and the large workshops envisaged in the project will provide the JIRI with a concrete instrument for enhancing cooperation in the field.

- Mr Carlos Segovia from Instituto de Salud Carlos III, Madrid, Spain, presented the EU-LAC Health project which will develop a road map for policy makers and stakeholders in the health research area. In this context, the project has implemented consultation and



discussion processes in order to better coordinate health research efforts in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. The main objectives are to identify common needs and opportunities, reduce the fragmentation and formulate a global strategy.

During the discussion, it was agreed to optimize the links between the SOM Working Groups, the INCO-Nets, the thematic support projects, the JRC and the national initiatives. The information flow between the different initiatives should be optimized.

Agenda Item 3 and 4: Presentation of two suggested new working groups and discussion

(i) Working group on Health

The initiative to create a new SOM Working Group on Health was discussed, taking into account the identification of the thematic area health as a priority in the JIRI and the suggestion from the EU-CELAC Funding Agencies meeting in November 2012 to create a working group on health. Spain offered to co-lead the new working group on the European side and Brazil requested an additional time to conduct an internal clearance before confirming their offer to co-lead the group on the CELAC side. There was a general acceptance of the proposal to create the new Working Group on Health and the following countries stated their interest to be included: Spain (co-leader), Belgium, Finland, France, Germany and Portugal on the European side and Brazil (co-leader), Argentina, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay on the CELAC side.

(ii) Working group on career development and mobility of young researchers

The discussion on creating a new Working Group on researchers' career development initiated in the thematic working groups that include career specific actions and from the EU-CELAC Funding Agencies meeting where it was suggested that the SOM should look into the Ph.D training part of the Knowledge Triangle. Finland suggested coordinating the researcher career development efforts in a specific working group, which would put emphasis on the identification of funding schemes, access to research infrastructures, cooperation in doctoral education, best practices in the field of co-tutorships and joint doctoral programmes, as well as links with researchers' career development and industry. The working group would partly follow up on the EU-CELAC Academic Summit held in Santiago in January 2013.

During the subsequent discussion it was decided to develop a concept of the work of the group, clearly specifying the areas of work, the added value to the JIRI and synergies with the thematic working groups. A formal SOM Working Group would not be created at this stage; however, a small number of countries would work on the concept of the work, which would be evaluated at the next SOM in 2014. The countries that offered to work on the



concept were: Finland (co-leader), Chile (co-leader), Dominican Republic, Malta, France, Argentina and Uruguay, while Italy would confirm their participation in the near future.

Agenda item 5: Presentations and discussion of progress in the thematic working groups

The Working Groups are the main instrument to implement the EU-CELAC Action Plan and the Road Map. The Working Groups' co-leaders were invited to speak on the following points in their presentation:

- Specific objectives for their working group and the key criteria used to identify these;
- Identification of joint activities, joint calls, coordination of existing projects or other mechanisms deployed or envisaged for deployment to achieve their objectives;
- Other forms of cooperation in relation to their objectives not requiring specific projects or funding;
- An appreciation of their progress so far and next steps.

(i) Bioeconomy including food security (co-chaired by AR and FR)

The bioeconomy working group has realized a significant work gathering stakeholders, government representatives and experts in six consultation processes to jointly identify topics of mutual interest in the areas of biorefineries, food security and cross cutting issues. Three priority actions were outlined by the working group: 1) a proposal for a joint call in biorefineries, specifically on conversion processes and biomass availability (this links also to the Energy Working Group); 2) an observatory that gathers the stakeholders and researchers on bioeconomy and which will be closely linked to the European bioeconomy observatory under development by the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC); 3) creation of a bi-regional master programme with a management approach developed jointly by a consortium of universities, addressing specifically the lack of engineering capacities in bioprocesses in Latin America. To the extent of developing the capacity building pillar the concept of a researchers' career development group would be very welcomed.

It was noted that the working group has managed to put bioeconomy on the policy agenda in the Latin American and Caribbean regions. It was furthermore suggested to review the name of the working group, since "food security" is inherent in the term "bioeconomy". Portugal welcomed the first two priority actions but had doubts on the third, except if it concerned only doctorate candidates. France and Argentina wished to include also master's level students. Costa Rica would welcome a course on policy issues in bioeconomy for CELAC partners to learn from European experience in policy making in this field. Mr Damien Plan from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) welcomed the links to be created with the observatory under way at JRC and referred to



this being a two-step process; first to exchange information on the methodology and then ('hopefully') to exchange data and information. Belgium stated its interest in joining the Working Group.

(ii) Renewable energies (co-chaired by MX and ES)

The Working Group on renewable energies focuses its work on bioenergy, solar-thermal, photovoltaic (PV) and wind energy. Through different consultation processes, the main lines of mutual interest have been identified as biomass availability and conversion process (see also WG Bioeconomy), development of components for experimental solar plants, wind resources assessment and characterization of solar components for concentration systems. For the implementation phase, the working group envisages three action lines: coordinated calls and twinings; networking and exchanges between researchers; and development of long-term strategic proposals. The latter alternative aims to setting the preconditions for the creation of LAC Technological Platforms in renewable energies. This will integrate the scientific and industrial communities working to solve the problems linked to a secure and sustainable use of and access to energy. Initial talks with CYTED² to implement a pilot public-private partnership this year, the establishment of thematic networks in the areas and the coordination with other for a such as ESFRI³ and the CSP⁴ Summits are already ongoing.

It was noted that the groups on bioeconomy and renewable energies should further their synergies and establish a coordination mechanism in the field of bioenergy. The Working Group also has to co-ordinate their work with the EERA⁵ and will continue aligning its activities with the SET Plan⁶. Portugal expressed interest in joining. Costa Rica underlined that this area is a key one for all countries and also referred to the importance of storage of PV energy.

It was mentioned that for the implementation of the activities, in the frame of this working group, it would be suitable to have a specific instrument (thematic CSA) for supporting the identification of topics and the implementation of concrete activities, such as the other working groups have.

(iii) Biodiversity and Climate Change (co-chaired by CO and FR)

The biodiversity and climate change working group has focused the work on identifying areas for joint activities and pilot projects, reviewing the public policy process and

² Ibero-American Programme for Science, Technology and Development

³ European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures

⁴ Concentrated Solar Power

⁵ European Energy Research Alliance

⁶ European Strategic Energy Technology Plan



identifying funding instruments. The group has furthermore focused the work on the links between biodiversity and climate change, narrowing down the initial 24 priority areas to a set of five areas of common interest: water related problems, climate change and relation with ecosystems, bioprospecting, monitoring on climate change impact on selected species, and interdisciplinary studies on biodiversity loss. Based on the current cooperation in the field, the working group has established an action plan for 2013-2014 including the development of a road map with the key actors of the area, establishment of a biregional platform and workshops on public-private partnerships and a joint call for mobility of researchers and enterprise upon the results of the workshop. They identified three areas of joint activities: 1) Mobility calls; 2) Clusters of Knowledge and 3) Fostering joint projects.

During the discussion it was debated whether to put more emphasis on climate change and climate change resilience. It was noted that all three issues are important; climate change, biodiversity and the interaction. The first two are covered by different research teams but the interaction would be an interesting focus aspect in order to achieve specific output. A need to move beyond the identification of topics and towards the implementation of pilot activities was identified, as well as the benefits of associating the activities with the Biodiversa ERA-Net as well as the INCO-Nets and ENSOCIO-LA. Uruguay pointed out the links to the Bioeconomy WG and also asked if coastal areas' and oceans' biodiversity (loss) was also considered. The Dominican Republic stated their interest in joining the group, Belgium would confirm their interest in participating and Germany indicated their support to the group. Finland also wants to take more active part, provided information and resources are secured.

(iv) ICT for meeting Societal Challenges (co-chaired by CL and FI)

The working group on ICT has focused its work on four main pillars: e-Inclusion, e-Health, Living Labs and Smart Cities. Specific activities include the creation of an observatory on ICT communities, stakeholders and projects, a Latin American and Caribbean Network of Living Labs connected with ENoLL, thematically oriented LAC Technology Platforms and links with the European platforms and an EU-CELAC Network of Smart Cities. The already existing instruments and projects, such as RedCLARA, ECLAC, CYTED among many others, are important counterparts in the work of the group. The interconnection between the four topics of the group and the need for a bottom-up approach was addressed, as well as the emphasis on the inclusion of end-users and private companies in the research and innovation initiatives. Furthermore, the need for interoperability of applications and open access to data was highlighted. Argentina referred to the possible role of the ALCUE-Net to harmonize the work and create links between different Working Groups. Chile noted the importance of linking also to other initiatives.



- (v) Cross cutting working group "Existing and New Instruments" (co-chaired by PT and MX)

This working group on funding instruments and best practices presented a comprehensive overview on the different type of funding schemes and the trends in S&T joint funding instruments. The type of funding schemes range from bilateral to multilateral and covers the whole array of researcher careers, from postgraduate studies to calls for joint research projects, as well as the research to innovation chain with both basic and applied research and innovation instruments. A clear trend towards bilateral agreements between EU and CELAC countries with emphasis on mobility and capacity building was detected.

The group put forward a suggestion to reflect on the available instruments, the possibilities of combining existing multilateral schemes and the identification of barriers, gaps and the added value of coordinating the efforts. The different options include: reinforcement of existing schemes, coordination and twinning of national schemes, mutual opening of funding possibilities, as well as specific "a la carte" instruments or more general mechanisms. A call for mapping the possibilities of funding and coordination in each country was put forward

As a conclusion on the presentations of the working groups, the co-chairs wrapped up the inputs through the following key words which should be pursued by all groups (the seven 'I-s'):

- Interdisciplinarity between the thematic areas, which should be taken advantage of.
- Interconnections between the work, themes and societal challenges of the groups.
- Inclusiveness of the stakeholders and actors in both regions, linking academia with private sector and policy level with civil society.
- Interaction with the existing networks and activities, seeking synergies and produce a different dynamism where the efforts and resources from the bi-regional, national, regional and local levels are coordinated.
- Impact of the work on the life quality of the citizens in both regions, on the environment, on national priorities and policies, on the joint research agendas among other.
- Indicators to measure the impact.
- Innovation in its relevant aspects needs to be addressed in all working groups under the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation.

This should be materialized under four guiding principles: a) balance and mutual benefit; b) flexibility; c) sustainability / continuity; and d) openness for new countries to join.



Agenda item 6: Roadmap to implement the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation

The Santiago Declaration issues a mandate of the (general / political) Senior Officials Meeting of the EU-CELAC Ministries of Foreign Affairs to update the items 1 to 6 of the 2013-2015 Santiago Action Plan. On the European side, the European External Action Service is collecting the inputs for this update, and on the CELAC side the current presidency, Cuba, coordinates the national inputs. It is expected that the October 2013 SOM could adopt an updated version of the 2013-2015 Action Plan and the agreed text be tabled at the next EU-CELAC Summit in Brussels in 2015.

The S&T Senior Officials made a call for the coordinating bodies to consider the recommendations of the sectorial dialogues.

The Action Plan item 1 refers to science, research, innovation and technology and endorses the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation, which is being implemented through the Roadmap adopted at the S&T Senior Officials Meeting in 2011. Furthermore, the implementation of the roadmap is being monitored by the S&T SOM.

It was highlighted that the significant development and important cooperation regarding the bi-regional relations in science, technology and innovation should be made more visible and better reflected in the roadmap. The roadmap should serve as a document to determine, recognize and monitor the impact of STI cooperation between both regions in order to enhance the political visibility.

There was a general call for increasing the impact of the SOM and the working groups, including the definition and application of performance indicators, and the need for an enhanced political visibility of the activities and achievements. To achieve this, an enhanced commitment of the EU-CELAC countries towards the JIRI is necessary.

It was emphasized that the countries should update and validate their senior officials nominations in order to get an overview of the operational group of government representatives.

It was decided to review the roadmap in terms of producing a streamlined and focused document that could be monitored in terms of impact and performance. The core group would be responsible of suggesting a reviewed roadmap to the SOM. The ALCUE-Net project has a clear role to establish a coordinated work agenda, to address impact and enhance visibility and to support the monitoring process between the SOMs. The SOM suggested circulating the agendas, invitations and results of the activities to all senior officials.



The working groups should apply a self-assessment of the performance and propose indicators to address the objectives and expected results. A deadline by end-May 2013 was suggested.

Agenda Item 7: Review of the EU-CELAC Action Plan

Upon the discussions in under agenda item 6, there was a general agreement to suggest recommendations to the Senior Officials of the Foreign Ministries regarding the review of the EU-CELAC 2013-2015 Action Plan.

Proactive efforts from the S&T Senior Officials towards the national Foreign Ministries were highlighted with the aim of providing inputs to the review of the Action Plan and better reflect the SOM activities in it.

The need to show the concrete impact of the S&T SOM and recognize this in the Santiago Action Plan was emphasized by the senior officials. To this extent the Chilean co-chair encouraged a creative and decisive effort that would enhance the political visibility of the bi-regional S&T cooperation, inviting the senior officials to create a multilateral call for proposals upon the already existing bilateral funding instruments, and offering to take the lead on the implementation of a bi-regional multilateral call as a result of the SOM.

Closure of the meeting and hand-over of the CELAC presidency of the S&T dialogue from Chile to Cuba

The co-chairs thanked the senior officials for a very fruitful meeting focused on concrete steps forward and impact assessment, and welcomed the creation of a new working group on health and the operational group on career development of researchers.

Costa Rica announced that the next SOM would be convened in the first week of April 2014 in San José de Costa Rica and underlined the great expectations and opportunities of holding the meeting in the country. Mr Keilor Rojas added an eight 'I' to the previous seven: 'Inspiration'.

The CELAC presidency of the S&T dialogue was handed over from Chile to Cuba. Chile expressed gratitude for the experience of co-chairing the SOM since 2011. Cuba showed gratitude to Chile for co-chairing the SOM and will take over the presidency of the S&T dialogue to promote the mutual interests in CELAC and work for the scientific and technological development for the benefit of the people.