

Joint statement on Science, Technology, Research, and Innovation

The EU and the Islamic Republic of Iran intend to embark on a renewed partnership and enhanced cooperation in a number of areas. A particularly promising area of cooperation with high potential is the area of science, technology, research and innovation.

While Europe is struggling to address challenges such as aging population and economic decline, Iran has the fastest growth rate for science in the world and a well-educated and highly qualified workforce (4.6 million students, over 50% of its 78 million populations are under 30 years of age).

Europe is investing heavily in science, research and innovation with EUR 80 billion allocated to the EU's Research and Innovation programme over the 7 years period - Horizon 2020 (2014-2020). The programme is "open to the world" and participation from developing countries' entities is strongly encouraged. Under Horizon 2020, the Iranian private and public institutions are eligible for participation and automatic funding in the EU Research and Innovation Programme.

Iran's 20-Year Vision Plan highlights the importance of high technology, science and the need for investment through international cooperation.

There are many opportunities for enhancing the EU - Iranian research and innovation cooperation and science and technology, diplomacy, including under EU Horizon 2020 programme.

To this end, cooperation actions could include:

1. Further participation of Iranian entities in Horizon 2020, including through:

- Raising awareness and bridge-building events to accelerate the contacts and networking between the EU and the Iranian counterparts. In this context, the Iranian partners are encouraged to participate in the forthcoming info days on bio-economy (June 2016) and health (July 2016);
- Organization of a technical workshop and training for the Iranian Horizon 2020 National Contact Points (NCPs);
- Fostering Iranian experts' participation as independent experts in the evaluations of Horizon 2020 calls for proposals;
- Encouraging the removal of barriers to academic mobility

2. Establishment of a Joint Working Group for creating an official platform to exchange and cooperate on issues of common interest and paving the ground for strengthening and improving the cooperation in science, technology, research and innovation between Iran and EU.

3. Establishment of enhanced research cooperation in selected thematic areas of common interest (such as renewable energy, climate change/water desalination, food security, key enabling technologies, bio-economy and health) in view of future joint activities and steer it through regular working group meetings.

In addition to those selected areas, the Iranian research, technology and innovation stakeholders are encouraged to join the following on-going projects and platforms:

- **Research Infrastructures** - Pan-European and national Research Infrastructures (climate change/earth observation, cultural heritage/biodiversity preservation, energy, health and food); transnational access to European synchrotron facilities
- **Health** - Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD); International Rare Diseases Research Consortium (IRDiRC);
- **Energy** - Sustainable Process Industry through Resource and Energy Efficiency (SPIRE cPPP); Energy Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC InnoEnergy);
- **Water** - Joint Programming Initiative on Water (Water JPI); Climate Knowledge and Innovation Community (Climate-KIC); Water RE-Desalination Action Group of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP); Water Supply and Sanitation European Technology Platform (WssTP); The Network for Water in European Regions and Cities (NETWERC H2O);
- **Climate change** cooperation in the framework of the Global Earth Observation (GEO) initiative;
- **Food/bio-economy** - International BioeconomyForum (2017); Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture; Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE-JPI); Joint Programming Initiative on Nutrition – Healthy Diets Healthy Lives; Joint Programming Initiative Oceans (including aquaculture) and KIC Food4Future (2017).
- **Social sciences and humanities** - science diplomacy, EU – MENA cooperation.

- **Key enabling technologies**

4. Science and technology diplomacy

EU and the Islamic Republic of Iran are committed to work together also in the area of science and technology diplomacy, which potential in building bridges in an exceptionally challenging region, is largely untapped.

Both sides already cooperate together in science and technology diplomacy initiatives such as SESAME and the Horizon 2020 funded MERID platform. Alongside scientific excellence, these initiatives employ research, science, technology and innovation as channels for intercultural dialogue, understanding and reconciliation. They contribute to nourishing a culture of cooperation, conflict prevention and transformation thus providing an unconventional and important tool for diplomacy.

5. Exchange of innovation good practices.

EU and the Islamic Republic of Iran intend to exchange good innovation practices, including through experts visit and dedicated discussions in specific areas such as innovation policy, innovation funding, innovation in strategic and emerging industries and support to knowledge-based start-ups and companies.

6. Iran`s participation in the European Research Council actions.

Both sides intend to explore the possibilities for encouraging the participation of Iranian scientists in the research activities supported by the European Research Council. This may lead to the signing of an implementing arrangement that could further facilitate the hosting of Iranian scientists by ERC-supported research teams, following the model now established with a number of other countries.

7. Nuclear research cooperation, including under EU Euratom programme (this section is covered by the Joint Statement on Cooperation in the field of Nuclear Energy)

8. Enhanced collaboration between Iran and the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC)

- The JRC is already working with Iran on disaster management, and, based on bilateral discussions with scientific partners, has explored areas of mutual interest in which cooperation can be strengthened, such as: Earthquake engineering and structural design; Global Alliance of Disaster Research Institutes and Disaster Risk Management and Urbanisation.

- Additional potential areas of collaboration can be developed in support of capacity building, knowledge sharing and training in: agriculture and crop monitoring; food safety; water resources management; air quality; green transport and others.

9. Both sides should nominate a representative to follow up the procedure and evaluate the outcome of this statement.