

Joint communiqué of the 9th JSCM -2018

9th Joint Steering Committee Meeting of the Bilateral Agreement on Science and Technology between the European Union and the United States of Mexico

March 22nd, 2018

The ninth meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Committee on Scientific and Technological (S&T) Cooperation took place in Mexico City on 22 March 2018 under the co-chairmanship of Ms Cristina Russo, European Commission Director of International Cooperation for Research and Innovation, and by Dr. Arturo Borja, Director of International Cooperation from the National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT). The meeting saw the participation of representatives from the National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT), the Ministry of Energy (SENER), the Mexican Agency for Cooperation in Science for Development (AMEXCID) and various Directorates General and agencies from the European Commission.

Research and innovation policy context

Science and technology cooperation features in the New Global Agreement between the EU and Mexico and the meeting showed how both sides are cooperating in areas of mutual benefit.

The two sides took good note of recent research and innovation (R&I) policy developments in Mexico and in the European Union. CONACYT endorsed the strategic cooperation in S&T with the European Union as reflected in the continuous efforts towards strengthening Mexican participation in Horizon 2020, besides all bilateral R&I activities and agreements with Members States. The EU has adopted a work programme for the next three years of its framework programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, comprising a budget of 30 € billion, of which 1 € billion will be devoted to international cooperation, with a number of flagship projects with Latin America and Mexico.

The meeting marked five years of collaboration with the current administration in place at CONACYT and the chairs expressed their contentment with the substantial progress made in a range of common priority areas.

S&T cooperation featured prominently in the new Global Agreement, and the meeting showed how both sides are deepening, scaling up and opening new opportunities for cooperation in strategic areas of mutual benefit.

There was agreement that the EU and CONACYT should continue to join forces to jointly tackle global challenges, increase the impact of research, promote breakthroughs, and boost abilities to compete on world markets.

Framework conditions for cooperation

The chairs acknowledged the EU R&I Framework Programme, Horizon 2020, as a main vehicle for EU-Mexico partnership, with the potential to further strengthening of cooperation in key strategic sectors of mutual benefit. CONACYT and SENER investment in coordinated calls under Horizon 2020 was commended, as was the CONACYT-H2020 Co-Funding Mechanism and other forms of support put in place by CONACYT to foster the participation of Mexican entities in Horizon 2020 projects, which should go forward.

The two sides agreed to continue policy support services, assist in upgrading the capacity of National Contact Points, and jointly promote events that facilitate access to information and partnering of R&I stakeholders. They also agreed to establish a Task Force to help focus on strategic priorities and align activities at the level of programmes on the two sides.

The meeting confirmed schemes for researchers' mobility, in particular the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions as important cooperation arrangements. Moreover, the implementing arrangement facilitating Mexican researchers in joining teams of European Research Council grantees gives the researchers the opportunity to gain international experience and enables knowledge exchange at the highest level, providing an excellent basis for scientific progress on both sides. The parties agreed to support activities to raise awareness of these possibilities.

Emphasis was also laid on gender as a cross-cutting issue and the crucial importance to ensuring a more integrated approach to research and innovation.

Thematic priority areas of cooperation

Both sides reaffirmed commitments to strongly encourage EU-Mexico cooperation on a range of topics.

In the area of enabling and industrial technologies, enhanced collaboration on the development, implementation and replication of FIWARE-based services in the EU and Mexico is going on. A second flagship EU-Mexico joint call on High Performance Computing (HPC) will develop strategic partnership in HPC that enables advancing the work on HPC applications in domains of common interest such as energy, including oil, life sciences, earth sciences, climate change and air pollution, and natural disasters.

The meeting confirmed the smooth implementation of the joint call on geothermal energy through the GEMex project and welcomed the progress made on Clean Energy Materials Challenge through the Mission Innovation flagship initiative as a shared commitment, with international collaboration encouraged on commonly identified innovation challenges.

Both sides expressed the need to continue addressing health challenges, mainly through multilateral initiatives such as in the areas of chronic and infectious disease. CONACYT agreed to consider the possibility to join the Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance, and also the International Rare Diseases Research Consortium. The two sides agreed to encourage cooperation through the flagships on cancer research and personalized medicine.

The EU side acknowledges CONACYT's willingness to participate in the flagships on Nanosafety and Technologies for Global Health Care (safety of medical devices) as well as contribute to the development of the guidelines of the "Malta Project" which involves EU Member States, OECD and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). Furthermore, the EU side welcomed the intention of Mexico to join the EU Observatory for Nanomaterials.

The two sides agreed to encourage cooperation on R&D and demonstrations under the two Transport flagships in clean urban transport and logistics intended to develop large scale demonstrations of low-carbon transport solutions (in particular in the field of electro mobility) in medium size cities and mega-cities.

Mexico expressed a strong interest in cooperating in the field of aeronautics and both parties agreed to explore further the areas of common interest for future collaboration.

Both sides pledged to encourage cooperation between European and Mexican research centres under the Climate and Resource Efficiency challenge and ensure participation in the flagships on nature-based solutions and sustainable urbanisation, as well as climate change impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Further increased cooperation through multilateral platforms is also encouraged such as the Belmont Forum and the Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

Both parties also recognized the consolidation of the EU-LAC partnership in R&I under the Common Research Area and ensure greater access of Mexico to pan-European research infrastructures of global nature as well as consolidating Mexico's leading role in helping to defining the scope of the Research Infrastructures working group as well as in the sustainable urbanisation task force.

Finally, the parties convene the next meeting of the Joint Steering Committee in Brussels in the second half of 2019.