



Informal Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Competitiveness (Research) 19 July 2021, Brdo Congress Centre

Background paper – Session 2: *"Balanced openness: The new Global Approach to Research and Innovation"*

State of play

We live in a transformed global environment where we face numerous social, environmental, health, and economic challenges. The increased geopolitical tensions require the recalibration of Europe's international cooperation in research and innovation (R&I) to promote openness, a level playing field and reciprocity in collaboration with partner countries. International cooperation must be based on fundamental values and safeguard the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy, and security.

The Commission Communication on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation "Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world" (Global Approach to R&I) sets out plans for a policy framework to shape the Union's scientific engagement with international partners. We need to cooperate across borders on a scale never seen before to achieve our shared objectives and to deliver the twin green and digital transitions. The Slovenian Presidency welcomes a discussion on the new Global Approach to facilitate the preparation of Council Conclusions before the end of September.

Openness, shared values and a new balanced approach

The Union has traditionally been one of the most vocal proponents of open science globally, both through its Framework Programmes and at the level of individual Member States.

The Commission has proposed a future strategy based on five priorities:

Openness to international cooperation

The renewed Global Approach to R&I maintains the overarching principle of openness in international R&I cooperation, where the Union has long been committed to lead by example. Therefore, the Global Approach to R&I should exercise a Team Europe approach, recognizing the efforts and activities of the individual Member States, different EU institutions and the key stakeholders of the European Research Area (ERA).

The establishment of a level playing field based on shared values and principles, agreed framework conditions and reciprocity

The Team Europe approach has internal dimensions. Its contours were already reflected in the initial discussions of the Expert Group on the ERA Forum for Transition on the EU's principles and values for R&I. The future strategy is built on the **idea of balancing the key principles of openness**, facilitation of knowledge transfer and exchange of ideas with the principles of reciprocity, the **respect of Union values**, upholding its interests, and intellectual property global standards.

Cooperation based on multilateral alliances to create a global critical mass of R&I



Our R&I cooperation should be strengthened through multilateralism and multilateral R&I partnerships in particular. In order for the EU to become a beacon of multilateralism in a global context, we need to align and pool our efforts internally as well. The Team Europe approach proposed by the Commission could pave the way in this context too.

A focus on thematic priorities targeting solutions to global challenges

The new global approach is in line with the strategic priorities of the Union and is thereby, focused on the areas of the twin transition (Green Deal and Digital Transition) and health as a response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. However, to fully grasp the potential of our global R&I resources, we could also consider widening our scope beyond these areas and aligning them with the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

A modulated approach to cooperation with partner countries and regions, based on agreed roadmaps

The intention is to 1) continue and further develop the established cooperation with the Americas and the Caribbean, 2) enhance activities within the Eastern Partnership, 3) focus on the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood and 4) further develop the strategy with Africa. Further development of international R&I cooperation with the Western Balkans could also be fostered, as it represents an important step towards their integration in the Union.

Taken together, these five elements constitute an agenda for a more balanced openness in Europe's cooperation in R&I.

From policy to practice in achieving this new balance

The Commission proposes to launch a multilateral dialogue with partner countries, particularly those with which the EU has Science and Technology Agreements, in view to agree on the values and principles which should underpin international R&I collaboration. This dialogue should start from the EU's internal agreement on the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe (discussed in the morning session). The key EU values¹ for R&I should be the basis of the Union's external dimension of the ERA.

The priorities related to multilateralism and the thematic focus should be delivered through a coordinated approach between the Member States and the EU, both in their bilateral relations with partner countries and through the framework of multilateral cooperation. This coordination should be facilitated by the new ERA governance structure and should take into account the contribution of the wider stakeholder community.

Horizon Europe may be seen as one of the key instruments in driving and delivering the renewed Global Approach. It is very important that it remains open as a rule and that the participation of third countries is only limited in exceptional

¹ Freedom of scientific research, pursuit of scientific excellence, research ethics and integrity, societal responsibility, gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness, open data and open science, sustainable research careers, standards and evidence-based policy making.



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and duly justified cases when the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security could be negatively affected.

Questions for discussion:

-  How should we modulate our cooperation with international partners according to the degree of convergence on a level playing field consisting of values and principles, framework conditions and reciprocity?
-  Should we consider thematic priorities beyond the twin transitions and health, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals? Are there any additional thematic priorities that we should consider?
-  How can we best develop international R&I partnerships to promote our shared objectives:
 - to deliver on the twin transitions and the protection of health; and
 - to strengthen Europe's influence in the world?