



Europe's global approach to cooperation in research and innovation: strategic, open, and reciprocal

Brussels, 18 May 2021

Today, the Commission adopted a Communication on its Global Approach to Research and Innovation, Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world. With this, the EU aims to take a leading role in supporting international research and innovation partnerships, and to deliver innovative solutions to make our societies green, digital and healthy.

Excellent research needs the best minds from all over the world to work together. It is a strategic priority for the EU. Yet international cooperation in research and innovation is taking place in a transformed global landscape, where geopolitical tensions are rising and human rights and fundamental values are being challenged. The EU's response is to lead by example, promoting multilateralism, openness and reciprocity in its cooperation with the rest of the world. The EU will facilitate global responses to global challenges, such as climate change or pandemics, respecting international rules and fundamental EU values and strengthening its open strategic autonomy.

Executive Vice-President for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age, Margrethe **Vestager**, said: *"Openness has always been a cornerstone in our cooperation with the rest of the world. Our response to the pandemic has shown the benefits of more open science, of sharing data and results for the benefit of people in Europe and the rest of the world. This strategy will help us to create a global critical mass of research and innovation to help us find solutions to today's pressing global challenges."*

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya **Gabriel**, said: *"To make sure that this openness works, and that researchers can cooperate across borders as easily as possible, we do not only need support from major funders like the EU, but also a clear framework that creates a level playing field on issues like ethical and people-centred research, the fair treatment of intellectual property and reciprocal access to research programmes. We will actively engage with partners who share these values and principles."*

A 'Team Europe' approach

The global approach to research and innovation reconfirms Europe's commitment to a level of global openness that is needed to drive excellence, pool resources to achieve scientific progress and develop vibrant innovation ecosystems. In view of this goal, the EU will work with international partners to create a common understanding of **fundamental principles and values** in research and innovation, such as academic freedom, gender equality, research ethics, open science and evidence-based policymaking.

The new strategy builds on two principal objectives that come together in a balanced way. First, it aims for **a research and innovation environment that is based on rules and values, and it is also open by default**, to help researchers and innovators around the world work together in multilateral partnerships and find solutions to global challenges. Second, it aims to ensure **reciprocity and a level-playing field in international cooperation in research and innovation**. Besides, the EU's global response to fight the coronavirus pandemic, including through multilateral platforms and Horizon 2020 projects, has shown how we can maximise access to scientific knowledge and international value chains when we join forces.

To achieve its goals, the EU will embark on several actions. For example, it will support researchers and their organisations to help accelerate sustainable and inclusive development in low and middle-income countries, including through an ambitious **'Africa initiative' under Horizon Europe**, to strengthen cooperation with African countries. The Commission also intends to present **guidelines on dealing with foreign interference targeting EU research organisations and higher education institutions**. These guidelines will support EU organisations in safeguarding academic freedom, integrity and institutional autonomy.

Horizon Europe, the next EU research and innovation framework programme 2021-2027, will be a key instrument for the implementation of the strategy. In order to safeguard the EU's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security, the programme may exceptionally limit participation in its

actions, always on duly justified cases, allowing the programme to remain open as a rule. The association of non-EU countries to Horizon Europe will offer additional opportunities to participate to the overall programme with generally the same conditions as those of the Member States.

Close coordination and cooperation between the EU and its Member States will be key to the successful delivery of the strategy. The Commission will promote initiatives modelled on a '[Team Europe](#)' approach, combining the efforts of the EU, the Member States and European financial institutions. **Synergies with other EU programmes** such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe will be an important element of this approach.

Background

In 2012, a [Commission Communication](#) set out a strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation. It guided the EU scientific and technological relations with third countries and underpinned the international reach of Horizon 2020. During the last three years of Horizon 2020 international cooperation got a significant boost through the 'international cooperation flagships', including more than thirty ambitious cooperation initiatives with several third countries and regions such as Africa, Canada, Japan, South Korea, China, India and others.

Almost a decade later, the new Global Approach to Research and Innovation supersedes the previous strategy in order to respond to today's significantly different global context and to align the EU's international cooperation with its current priorities.

For More Information

[Communication on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation](#)

[Questions and Answers](#): Global Approach to Research and Innovation

[Factsheet](#): Global Approach to Research and Innovation

[International cooperation in research and innovation](#)

IP/21/2465

Press contacts:

[Johannes BAHRKE](#) (+32 2 295 86 15)

[Maretta GRAMMENO](#) (+32 2 298 35 83)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)

Related media

 [The Nucleic Acids Analysis laboratory of the Joint Research Centre \(JRC\)](#)