

THE EU-CELAC SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING (SOM) ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION 2017 AND THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF EULAC FOCUS

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The EU-CELAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (JIRI) was adopted in 2010 by the VI. EU-Latin-American and Caribbean Summit, with the aim to deliver greater benefits from scientific cooperation between the two regions. The Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) with EU-CELAC representatives was established as a regular bi-regional dialogue on Science and Technology to consolidate EU-CELAC cooperation in order to implement the JIRI. Five Working Groups in the following priority areas were established so far: Energy, Information and Communications Technology, Bioeconomy, Biodiversity & Climate Change and Health. Enhanced by the speech of Commissioner Moedas at the EU-CELAC summit in June 2015, the idea of a EU-CELAC common research area (CRA) was consolidated by agreeing on three strategic pillars at the EU-CELAC SOM in March 2016: Mobility of Researchers, International outreach of Research Infrastructures and Increased thematic cooperation to address global challenges.

This year's SOM took place in March 2017 in Brussels. It was co-led by the European Commission (EC) and the CELAC pro-tempore presidency of El Salvador. The main aim of the SOM was to present the progress made in implementing the CRA and discuss newly upcoming thematic priorities for the bi-regional cooperation.

EULAC Focus is a research project funded under Horizon2020 of the European Union for the period 2016-2019 with a clear aim of strengthening the EU-CELAC Strategic Partnership by reinvigorating and strengthening existing initiatives and proposing new and innovative areas of cooperation between both regions in the fields of culture, scientific cooperation and social issues. The three fields are connected by focusing on four cross-cutting topics: Mobility, Inequality, Diversity and Sustainability.

The objective of this document is to outline, along the major discussions and outcomes of the EU-CELAC SOM 2017, what EULAC Focus offers to implement the Common Research Area efficiently.

NEW SUPPORTIVE INITIATIVE: EU-CELAC R&I POLICY ADVICE INITIATIVE

The EC presented a new action, offering CELAC countries support in formulating national objectives for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and committing towards its implementation. CELAC countries interested in participating in this initiative are asked to address the EC directly.

How EULAC Focus can contribute:

EULAC Focus is able to give valuable background information in order to better understand how to contextualize national and regional objectives in the CELAC region.

The cooperation in the areas of science, culture and social issues is currently disconnected, lacking cross-cutting interaction and visibility and a clear emphasis on distinctive initiatives for the direct benefit of the civil society. Therefore, the three areas will be analysed in a cross-cutting manner, putting emphasis on the effects of cultural, scientific and social cooperation on the abovementioned horizontal issues.

EULAC Focus will take good examples of successful initiatives and expand the dissemination to all levels in order to increase the effective impact of cooperation in these fields. It will draw a coherent picture of the ongoing discussions and challenges in CELAC and the EU and formulate contributions.

In November 2016, EULAC Focus started by supporting the EULAC Foundation in organising the EU CELAC reflection forum 2016. This forum has the objective to create an open and informal exchange of perspectives and arguments among key actors of both regions to reflect on the inputs required for partnership and the preparation of the next CELAC-EU Summit. EULAC Focus experts supported the comprehensive dialogue in the four working groups addressing:

1. Higher education, research, innovation, technology, regional integration and interconnectivity
2. Social development through education, employment, and equity of gender
3. Sustainability, environment, climate change, biodiversity, energy
4. Investments and entrepreneurship

MOBILITY OF RESEARCHERS

During the discussions regarding improving the mobility of researchers between both regions, two developments were discussed to which EULAC Focus could contribute:

EURAXESS worldwide

The mobility portal EURAXESS Worldwide is a networking tool which gives researchers the possibility to stay connected to Europe. Among others, it includes information about funding opportunities, research policies and events and furthermore gives the opportunity to connect with other researchers via a partnering tool. The EURAXESS worldwide section dedicated to researchers in Brazil is currently expanding to other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

EU-CELAC academic summit

The EULAC Foundation stressed the importance of a closer interlinkage between the EU-CELAC academic summit and the EU-CELAC Senior Officials Meeting on Science and Technology. Effective and constructive dialogues on academic and research collaboration between both regions cannot be held without considering the activities of the other area.

How EULAC Focus can contribute:

EULAC Focus dedicates a specific task to academic networks and mobility schemes. By identifying key actors and networks, instruments and schemes of (bi-regional) academic cooperation as well as of patterns and trends of (bi-) regional mobility of researchers, the project supports the exploration of new opportunities for connectivity and up-scaling between CELAC and EU with regard to academic mobility.

Furthermore, the EULAC Focus consortium comprises partners from both fields: Institutions representing actors from significant academic networks (e.g. Central American Higher University Council – CSUCA, University of Barcelona – coordinator of OBREAL) and institutions strongly involved in the scientific dialogue under the EU-CELAC Common Research Area (e.g. Argentinean Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation – Coordinator of ALCUE NET as technical secretariat to the SOM; DLR Project Management Agency – coordinator of the ERANet-LAC project). This combination of knowledge and experiences opens the opportunity to formulate comprehensive contributions how to strengthen the dialogue between both fields.

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH OF RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES (RI)

At the SOM 2017, CELAC countries together with the EC established a new working group on Research Infrastructures coordinated by Uruguay. The objective of this working group is to align and harmonize (bi-) regional policy coordination and share good practices in policy development and mapping of research infrastructures.

How EULAC Focus can contribute:

EULAC Focus deals with the topic of research infrastructures (RI) by conducting a scientific analysis of the current national RI landscapes and processes. The main objective hereby is to better understand the national and regional dynamics regarding RI policy development and implementation in CELAC and to identify pilot initiatives of bi-regional interest to explore opportunities for connectivity and up-scaling with initiatives such as ESFRI. The analysis consists of a desk study of political structures and capacities in CELAC and existing studies and mappings regarding CELAC RI. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews with RI key players from the region will be conducted to deepen the understanding of RI policy-making and implementation.

INCREASED THEMATIC COOPERATION TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Two initiatives resulting from projects implemented under the JIRI were launched in the frame of this year's SOM:

EU-CELAC Interest Group (EU-CELAC IG)

Funding agencies from EU and CELAC have constituted the EU-CELAC Interest Group for bi-regional cooperation in science, technology and innovation (STI). The EU-CELAC IG builds on the collaboration experience and mutual trust established in past and ongoing FP7 projects e.g. in the framework of ERANet-LAC. Its main objective is to organize future joint actions and secure sustainability of the outcomes ERANet-LAC has generated. Currently, the EU-CELAC IG comprises 30 funding agencies (14 Latin American, 2 Caribbean / 14 European).

Latin American and Caribbean National Contact Points' network (LAC NCP network)

NCPs are national structures, appointed by the governments, which provide guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of participation in Horizon2020 in the language(s) of the country.

How EULAC Focus can contribute:

EULAC Focus collaborates closely with both initiatives. The initiatives disseminate relevant information and outcomes in all directions in order to create a higher visibility and improve the dialogues between EU and CELAC Science, Technology and Innovation actors on all levels.

More information or want to get involved?

Visit: www.eulac-focus.net