

2 HOT TOPIC: EU spells out its global R&I approach in a changing world



Whether it is tackling climate change, health crises or marine pollution, global challenges require a global research and innovation (R&I) approach that is open, reciprocal and focused.

On 18 May, the European Commission issued a Communication on its 'Global Approach to Research and Innovation', Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world, and aimed at making our societies green, digital and healthy.

Science takes place in a complex geopolitical setting with often competing demands on scarce resources and time. To achieve the best results and avoid fragmented effort, the EU pursues open, multilateral, and reciprocal engagement with international partners and associates. Its experience is that working together like this is the best way to tackle pressing global challenges.

"Openness has always been a cornerstone in our cooperation with the rest of the world," remarked Margrethe Vestager, Executive VP for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, on the new Communication. "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."

Europe seeks to engage with partners and strengthen multilateral alliances with those who share its values – i.e. academic freedom, gender equality, research ethics, open science and evidence-based policymaking – and respect international norms in a range of important areas, such as:

- Marine cooperation (i.e. the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, and the North-South Pole dimension)
- Breakthrough energy technologies
- R&I policy for fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food systems
- Use of digital technology in the fight against climate change and environmental challenges
- International digital partnerships matching the four pillars of the 2030 Digital Compass
- Health security, preparedness and the health system

Team Europe approach

This resoundingly global approach to R&I underscores Europe's commitment to reaching levels of openness needed to drive excellence, pool resources to achieve scientific progress and develop vibrant innovation ecosystems.

But it takes more than EU or public funding and support to ensure that international researchers can cooperate freely across borders, according to Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education



and Youth. “We also [need] 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.”

Whether it is tackling the pandemic or cooperating with low- and middle-income countries dealing with endemic problems, multilateral platforms and EU-backed projects show how the Union can galvanise scientific knowledge and communities towards the best outcomes.

For example, the ‘Africa initiative’ under the new seven-year framework programme, [Horizon Europe](#), seeks to strengthen cooperation with African countries. The Commission also intends to present guidelines for dealing with foreign interference on EU research organisations and higher education institutions, thus safeguarding academic freedom, integrity and institutional autonomy.

The Commission also plans to encourage initiatives modelled on a ‘[Team Europe](#)’ approach, combining the efforts of the Union, individual Member States and European financial institutions. Synergies with other EU programmes such as Global Europe, the neighbourhood, development and international cooperation instrument, are also an important element of the overall approach, according to the Communication.

The good news for the EURAXESS Worldwide community is that Horizon Europe is open to researchers and innovators from around the globe who are encouraged to team up with EU partners in preparing proposals. It includes dedicated actions to strengthen international cooperation and supports multilateral initiatives in areas such as clean and renewable energy, ocean research, earth observation, and infectious diseases.

Background and more info

In 2012, a Commission [Communication](#) set out the first strategy for international cooperation in R&I, including relations with third countries, and underpinned the international reach of Horizon 2020. The introduction of more than 30 International Cooperation Flagships under H2020 boosted R&I exchanges with regions such as Africa, Canada, Japan, South Korea, China, India, and others.

Almost a decade on, the new Global Approach to Research and Innovation takes over from the previous strategy to meet today’s significantly changed global context, and to align the EU’s international cooperation with its current priorities.

Global Approach to Research and Innovation [Communication](#) / [Q&A](#) / [Factsheet](#)