



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**RECH 409
COMPET 549
RELEX 994
DEVGEN 261**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of : Competitiveness Council on 1 and 2 December 2008

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Subject : Council conclusions concerning a European partnership for international scientific and technological cooperation

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions concerning a European partnership for international scientific and technological cooperation, as adopted by the Competitiveness Council on 2 December 2008.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS
CONCERNING A EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP FOR
INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING the general context of the realisation of the European Research Area (ERA) and in particular the Commission's Green Paper of 4 April 2007¹, the conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council of 14 December 2007 and the Council conclusions on the launch of the "Ljubljana Process" – towards full realisation of the European Research Area (30 May 2008)², in which a "wide opening of the ERA to the world" constitutes one of the five initiatives identified in this context, and REFERRING to its "Vision 2020 for the European Research Area" (2 December 2008)³;

CONSIDERING that accelerating globalisation creates opportunities for increasing scientific excellence and for achieving sustainable development, and whereas, in particular, scientific and technological cooperation needs to be stepped up at worldwide level in order to resolve the major global challenges (those already identified such as climate change, poverty, infectious diseases, energy risks, water and food supply, safety of the population, preservation of biodiversity, network security and the digital divide as well as further challenges which may emerge);

CONSIDERING that the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development (7th FP) allows for the participation of third countries and includes several new instruments intended to encourage international cooperation;

¹ 8322/07 [COM(2007)161].

² 10231/08.

³ 16767/08.

CONSIDERING that there are a large number of bilateral and multilateral S&T cooperation agreements in force concluded between the European Communities and third countries as well as between Member States and third countries, and WHEREAS there are currently no strategy at European level for exchanging relevant information on the activities deriving from these various agreements and, where appropriate, ensuring the adequate level of coordination amongst these activities;

CONSIDERING that Europe's aspiration – as expressed in its "Vision 2020 for the ERA" – is to be able to speak with a consistent voice with its main partners, as well as within relevant international fora, in the area of science and technology;

CONSIDERING that international scientific and technological activities should be based on principles and practices which uphold reciprocity, fair treatment and mutual benefits, as well as adequate protection of intellectual property;

CONSIDERING that scientific and technological cooperation activities play a crucial role in the development, sharing and diffusion of knowledge worldwide, and constitute an important means for promoting the mobility of researchers and brain circulation;

1. IS OF THE VIEW that the pursuit of the European Union's general objectives can be strengthened through a strategic framework for the appropriate coordination of its various scientific and technological cooperation activities with third countries, while setting priorities that are differentiated according to the level of scientific and economic development and sectoral characteristics of those countries;

2. WELCOMES the Commission Communication "A strategic European framework for international science and technology cooperation"⁴, with the aim of, in particular, strengthening the scientific and technological base of the European Union, boosting the competitiveness of its industry and helping to deal with global challenges within a context of "global responsibility";
3. UNDERLINES that such a strategy aims to develop better coherence and synergies between the various international scientific and technological cooperation activities carried out in Europe by Member States and the European Community, whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
4. INVITES Member States, incorporating as appropriate the countries associated to the FP7, to encourage a dialogue at European level with a view to the coordination of their international S&T cooperation policies and activities, as well as to facilitate consultation between interested stakeholders, including industry, in order to identify opportunities for and, where appropriate, obstacles to the development of scientific and technological cooperation activities between the European Union and the rest of the world;
5. INVITES Member States and the Commission to form a European Partnership in the field of international scientific and technological cooperation ("S&T cooperation") with a view to implementing this European strategy; this should be based on consultation and sharing of information in a flexible way in order to identify common priorities which could give rise to coordinated or joint initiatives; and INVITES Member States and the Commission to coordinate activities and positions vis-à-vis third countries and within international fora in those areas which are part of this strategy, incorporating where appropriate the associated countries of the 7th FP;

⁴ 13498/08 [COM(2008) 588].

6. In that context, INVITES Member States and the Commission to collaborate within a dedicated configuration of CREST (thereafter called “Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation”) to drive forward the European Partnership for S&T cooperation according to the mandate set out in the Annex;
7. INVITES Member States and the Commission to contribute fully towards the success of the Partnership by making available to it appropriate information and experience acquired in connection with their respective cooperation activities including the outcome of evaluation and impact assessment of S&T collaboration with third countries;
8. Within the framework of the Partnership, INVITES Member States and the Commission to better coordinate and make more operational their S&T cooperation activities with other regions of the world, notably by strengthening or creating dialogue platforms with other regions of the world with a view to jointly identifying future priorities and actions with regard to S&T cooperation;
9. INVITES the Commission to further increase the impact of S&T Agreements, ensure the correct application of the principles of reciprocity, fair treatment and mutual benefits as referred to in the cooperation agreements between the European Community and third countries in the scientific and technological domain; and INVITES Member States to promote, within the framework of their S&T cooperation with third countries, where appropriate, the principles and practices set out in the Code of Practice for the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities⁵, the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers⁶;

⁵ See Council Resolution (30 May 2008), 10323/08.

⁶ OJ L 75, 22.3.2005.

10. UNDERLINES the need to ensure the necessary coherence and complementarity between European and national instruments supporting research and those supporting S&T capacity-building, and INVITES the Commission to strengthen the relationship between the Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development (FP), the Pre-Accession Instrument (IPA), the European Development Fund (EDF), the financing instrument for development cooperation (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) as well as other relevant mechanisms;
11. and in this context, RECALLS the action already undertaken to promote cooperation between Member States and developing countries, notably the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership, and along these lines CONSIDERS exploring further cooperation with developing countries as part of the EU's overall S&T strategy;
12. CONSIDERS that all specific procedures related to the implementation of the international cooperation strategy of the European Research Area must be examined within the framework of the general approach to the optimisation of the governance of the European Research Area, as foreseen by the Ljubljana Process.

**MANDATE FOR CREST CONCERNING A STRATEGIC FORUM
FOR INTERNATIONAL S&T COOPERATION**

Objective:

To facilitate the further development, implementation and monitoring of the international dimension of ERA by the sharing of information and consultation between the partners (Member States and the Commission) with a view to identifying common priorities which could lead to coordinated or joint initiatives, and coordinating activities and positions vis-à-vis third countries and within international fora.

Working Methods:

CREST will meet in a dedicated configuration ("The Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation") with high level representatives of Member States and the Commission. This dedicated configuration of CREST may be supported by an appropriate working group if deemed necessary. It will be chaired by one of its members representing a Member State designated for a period of 2 years. It will be open, as appropriate, to the countries associated to FP.

Main Activities:

- Systematically sharing and structuring information on the S&T cooperation activities and objectives (whether ongoing or planned) of the various partners;
- Pooling relevant knowledge concerning third countries, in particular analyses of their S&T resources and capabilities;

- Ensuring regular consultation between the partners in order to identify their respective objectives and common priorities in terms of S&T cooperation with third countries ("what and with whom?");
- Where appropriate, coordinating activities of a similar nature implemented by Member States and the Community (with variable geometry);
- If necessary, proposing initiatives to be implemented with appropriate ways and means;
- Networking of Member States' and the Commission's scientific advisors in key third countries.

Reporting:

Annual report to the Council and to the Commission on progress achieved in realising the objectives of the Partnership, including as relevant:

- mapping of international cooperation activities (whether ongoing or planned) between the EU and third countries;
- analysis of the scope, coherence and complementarity of the various EU activities;
- identification of common priorities and proposals for measures to implement them;
- overall assessment of the impact of the EU's actions in international S&T cooperation.