

EU-LAC Innovation Cooperation Conference

21-22 November in Brussels, Belgium



COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The 'EU-LAC innovation cooperation conference took place in Brussels on 21 and 22 November 2019, bringing together decision makers from the European Union and from Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. The conference was hosted by the European Commission and welcomed participants from 29 EU and LAC countries. Ms Maria Cristina Russo (Director for International Cooperation in the European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation) opened the event together with Ms Edita Hrdá (Managing Director for the Americas in the European External Action Service) and with Dr. Lino Baraño (Secretary of Government for Science, Technology and Productive Innovation, Ministry of Education – Argentina). The keynote speeches were delivered by Mr Paulo Alvim (Secretary of the Government for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovations and Communications, Brazil) and by Mr Jean-David Malo (Director of the European Innovation Council Taskforce in the European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation).
3. The participants welcomed the organisation of the conference as a concrete step in implementing the decisions of the last Senior Officials Meeting of the Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation - JIRI (San Salvador, October 2017) to strengthen the innovation dimension of the EU-CELAC cooperation under the Common Research Area and to develop a common innovation agenda. The Common Research Area is based on three pillars, focusing on mobility of researchers; research infrastructures and on the tackling of grand societal challenges.
4. The participants agreed that the conference comes at a particularly opportune moment, as preparation continues on the next fully open research and innovation framework programme, Horizon Europe, which puts very high focus on innovation and on international cooperation.
5. The conference explored several key areas of innovation cooperation:
 - Policies and good practices to promote innovation in LAC and EU countries;
 - Engaging with stakeholders – how to ensure that innovation remains in the spotlight of the sectoral policies;
 - Characteristics and limitations – political realities, economy, innovation;
 - Success factors and actors of innovation ecosystems;
 - Innovation support instruments;
 - Common challenges to innovation.

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6. The participants presented the experience of their countries and regions with supporting innovation activities and discussed possible initiatives that could help intensify such activities and open them for cross-border and inter-regional cooperation.
7. The participants acknowledged the strategic contribution of innovation to the prosperity and well-being of the citizens and recalled its positive effect on other cooperation areas as well, emphasising the unifying role that innovation plays globally.
8. The participants therefore decided to promote innovation cooperation as an additional pillar of the EU-CELAC Common Research Area. The modalities of implementation of innovation cooperation should be discussed at the next JIRI Senior Officials Meeting, which should take place in 2020 under the Mexico's Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC.