

Multilateral dialogue on principles and values in international research & innovation cooperation

Background

In view of the importance of science and technology for economically and environmentally sustainable development, and the growth of new ways in which scientific results and novel technologies can be applied in everybody's daily lives, basic principles and fundamental values have been gaining renewed relevance and urgency for research and innovation around the world.

In this context, scientists, policy-makers, and the public at large encounter an ever increasing array of unexpected and complex questions, and have to make, or are subject to, important decisions.

Examples include the application of Artificial Intelligence, in particular autonomously operating machines; the possibilities to combine biological and non-biological materials, genetic engineering; animal testing; the availability of ever larger data sets; the importance of intellectual property rights; or pressures on scientists to perform / to produce results in short time spans ('publish or perish'), to name but a few.

At the same time, there is increasing awareness that the basic principles and fundamental values which apply to scientific research in a national setting are of equal relevance to *international* collaborative research & innovation efforts, i.e. research and innovation activities carried out jointly by partners from different parts of the world.

The position of the European Union

In response to global trends, the European Commission in May 2021 put forward a new strategy for Europe's international cooperation in research & innovation in a changing world, the *Global Approach to Research and Innovation*¹.

In a series of subsequent documents, the EU set out its view of what it considers the most essential such principles and values for international cooperation in research and innovation².

At the same time, recognising that different approaches and priorities may exist in other parts of the world, and with a view to working towards a common understanding of the principles and values which should underlie international R&I cooperation, the European Union is inviting key partners from around the world to engage in an open dialogue to identify commonalities, discuss differences and learn from each other's experiences.

This reflects a conviction that there is much to be gained from engaging in a constructive yet open exchange of views on what are, or should be, the principles and values to be observed in joint transnational R&I activities: to agree on language and terminology used, thus to avoid potential misunderstandings, to compare experiences and priorities, to learn from each other's approaches, and to jointly identify good practices.

This will allow to move together towards a trusted environment in which researchers from different parts of the world can cooperate, confident that they are doing so on the basis of shared principles and values, such as freedom of scientific research, ethics and integrity, research excellence, inclusiveness

¹ European Commission Communication on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation - Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world, May 2021

² See:

- Council Conclusions on the Global approach to Research & Innovation - Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world, September 2021
- Marseille Declaration on international cooperation in research and innovation (R&I), 08 March 2022
- European Parliament Resolution on the Global approach to research & innovation, April 2022
- Council Conclusions on principles and values for international cooperation in research and innovation, June 2022

and gender equality, open science; improvement of the universal protection and enforcement of intellectual and industrial property rights, as well as the protection of privacy and personal data; value creation and societal and economic impact, societal and environmental responsibility and response to the needs of society, solidarity and partnerships in particular with low and middle income countries, risk management and security.

Invitation to join in an open multilateral dialogue

Some of these questions have been or are being discussed in international fora and organisations, usually with focus on a specific principle or value.

The European Commission is therefore inviting key partner countries from around the globe to join in a multilateral dialogue on principles and values for international cooperation in research and innovation. The aim is to review all principles and values that are relevant to international cooperation in an all-encompassing manner, taking into account the important work ongoing or already accomplished in existing international structures³.

The inaugural meeting of this initiative, on Friday, 8 July 2022⁴, will be an introductory meeting to explain the context and the objectives of the multilateral dialogue, provide an opportunity for all participants to introduce themselves, propose working methods and topics of discussion for the subsequent meetings, and to invite written comments from the participants.

Subsequent steps

The first meeting will be followed by a number of ‘thematically focused’ workshops in the period autumn 2022 – early 2023, concentrating on one or two principles and values each time. These workshops will be held in an inclusive, participatory, and interactive way. Invitations to those workshops will be sent out separately nearer the time.

The aim of these working-level workshops will be to discuss principles and values for international R&I cooperation in more detail, to agree on a common terminology, to share experiences with their practical implementation in different parts of the world, to exchange views on priorities, and to distil ‘good practices’ for the benefit of all participants.

In a stock-taking meeting in the first half of 2023, the moderators of the ‘thematic’ workshops will be invited to report the outcomes in order to establish an overview of the approaches to principles and values and the priority that is given to them in different parts of the world.

The aim of this stock-taking meeting will be to establish a list of commonalities which will allow to enhance and deepen R&I cooperation and to discuss concrete steps that could be taken to work towards a more aligned view in those areas in which there may be differences.

We hope that you will be able to join us in this important initiative and we look forward to working with you in the coming months.

³ for instance UNESCO, OECD Global Science Forum, World Medical Association, and others

⁴ In order to give all invitees from around the globe the possibility to participate, the meeting will be held in an online format (via Webex).

Agenda

LAUNCH EVENT:

MULTILATERAL DIALOGUE ON PRINCIPLES AND VALUES IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH & INNOVATION COOPERATION

FRIDAY, 8 JULY 2022, 13:15-15:00 (BRUSSELS SUMMER TIME)

IN A VIRTUAL FORMAT VIA WEBEX

Moderator: Martin Penny, Head of Unit, European Commission

15 mins.	Welcome and introduction (Director Cristina Russo): Background, context, objectives of the multilateral dialogue
15 mins.	Keynote address: [The role of principles and values in international research & innovation cooperation (title t.b.c.)], Sir Peter Gluckman, President, International Science Council
40 mins.	Tour de table: Introduction of participants
20 mins.	Proposed working methods and principles and values for discussion at subsequent meetings (Martin Penny) Discussion
7 mins.	Concluding remarks (Deputy Minister Radka Wildová, Presidency of the Council of the European Union)
3 mins.	Closure of the meeting (Director Cristina Russo)

SUMMARY:
INAUGURAL MEETING
**MULTILATERAL DIALOGUE ON PRINCIPLES AND VALUES IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH &
INNOVATION COOPERATION**
Friday, 8 July 2022, 13:15-15:00 (CET)

The inaugural meeting of the multilateral dialogue on principles and values in international research and innovation (R&I) cooperation was held in an online format (via webex) on Friday, 8 July 2022.

This dialogue was first proposed in the European Commission's Communication on the "Global Approach to Research and Innovation" and was subsequently endorsed by the Council of Ministers of the European Union in its Conclusions of 28 September 2021⁵ and of 10 June 2022⁶.

In total, 46 countries were represented in this inaugural meeting, including: 22 Member States of the European Union; 11 countries associated with or in line for association with the EU's Framework programme for research and innovation 'Horizon Europe'; and 13 countries with which the European Union has a Science & Technology Cooperation Agreement; as well representatives from six European science stakeholder organisations.

Context and objectives

In her welcoming address, Maria Cristina Russo, Director in the European Commission for 'The Global Approach and International Cooperation in R&I', recalled the context and the objectives of the multilateral dialogue: the basic principles and fundamental values which apply to scientific research *in a national setting* are increasingly recognised around the globe as being of equal relevance to *international* collaborative research and innovation efforts. Acknowledging that different approaches and priorities may exist in different parts of the world, the European Union is inviting key partners from around the world to engage in an open dialogue to identify commonalities, discuss differences and learn from each other's experiences.

This dialogue aims to work towards a *common* understanding of the principles and values that should be the basis for international research and innovation cooperation. The intention is to learn from each other's experiences, practices and priorities, identify commonalities and good practice and discuss differences, with the aim of moving together towards a common understanding of the environment in which researchers from different parts of the world can work freely with each other, confident that they are doing so on the basis of *shared* principles and values.

Keynote address – Sir Peter Gluckman, President of the International Science Council

Sir Peter Gluckman, President of the International Science Council, delivered a keynote speech, situating the multilateral dialogue in the context of the principles and values by which science, scientists and the science system work and interact with society at large.

In particular, Sir Peter observed that "*given that modern science is a global activity, and given its criticality to virtually every challenge we must confront, it is important that we have broadly and globally accepted understandings of the principles that underpin how science is conducted*". A copy of the full speech is attached for information.

Sir Peter Gluckman added a reminder that ultimately, science was an activity of individuals and that it was therefore important for scientists, through the appropriate stakeholder organisations, to be

⁵ on the Global approach to Research and Innovation - Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world

⁶ on principles and values for international cooperation in research and innovation

represented in this dialogue. He confirmed the interest of the International Science Council (ISC) to remain engaged in the dialogue and associated workshops, and in this context drew attention to three recent reports published by the ISC:

- Science is a global public good⁷
- Contemporary perspectives on the responsible practices of science in the 21st century⁸
- Unleashing science: Delivering missions for sustainability⁹

Proposed next steps

Starting in the autumn of 2022, several thematically focused workshops focussed on one or two of the principles and values will be held, in an inclusive and interactive manner, ideally at mid-management level. The first such meeting is planned for **Thursday, 20 October**, in a hybrid format (physical-virtual).

The aim of these workshops will be to discuss principles and values for international R&I cooperation *in more detail*, to agree on a common terminology, to share experiences with their practical implementation in different parts of the world, to exchange views on priorities, and to distil ‘good practices’ for the benefit of all participants.

A stock-taking meeting in the first half of 2023, to be chaired at Director-level, will review a summary overview of the approaches to principles and values and the priority that is given to them in different parts of the world. It will aim to establish a list of commonalities which would allow to enhance and deepen R&I cooperation and to discuss concrete steps that could be taken to work towards a more aligned view in those areas in which there may be differences.

Proposed working methods

For the thematic workshops, the participating countries and stakeholder organisations are invited - individually or by teaming up with each other, and on an entirely voluntary basis - to take the lead and ‘adopt’ a particular principle/value, to give a presentation of how it is being implemented domestically and in international collaborative activities, and to moderate an exchange of views and experiences with the other participants, so as to produce a snapshot of the practices followed in different parts of the world.

For the first ‘thematic’ workshops under the dialogue, the following topics have been suggested:

- Ethics and research integrity
- Academic freedom, i.e. freedom of research, teaching and study
- Gender equality and inclusiveness
- Intellectual property
- Research excellence
- Open science

The subsequent discussion session of the meeting showed strong support for and endorsement of the dialogue from the participants for the aims, objectives and proposed working approach, with spontaneous expressions of interest from several countries to work with the European Commission and with each other in preparing and organising thematically focussed on select principles/values.

Comments, remarks, and suggestions made by participants during the discussion session of the meeting included:

⁷ <https://council.science/current/news/science-as-a-global-public-good/>

⁸ <https://council.science/publications/a-contemporary-perspective-free-and-responsible-practice-of-science/>

⁹ <https://council.science/current/news/unleashing-science/>

- The multilateral dialogue should focus on questions related to and relevant to science rather than on political or ideological issues.
- It is important maintain global compatibility and to respect the diversity and national characteristics derived from different histories and cultures, and to pay particular attention to the interests of developing countries.
- The approach should be a stepwise one – values should be gradually discussed and determined, rather than pre-supposing them or having them as pre-conditions.
- In some parts of the world, some of the principles and values go by different names, or the emphasis is put differently, so it is indeed important to agree on terminology and on common approaches. For instance, ‘scientific responsibility’, ‘transparency’, ‘science as a common good’, ‘balanced (international) cooperation and the fair distribution of benefits from scientific research’ should also be seen as values and should be discussed accordingly.

First expressions of interest to work on specific principles / values in the thematic workshops were made by a number of countries:

- Ethics and research integrity: South Africa, joined by India, Mexico, Morocco and the U.S.
- Academic and scientific freedom: Germany, joined by Finland and the U.S.
- Gender equality and inclusiveness: Spain, joined by India and Mexico
- Intellectual property: India and Morocco
- Research excellence: Italy
- Open science: France, joined by South Africa, Egypt, India, Mexico and Spain
- Ethics of [the application of] artificial intelligence: Brazil and India
- Value creation and ‘science as a common good’: Austria

The participants of the meeting were invited to confirm these expressions of interest, submit additional ones, as well as to propose additional comments (if any) to the European Commission **by 29 July 2022**. These comments and expressions of interest will then be taken into account in the planning of the first thematic workshops, which will be sent out to all participants subsequently.

Remarks by the Presidency of the Council of the European Union

On behalf of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Deputy Minister Radka Wildová of the Czech Republic underlined the importance of the multilateral dialogue, welcomed the engagement of the all countries present and pledged to follow up on the important work done by the French Presidency of the Council in the first half of the year. This open multilateral dialogue will enhance a shared understanding of the principles and values, which should underpin international cooperation in research and innovation, thus promoting reciprocity and a level playing field.

Closing remarks

Closing the meeting, Director Maria Cristina Russo thanked all participants for their presence and their active contributions to the discussion and extended her thanks to Sir Peter Gluckman for his inspiring keynote address.

She noted that the European Commission was very much looking forward to continuing to work with all of the invited countries and stakeholders as part of this multilateral dialogue, which will be conducted in an open, inclusive and participatory manner. She also reassured the participants that the work in the subsequent thematic workshops would take into account and would build on the important work that is being done or has already been accomplished in existing international structures, such as by the UNESCO, the OECD Global Science Forum, the Global Research Council, the G7 or the World Medical Association.

She reminded the participants that the first thematic workshop was planned for Thursday, 20 October

2022, in a hybrid (physical-virtual) format. Invitations together with an information note would be sent out separately to all participants nearer the time.

Ms Russo also reminded the participants that they were invited to send in additional comments, suggestions and expressions of interest **by 29 July**, so that they could be taken into account in the preparations of the thematic workshops. Replies should be sent directly to Richard Burger at Richard.Burger@ec.europa.eu.

PARTICIPANTS (BY COUNTRY AND STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATION):
FIRST MEETING, MULTILATERAL DIALOGUE ON PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR INTERNATIONAL
R&I COOPERATION, FRIDAY, 08 JULY 2022

Countries	
Argentina	Israel
Armenia	Italy
Australia	Japan
Austria	Kosovo
Belgium	Latvia
Brazil	Luxembourg
Bulgaria	Malta
Canada	Mexico
Chile	Moldova
China	Montenegro
Croatia	Morocco
Czech Republic	North Macedonia
Denmark	Netherlands
Egypt	Norway
Faroe Islands	Portugal
Finland	Romania
France	Slovenia
Georgia	South Africa
Germany	Spain
Greece	Sweden
Hungary	Switzerland
India	United Kingdom
Ireland	U.S.A.

Stakeholder organisations	
ERIC Forum	The Guild
EU-LIFE	
European Alliance for SSH	Individual researchers representatives

European Commission	Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of the European Union
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