

## 8<sup>th</sup> EU– Egypt Joint S&T Cooperation Committee Meeting

25 November 2021

### Minutes

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The 8th meeting of the EU-Egypt Joint Scientific and Technological (S&T) Cooperation Committee took place virtually under the co-chairmanship of Ms Nienke Buisman, Head of Unit, Global Approach & International Cooperation in Research & Innovation (R&I), Directorate-General for R&I of the European Commission, on behalf of the European Union, and Prof. Mohamed El-Shinawi, Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, on behalf of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

On the Egyptian side, representatives from the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT), and the Egyptian Science , Technology and Innovation Funding Authority participated in the meeting. On the EU side, there were representatives from the European Commission's Directorate-General for R&I, Directorate -General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Directorate - General for Education Youth, Sports and Culture, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the European External Action Services.

The meeting was an opportunity for exchanging information and focusing on a discussion aiming at ensuring sustainability of EU-Egypt R&I cooperation. The two sides:

- Took note of recent research and innovation policy developments in both Egypt and the EU
- Acknowledged the progress of R&I EU-Egypt cooperation under H2020, European neighbourhood instrument (ENI), Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) and BLUEMED
- Envisaged continuing with active engagement in policy dialogue in the context of both EU-Africa High level Policy Dialogue (HLPD), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) R&I platform.
- Took note of the importance to work closely on the implementation of the R&I priorities agreed in the context of the two policy dialogue platforms.
- Acknowledged progress in cooperation under the PRIMA and the active role of Egypt as co-chair. The two sides intend to start reflecting on the future role of the PRIMA in synergies with EU policies and other initiatives in the region
- Took note of cooperation prospects under Horizon Europe (HE), particularly under the Africa initiative, and thematic areas including human capital development as well as blue economy.

The EU side fully highlighted the role of R&I in the renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood<sup>1</sup> and:

- Highlighted the openness of Horizon Europe to participation of neighbourhood countries including Egypt
- Acknowledged the informal interest Egypt has expressed in association to Horizon Europe during the 7th EU-Egypt Association Committee meeting on 5th October 2021 in Cairo, and highlighted the need for a Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement on the general principles of Egypt's participation in EU programmes to be in place before negotiations can start.
- Encouraged the Egyptian side to proceed with a speedy and formal nomination of a Horizon Europe NCP in order to support further engagement of Egyptian entities in the programme.
- Expressed interest of JRC's support to develop a national technology transfer roadmap, should Egyptian side be interested.
- Presented Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters, and the Mediterranean lighthouse on tackling marine pollution encouraged strong engagement from Egyptian side.
- Encouraged the Egyptian side to further explore opportunities under ERC

Egyptian side highlighted major recent policy developments and:

- Egypt is keen on tightening cooperation with European countries in all areas of mutual interest whereby Egypt remains committed to promoting educational excellence, responsible research and innovation. More concrete steps were implemented since the launching of Egypt STI strategy 2030 which put a clear emphasis on international collaboration and European collaboration. Egypt participated in number of Co-Fund programs that aim to further support European collaboration in research and innovation. On the other side, Horizon 2020 results showed good progress in Egyptian participation and the PRIMA program is considered a significant milestone in strengthening European collaboration in the region. The Egyptian delegate reconfirmed the interest in the association agreement to Horizon Europe.
- Egypt is committed to working at different levels within its STI strategy and sustainable development vision to boost the overall capacity of its institutions and in achieving more resilient, inclusive growth and employment opportunities in key priority areas including Energy, Water, Agro-Food and health.
- The Egyptian delegate highlighted the importance of African-African collaboration and Euro-African collaboration to Egypt. The country firmly believes in the need to invest more and support collaborative research and innovation in Africa to address the pressing socio-economic challenges that afflict many African countries, including sustainable agriculture, industrialization process, health care systems development.
- The Egyptian delegate highlighted the recent efforts exerted in Egypt as evident by the significant growth of the number of peer-reviewed publications and citations in the past decade in addition to a package of incentives for researchers including a set of legislative measures to support an enabling environment for research and innovation.
- Egypt is continually making significant efforts to develop the higher education sector in the country through implementing infrastructure projects and ICT tools while expanding

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[https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint\\_communication\\_renewed\\_partnership\\_southern\\_neighbourhood.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf)

educational and research facilities and promoting excellence in education, including establishing content-based virtual classrooms, developing online libraries with e-learning platforms through the Egyptian Knowledge Bank and Egyptian Innovation Bank.

- The Egyptian delegate acknowledges the importance of finalizing the nomination of Horizon Europe NCPs which shall be finalized in the next few weeks.

Next steps:

- Continue with the cooperation in both the policy dialogue with the African Union (HLPD) and the Union for the Mediterranean in the context of the two policy dialogue platforms and especially in view of the EU-AU Summit in February 2022 (joint Innovation Agenda) and the UfM R&I Ministerial (June 2022).
- Follow up on the process of nominating NCPs for HE
- Organize a dedicated meeting for Egypt to further learn about the topic of association to HE
- Further explore Egypt's interest in the openness of the EDCTP/GHP
- Further explore possible cooperation in the topics of technology transfer and R&I capacity building and organize bilateral meetings with JRC and DG NEAR