

RESEARCH MEETS DIPLOMACY: EUROPE AS A GLOBAL ACTOR

INSIGHTS FROM THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES FOR EU EXTERNAL ACTION

5 June 2014 Brussels, Belgium

Conference Report



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I. INTRODUCTION

For several decades, the European Union (EU) has been engaging with countries and cultures around the world. Over time, its activities as a global player have expanded into ever more domains. To support and accompany these activities, the Union has been funding research projects in the field of the social sciences and humanities (SSH) for a number of years. Made possible through the Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation (FP7 and the newly launched Horizon 2020), these projects are being conducted under the thematic headings "Europe in the World" (FP7) and "Europe's Role as Global Actor" (Horizon 2020). EU-funded SSH research projects systematically produce policy-relevant insights into EU foreign policy and global affairs, generating knowledge of potential use to the Union and its partners.

The conference "Research meets diplomacy: Europe as a global actor" was part of an on-going effort to bring the findings of these research projects to the attention of interested policy makers and stakeholders, while seizing the opportunity for a joint reflection involving policy-makers and researchers on future research agendas. Organized by the "Reflective Societies" unit of the European Commission's Directorate General for Research and Innovation (RTD) in cooperation with the EU-funded "Flash-IT" dissemination project, the conference brought together some 120 researchers, diplomats, policy-makers, business representatives and civil society actors. Held in Brussels on 5 June 2014, the conference featured over 30 speakers hailing from the academic sector, EU institutions and services, prominently including the European External Action Service (EEAS), and civil society. The interactions between members of the EU's diplomatic service and the invited researchers - many of them coordinators of FP7 projects - gave the conference substantial added value.

This report provides an overview of the major insights gained at the conference. It begins with some background to the conference (II.), then highlights key research results from presentations given at the event and describes proposed directions for future research (III.), before offering a reflection on knowledge sharing between Europe's research and policy-making communities (IV.). The conclusion looks toward the future of research on the EU as a global actor (V.). More information about the conference - including the agenda and speaker presentations - can be found in the annex (VI.) and online.

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BACKGROUND: EU-funded research in the social sciences and humanities from FP7 to Horizon 2020

II. BACKGROUND: EU-funded research in the social sciences and humanities - from FP7 to Horizon 2020

The European Union has a long history of funding research on global issues and external policies. In the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7), which lasted from 2007 to 2013, a specific research activity under the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities programme was devoted to the study of "Europe in the World". The key rationale for funding research projects in this field was to gain a better understanding of the interactions between world regions and their implications, especially for the EU, and to address major challenges at the global level.

The activity "Europe in the World" had three research focuses:

"Interactions and interdependences between world regions and their implications" examined the role of the EU in a geopolitical and economic perspective and on paths of development in different world regions. The projects funded under this heading have a broad scope, ranging from issues of sustainable development, with a particular focus on sustainable governance and access to natural resources, to questions of international politics and global governance more generally. A number of recent projects looks into the sociopolitical situation in the strategic area of the EU's neighbourhood, with the South Mediterranean and the Caucasus featuring prominently among the areas under study. Another cluster of projects is centred on issues of development and poverty reduction, looking for instance at historical patterns underdevelopment, at poverty entry and exit processes and social innovation in developing country contexts.

"Conflict, peace and human rights" studies the role of the EU in conflict resolution and the articulation of the rule of law and protection of human rights at European and international level. Projects that focus on conflict resolution look, for instance, at the role of diasporas in conflicts, at the effectiveness of international humanitarian law, at the role of private military and security companies, as well as the role of civil society and the media in conflict resolution. Other projects study the place of human rights in EU external policies and the perception that external actors have of the human rights situation in Europe.

Research in the area of "Europe's changing role in the world" specifically assesses the role of the EU as an actor in multilateral governance arrangements.

Several projects in this area also studied how the role of the European Union as a global actor is perceived in other world regions and countries.

The projects funded so far have provided for an extremely interesting and varied body of research. Access to the projects' findings can easily be gained via the CORDIS database and through the numerous publications prepared by the Directorate General for Research and Innovation. A synopsis of the projects funded under the abovementioned domains can be accessed here.

Research into global affairs will continue in the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, whose Specific Programme explicitly calls for research on "Europe's role as a global actor, notably regarding human rights and global justice". Picking up on this, the 2015 Work Programme for Societal Challenge 6 contains a call for proposals entitled "Europe as a global actor".2 This call comprises ten research-oriented topics that look essentially at the EU's relations with its neighbouring regions and delve into its role as a foreign policy player, in particular regarding development policy, crisis management and cultural and science diplomacy. Two additional topics in the abovementioned call will provide financial support to EU activities of international cooperation in research and innovation, including research and innovation policy dialogues with key third countries and regions.

To take stock of the vast array of research projects and mark the transition between FP7 and Horizon 2020, the conference "Research meets diplomacy: Europe as a global actor" came at a timely moment. On the one hand, it offered an opportunity to present some of the main results of the extensive research conducted over the course of FP7. On the other hand, it allowed stakeholders to explore a number of ideas about future research on EU foreign policy.

During the conference, researchers and policy-makers gave the audience their take on a set of important questions, namely:

- Which insights have FP7 projects brought (or can still bring) to foreign policy making/diplomacy?
- Which new knowledge is needed for sound foreign policy making, and how can it be realistically delivered by European research projects?
- What future research themes can better support foreign policy making in the EU?

The discussions were organised around four panels, whose broad conclusions are presented in the following sections, answering essentially the first and last of the three questions. Answers that the conference gave to the second question are summarized in part IV. The first panel looked at the EU's capacities as a global actor, almost five years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The second panel was focused on the EU's neighbourhood - and in particular on the South-East Mediterranean given the strategic importance of this region. The last

 $^{^{}m 1}$ The latest publication in this area is titled "A global actor in search of a strategy - European Union foreign policy between multilateralism and bilateralism". It can be accessed $\frac{\text{here}}{\text{here}}$. 2 See the Annex for Details. The Societal Challenge 6 Work Programme for 2015 can be accessed $\frac{\text{here}}{\text{here}}$.

BACKGROUND: EU-funded research in the social sciences and humanities

two panels discussed the EU's role in the wider world, focusing on global challenges in two regions that are gaining increasing attention at EU level: sustainable governance of natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean and political challenges - including climate change - in the Asia-Pacific region.

RESEARCH MEETS DIPLOMACY: key themes and major insights

III. Research meets diplomacy: key themes and major insights

1. The EU's capacities as a global actor

The debate on the EU's capacities as a global player has been thriving, especially since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in late 2009, which created the function of an EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) supported by a novel European External Action Service. This panel's intention was to take stock of the research on the Union's preconditions for acting on the global stage, including its legal-institutional framework for foreign policy making, its instruments and strategies. It focused on understanding the advances and limits of EU capacities almost five years after the Lisbon Treaty entered into force.

Panellists addressed the issue of EU capacities from various angles. Shaun Breslin, who coordinates the large-scale FP7 project GR:EEN³, argued that the Lisbon Treaty may have actually raised unrealistic expectations - internally and externally - about the EU's capabilities as a global actor. While it promised greater coherence and the concentration of most external policy-related powers in the hands of a single representative (HR) and body (EEAS), this coherence has remained an illusion in many fields. As a matter of fact, the EU is considerably weakened by Member States who pursue their own, often conflicting policy initiatives. Examples examined by the GR:EEN project include European responses to the Arab Spring or diverse national strategies towards securing energy supplies. What is more, the EU's foreign policy has been surprisingly introspective in many respects, and when engaging with third countries has often rather inflexibly tried to impose its preferences rather than working in partnership. Care should therefore be taken to devise a more flexible and targeted approach to third parties, based on a listening exercise that takes into account the actual demands of the EU's interlocutors. In this context, GR:EEN research shows that by focusing intensively on rising powers (especially China) the EU tends to neglect other important geographical zones. Also in this respect, greater flexibility may be warranted in dealing with blocs of countries in which alliances are fluid depending on the issue at hand.

Cases of successful global activity by the EU, in areas where it is a de facto global standard-setter such as food safety or chemicals regulation, show that its impact is enhanced whenever it can engage partners in its regulatory networks. For both research and policy, this insight of the GR:EEN project may entail a need to move away from a sole focus on traditional "international relations", and

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³ GR:EEN - *Global Re-ordering: Evolution through European Networks*. Grant number: 266809. Website: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/qreen/

Research meets diplomacy: key themes and major insights

(re-)consider norm diffusion as a way in which Europe can influence rule-making and induce long-term change in third countries and multilateral institutions.

From the policy makers' perspective, it was argued that while many foreign policy instruments (political/trade agreements, macro-financial assistance, reform assistance, sanctions) were working more coherently together since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU did indeed still lack a coherent vision in many areas. And although the 2003 European Security Strategy could still be considered as a valid strategic document, further strategic debates were necessary. As the EU is broadening its approach in foreign policy, moving into fields like energy security or cyber-security, a yet more comprehensive approach to external relations needs to be devised. For that reason, and following the 2013 review of the EEAS, a novel broad EU strategic document is expected to be drafted following the appointment of the new High Representative in late 2014. The exercise of drafting this document should allow for incorporating insights from the relevant research communities. The need for evidence-based recommendations was particularly pressing as regards the EU's (Eastern) neighbourhood. The fluid socio-economic and political contexts in this area need to be better understood so as to allow the EU to identify options for addressing third countries in the most fruitful way, with a convincing narrative and an adequate set of foreign policy instruments.

While agreeing with both Breslin's diagnosis that the EU lacked coherence and the generally acknowledged need for a new, comprehensive EU foreign policy strategy, Caterina Carta of Vesalius College Brussels emphasized the institutional preconditions for implementing any type of EU strategy. In the case of EU foreign policy, besides frequent Member State cacophony, the "shortcomings by design" of the EEAS's institutional structure and the at times unclear distribution of tasks between the EEAS and the Commission provide major obstacles to effective EU external activities. They are exacerbated by budget cuts in the wake of the financial and economic crisis. Against this backdrop, should the EU fail to develop a coherent strategy underpinned by the necessary resources and distribution of tasks, it faces a clear risk of decline. This pessimistic scenario was seconded by Jan Wouters, coordinator of the FP7 project FRAME⁴, who went even further in his critique by identifying a clear renationalization trend in EU foreign policy. He questioned Member States' willingness to support further EU integration in the foreign policy domain and pointed to an apparent tension between values and interests in the EU's external relations - a tension that any future EU foreign policy strategy will need to solve in a constructive manner.

Participants highlighted several areas that warrant further research in support of improved EU capacities as a global actor:

 To explore and improve EU performance, it is important to undertake case-based, context-aware research aimed at understanding challenges of EU interactions with third countries in various issue areas.

⁴ FRAME - Fostering Human Rights Among European Policies. Grant number: 320000. Website: http://www.fp7-frame.eu/

- To enhance the EU's anticipative capacities, researchers' emphasis should be placed on future-oriented themes related to economic, social (e.g. youth unemployment, demography), environmental/resourcerelated (water access, energy supply) challenges.
- o In times of financial and economic crisis, classical themes regarding the EU's foreign policy capacities may need to be revisited, including the tensions between EU institutions inter se, between EU institutions and Member States, among Member States and between values and norms.
- To support strategic debates, a better understanding needs to be gained of the various "other" channels of EU foreign policy beyond classical relations with third countries by looking into EU engagement with non-state actors and civil society in third countries and in a transnational perspective.

2. The Mediterranean area and the EU

The Mediterranean area is of particular importance to the EU. Historical ties between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea are strong. Multiple attempts at establishing durable EU-Mediterranean cooperation, especially in the trade, economic, energy, environmental and agricultural fields, have been made over the past decades. In recent years, the Mediterranean has been undergoing major political, economic and social transformations ("Arab Spring"), fuelled by demographic and technological changes, which have direct repercussions for Europe. This panel intended to take stock of research on the Mediterranean, while identifying major challenges requiring scientific scrutiny in the future.

Suggesting that "applied research is key to drive the change towards inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development" in the region, Rym Ayadi reported research findings from the FP7 project MEDPRO⁵ which she coordinated. The project undertook large-scale cost-benefit analyses of various policy scenarios for the Mediterranean region, and came to the conclusion that part of the region is bound to succumb to long-lasting conflicts unless a comprehensive long-term Euro-Mediterranean policy agenda is pursued. This type of integrated agenda is much needed, not only to ensure a transition toward greater stability and sustainability in the region, but also to avoid that such conflicts lead to negative spill-over effects in Europe and beyond. A more integrated, comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean policy agenda would rely on a common market and legal frameworks for a range of issues including water and energy. Novel forms of partnership regarding migration would equally need to be assessed. Besides water, energy and migration, other pressing policy and research challenges for the future identified by MEDPRO research were waste management, climate change, human rights, conflict prevention, employment and the development of human capital, intangibles and youth development.

⁵ MEDPRO - *Mediterranean Prospects*. Grant number: 244578. Website: http://www.medpro-foresight.eu/ See also the results of the Expert Group "EuroMed 2030" here.

The role of young people and their development in the Mediterranean is the central topic of the FP7 project SAHWA⁶. Its coordinator, Ivàn Martín, identified exclusion as the defining feature of youth in the Arab Mediterranean region, painting an alarming picture of this population. He noted that the area is home to 60 million people between the ages of 15 and 30. 40% of them - the vast majority female - are neither in education nor in employment or training. The illiteracy rate is 10%. Not surprisingly, many of the young people from the region aspire to migrate to Europe. Although programmes that seek to empower and mobilize youth do exist, they often remain without effect. As far as the role of the EU is concerned, Martín argued that youth are not properly factored into larger policy considerations (e.g. on mobility schemes) for the region. The European Neighbourhood Policy in particular does not sufficiently focus on youth inclusion. The SAHWA coordinator therefore advocates a broader "ENP Vision for (Youth) Inclusion and Ownership", which could create more opportunities for further development, especially among young people in the Mediterranean.

In the ensuing discussion, which included EU policy-makers working on the Mediterranean area, participants agreed that the current situation was to be considered as both a major problem and an opportunity. Reforms of the security sector as well as issues related to the environment and climate change were singled out as significant topics of common concern for the EU and the Mediterranean. It was argued that evidence upon which policies are currently based in the region is often flawed, and that more reliable knowledge about the region was needed. Evidence-based policy making is particularly important to counter thinking in terms of "Arab exceptionalism", which posits that nondemocratic Arab regimes must be accommodated because there is no viable alternative for the region. Contesting this view, panellists estimated that despite the faltering of the political transition hoped for in the wake of the Arab Spring, democratic transformation in the region remains possible. To counter the exceptionalist fallacy through rigorous investigation and dissemination of research results, EU-funded research initiatives involving scientists from both shores of the Mediterranean can be of utmost importance.

The panellists largely agreed on a future research agenda that addresses the following points:

- Understanding and addressing long-term socio-economic challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean region: issues such as mass migrations, energy and climate change challenges, water scarcity and waste management need to be better understood and possible solutions articulated, including policy options for the EU.
- Understanding and promoting the drivers of inclusive and sustainable growth: human capital and intangibles, new forms of win-win partnerships (South-South and North-South cooperation), new growth models and co-development need to be explored.

⁶ SAHWA - Empowering the young generation: towards a new social contract in South and East Mediterranean countries. Grant number: 613174. Website: http://www.sahwa.eu/ See also project POWER2YOUTH (Annex).

 A better understanding of security-related problems, conflicts and religious tensions in the South and East Mediterranean region was equally identified as important. This includes examination of human rights situations, democratisation processes and the role of various types of actors in the regions, including the EU.

3. Latin American and Caribbean countries and the EU

The political, economic and social context in which Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries are embedded has profoundly changed over the past ten years, and so has the relation between the LAC region and Europe. Due to their interlinked history, the two regions exhibit cultural and political affinities and share many common values. EU and LAC relations are also marked by strong economic ties: the EU is the second largest trade partner of the LAC countries and the leading foreign investor in the region. However, given the difficulties for LAC on the road to regional integration, a perspective of inter-regional cooperation between the two sides is struggling to take hold. In practice, EU-LAC relations have crystallized into what was defined by the panellists as a "multiactor setting". The EU is interacting with different types of partners in the region. Some are regional or sub-regional organisations like the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Others are individual countries which the EU considers as strategic partners such as Brazil and Mexico. A number of small Caribbean states are actually part of the EU territory and others are associated countries.

Making sense of such multi-actor and multi-level governance arrangements is, according to the panellists, one of the main challenges facing EU and LAC policy makers. The need to raise the overall profile of EU-LAC relations, based on shared interests and values, constitutes an additional challenge. Both the EU and LAC would stand to gain from turning their relationship into a partnership of equals, characterized by a convergence of positions in international fora, enhanced knowledge sharing and economic cooperation. In this context, the panellists also discussed the current CELAC-EU format for cooperation and questioned its effectiveness in light of the heterogeneity of countries making up the CELAC block and of the differences in scope and competences between the EU and CELAC. One alternative scenario for cooperation, advanced by the ATLANTIC FUTURE project⁷, would consist in strengthening the EU-LAC relation within the framework of a common Atlantic space, encompassing North and South America, Europe and Africa. Trade partnerships would have to be part of this design, in order to counterbalance China's presence and influence in the region, together with other forms of cooperation.

⁷ ATLANTIC FUTURE - Towards an Atlantic area? Mapping trends, perspectives and interregional dynamics between Europe, Africa and the Americas. Grant number: 320091. Website: http://www.atlanticfuture.eu/

Research meets diplomacy: key themes and major insights

Another key theme in the discussion, driven by the coordinators of the EUfunded projects ENGOV⁸ and COMET-LA⁹, Barbara Hogenboom and Maria del Mar Delgado Serrano respectively, was how to achieve sustainable governance of natural resources in LAC. The region is, in fact, characterized by an immense wealth of such resources. The researchers acknowledged that non-renewable natural resources are being managed more equitably in the context of an elite shift that has interested a number of Latin American countries (for instance Lula's government in Brazil, Correa's in Ecuador, to name just two of the leftleaning governments that were swept to power in the early 2000s). However, over-reliance on resource-based growth remains a reality, and natural resources are still being exploited in ways that disregard the environmental impact of extractive activities. Given their symbiotic relation with nature, indigenous communities often bear the biggest burden in terms of lost livelihoods and destruction of cultural and social values. Extractive activities are now one of the main causes of social tensions and conflicts in LAC. Researchers concluded that democratizing governance of natural resource use - by bringing the interests of all stakeholders, especially local communities, into the decision-making process is an effective way of achieving a more environmentally and socially sustainable model of development. They urged anyone approaching the issue from outside to carefully consider the perspective of local communities. Also, it was found that joining locally owned knowledge with scientifically supported methods may facilitate progress toward sustainability. Research by the COMET-LA project confirmed that Europe is recognized in the region as a "powerful and respectful actor", a status that brings with it some responsibilities. As a global actor and self-declared champion of the environmental cause, the EU is expected to act in support of participatory decision-making that helps protect the region's rich natural capital.

During the debate, a number of areas were identified where further research is needed to effectively support policy making in the region:

- Dynamics of inter-regional cooperation in LAC and the role of Brazil and other leading countries as well as their implications for EU foreign policy: cooperation among countries in the region remains an issue that needs to be understood across many policy fields, beyond economy and trade.
- Democratic and participatory governance of natural resources in LAC, with a particular focus on climate change mitigation strategies: research could examine which actors and processes facilitate a more effective governance, and what external actors like the EU can contribute to these processes.
- Socio-economic impacts of cocaine production and drug trafficking in LAC and the impact of drug supply on the EU.

⁸ ENGOV - Environmental Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean: Developing Frameworks for Sustainable and Equitable Natural Resource Use. Grant number: 266710. Website: http://www.engov.eu/en/
⁹ COMET-LA - COmmunity-based Management of EnvironmenTal challenges in Latin America. Grant number: 282845. Website: http://www.comet-la.eu/. Another FP7 project worth mentioning in this context is DESAFIO - Democratisation of Water and Sanitation Governance by Means of Socio-Technical Innovation. Grant number: 320303. Website: http://desafioglobal.org/.

 EU-LAC migration flows: research should take into account the impact of the recent economic and financial crisis on return migration and on European migration to LAC countries.

4. The Asia-Pacific region and the EU

Given its peripheral location from the European perspective, the Asia-Pacific region has historically figured less prominently on the EU policy agenda, and has attracted fewer researchers' attention. Due to its highly dynamic economic and demographic profile as well as an increasing political presence, it is however a global region of growing importance. For that reason, the EU is well advised to improve its dealings with this part of the world. This has started to become recognised in EU political circles, as shown by recent visits of the High Representative to the region. Research is a critical support to this process as it improves the understanding in Europe of the capabilities and needs of the region. One possible obstacle to this are marked differences in culture between Europe and Asia that spill over into the field of science. Further effort is thus required to identify appropriate modalities that recognise the heterogeneity of the region, existing sub-regional groupings, the competence of research institutions and universities and topics of mutual interest. Among these topics, the increased attention to climate change and its impacts has shifted the issue of sustainable management of the environment and natural resources to the centre of the EU-Asia-Pacific cooperation agenda. Accordingly, the conference's final session featured a debate on the challenges facing Pacific Islands nations and on the impacts of climate change on the inhabitants of the Pacific alongside discussions about the EU's role in Southeast Asia. The debate was preceded by presentations from two EU-funded FP7 projects, ECOPAS¹⁰ and SEATIDE¹¹.

The ECOPAS project is designed to provide coordination and support to research and policy communities on issues connected to climate change and related processes in the Pacific Islands region. In his presentation, the project coordinator, Edvard Hviding, stressed the fact that the Pacific, with its 11 million inhabitants, can be compared to a sea of islands with rural subsistence economies. Regarding climate change in particular, he pointed out how vulnerable these populations are to sea level rise and advocated the need for the EU to enhance its knowledge of the Pacific and its environmental contexts. As global leader in the fight against climate change, the EU has a special role to play both in climate change mitigation generally and in reducing climate change externalities in the Pacific region in particular. Action in this area is also required to preserve one of the world's largest biodiversity hotspots, as Karin Zaunberger (European Commission, DG Environment) argued. A sound understanding of the socioeconomic, environmental, political and cultural contexts on the ground is indispensable to adopt adequate policy responses integrating environmental and

¹⁰ ECOPAS - *European Consortium for Pacific Studies*. Grant number: 320298. Website http://www.ecopas.info/

¹¹ SEATIDE - Integration in Southeast Asia: Trajectories of Inclusion, Dynamics of Exclusion. Grant number: 320221. Website: http://www.seatide.eu/?content=home

developmental policies in the most adequate fashion, while taking account of the geopolitical context in this region of the world, strongly dominated by Australia.

Focusing on Southeast Asia, the SEATIDE project aims to take a fresh look at the benefits and risks of integration in this region. Given that knowledge about this area is sometimes limited among EU policy-makers, project coordinator Andrew Hardy made the case for innovative ways of promoting dialogue between researchers and policy makers. He specifically advocated a focus on field study and sharing experience on the ground. In this context, he shared the fascinating results of an investigation into the cultural significance of a long-neglected Vietnamese artefact known as the Long Wall of Quang Ngai. The research revealed much about ethnic relations, politics and poverty in a Vietnamese province, with results that can be generalised to other areas of the region. Its findings were brought to the attention of high-level EU policy-makers by engaging them into the field study.

Parting from this practical example, Hardy argued that the EU should strive to move from a role of observer to one of active player in the area. Development aid is one of the main channels through which the EU is contributing in the region so far, mainly via the European Development Fund. However, the panellists concluded that the EU could among others also more and more become a source of best practices in terms of arrangements for more sustainable governance of resources. The Common Agricultural Policy and the Blue Growth Agenda were brought as examples of mechanisms that could be taken as a blueprint for further cooperation and coordination of policies in Southeast Asia.

During the debate, a number of areas were identified where further research is needed to effectively support policy making:

- o First and foremost, the further *development of European research* capacities on the Asia-Pacific region in itself, in cooperation with actors from the Asia-Pacific, was seen as a necessary measure, given (i) the current predominance of research from Oceania and Southeast Asia, and (ii) the fact that the knowledge of the EU among actors in the region tends to be much greater than what is known inside the EU about the Asia-Pacific. Closing this knowledge gap is thus a priority challenge.
- Beyond the need to establish structures and engage with local research actors, the area of sustainable development was singled out as particularly crucial field for further research and engagement.
- A better understanding of security risks in the region was equally identified as important from a policy and research perspective, also for the EU.
- Finally, it was argued that research should focus on the role of specific, possibly lead actors in the region (e.g. Australia, Indonesia).

Ample opportunities for further engagement with the region exist, as 2014 was declared the International Year of Small Island Developing States, celebrating the contributions that this group of countries has made to the world. Beyond that, 2015 will be the European Year for Development.

Reflections on the dialogue between research and policy

IV. Reflections on the dialogue between research and policy

The dialogue between researchers - whether from the social sciences and humanities or other scientific disciplines - and policy-makers is characterized by a well-known tension. This tension opposes the world of research, which is focused on discovery and engages with complexity, and the world of policy making, which concentrates on decisions and often looks for clear-cut answers to complex problems. The two worlds also operate with different time horizons. In a diplomatic context, these differences become even more apparent. Diplomats have to regularly operate in very fluid, fast moving contexts, often reacting to crisis situations. Their working environment is regulated by a dense net of formal and informal rules, and they frequently work with classified information to which the public, including researchers, often do not have access. And yet, the value of scientific insights for well-informed policy-making, also in the foreign policy domain, is widely acknowledged.

For that reason, it is important to find adequate ways to bring these two communities together for their mutual benefit. This implies first and foremost mediating between different communication cultures. In general terms, what researchers can do to engage in effective science communication is to translate their findings into a language and format that is accessible to policy makers who may not share the same conceptual-theoretical background and frequently face time constraints. The dissemination of scientific findings can then take different forms: ranging from oral exchanges (e.g. targeted briefings) and research-topolicy workshops to written presentations. Policy briefs, for instance, synthetize complex arguments in a clear and concise format, underpinning arguments and recommendations by research findings. Policy makers, however, are not only on the receiving end. While they need to be prepared to listen and learn, they can also actively contribute to research activities, for example as interview partners or experts in focus groups who share their inside knowledge with scholars. Furthermore, they can serve as "sounding boards" for scholars who need to test out ideas. In this way, policy makers can become embedded into research processes, whose very results may ultimately benefit their work.

This type of mutually beneficial exchange was also envisaged when organising the conference "Research meets diplomacy: Europe as a global actor". While the substantial results of the dialogue on the EU as a global actor are summarized in the preceding sections, panellists made a host of interesting suggestions regarding the further need for, ways and means of engaging researchers and policy makers, especially in the specific context of foreign policy with its particular knowledge needs.

Participants generally lauded the idea of organising frequent exchanges between scientific communities and the policy-making world. They also highlighted the practical difficulties of realizing the full potential of such exchanges, however. Besides the general constraints enumerated above, they noted a tendency among EU institutions to overly rely on a small group of professional "science communicators" and think tanks, which have considerable experience and a certain reputation when it comes to translating research results into policy language. This also implies, however, that the expertise of many others is not sufficiently taken into account in political decision-making processes. This has to do with deficits in making this knowledge available on the part of the researchers, but also with limited efforts on the side of policy makers to locate and harvest expertise from researchers with less access to the Brussels circuit.

The type of knowledge that is needed in a foreign policy context should, as a panellist from the European Parliament argued, in the best of cases be based on thorough theoretical/conceptual foundations, which provide the unique valueadded of a scientific approach, combined with solid expertise and awareness of the policy and institutional contexts of (EU) foreign policy. Additionally, it should also be based on culturally informed experience from the field (e.g. in a third country or in an issue area like human rights promotion, often both). Research that is to provide such knowledge faces a number of challenges, which the policy-making arena and those funding science need to help overcome. Thorough knowledge of the institutional contexts pre-supposes cross-sector mobility between academia and policy-making that is currently often not much appreciated by either of the two systems. Field experience requires engagement with local knowledge and contexts that depend on funding for European and foreign researchers to jointly work on their research agendas. The translation of research results in foreign policy contexts regularly requires a common conceptual language and cultural understanding that can often not be gained by simple ad hoc exchanges, but require more profound engagements. Networks should be established that provide for the possibility of constant exchanges between EU and non-EU based researchers and policy makers throughout the design and implementation phases of research. The innovative example shared by the coordinator of the SEATIDE project, which offered high-level policy makers from the EU the opportunity to share parts of a field study trip with researchers in Vietnam, could be a source of inspiration in this regard.

For many reasons, further improving dialogue between researchers in the social sciences and humanities and policy makers is a crucial challenge. In an ever more complex world, policy makers will need to rely on the best available evidence if they want to make informed choices. Inversely, if social science researchers want their undertakings to have a societal added value that transcends the undisputed intrinsic value of contributing to a body of knowledge within a given scientific discipline, they must consider stepping up their efforts to communicate with policy makers.



V. Conclusion

For a number of years, EU-funded collaborative research has been conducted as a valuable contribution to both the growing body of independent scholarship on the role of the EU in global affairs *and* to EU foreign policy-making.

The conference "Research meets diplomacy: the EU as a global actor" provided an attempt at systematically taking stock of some key strands of this research, while gathering ideas for future topics of research. Debates underscored that the timing of the event was right. The "Strategic Agenda for the Union in Times of Change" outlined by the European Council in late June 2014 indicates the necessity to reinforce the "Union as a strong global actor" as one of five priority areas for the EU's work over the years to come. As speakers from the European External Action Service rightly pointed out, this strategic outlook and the 2014/15 transition in the EU institutions and the appointment of a new EU High Representative, constitute a unique moment in time for discussions on the role that the EU can, does and should play as a global actor as it moves toward 2020.

By consequence, a window of opportunity is opening in the second half of 2014 and early 2015 for scholars to feed the findings of their research into strategic debates at EU level. This will be most effective if (i) researchers manage to formulate messages in a way that speaks to the key puzzles policy makers are currently faced with, and (ii) policy-makers display high levels of openness for the results of scientific research, also from the social sciences and humanities. Participants at the conference presented many proposals on how to make the dialogue between scholars and policy makers even more fruitful, especially in the fast moving diplomatic context. Continuous engagement that provides policy makers with insights into research processes may be a viable way forward in this respect.

Another key message that emerged from each of the panel discussions is closely related to the on-going strategic debates. The existence of evidence on the EU's options to strengthen its diplomatic capacities and on the roles it plays in various parts of the globe is a necessary condition for a stronger EU presence in the world. It is not sufficient, however. It takes political actors to make use of this evidence, choose from various options and ensure that the EU can act effectively as the "strong global actor" it intends to be. It was repeatedly argued that this directly engages the responsibility of the Member States and their willingness to further pool resources to give the Union the means to make a substantial contribution to global affairs.

On its path to becoming an even stronger global actor, the EU may benefit from several horizontal insights on what has been - and what still can be - learned from the research projects discussed at the conference. Participants argued that

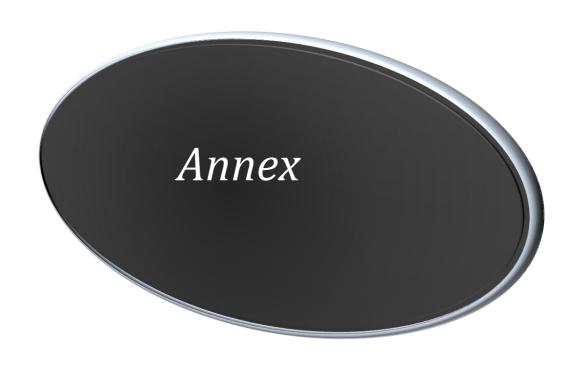
¹² European Council. *Presidency conclusions*. 26-27 June 2014.

Conclusion

for both EU foreign policy-making and research on the EU as a global actor, it is desirable to:

- Overcome EU centrism in research and policy and emphasize local knowledge: while EU-internal discussions about its capacities, the best way to organise its diplomatic service etc. are of crucial importance, the strategic debates on its foreign policy cannot stop at this. As the world evolves and global politics is arguably becoming more complex, the Union needs a sound understanding of the environments it operates in. This also entails reaping the benefits of local knowledge, which calls for close cooperation between EU and third country researchers.
- Look beyond the BRICS and think in terms of global regions and/or spaces: the current focus on the emerging countries comprises a tendency to neglect the growing importance of other actors, whether members of the G-20 such as Indonesia or regional heavyweights such as Nigeria, to name but two. The EU is well-advised to engage with these players, and research can support this engagement through providing the necessary understanding of the political, socio-economic and cultural contexts in third countries and regions.
- Look beyond trade and economics when it comes to EU external activities: participants noted a tendency for the EU to focus on its market power and privilege trade and economic relationships with third countries to the detriment of other policy areas. This trend is also reflected in research on EU external activities. Without contesting the undeniable importance of the trade and economic sectors, it will be important for the EU to interact with third countries even more actively around other issues, be they related to sustainable development, security or human rights. Further research on such areas is therefore equally of interest.

Although the event focused on numerous themes of undoubted importance, it could by no means do justice to the entire range of interesting research on pressing policy problems related to the EU as a global actor and conducted by FP7 projects. To enable a further consolidation of existing knowledge while facilitating the production of innovative insights into new domains, Horizon 2020 provides, especially with its Societal Challenge 6, the opportunity to finance further research on the EU as a global actor. Some of the burning themes placed on the table throughout the event (e.g. concerning the EU's neighbourhood, Southern and Eastern) are at least partially addressed through calls under the area "Europe as a global actor" published for 2015.



Conference programme

Research meets diplomacy: Europe as a Global Actor

Insights from the Socio-economic sciences and humanities for EU external action
5 June 2014

MADOU Auditorium, Place Madou 1, B-1210 Brussels

9:00 Registration

9:15 Welcome

Stefaan Hermans, Head of Unit B6 'Reflective Societies', DG Research & Innovation (RTD), European Commission (EC)

Introduction

SSH research in support of EU foreign policy: from FP7 to Horizon 2020 - **Cristina Marcuzzo** and **Simon Schunz**, Unit B6 'Reflective Societies', DG RTD, EC

International cooperation in research and innovation - **Angela Liberatore**, Deputy Head of Unit C3 'European Neighbourhood Policy, Africa and the Gulf', DG RTD, EC

Ensuring dialogue between researchers and policy-makers - **Natalia Morazzo**, Agency for the Promotion of European Research (APRE), FLASH-IT project coordinator

10:00 Coffee break

10:15 The EU's capacities as a global actor

Chair: Simon Schunz, Unit B6 'Reflective Societies', DG RTD, EC

Research on the EU's capacities as a foreign policy actor - internal and external perspectives - **Shaun Breslin**, University of Warwick, GR:EEN project coordinator

The EU's future foreign policy capacities – what is needed and how research can contribute to getting there - **Carl Hartzell**, Strategic Planning Division, European External Action Service

The EU's multi-facetted diplomacy and the quest for coherence - **Wanda Troszczynska-van Genderen**, DG External Policies, European Parliament

The EU's foreign policy capacities post Lisbon - strategies and instruments for the future - **Caterina Carta**, Vesalius College Brussels

Discussant: **Jan Wouters**, Director, Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, KU Leuven, FRAME project coordinator

11:45 The EU's neighbourhood policy in the Mediterranean area

Chair: Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero, Unit B6 'Reflective Societies', DG RTD, EC

Recent trends in the EU-Mediterranean relationship - **Pekka Hakala**, DG External Policies, European Parliament

Research on the Mediterranean region and what it implies for the EU's foreign policy - **Rym Ayadi**, Centre for European Policy Studies, MEDPRO project coordinator

The young generation in the Mediterranean region - **Iván Martín**, Barcelona Centre for International Affairs - CIDOB, SAHWA project coordinator

Evidence-based future EU neighbourhood policy vis-à-vis the Mediterranean - **Alar Olljum**, Division for North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq, European External Action Service

Discussant: Amine Ait-Chaalal, Director, Study Centre on International Crises and Conflicts, UCLouvain

13:15 Lunch break

14:30 The EU's relations with the wider world - sustainable governance of natural resources in the framework of EU-LAC relations

Chair: Cristina Marcuzzo, Unit B6 Reflective Societies, DG RTD, EC

The evolution of EU-LAC relations in a multipolar world - **Susanne Gratius**, Foundation for International Relations and Foreign Dialogue - FRIDE, Madrid, ATLANTIC FUTURE project partner

The challenge of sustainable governance of natural resources from the perspective of EU-LAC cooperation - insights from research - **Barbara Hogenboom**, Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, University of Amsterdam, ENGOV project coordinator

Participatory governance of natural resources and bottom-up initiatives - **Maria del Mar Delgado Serrano**, Universidad de Cordoba, COMET-LA project coordinator

EU-LAC relations: key priorities for cooperation and future research needs - **Francisco Acosta Soto**, Deputy Head of Division Regional Affairs, Directorate Americas, European External Action Service

Discussant: Consuelo Uribe Mallarino, Vice-rector for Research, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia

16:00 Coffee break

16:15 The EU's relations with the wider world - the EU's role in the Asia-Pacific region

Chair: Marie Ramot, Unit B6 Reflective Societies, DG RTD, EC

The Pacific as an object of study for EU research and EU-Pacific relations - state of the art and prospects - **Edvard Hviding**, University of Bergen, ECOPAS project coordinator

The importance of the Pacific for biodiversity - **Karin Zaunberger**, Unit B2 'Biodiversity', DG Environment, EC

EU - South East Asia relations - a research perspective - **Andrew Hardy**, Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, SEATIDE project coordinator

The EU and the Asia-Pacific region: the potential for greater cooperation and how research can enhance mutual understanding - **Ranieri Sabatucci**, Head of Division Southeast Asia, European External Action Service

Discussant: **Patrick Crehan**, Director of CKA, a Brussels based management consultancy firm focused on the management of research and innovation

17:45 Concluding Remarks

Terry Martin, Science-Policy Interface Agency (SPIA), FLASH-IT project **Philippe Keraudren**, Deputy Head of Unit B 6 'Reflective Societies', DG RTD, EC

18:00 End of meeting

List of participants

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Overview of projects on "Europe as a global actor"

See the related documentation on the event's web page: <u>Europe as a global actor - Synopsis of FP7 projects</u>

The 2014/2015 call "Europe as a global actor"

Societal Challenge 6 "Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies" – Work Programme 2014/2015

Reference	Title	Deadline
INT-1-2014/2015	Enhancing and focusing research and innovation cooperation with the Union's key international partner countries	29/04/2014 at 17.00.00 Brussels time for proposals targeting Russia and China 12/05/2015 at 17.00.00 Brussels time for proposals targeting Australia, USA, Brazil, South Africa, Ukraine
INT-2-2014/2015	Encouraging the research and innovation cooperation between the Union and selected regional partners	29/04/2014 at 17.00.00 Brussels time for proposals targeting Black Sea, Middle East, Africa 12/05/2015 at 17.00.00 Brussels time for proposals targeting Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood, Eastern Partnership
INT-3-2015	Europe's contribution to a value- based global order and its contestants	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00 Brussels time
INT-4-2015	The European Union's contribution to global development: in search of greater policy coherence	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00 Brussels time
INT-5-2015	Rethinking the European Union crisis response mechanism in light of recent conflicts	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00 Brussels time
INT-6-2015	Re-invigorating the partnership between the two shores of the Mediterranean	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00 Brussels time
INT-7-2015	Towards a new geopolitical order in the South and East Mediterranean region	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00 Brussels time
INT-8-2015	The European Union and the	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00

	Eastern Partnership	Brussels time
INT-9-2015	The European Union, Turkey and	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00
	its wider neighbourhood:	Brussels time
	challenges and opportunities	
INT-10-2015	The European Union and	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00
	integration challenges in the	Brussels time
	Balkans	
INT-11-2015	European cultural and science	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00
	diplomacy: exploiting the	Brussels time
	potential of culture and science	
	in the EU's external relations	
INT-12-2015	The cultural, scientific and social	28/05/2015 at 17.00.00
	dimension of EU-LAC relations	Brussels time

Read more about this call in the <u>Work Programme</u>.