

CESAER

Guiding principles for the Global Framework for S&T Cooperation

Position dated 7 April 2022

The leading universities of Science and Technology (S&T) united within [CESAER](#) welcome the EU institutions' focus on global engagement in Research and Innovation (R&I), including the [Communication](#) 'Europe's global approach to cooperation in R&I, the related [Council conclusions](#) and the [Staff Working Document](#) 'Tackling R&I Foreign Interference'.

Conflict and war pose enormous local and global threats and jeopardise global security and stability, which is a context for the debate on the Global Framework for S&T Cooperation. We condemn oppressor and aggressor regimes, express our concerns about the suffering they cause, and point out that science diplomacy is an important tool for preventing and resolving conflict.

We recall that the purpose of our universities is to conduct excellent science and develop cutting edge technology, to educate next generations (of leaders), to nurture independence of thought, and to assure ethical and trusted behaviour of academics, students and other staff, thus fostering trust of societies. We highlight our strongest commitment and adherence to scientific integrity, academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as laid down in the *Magna Charta Universitatum* ([MCU](#)), as non-negotiable specific [values](#) guiding our [contributions](#) to global S&T cooperation.

Universities, students, academics and other staff are key agents of great change and transformation in advancing knowledge societies for a prosperous, sustainable and peaceful future. As S&T have played determining roles in past wars and also in science diplomacy, we highlight that some academics and academic institutions assume societal responsibility in helping to defend and enforce peace and the rule of international law. We emphasise that governments and international organisations must empower academics and academic institutions taking on this responsibility to be thoughtful and nuanced whilst applying discretion and diligence, and must refrain from sanctioning academics and students solely on the basis of nationality.

With this position, we respond to the '[Marseille Declaration](#) on International Cooperation in R&I', seek to advance the Global Framework for S&T Cooperation, and offer four guiding principles for governments, international organisations and other partners to consider.

(i) Adhere to universal values

S&T has released tremendous forces throughout history - just think of the profound impact that combustion engines, computers, weapons and vaccines have had on our societies. Emerging [key technologies](#) are expected to have an equally profound impact on our societies in the near future.

To harness these forces and guide them towards a prosperous, sustainable and peaceful future, we call upon governments, international organisations and other partners to:

- Root the Global Framework for S&T Cooperation firmly in universal values such as those laid down in the [Charter of the United Nations](#) and the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#);
- Adopt a long term perspective and build academic capacity to build and maintain bridges supporting peace, the rule of international law, reconciliation amongst people, and inclusion of all parties in tackling local and global challenges;
- Provide generous financial support and simplified administrative procedures to help scholars and students affected by conflict and war, including those fleeing from oppressor and aggressor regimes;

(ii) Put global goals at the framework's centre and promote openness

Global goals (notably the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)) must be at the centre of the Global Framework for S&T Cooperation, with openness of S&T (as laid down in the [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#)) promoted to help achieve them. This provides a solid foundation for academia to build and maintain bridges across cultures, countries, continents and conflicts.

- We urge governments and international organisations to recognise that scientific knowledge should be as open as possible. They should remove legal and bureaucratic barriers to enable free circulation of scientific knowledge and its bearers (learners, teachers and researchers) at regional, national, European and global levels, wherever possible, and limit creation of new barriers. Any barriers to the free circulation of scientific knowledge and its bearers should be clearly justified and precise (e.g. limited to specific entities and in specific fields).
- We encourage the EU institutions to lead by example by positioning the EU as 'outwards looking and leading', as their default for S&T cooperation.

(iii) Maintain civilian focus in Horizon Europe and related programmes

Whilst taking note of the [proposed](#) "synergies between civilian and defence R&I", we point out that the EU Framework Programme for R&I and related programmes are Europe's key instruments for reaching out to global partners who share universal values and joining forces to tackle local and global challenges.

- We call upon EU institutions to maintain the civilian focus in Horizon Europe and related programmes such as Erasmus+.

Concerning the Global Framework for S&T Cooperation, we call upon all governments, international organisations and other partners to:

- Adhere to the 'as open as possible and as closed as necessary' principle when considering taking any actions related to security and stability, whilst safeguarding the 'safety and security of scientific knowledge and technology';
- Provide guidance, resources and co-created tools that allow academic institutions and academics to carry out risk-benefit analyses, such as the recently published [toolkit](#), to help understand and mitigate risks related to foreign interference;

- Ensure transparency in affiliations, funding and collaborations to enable partners to make informed decisions by, for example, making information on dependencies and sources of funding publicly available;
- Ensure that legislation on S&T export control and knowledge safety (including for recruiting researchers from other countries) and its enforcement are (i) clear, coherent and transparent; (ii) informed by scientific advice; and (iii) implemented at the institutional level by default.

(iv) Seek, associate and cherish close allies in S&T cooperation

Horizon Europe is the key instrument for implementing the EU's approach to international cooperation in R&I. We greatly welcome the progress made towards [concluding association agreements for Horizon Europe](#). However, we strongly lament the lack of progress on concluding association agreements with Switzerland and the United Kingdom. It is certainly not the right time to let short term political differences prevail above longstanding S&T cooperation and science diplomacy: we consider it crucial to associate and cherish British and Swiss partners as the EU's longest-standing and closest allies.

- We call upon the EU institutions to associate as many excellent and like-minded third countries as possible with the EU funding programmes for research, education and innovation.
- We urge the EU institutions, the British government and the Swiss government to conclude association agreements for Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ immediately.
- We urge all involved parties to keep doors open and safeguard long-standing S&T cooperation in Europe. Building effective and structural cooperation takes much more time than dismantling it, so all parties should not unduly jeopardise our long-standing S&T cooperations, even under political and economic tensions.

Our offer

Recalling the strong commitments and long-standing efforts of our [Members](#) and association in global S&T cooperation, we offer our continued partnership, expertise and support, standing ready to support the development and implementation of the Global Framework for S&T Cooperation following up on the [Marseille Declaration](#), as well as the implementation of action 9 'Promote a positive environment and level playing field for international cooperation based on reciprocity' of the [ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024](#).

For more information and enquiries, please contact our Secretary General [David Bohmert](#) and Deputy Secretary General [Mattias Björnmalm](#).

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