

Science diplomacy contributes to prosperity and stability in the Middle East

Science diplomacy is a driver of scientific and technological excellence, a key for tackling global challenges and a powerful tool for improving relations across countries, regions and cultures. It is one of the best sources of 'soft power' and an important instrument in today's increasingly complex world. It has a particular added value in Middle East cooperation as the universal language of science opens channels of communication and builds trust where few other mechanisms are feasible. To demonstrate the EU's increasing engagement in the Middle East through science diplomacy, the EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas travelled recently to Jordan where he participated in a high level conference on «Addressing shared challenges through science diplomacy: the case of the EU–Middle East Regional Cooperation». On such occasion Commissioner Moedas visited the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME)¹ which is a Research Infrastructure that plays a main role in building scientific and cultural bridges while also contributing to a culture of cooperation through international collaboration in science.



Photo: Commissioner Moedas and Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General of DG RTD, visiting SESAME International Research Centre

During his participation at the conference he reiterated that the Middle East, like Europe, is very diverse in terms of culture, religion, ethnicity, history and governance traditions. While it is one of the most unstable and complex regions in the world, providing one of the toughest 'tests' for science diplomacy, at the same time it offers a rare opportunity for human capital development as diversity is perhaps the greatest asset any region can boast. He recalled that the region's contribution to world science has been significant throughout history and has resulted in a number of major scientific breakthroughs and technological inventions without which today's life would be unthinkable. These achievements have had a great influence on European/Western medicine, physics and other life and natural sciences as even in the past there was a lot of interaction between European and Middle Eastern scientists. He also added that there are a number of scientific and research areas where science diplomacy could be particularly instrumental and the EU and the Middle East can work together: these include water, energy and food security, health, cultural heritage, cultural and religious divides, etc. During his meetings Commissioner Moedas reiterated that large scale research, science and innovation projects in the region can foster scientific and technological excellence, and prevent or reverse the brain drain, by enabling world-class scientific research in subjects ranging from biology, archaeology and medical sciences through basic properties of materials science, physics, chemistry,

and life sciences. Such projects create a motivating scientific environment that encourages the region's best scientists and technologists to stay in the region or to return if they have moved elsewhere.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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¹ Synchrotrons use light (beam-lines) that ranges beyond the visible (in the infrared, ultraviolet, X-ray and beyond) to study matter (from biological cells to atoms). They are used for a wide scope of applications – infrared imaging of diseases, designing pharmaceuticals, solar cells enhancement, CO₂ capture, assessing archaeological artefacts, etc. <http://www.sesame.org.jo/sesame/about-us/what-is-sesame.html>

Upcoming events

EU-LAC Health Conference
“Proceeding to the next step of health research cooperation between the European Union, Latin American and Caribbean Countries: The EU-LAC Health Roadmap”
2 June 2015 - Brussels - Belgium
Click [here](#) to access this event

6th INCO Conference
Joint Innovation, Common Prosperity
17-18 June 2015 - Beijing - China
Click [here](#) to access this event

H2020 Calls update

Disaster-resilience: safeguarding and securing society, including adapting to climate change
Topic: Ethical/Societal Dimension topic 3: Impact of climate change in third countries on Europe's security
Deadline: 27-08-2015 - 17:00 (Brussels time)

Sustainable Food Security
Topic: Authentication of food products
Deadline: 11-06-2015 - 17:00 (Brussels time)

For more information on these calls and other calls click [here](#)



Photo: Commissioner Moedas speaking at the conference «Addressing shared challenges through science diplomacy: the case of the EU–Middle East Regional Cooperation» held in Jordan