

## 2.7. Mexico

### 2.7.1. *Mexico as a partner of the EU*

In 1997, Mexico was the first Latin American country to conclude an Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union, in key areas of political, trade and security cooperation. Free Trade Agreements followed in 2000 for trade in goods and in 2001 for trade in services. The EU and Mexico also established a Strategic Partnership in 2008, implemented by a Joint Executive Plan endorsed in 2010. Both sides have decided to adapt the contents of the Global Agreement and the Strategic Partnership to reflect recent global geopolitical shifts and the negotiations on the new modernized agreement started in June 2016.

Mexico ranks 15th among the EU's trade partners (16th in exports and 21st in imports) whereas the EU remains Mexico's second largest export market.

The current Mexican government has made enormous progress in its structural reforms agenda in various sectors including the areas of telecommunications and energy, aimed at raising productivity, competitiveness and potential output growth. The reform of the energy sector has major implications for renewables with an ambitious goal to generate 35% of its energy from renewable sources by 2024.

The capacity of Mexico as a strategic research and innovation partner of the EU is therefore increasing, and the potential of our cooperation to promote breakthroughs, tackle global societal challenges and increase our competitiveness on world markets is growing.

The Bilateral Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and the United Mexican States was signed on 03/02/2004 and came into force on 13/06/2005.

### 2.7.2. *Priorities for S&T cooperation*

The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) which oversees the implementation of the EU-Mexico S&T Agreement has emphasised the need to deepen, scale up and open cooperation in selected thematic areas. This has led to a number of initiatives:

In the energy area, a coordinated call on 'Enhanced Geothermal Systems and superhot systems' was launched in the 2016-17 WP of Horizon 2020 under the 'Secure, Clean and Efficient Energy' challenge. 10 Million Euros have been earmarked for the call on each side. A second call on geothermal energy may be envisaged. Furthermore, both parties agreed to explore other areas of possible cooperation including smart grids, solar energy and energy storage, bearing in mind that prospective benefits need to be mutual and shared by the respective stakeholders.

In the ICT area, promising collaboration is taking shape in the context of the Future Internet Public Private Partnership. One of the objectives is to establish links between Mexico and the EU on Future Internet services by setting up FIWARE Lab installations (Future Internet ware) in Mexico and supporting the development of services based on those platforms. The 2016-2017 Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies ICT WP of Horizon 2020 targets inter alia the development, implementation and replication of FIWARE-based services in the EU and Mexico. Both parties also envisage future cooperation on High Performance Computing applications such as High-Performance Computing for energy (including various sub-fields like oil, renewables, wind, etc.), life sciences, earth sciences, air pollution and natural disasters. In WP2018-2020, the aim is

to build upon the established relations and co-operations by focusing on Next Generation Internet research themes. At the occasion of the OECD meeting in Cancun (22-24 June 2016) it was agreed to start an ICT Policy dialogue by the end of 2016.

In the area of health, cooperation will continue in the context of the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness (GloPID-R) and the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD). Efforts will be made to strengthen the participation and contribution of Mexican organisations in the Horizon 2020 health research programme. The Commission extended an invitation to Mexico to join the International Rare Disease Research Consortium (IRDiRC) in order to maximize the output of rare diseases research at a global level.

In the area of environment and climate change, the Mexican National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) confirmed its interest to explore becoming a full member of the Belmont Forum. Both parties are also exploring possibilities for developing a strategic cooperation in Marine research and welcomed the possibility that Mexico could join the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance.

The JRC and CONACYT have launched discussions in view of exploring possibilities for developing a more strategic and structured approach to their cooperation, including biodiversity, metrology and food safety, using smart specialisation; linking with the EU Reference laboratories (EURLs) coordinated by the JRC<sup>33</sup>.

In the area of Intelligent Manufacturing Systems, it was agreed to work together through the global IMS initiative<sup>34</sup> with a special focus on production technologies and processes, ICT for manufacturing and the nano-manufacturing. Mexico will support Mexican participants in IMS through CONACYT funds. Mexico currently holds the chair of IMS and the World Manufacturing Forum will be held in Mexico at the end of 2017.

In the area of social sciences and humanities, Mexico continues its strong involvement in the Trans-Atlantic Platform dealing with social sciences and humanities. This EU funded initiative is a collaboration between key humanities and social science funders from South America, North America and Europe. The Platform facilitates the formation of networks within the social sciences and humanities and helps to heighten awareness of the crucial role the social sciences and humanities play in addressing 21st century challenges.

In liaison with the Enterprise Europe Network, Mexico has set up the Enterprise Mexico Network to connect Mexican small businesses and researchers to qualified global opportunities, facilitate international partnerships and create trade through access to public and private sector resources. As part of the cooperation, the Enterprise Europe Network provides information on events and access to a database of European and international companies in different economic sectors.

As an example of leveraging other cooperation funding mechanisms, the Partnership Instrument (of the European External Action Service), is funding the Low Carbon Business Action which was launched in August 2015 and will last for 2 years (1.5MEUR). This will facilitate partnerships between EU and Mexican SMEs in the

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<sup>33</sup> Between 2013 and 2015, Smart Specialisation strategies were developed in all 32 States (including Mexico City) and three regions (north, centre-north and South-southeast), based on the European RIS3 methodology and were called *Agendas de Innovación*. The innovation strategy and associated action plan for each State were defined with the aim of becoming the cornerstone for the territory's development and potential to innovate and compete in the regional, national and global context.

<sup>34</sup> IMS is an industry-led, international business innovation and research and development program established to develop the next generation of manufacturing and processing technologies through multi-lateral collaboration: <http://www.ims.org>.

fields of energy efficiency and waste management. Five matchmaking events will be organised in Mexico in the framework of the project.

### *2.7.3. Framework Conditions*

To support the participation of entities established in Mexico in Horizon 2020 projects, CONACYT has established the so-called Conacyt-H2020 co-funding mechanism<sup>35</sup>, in place since 2014. This co-funding mechanism provides a source of financing for "project-by-project participation" by Mexican partners in Horizon 2020 projects covering all thematic areas. This complementary funding mechanism aims to reinforce EU-Mexico STI cooperation by increasing the participation of Mexican research institutions and companies in Horizon 2020.

The EU-Mexico Joint Steering Committee has also agreed to continue to support efforts of multipliers, notably National Contact Points, for facilitating access to information and partnering of R&I stakeholders. Moreover, both sides agreed to jointly promote the organisation of R&I Days and other matchmaking events to facilitate partnering with both academia and industry with the support of the EU funded EU-MEX-Innova Bilat project.

The importance of schemes for researchers' mobility has also been highlighted. The signature of the new implementing Arrangement between the European Research Council (ERC) and CONACYT in November 2015 represents an important stepping stone in the S&T relations with Mexico. Further joint efforts to promote the participation of Mexican researchers and research institutes in the EU's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellowship Programme will also be made.

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.conacyt.mx/index.php/el-conacyt/convocatorias-y-resultados-conacyt/convocatoria-conacyt-horizon2020>