2.10. Russian Federation

2.10.1. The Russian Federation as a partner of the EU

Russia is the scientifically most important non-associated neighbour country to the EU. With a total R&D spending of about 35 billion euros (2011), Russia would rank between EU Member States like Italy and the UK. A high share of Russian R&D is performed by the business sector (62.4 %), while the government provides the major share of funding (66.5%) (figures of 2009[42]).

Scientific relations with Russia are based on a long tradition of excellence, a large network between scientists and scientific institutions, and they are underlined by important and well known achievements in diverse areas of science and their applications. Supporting these relations remains a priority, as was confirmed during the EU-Russia Joint Science & Technology Cooperation Committee meeting, which took place on 24 June 2016 in Moscow. Restrictive measures imposed on Russia following the illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of Eastern Ukraine do not target S&T collaboration, except for certain technological fields related to off-shore oil and gas exploration, and military applications.

2.10.2. Priorities for S&T cooperation

All scientific fields of joint interest are a priority for EU-Russian S&T cooperation. This broad approach is based on the recognition of the neighbourhood, good EU-Russia S&T relations and the importance of Russian science. It is also in accordance with the recommendations from the Working Group on Russia of the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation (SFIC). In-depth discussions within the working group have led to the result that focusing collaboration exclusively on a specific list of subjects would lead to omit other equally important subjects where collaboration with Russia exists already at a level that would not justify leaving them out.

The Russian Ministry of Education and Science regularly updates a list of subjects from the Horizon 2020 WP which are of interest for the Russian side. The list is published within the Russian Country Page, which also describes the Russian co-funding mechanism, on the Horizon 2020 Participant Portal.

Collaboration in research infrastructures is a priority, including arctic research, Russia's membership in the Group of Senior Officials (GSO) and Russia's offer for access to its future six Megascience facilities – facilitated by CREMLIN project – Connecting Russian and European Measures for Large-scale Research Infrastructures, and through a wide range of Russian infrastructures (currently 54 infrastructures) that are open for European collaboration.

Innovation cooperation will be enhanced mainly via EUREKA and EUROSTARS.

In addition, several Working Groups and dialogues have focused on research cooperation in the areas of aeronautics, nuclear safety, space, material science and arctic research. Priority shall be given to Russia joining global initiatives in research related to health (e.g. the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness) and the bioeconomy. New initiatives are also possible and timely in the area of transport related to Clean Sky II, to European – Asian rail or to the northern passage from Europe to Asia through Arctic waters.

[42] National Science Board, Science and Engineering Indicators 2012, p. 4-47.

In nuclear fission research both sides possess complementary nuclear expertise and infrastructures. Areas to be further exploited in bilateral cooperation are nuclear safety, plant-life management and life extension of existing nuclear power plants as well as specific aspects of the new Generation-IV reactors and systems (in particular fast neutron reactors). In fusion research, Russia has the capability of contributing to JET in the field of diagnostic development and application, plasma/first wall interaction studies, gyrotrons, as well as in other physics domains.

2.10.3. Framework Conditions

Recent Russian regulations have improved conditions for foreign researchers working in Russia, even though some problems still persist as regards, for example, to registration of foreign offices in Russia or granting visa for foreign researchers visiting private institutes for more than three months per year. On the European side, the Scientific Visa Package facilitates the procedure of admitting researchers who are third-country nationals to Europe for the purpose of scientific research (EU Directive 2005/71/EC). The latter is especially important for allowing Russian scientists access to those research facilities where they have invested bigger shares or which are operated jointly.

The Russian Ministry of Education and Science established a co-funding mechanism for Russian participants in Horizon 2020 actions and for Russian collaboration with EU Member States. The priorities for Russian co-funding are frequently updated and published as the Russian Country Page on the Horizon 2020 Participant Portal. The policy dialogue focusses on further developing the co-funding mechanism and participation in ERANETs.

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) part of Horizon 2020 (2014-20) continue to offer diverse opportunities for EU-Russia scientific cooperation. Two Russian programmes supporting mobility are the mega grants attracting top-level researchers to Russian institutions and the scholarships of the President of Russia supporting Russian PhD students abroad.