



## EU Science Diplomacy as a Bridge between EU and non- EU states: A Case Study of Croatia-Serbia-Belarus



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### Introduction

Lately, the world faces many problems. Actions on them require their deep understanding and all together can generate possible solutions. Diplomacy is guided by overarching goal of using science to build bridges between countries and to promote scientific cooperation as an essential element of foreign policy. The main purpose of such support actions is awareness-building and capacity-building in both S&T and diplomatic communities. Following this, scientific cooperation has an indisputable role in effective European neighbourhood policy, international relations and development policy.

The overall aim of this paper is to present EU Science Diplomacy and one of its main tools programme - Horizon 2020 as a bridge between EU member countries as Croatia and non-EU countries like Serbia and Belarus. An overview of the concept and relevant tools and practices in these three countries has been presented.

The Republic of Croatia is situated at the crossroads of Central and Southeast Europe on the Adriatic Sea. Croatia became the 28th member state of the European Union on 1 July 2013. A country of 4.4 million people, Croatia ranks 45th, out of 188 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Index.<sup>1</sup>

The Republic of Belarus is a landlocked country in the Eastern Europe, bordered by Russia to the northeast, Ukraine to the south, Poland to the west, and Lithuania and Latvia to the northwest. The total population of Belarus is around 9,5 million people.<sup>2</sup> Its

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capital and most populous city is Minsk. Belarus ranks 52th, out of 188 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Index.

The Republic of Serbia is located in the south-east region of Europe and has a land area of 88,361 sq km. The total population of Serbia is around 8 million people with the Belgrade as a capital city. Its nominal GDP in 2016 amounted \$37.745 billion, which is \$5,376 per capita.<sup>3</sup> Belarus ranks 66th, out of 188 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Index. It holds the position of military neutrality, and on 21 January 2014, the 1st Intergovernmental Conference took place, signaling formal start of Serbia's accession negotiations.

## EU Science Diplomacy

Globally Science Diplomacy is becoming a crucial issue at the time of major crises, but it is still scarcely known and perhaps not optimally used. Europe, in particular the EU, has a high level of scientific excellence and should, therefore, be able to mobilise its scientific potential as a main mean of action within its foreign policies.<sup>4</sup> A commissioner for research, science, and innovation, Mr Carlos Moedas stated that "he wants to see the EU play an increasingly active and visible role in international science diplomacy. This can be achieved, namely, by using the universal language of science to maintain open channels of communication in the absence of other viable foreign policy approaches, ensuring the EU maintains its presence at the highest level of international scientific endeavor, and ensuring the EU has access to research performed outside Europe".<sup>5</sup>

Science Diplomacy and science and technology are very high on the list of priorities of the EU. Furthermore, EU's competence in science diplomacy is embedded in how S&T policy is dealt with in the European treaties. There is no genuine legal competence for a single European S&T policy, as under article 4(3) TFEU, research and technological development are seen as shared competence in which the EU can carry out activities, but member states can also exercise competences in parallel. By virtue of Article 181

TFEU, member states and the EU must, therefore, coordinate their policies to ensure a coherent research policy. Article 180(b) TFEU states that "the EU will carry out the promotion of S&T with third countries while complementing that of the member states". As such, it can be said that the EU's science diplomacy has to be seen as a shared responsibility.

In 2008, the European Commission adopted a 'Strategic European Framework for International Science and Technology Cooperation'<sup>6</sup> and established a European 'Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation' (SFIC) with the objective "to facilitate (...) the international dimension of ERA". The importance of international cooperation in S&T is explicitly recognised in Horizon 2020. In the 2012 Communication of the E C, entitled 'Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: a strategic approach'<sup>7</sup>, following three core objectives for international cooperation with non-member states are outlined.

- Strengthening the Union's excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation as well as its economic and industrial competitiveness;
- Tackling global societal challenges; and
- Supporting the Union's external policies.

The communication also states that cooperation in research and innovation will make use of Science Diplomacy to achieve soft power and improve relations with third countries. In the document COM (2012) 497, it is clearly stated that such an international cooperation should support the EU's external policies by coordinating closely with enlargement, neighbourhood, trade and its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFPS). The same document also mentions that science diplomacy has to be used as an instrument of soft power "and as a mechanism for improving relations with key countries and regions".

A similar point of view is expressed in COM (2014) 339 Final<sup>8</sup>, where it is stressed that further efforts need to be made in addressing the external dimension of Research and Innovation policy. The literature review and internet search revealed that it is not easy to find strategic documents at

the level of EU member states with regard to Science Diplomacy. There exist many different operational tools across different EU member states, which put Science Diplomacy in action. However, in most cases we are dealing with implicit form of Science Diplomacy as the concept is not always mentioned. Furthermore, in line with the observed absence of strategic tools, the operational tools are not always clearly linked to Foreign Affairs policies. From the review of national Science Diplomacy initiatives, it can thus be concluded that most EU member states do not have a Science Diplomacy strategy. In most cases, however, member- states are engaged in some activities that can be labelled as Science Diplomacy. But the national efforts in most cases remain very limited and there are little support structures. On top of it, most national Science Diplomacy activities are at best only loosely connected to Foreign Affairs policies. In other words, Science Diplomacy is not well developed within most of the EU member states.

One proposal of the Logenhove <sup>4</sup> is to focus EU Science Diplomacy Strategy upon three areas, which are a mix of self-interests and aspirations to have a positive impact on the world. These are: (i) Science and technology towards enhancing regional security in its neighbourhood, (ii) Science and technology improving European trade in the world and (iii) Science and Technology resolving global problems.

Strengthening of the EU's global position in research, innovation and technology is passing through proactive international cooperation. It specifically aims at developing a common 'Knowledge and Innovation Space' in the EU Neighbourhood, and is developing Science and Technology agreements with some more strategic partners (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Korea, India, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, USA,.). But there are also Policy dialogue and platforms on the STI cooperation at the regional level (Africa, ASEAN, Central Asia, Gulf, LAC, Pacific). As commissioner Moedes stated<sup>5</sup>: "I am always on the lookout for new opportunities to further EU science diplomacy, with the purpose of ensuring that European values lead global scientific endeavor. The EU's

Horizon 2020 funding, for example, has been open to the world from the start, but my department and I pushed in 2015 to include the Ukraine and Tunisia associations in 2015, because we believe participation in EU programmes will encourage both countries to invest in their scientific communities, better positioning them to recover from conflict as well as to contribute diversity to future EU projects"

Science Diplomacy of EU is built on Horizon 2020, which is an impressive research innovation programme worth €80 billion over 2014-2020. It induces a significant external dimension. By coupling research and innovation, Horizon 2020 is helping to achieve this with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. With a view to support implementation of reforms, one of the instruments that European Union uses to strengthen cooperation between EU member-countries on one side and the potential and candidate countries on another in the area of European policies for a specified period of time. Participation in EU Programmes for candidate states represents an opportunity to make acquaintance with the European institutions, legislations and their application in practice with EU policies as well as with the system of values and mechanisms on which the EU is based.<sup>9</sup>

The goal is to ensure Europe producing world-class science, removing barriers to innovations and making it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation. Horizon 2020 is open to everyone with a simple structure that reduces red tape and time so participants can focus on what really is important.

Furthermore, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation would be complemented by further measures to complete and further develop the European Research Area. These measures would aim at breaking down barriers to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation.

On 11 January 2018, the Commission adopted a Communication on the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020, which outlines its views on how the impact of a successor research and innovation investment programme could be maximised.

In the first three years of the programme implementation, EUR 20.4 billion—just about one fourth of the total Horizon 2020 budget — were allocated to 11,108 signed grants. Horizon 2020 has, so far, attracted more than 100,000 applications, representing a 65 percent increase in the annual number of applications compared to the earlier year, the 7th Framework Programme (FP7). It involves top level participants from the higher education, research, private sectors and from a wide range of disciplines and thematic fields. The main beneficiaries of Horizon 2020 are higher education and research organisations, which together received 64.9 percent of the funding, the private sector received 27.7 percent, and public authorities and other types of organisations 7.3 percent. About 23.9 percent of the budget for industrial and enabling technologies and societal challenges was given to SMEs, exceeding the legal target (20 percent). More than half (52 percent) of participants were newcomers. Participants came from over 130 countries (including 87 third countries). Those from EU-28 countries received 92.9 percent of the funding. Approximately 75 percent of all funding, so far, was used for instruments, supporting collaborative research and innovation, while the rest was for individual beneficiaries to support excellent science through European Research Council grants and research and innovation projects for the SMEs. Further strengthening the EU's science base is as necessary as ever, and remains a valid Horizon 2020 objective. The societal challenges identified when conceiving Horizon 2020 still exist, and are valid continued priorities for the EU and Horizon 2020. The relevance of Horizon 2020 also lies in its contribution to the achievement of a wide range of EU and global objectives such as the Sustainable Development Goals. Horizon 2020 has been flexible enough to support research on urgent new fields (e.g. Ebola and Zika outbreaks, migration) as well as new, promising science and research.<sup>10</sup>

The strategic programming process improved intelligence-base underpinning programming choices, though stakeholders call for even greater transparency. The high application rate, including from newcomers, also shows the relevance and attractiveness

of Horizon 2020 for stakeholders. The annual number of applications have increased by 65 percent between FP7 and Horizon 2020, including 78 percent from new applicants, mainly from the private sector. Stakeholders' substantial reasons for participating in particular getting financial support, access to knowledge and expertise, and collaboration with European or international partners — illustrate importance and relevance of Horizon 2020.<sup>10</sup>

## Science Diplomacy of Croatia

There exist many different operational tools across different EU member states that put Science Diplomacy in action. However, in most cases we are dealing with implicit form of Science Diplomacy as the concept is not always mentioned. Furthermore, in line with the observed absence of strategic tools, the operational tools are not always clearly linked to Foreign Affairs policies as an example in Croatia.

There existed great bilateral agreements among countries dealing with one or another form of international S&T cooperation, but none of them were referred to term science diplomacy. As stated earlier, Croatia has many bilateral agreements with EU countries on S&T cooperation like with Austria, Italy, Germany, France and non-EU countries USA, Israel, Russia, China, Japan. Cooperation with a number of countries and foreign partners with which the Government of the Republic of Croatia, i.e. the Ministry of Science and Education has not concluded international legal acts, is realized exclusively on the basis of direct inter-institutional agreements. In the light of globalization processes, the practice of concluding agreements on the governmental level is being abandoned; therefore, mostly highly developed countries support direct cooperation of institutions in the sphere of education, higher education, science and technology.

It is undisputable that numerous basic researches can improve competitive advantages of Croatian economy and Croatian companies. Scientific research in Croatia is monitored and conducted in six fields of science : natural sciences, technical, biomedical, biotechnical and social sciences and humanities.

One of the strategic documents on S&T is the Strategy for Innovation Encouragement of Croatia 2014-2020 adopted in December 2014. Its main objective is to increase level of competitiveness of the Croatian economy and increase social well-being. The document entails a list of around 40 guidelines structured around following four thematic pillars:

- Development of the innovation system and setting up a legal and fiscal framework to encourage innovation;
- Strengthening innovation potential of the economy;
- Encouraging cooperation and knowledge flow among businesses and academia;
- Strengthening of the human resources in innovation and creation of an attractive environment for world-class researchers<sup>11</sup>.

The second strategic document “Strategy for Smart Specialisation (S3)” is focused on the following thematic areas:— health and quality of life, energy and sustainable environment, transport and mobility, security, food and bio-economy. The S3s Action Plans for 2016 and 2017 envisage a series of actions such as mapping of R&I capacities in research and business sectors, establishment of Innovation Network for Industry, thematic innovation councils, thematic innovation platforms, centres of competence, etc. The National Innovation Council and Interministerial working group are foreseen to manage S3 and to establish a system of evaluation and monitoring. The adoption of the S3 has opened possibility to tap into European structural and investment funds ESIF 2014-2020.<sup>12</sup>

Following the above mentioned documents, the governance of R&I system in Croatia is centralised at the state level (weak regional dimension). R&D policy falls mainly within the scope of the Ministry of Science and Education with innovation aspects dealt by the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts. The afore mentioned bodies together with the Ministry of Regional Development and European Funds acquire increasingly important role because of the growing role of the European Structural and Investment Funds for financing R&I activities.

The main funding body for competitive research projects is the Croatian Science Foundation, responsible for improving competitiveness, visibility and integration of the Croatian research area into European Research Area (ERA). The highest advisory body for the research, higher education and technology is the National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development. The Agency for Science and Higher Education is responsible for setting up a national network for quality assurance and evaluation of scientific research and higher education.

The Croatian Agency for Small Business, Innovation and Investment (HAMAGBICRO) is responsible for implementation of all business R&I related ESIF. There are 184 scientific organisations registered in Croatia for scientific activity, and recorded in the Register of scientific organisations. These include 25 public research institutes and 91 higher education institutions. Besides, there are several research institutes in state ownership oriented to market research. There are around 25 private research organisations which are either independent institutes (e.g. the Mediterranean Institute for Life Sciences) or belong to corporations (e.g. Ericsson Nikola Tesla). Several small research-based companies have been founded over the last years; some are not present in the Register of research organisations.

There are several research and technology institutions with the main mission of fostering science-industry cooperation and commercialisation of research results such as the Science and Technology Parks. Important measures for improvement of the national innovation system include, among others, further strengthening of technology transfer offices at universities, establishment of Innovation Network for industry, creation of thematic innovation platforms and centres of competence. Establishment of thematic innovation platform, related to Smart Specialisation Strategy 3 (S3), priorities has also been envisaged. This should be initiated within the strategic project for supporting establishment of innovation network for industry and thematic innovation platforms, which was started in May 2016, and is expected to

last for four years, together with the establishment of the Innovation Council for Industry and eight thematic innovation councils (linked to the thematic and crosscutting themes of S3). Based on the proposal of the National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technology Development, MSE established thirteen centres of research excellence in 2014 and 2015. The best researchers are selected in the particular (sub-)fields of science and it is the main supporting measure aiming at increasing internationalisation of companies, primarily SMEs, including several grant schemes, which are to be funded by ESIF within the Operational Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014-2020.<sup>13</sup>

Croatia participates in many programmes of EU in the area of S&T, like COST model, European Commission Framework Programme (FP) for research and technology development, European Structural and Investment Funds and Horizon 2020, and also the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises COSME (Erasmus+, Creative Europe, European Union) Programme. For this paper, focus is on Horizon 2020. Croatia has set up the necessary administrative and institutional framework for FP/H2020, which consists of the National Contact Points and members on Horizon 2020 programme committees. The national portal for H 2020 programme was launched in December 2013. Some data was published in September 2017 on the participation and results of Croatian institutions participating in the Horizon 2020 programme in accordance with the official data published on the eCORDA (External Common Research Data Warehouse) platform. The total amount of financial resources allocated to participants from the Republic of Croatia was € 42.204.486,00 and the total number of project proposals (proposals) was 1882 and projects funded were 209, and the total number of participating Croatian organizations was 2433.<sup>14</sup>

Regarding the science in the service of Foreign Affairs, like S&T advisors attached to embassies, this is not practice in Croatias diplomatic norms. In most emabssies, the advisors for economy are in-charge for area of S&T. But, regarding bilateral agreements of Croatia on S&T with other countries,

Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs as a main institution for international cooperation is in charge for this process in coordination with Ministry of Science and Education, Ministry of Economy and other relevant institutions. So the conclusion in this case is that we can see excellent examples of science diplomacy in Croatia, but are not referred like that.

## Science Diplomacy of Serbia

Since 2000, Serbian budget allocations for science have had a significant growth in gross amount, from the modest sum of EUR 28 million in 2001, to about € 100 million in 2008. Still, the share of science in GDP in 2003 amounted to 0.3 percent, and continues to stagnate at that level right till late. In addition to the budget funds of the Ministry of Science and Technological Development, there are also other sources of investment in science in Serbia such as other ministries and public administration authorities, including Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Institutes generate income through cooperation with the industrial sector and take part in international programmes. The estimates being that the income of the institutes and higher education together with budget financing make a total of approximately 1.3 percent of the GDP. Since 2007, science and research is the area in which Serbia is a member already of European Union. Serbia is associated with the Seventh EU Research Framework Programme (FP7) since January 2007. The Ministry in charge of Education, Science and Technological Development is in charge for this programme in Serbia. The International Agreement for the Horizon 2020 was signed on 1 July 2014. Currently, its researchers are participating in Horizon 2020 actions.<sup>15</sup> Eight chapters out of 35 are opened within negotiation process with EU, and one of the first chapters that was provisionally closed is Chapter 25, Science and Research. Although the Science Diplomacy can be considered as something new for Serbia, but the actual synergy between diplomacy and science brought the results. Diplomacy opened the door for science and science took the chance that it was offered.

On the proposal of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy for Scientific and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016 to 2020 - "Research for Innovation". The strategy has set goals in the field of science and innovation in the Republic of Serbia until 2020 as well as instruments and guidelines for their realization. The vision of the Strategy is that in five years, science in the Republic of Serbia would be based on a system that supports excellence in science and relevance for economic development, competitiveness of the economy in the Republic of Serbia, and the development of the society as a whole. The mission of the Strategy is to establish an effective national research and innovation system integrated into the European Research Area, which relies on partnerships in the country and abroad, and would contribute to economic growth, social and cultural progress, raising citizens' standards and quality of life.<sup>16</sup>

Serbia embraced the so-called "innovation imperative", that is the notion that successful participation in the global knowledge economy requires ability to adapt and advance new technological and research capabilities, involving public and private collaborations. Innovation Fund, established in 2011, aims to promote linkages between research and technology development and economy, and encourage and support the development of innovative technologies. The EU's support for the Innovation Fund has been instrumental in advancing Serbia's innovation financing and promoting better integration between the research and private sector. The Fund is thus an important step towards closer links between Serbia's and EU's research communities and innovation ecosystems. Between 2011 and 2016, the Innovation Fund implemented the Innovation Serbia Project with the primary goal of piloting financial instruments supporting early-stage innovation activities and stimulating research and development (R&D) with commercial potential in private enterprises of Serbia. This Project was funded by the 2011 EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), and administered by the World Bank.

A total of 33 national patent applications as well as 25 international patent applications (13 PCT, 4 EPO, 1 US, 1 Australia, Eurasia and Japan) were filed by Innovation Fund's beneficiaries. In 2016, the Innovation Fund launched two new programmes – the pilot activity for the promotion of technology transfer from academic to commercial sector – the TTF Programme and a novel financial aid instrument for financing innovative projects with potential for commercialization, resulting from cooperation between public R&D organizations and private SMEs – the Collaborative Grant Scheme for R&D Organizations and Private Sector Enterprises. In 2017, the Innovation Fund launched so called Mini Grants and Matching Grants programmes aimed at private micro and small enterprises.<sup>17</sup> Previously mentioned facts clearly indicate that the Fund is an important step towards closer links between Serbia's and EU's research communities and innovation ecosystems.

Beside Horizon 2020, cooperation within the EU framework offers a wide variety of other programmes such as: Creative Europe (European Commission's framework programme for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors), Erasmus + (EU exchange student programme), the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions – MSCA (support research training and career development focused on innovation skills), COST action (European cooperation in the field of scientific and technical research), Eureka (European network developing cooperation between SMEs, research centres and universities for industrial innovation 2014-2020), etc.

Besides that the Republic of Serbia runs bilateral cooperation programmes with a number of countries (Belarus, China, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Italy, Portugal, Austria). This has resulted in co-financing of R&D projects; carried out by teams consisting of researchers from partner countries. Cooperation agreements are underway with Czech Republic, Greece, India, Russia, Spain and US.<sup>18</sup>

Multilateral cooperation takes place through the Central European Initiative (CEI), Scientific

and Technological Cooperation in the Danube Region, NATO science for peace and security (SPS) and the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) [18].

## Science Diplomacy of Belarus

Belarus is a small country with open economy. Its major economic sectors are service agriculture, industries and manufacturing. The country participated in around 3900 international agreements including over 2200 bilateral and around 1700 multilateral.<sup>19</sup>

Following the principle “we cooperate with those who are willing to cooperate with us”, Belarus has got over 45 bi- and multilateral agreements on the governmental level on cooperation in S&T or more widely, on economic collaboration, while S&T is the integral part thereof; covering almost half of the EU member- states (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, and also UK), as well as Macedonia and Serbia in the Balkans. In the Mediterranean, the agreements have concluded with Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Libya and Syria. Belarus also has got a legal basis for cooperation with China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Iran, Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Venezuela as well as with industrialised countries like Japan, South Korea and United States.<sup>20</sup>

Within the EU, Germany, France and UK are among the top partners, followed by Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland.

The number of agreements and direct contracts at the institutional level in Belarus are hard to estimate; as there is no source for such kind of information, while appropriations may give wrong results due to different levels of international activity of institutions. Annually, approximately 450 international S&T projects are being implemented in Belarus.

Part of these projects are being implemented through bi-annual programmes within the framework of bi-lateral cooperation agreements in science and technology between Belarus and the partner. Usually, each party funds its

own participants. Belarusian partners of these programmes are funded by *the State Committee for Science and Technology and/or Belarusian Republican Foundation for Fundamental Research*. Traditionally, joint R&D projects as well as organization of joint scientific events are supported.

To support bi-lateral S&T cooperation with the neighbouring countries (Russia, Latvia) and strategic partners (China, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Venezuela), several bi-lateral centres have been set up. Most of them are hosted by the Scientific and Technological Park “Polytechnik” at Belarusian National Technical University. Belarus – South Korea centre is located in the National Academy of Sciences.

The International S&T cooperation, and the implementation of bi- and multilateral S&T projects, in particular, is supported by the Government of Belarus: annually, 3-4 percent of the total expenditure for R&D is for this. The financial profit is evident: on an average, the foreign sources give 5-7 percent of the total R&D funding in the country. Due to the strong pressure on research teams to commercialize the results of their R&D activities and increase international collaboration on the one hand and decrease of the national sources of financing on the other, the share of foreign sources in the total expenditures for R&D has reached 13.8 percent.

Within the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, Belarus is a member of 2 alliances – Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and European-Asian Economic Cooperation (EurAsEC). At the moment, collaboration seems to be more alive within EurAsEC, which managed to launch the first S&T programme “Innovative Biotechnologies”, initiated by Belarus.<sup>20</sup>

In recent years, relations between the European Union and Belarus have gone through a number of stages. Over the past two years, however, there has been progress in EU–Belarus relations. Belarus has been participating more pro-actively in the Eastern Partnership, in particular, in multilateral formats; negotiations on a Mobility Partnership were concluded and negotiations on a Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements are underway. Tangible steps taken by Belarus



to respect universal freedom, the rule of law, and human rights, including fundamental labour rights, would remain fundamental criteria for shaping of the EU's future policy towards Belarus, as was stated in the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of 15 February 2016.<sup>21</sup>

On the initiative of Belarus, the annual EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue was resumed in July 2015. The most recent Dialogue was held in July 2017. On 22 August 2015, the remaining political prisoners were released from Belarusian jails. The EU welcomed this long-sought step, which represents an important milestone in relations between the EU and Belarus. The EU lifted most of the restrictive measures in February 2016, also activated a key package of economic and other cooperation-related measures. The package includes cooperation with international financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), enhanced preparations for World Trade Organisation (WTO) accession, and removal of textile quota for exports. The remaining restrictive measures (the arms embargo and the restrictive measures against the four individuals listed in connection with unresolved disappearances) are currently in place until 28 February 2018. All decisions, regarding EU restrictive measures, require unanimity among 28 EU member -states.

Belarus is one of the strongest-performing Eastern Partnership countries in the Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation. In September 2017, the conference "From innovative ideas to successful businesses: promoting national systems of early stage financing of innovative companies in EaP countries" was held in Minsk. In the 2018-2020 Work Programme for Horizon 2020, for which almost €200 million have been allocated to a series of calls focusing on energy and resource efficiency in the process industry ("SPIRE") with a particular geographical focus on the Eastern Partnership countries.

Under Horizon 2020, more than €12 million were allocated to Belarus for different projects for the period 2002-2017. As a result ,Belarusian scientists took part in 113 projects, which aimed,

among others, in strengthening of the Scientific and Technological cooperation between the EU member-states (and Associated Countries) and the Eastern European and Central Asian; bridging the gap between research and innovation, exchanges of technological innovations and practices, strengthening links and boost cooperation among the Information and Communications Technology research and industrial communities, etc.<sup>22</sup>

Besides, Horizon 2020, Belarus cooperates within the EU within a wide variety of other programmes such as Erasmus + (EU exchange student programme), MOST (Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People-Contacts, project offering short-term mobility and cultural exchanges for professionals), the EU4Youth (programme benefit young Belarusians through its support to skills development, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as capacity building for youth organisations), the Strengthening Private Initiative Growth in Belarus (SPRING) (programme backs private local economic initiatives in order to develop the private sector, increase job creation, and promote economic growth in Belarus), the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P) (this Trust Fund, managed by the EBRD, supports loans for municipal sector projects across the Eastern Partnership countries on energy efficiency and the environment) etc.

## Conclusion

We conclude by pointing out that one of the challenges in defining an EU Science Diplomacy is the relation between what is done at the level of member states and what can be done at the EU level. Some member states already have some own science diplomacy policy and tools available and some of them, like Croatia, have it in practice not in term like science diplomacy. The EU would need to focus on areas that are a mix of self-interests and aspirations to have a positive impact towards enhancing regional security in its neighbourhood.

EU's Science Diplomacy activities should focus on the European eastern and southern surrounding regions. Here Science Diplomacy

could serve as a bridge to build and strengthen relations and trust among the EU and its regional neighbourhoods by connecting their scientific communities better to the world of science and technology on the EU level as well as on the global level.

It is clear that neither trade and economics nor regional security can be the only concern in the EU's relationships with non-EU states like in the case studies of Serbia and Belarus. For them participation in EU Programmes, such as Horizon 2020, represents an opportunity to make acquaintance with the European institutions, legislation and their application in practice with EU policies as well as with the system of values and mechanisms on which the EU is based.

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