

Athens, 18/06/2010

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **Results of the 1<sup>st</sup> INCO Conference for International Cooperation – Supporting Research Integration”: Global cooperation for global problems**

The “1<sup>st</sup> Conference on International Cooperation (INCO) – Supporting Research Integration”, held in Athens, June 9-10, 2010, and organized by the General Directorate Research of the European Commission and PRAXI / HELP-FORWARD Network, was successfully concluded with the participation of more than 150 research policy makers from 53 countries underlying the necessity of research cooperation at global level in order to address global challenges (societal, environmental, etc).

The conference aimed to highlight the global dimension of the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP7) as well as to stimulate the exchange of views and formation of a policy standpoint as regards to international research. During the first day, the annual meeting of the European Commission (EC) with the INCO National Contact Points (NCPs) was held together with an exclusive training seminar. The second day was primarily focused on policy related issues of International Research Cooperation as well as on the views of Third Countries with regards to their involvement in the FP7. In addition, during the second day, experiences of International Cooperation projects funded by the EC under the FP7 were presented and extensively discussed.

More specifically, Dr. Leonidas Karapiperis, Special Advisor, DG Research, EC, stressed out that 75% of global research is made outside the EU, which by itself makes the connection of European Research Area (ERA) with the global research community a priority. He also underlined that European investments in research and technology are stagnant while Asian countries continue to grow and the US maintains higher investments. Finally, Dr. Karapiperis noted that ERA has six initiatives, namely the unification of the labor market for EU researchers, building world class research infrastructures and capacities, the effective coordination of programmes and priorities, the effective sharing of knowledge, building excellent research institutions and universities and opening the ERA to the world.

Apart from the international dimension of FP7, the Athens INCO Conference highlighted the scientific policies implemented by other countries or international organizations, while special focus was drawn on the Arabic Peninsula. Dr. David Stonner, Head of the Europe Office of the National Science Foundation (USA), pointed out the skepticism on behalf of American researchers as far as cooperating with researchers outside the US, despite the notable increase in this respect which is enhanced by initiatives funding international cooperations. Global challenges require better design of the national research policies, argued Dr. Iain Gillespie, Head of Science & Technology, Policy Division, Directorate for Science & Technology, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). He underlined that investments in Research & Technology in periods of financial crisis, make up the main factor for economic development and can seriously increase competitiveness and thus, it should not be viewed as unnecessary expenditure. European researchers found interesting the opportunities for research cooperation opened in the Arabian Peninsula, which invests heavily in building research infrastructures, especially in the field of energy, desertification, water resource management as well as in addressing certain diseases. Extensive presentations followed by Dr. Samir Hamrouni, Senior Advisor, S&T, Dubai Institute of Technology (DIT)/ Technopark/United Arab Emirates and by Mr. Kenneth Wilson, Director, National Research Foundation, United Arab Emirates, highlighting certain activities in the Arabic Peninsula and specific opportunities in the field of international cooperation.

The Conference was organized under INCONTACT, the official project for coordination and networking of all National Contact Points for International Cooperation (International Cooperation NCPs), whereby PRAXI/HELP-FORWARD Network, has the honor to coordinate. The next INCO Conference will be held in 2011 in Pretoria, South Africa.





### **Memorandum of Understanding**

During the INCO Conference, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Foundation for Research & Technology - Hellas (FORTH) / PRAXI/HELP-FORWARD Network and China Science and Technology Exchange Center (CSTEC) for undertaking common actions and initiatives with regard to bilateral S&T cooperation. Prof. Costas Fotakis, Vice Chairman of FORTH and Director of PRAXI/HELP-FORWARD Network and Mr. Chen Heping, Deputy Director of CSTEC signed the MoU.

Both organizations agreed to support the bilateral S&T dialogue, by promoting participation of the two countries' researchers from universities, foundations and private organizations through joint events (i.e. seminars, symposia and laboratories) in the fields of research, technology and bilateral participation in Greek and Chinese research programmes, respectively.

It is hereby noted that the two organisations already cooperate under the projects BILAT-SILK and INCONTACT-one world, which aims to reinforce research cooperation between Chinese and European organizations, under the FP7.

### **Conference Statistics**

The "1<sup>st</sup> Conference on International Cooperation (INCO) – Supporting Research Integration", was attended by more than **150 delegated**, in their majority policy makers in research from **58 different organisations** and **53 countries**, such as Egypt, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, UAE, UK, Jordan, Spain, Israel, Italy, Canada, Qatar, Kenya, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Belarus, Lithuania, Malta, Morocco, Mexico, Norway, Hungary, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Thailand, Jamaica, Turkey, Finland, Chile, etc.

The conference was organized for the **first time** and signaled the beginning of forthcoming events in the following years. In parallel to the main conference, **a training seminar** was held exclusively for the INCO NCPs, **the annual closed session** of the EU with the INCO NCPs as well as **7 project meetings** from respective EU funded projects. To this end, the conference was the basis for development of contacts and networking among S&T organizations and received excellent reviews based on satisfaction surveys. To view the presentations on-line, please visit [www.inco-conference.eu](http://www.inco-conference.eu)

PRAXI / HELP – FORWARD Network  
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### PRAXI / HELP-FORWARD Network Profile

**PRAXI / HELP-FORWARD Network** is a technology transfer service providing mechanism addressing to small and medium sized enterprises and research laboratories all over Greece. Its services are extended from information to mediation and advisory support covering the whole spectrum of activities related with research collaboration, technology transfer and commercial exploitation of research results.

PRAXI / HELP-FORWARD Network is administered by the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas (FORTH) and operates since 1991 in cooperation with the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV) and the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece (FING) in panhellenic reach. Since 1995 PRAXI / HELP-FORWARD Network has become a member of the **Innovation Relay Centre (IRC)** Network of the EU with the mandate of promoting RTD results exploitation and European co-operation in research and technology, while since 2008 it continues its activities within the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) as a member of the Greek consortium of the **Enterprise Europe Network** which provides international business cooperation services, information on European policies, innovation and technology transfer services as well as services for encouraging SMEs' participation to the European programs for Research and Technology. Additionally, since 1999, PRAXI / HELP-FORWARD Network has been the National Contact Point (NCP) in Greece for the EU RTD Framework Programmes, operating as official authority for information and advisory support services regarding the European research programs.

### INCONTACT PROJECT

**INCONTACT** ([www.ncp-incontact.eu](http://www.ncp-incontact.eu)) is the official project of the FP7 INCO NCPs and is implemented as a 'Specific Support Action' (SSA), funded under the Specific International Scientific Cooperation Activities (INCO) in the 7th Framework Programme for RTD (FP7) and is operational until December 2013. The INCONTACT project aims at the development of a platform for stimulating closer cooperation among INCO National Contact Points. Within the framework of this closer cooperation, INCO NCPs will work together to effect a substantial improvement in the overall quality of NCP services in the field of International Cooperation. The positive effect of these efforts will not be limited to the NCP network alone. The international research community will ultimately benefit from the heightened level of service offered by the network. Individual researchers will profit from higher quality services and information and the establishment of a more consistent level of NCP services across Europe will contribute to greater transparency of the research funding for ICPC (International Cooperation Partner Countries) participants.

