European Commission

EU-LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WORKING GROUP ON RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES (WG RI)

2nd Policy workshop

"*Transnational access to Research Infrastructures*"

Brasilia, 07 May 2019

- The workshop counted with 8 participants from 7 EU countries and 15 participants from 12 LAC countries (refer to participants list).

Objectives

- Foster common understanding on parameters that constitute access policies: exchange views on access provision and standardize concepts, exchange experiences and best practice between EU and LAC countries.
- Understand what mechanisms for providing access to RIs are in place in LAC; what is the potential and what needs to be developed for (intensified) collaboration with EU.
- Understand what mechanisms for providing access to RIs are in place in EU; what is the potential and how can access modes be improved for (intensified) collaboration with LAC.
- Exchange views and experiences with learning tools that can facilitate international collaboration (webinars, NCP-networks, future workshops, potential database platforms, etc.).

General remarks

- Participants expressed the need to prioritise thematic areas based on common interest and to start coordinating links and opportunities for bi-regional RI collaboration within these fields of study.
- Participants mentioned several parallel initiatives that focus on (bi-)regional RI collaboration, such as LASF4RI, and the need for the WG to establish crosslinks with these initiatives.
- Participants expressed the need for identifying ambassadors for bi-regional RI collaboration (eg. NCPs).
- Participants expressed the usefulness of the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures[1],as a reference document, and the EU experience in supporting transnational access;
- Participants discussed options for drafting a concise (policy) document that will describe the WG's vision on future bioregional collaboration on RIs and will

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/pdf/2016_charterforaccessto-ris.pdf

highlight the objectives and preliminary results of the WG's work so far. This document should serve as an advocacy and awareness-raising tool for WG members.

- LAC participants mentioned that in most LAC countries a legal framework is compulsory when applying for national funding (eg. through the signing of cooperation agreements etc.). It was commonly agreed that, although this is beyond the control of the WG, it should be taken into consideration when advocating for international collaboration activities.

Main conclusions and action points

Key note presentation and discussion

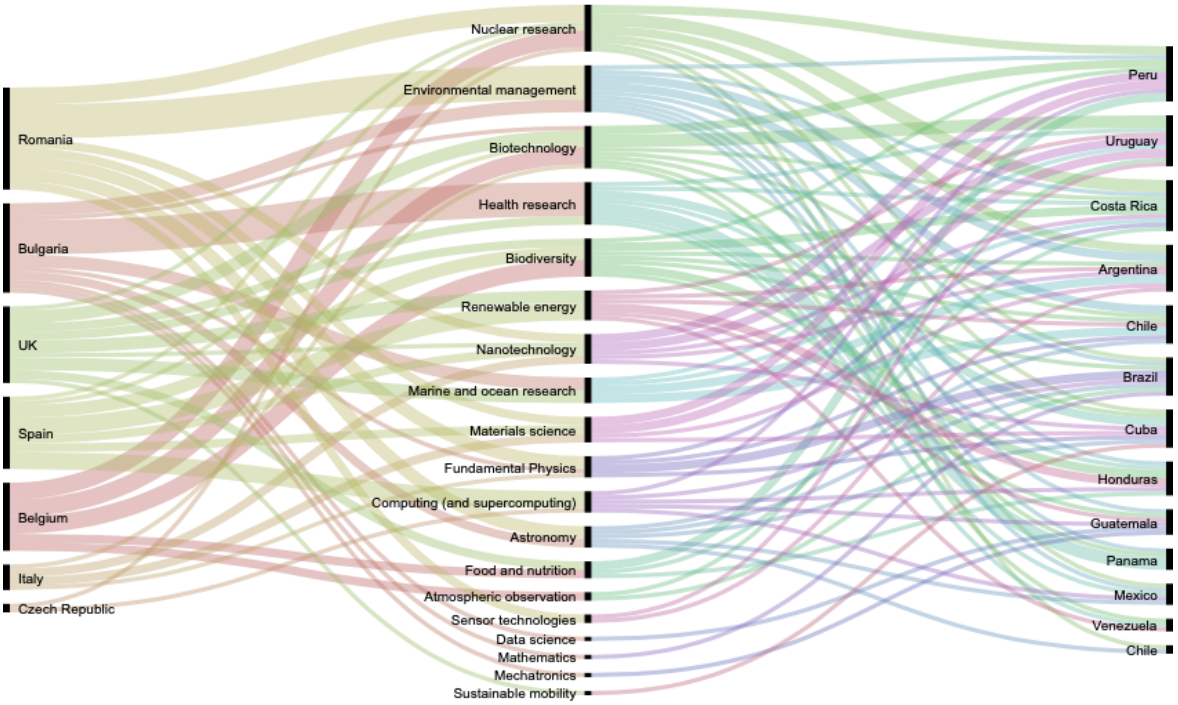
Presentation focused on Research Infrastructure Policy in Brazilian Government: the experience of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communication. This strategy will show the impact of RIs on the national system and the importance of RIs for education and innovation. All fields of research will be involved. It focuses on excellence in science and aims for increased impact on innovation and industry.

During the discussion that followed the presentation, participants stressed that:

- These kind of policies at ministerial level can facilitate transnational access to RIs;
- Selection criteria for RI access have to be ensured that allow excellence: Quality of scientific research and scientists will directly influence the quality of RI users and will therefore ensure excellent science;
- Both efforts on regional and bi-regional collaboration are necessary;
- Transnational access in LAC is mainly boosted by personal/informal contacts without well-established mechanisms yet;
- Interdisciplinary research is more likely to establish contacts/links with/contribution to industry and boost investments from private sector;
- Cooperation agreements can be operationalised by appointing facilitators that ensure access channels between an alliance of RIs;
- Mechanisms on how to secure investments in/for RIs should be further discussed by the WG;
- Open access policy EU will be very relevant for bi-regional collaboration but cannot be mistaken for transnational access.

Speed dating session

Figure 1 Research fields: EU interests and discussions with LAC counterparts

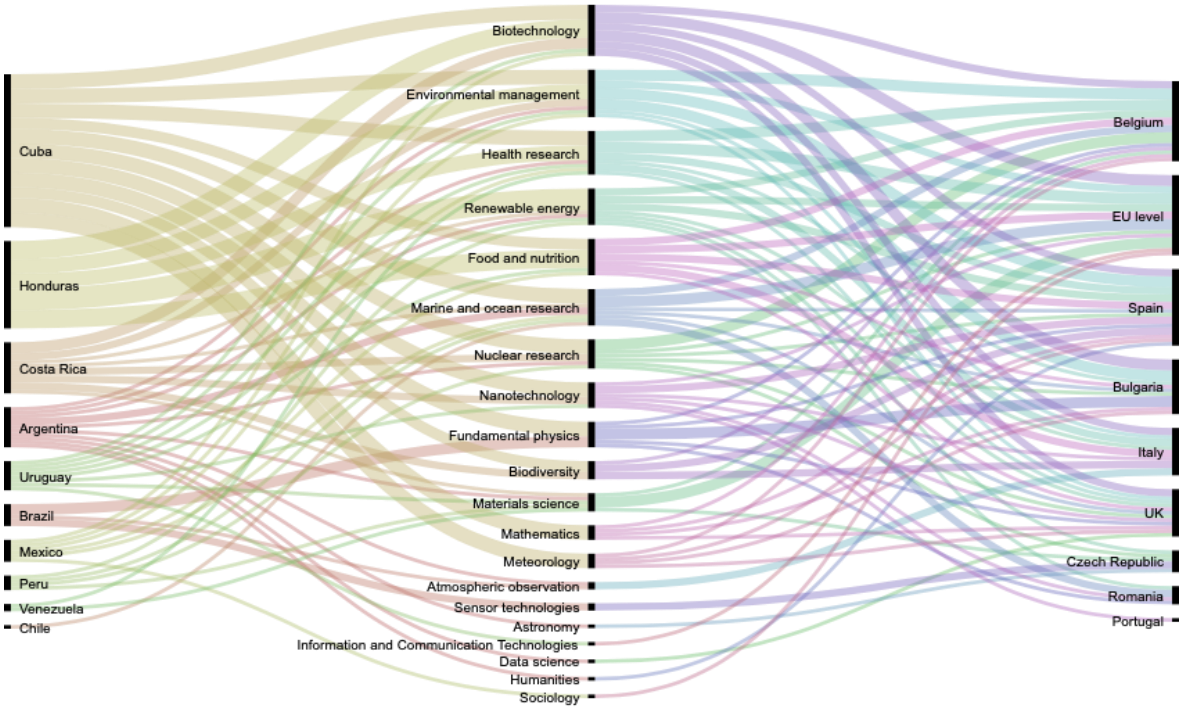


The illustration shows the main topics of interest raised by the EU delegates and with which LAC countries they had the opportunity to discuss. The figure shows these connections with a string system. However, the main purpose is to identify main interests/prioritised fields of study on bi-regional level. The larger the number of exchanges (strings), the bigger the category appears in the figure. Therefore: Nuclear research; Environmental management; Biotechnology; Health research; Biodiversity; and so on… represent in descending order the topics that were discussed the most and with whom.

Disclaimer I: It is important to note that the figure cannot tell what the discussion was about (eg. concrete possibilities to cooperate; unilateral pitch about "what my research facilities do"), or if the discussion resulted in mutual interest. Countries on the left side of the figure (so in this case EU countries), are de-facto interested in the fields of study, since the research is linked to a specific RI. However, it does not necessarily mean that the countries on the right side (LAC countries) are willing to cooperate in that particular field (or at least not more than any other). These initial links have to be further explored.

Disclaimer II: Some delegates discussed a large amount of study fields, others concentrated on just a few. This might tell us something about the focus of the national research landscape and/or policy priorities. On the other hand, some delegates did not prioritise the suggested (max.) 5 RIs discussed but mentioned all RIs discussed. Furthermore, some delegates did not report on the main study fields discussed but mentioned the fields of study prioritised by their national administration.

Figure 2 Research fields: LAC interests and discussions with EU counterparts



Similarly, the figure above shows the main topics of interest, as reported by the LAC delegates, and the countries with which they discussed. Again, the main purpose is to identify main interests/prioritised fields of study on bi-regional level. In this case, LAC delegates also discussed particular fields with the EU as one player, so without differentiating specific countries. The label "EU level" captures these cases when the discussion did not differentiate individual countries. Topics such as: Biotechnology; Environmental management; Health research and Renewable energy appear on top of the fields of interest.

Disclaimer I & II: idem

Discussion tables session

A short summary of concrete ideas and action points that were raised during the table discussions:

Table discussion 1 "How can LAC build mechanisms to increase (international) access to its RIs and opportunities for collaboration"

Future collaboration

- Include RIs as a core component in the design of calls with an applicable legal base in place to support this; open calls for mobility of researchers; common criteria and common terms of reference in LAC to develop a RI road map for the region; a regional network of national platforms; establish clear links between WG and political decision makers.

Existing mechanisms

- Funding for planning and coordination work (i.e. activities not directly involved in RIs management or use); adapt funding already in place to the LAC context; prepare future funding schemes for the possibility of a trans-national use; identify existing national mechanisms; encourage regional funds (and opening access to them for trans-national applications); they could be combined with national funds for greater effect; define common set of indicators / characteristics for the RIs.

Visibility and awareness

- Use the framework of the EU-CELAC Common Research Area; optimise use of resources to avoid duplication; regular interactive meetings (both LAC and EU/LAC); conferences with the possibility to visit a (local) RI; use intra-LAC study visits for building cooperation mechanisms; increase visibility by promoting the work of the RIs and of the WG; a dedicated website to boost the visibility of the RI work and of the RIs themselves beyond national borders; ensure sustainability of all the suggestions.

Table discussion 2 "How can EU build mechanisms to increase (international) access to its RIs and opportunities for collaboration"

Future collaboration

- Keep the WG operational active and strong; push for funding pilots for RI collaboration in identified areas; consider ERANET as platform for collaboration; push for an EU/LAC programme to strengthen research collaboration between researchers (eg. M. Curie-like); increase information sharing about open and upcoming calls that involve RIs.

Existing mechanisms

- Push advertisement of open calls; increase international collaboration funds for RIs in identified thematic fields of study; keep on promoting openness and excellence as guiding principles; EU/LAC platform to publish calls.

Visibility and awareness

- Website on LAC site; mailing list updates; organising EU-LAC forum on bi-regional RI collaboration (incl. match-making between two regions with help of NCPs); be present on events.

Table discussion 3 "What mechanisms can be established for ensuring ownership and sustainability of transnational RI collaboration and access facilities?"

- Consolidate the EU-LAC WG; make use of and adapt existing programmes for young researchers; elaborate document to advocate for activities WG; present work WG at events and forums (eg. SOM);
  agree on secretary of the EU-LAC WG; explore possible cooperation between the RIs involved in study visits; identify specific research areas to focus activities and efforts; guidelines for open access between RIs in the two regions to promote the

EU-LAC cooperation; pilot EU-LAC cooperation-projects (eg. in keys areas like food security, health, energy, biodiversity and climate change)

Next steps

What	***Who***	***When***
Concise (policy) document describing objectives/ results/ vision WG	*Service Facility first draft with action points listed*	*End of June*
	WG members to further elaborate on action points	*July-August*
	Finalisation	*Before Mexico meeting (Oct/Nov)*
Define thematic focus / areas of common interest for potential bi-regional collaboration	*WG members & SF*	*Before Mexico meeting (Oct/Nov)*
Increase visibility of WG on international fora/events, including LASF4RI, and with NCPs	*WG members & SF*	*On-going*
Opening calls on LAC site to the whole region	*LAC WG members*	*On-going*
EU/LAC platform to advertise calls	*WG members & SF*	*asap*
EU/LAC forum on RIs (b2b ESFRI meeting for example) including matchmaking	*EC & WG*	*Into consideration*
LAC WG Website	*LAC WG members (Uruguay?)*	*asap*
Update EU mailing list	*EC*	*asap*