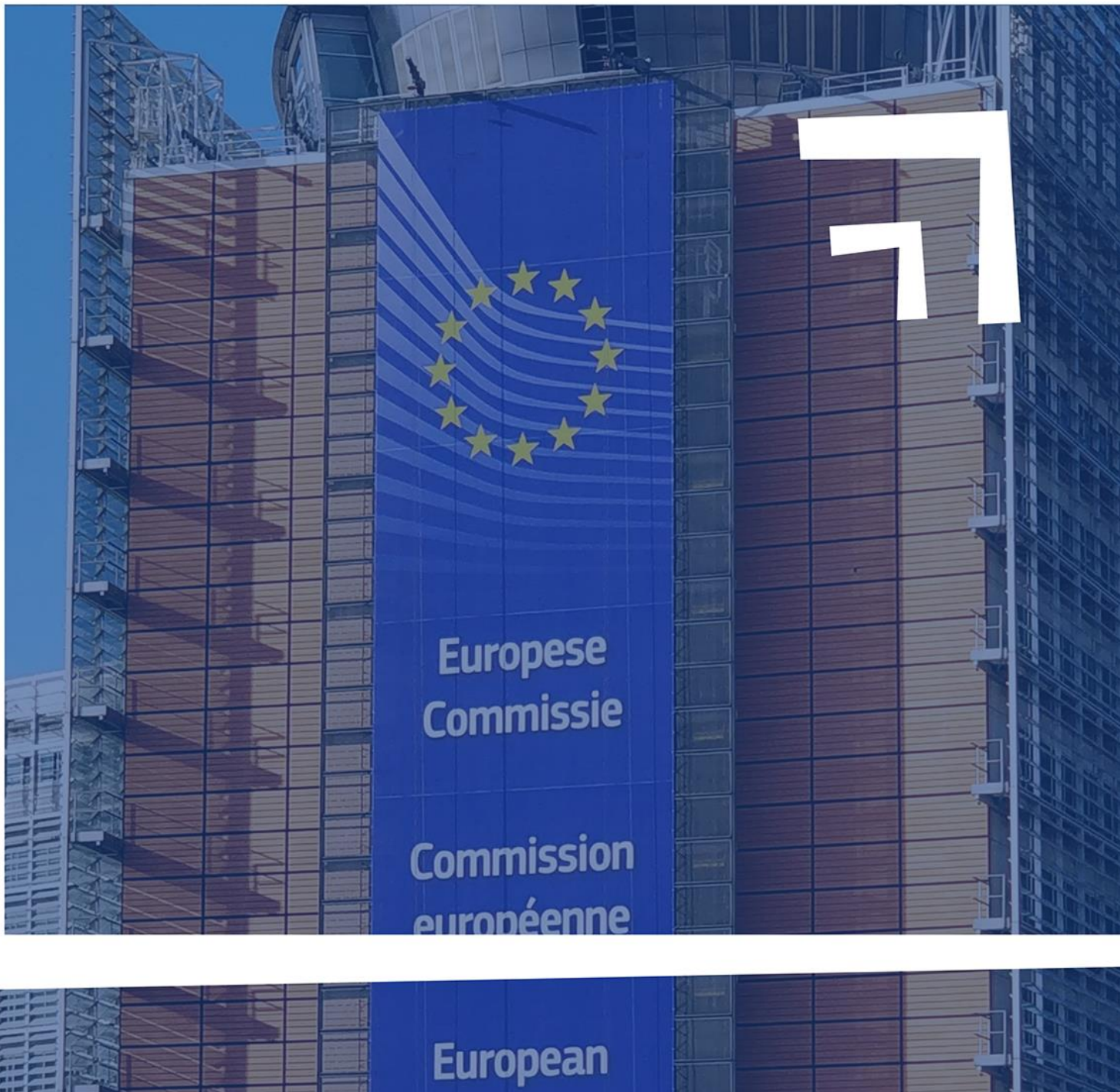


A NEW GLOBAL APPROACH ON R&I

APRE Policy Input to the European Commission Roadmap

April 2021





A NEW GLOBAL APPROACH ON R&I

APRE Policy Input to the European Commission Roadmap

The COVID-19 pandemic has distinctly showed the importance and effectiveness of international collaboration to tackle global challenges, while also emphasizing interdependence among ecosystems, countries and regions. The relevance of international collaboration in research and innovation has never been so clearly perceived amid the general public. On the other hand, the health crisis has further reinforced the need of reducing EU's strategic dependencies in key industrial sectors, reflecting the concept of Open Strategic Autonomy recently reaffirmed by the Trade Policy Review.

APRE supports the Commission's intention to revise and revamp the current strategy for international cooperation on research and innovation between Europe and the rest of the world, also in the light of the new emerging challenges and the unprecedented recent shifts in the international geopolitical context.

In particular, **we would like to contribute to the Commission's work with the following messages:**

- International cooperation in research and innovation based on common scientific, technological and cultural expertise needs to be further incentivised as an instrument to both strengthen the EU's excellence in R&I and attractiveness of world talents, and to tackle global challenges – with a particular emphasis on the green and digital transitions - in line with the 2030 Agenda's SDGs and the Paris Agreement. In this respect, **APRE fully supports the approach of general openness to third countries' participation maintained in Horizon Europe.**
- The concept of Open Strategic Autonomy is a new driver for the EU policy framework and needs to be appropriately reflected in the R&I dimension. **APRE agrees with the need to safeguard EU's interests while ensuring a level playing field for European actors at international level.** R&I collaboration – especially when involving our global competitors – shall consider the Union's interests and independence, mutual benefits, competition-related aspects, international commitments, science diplomacy and reciprocity. In this regard, APRE recognises Horizon Europe's new rules on the limitation of the participation as a proportional option to guarantee the protection of the EU's strategic interests. At the same time, **we invite the Commission to further clarify, within the Horizon Europe Programme Committee, the criteria to implement those provisions at the Work Programme level.**
- The decision to overcome the criterion of geographical proximity for third countries associated to Horizon Europe – proposed by the Commission and confirmed by the negotiations – is an important step

in the direction of strengthening the EU's sphere of influence and fostering the projection of European values towards the rest of the world. APRE strongly welcomes the conclusion of the association agreement with the UK and **invites the Commission to further follow-up on this provision and reinforce its commitment to finalise the association agreements with like-minded countries**, e.g. Canada, Japan, Singapore. While recognising the confidentiality of the ongoing discussions, **APRE encourages the Commission to guarantee the appropriate transparency of the negotiating process**, also regarding the parts of the Programme that will be excluded from the association agreement with a specific country.

- New opportunities to reinforce partnerships with different regions of the world, starting from those close to Europe, offer the chance to tackle global challenges, take practical action to sustain a shared recovery, and to finally set the direction of a clear Science Diplomacy agenda. In this regard, **the new R&I Global Approach shall strengthen its focus on the Mediterranean neighbourhood and other regions further afield, including Africa**, with the aim to connect cultures and develop strong bases for collaboration and development.
- The leading role taken by the European Commission in supporting the global response to COVID-19 both through multilateral platforms and Horizon 2020 projects should be adequately recognised and highlighted as a best practice for EU's Science Diplomacy future initiatives. Also, **targeted calls and earmarked resources, specifically dedicated to international cooperation, should continue to be modulated within the different areas based on relevance and common interest**. This shall be done by further promoting bilateral agreements between EU and industrialised / emerging countries, building on the flagship initiatives launched for the last three years of Horizon 2020.
- EU-funded networks and platforms specifically aimed at fostering international cooperation and promoting the participation of third countries in the Framework Programme had demonstrated to be highly successful in FP7 and during the first years of Horizon 2020. **APRE invites the Commission to reconsider the opportunity to re-fund such platforms**, in order to better identify R&I collaboration priorities and ensure a more effective exchange of knowledge.

CONTACTS

Mattia Ceracchi, Head of EU Liaison Office – ceracchi@apre.it

Martina De Sole, Head of International Cooperation – desole@apre.it



Agenzia per la Promozione della Ricerca Europea

Via Cavour, 71 00184 Roma - Tel.: +39 06 489 399 93 - Email: segreteria@apre.it

APRE EU Liaison Office, Rue du Trône, 98 1050 Bruxelles - Email: bruxelles@apre.it

www.apre.it

