

BACKGROUND



The recent economic crisis has underlined again the need to invest on a knowledge based economy. Global action is also a necessity for addressing several challenges (environmental, health, societal, etc) that require immediate attention.

Addressing this need of an interconnected world, the European Union has invested in the development of the International Scientific Cooperation (INCO) over the last 25 years to address the needs and opportunities, and to contribute to peace and prosperity for European citizens. In this context, the EU has opened to Third countries the Framework Program (FP), its main central funding instrument for scientific research. The current Framework Program, the 7th Framework Programme (FP7), lasts from 2007 through 2013. To maximise impact, funding for international research activities is spread throughout the various activities of FP7, with limited exceptions, while the INCO program is specially designed to support the participation of third countries in FP7.

The European Commission (EC) has specifically come forward recently with a communication ([*Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: a strategic approach*](#)) that sets out a new strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation, in particular with a view to implementing the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020. The main objectives of this strategy are to strengthen the Union's excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation and its economic and industrial competitiveness; tackle global societal challenges and support the Union's external policies.

The 2013 INCO conference occurs at a time when FP7 comes to an end and when Horizon 2020 is under its launching phase. This framework programme starts on the 1st January 2014 and will offer new challenges and opportunities for international cooperation. In this context, the 4th INCO conference will try to present new perspectives of cooperation/partnership between EU and third countries with particular focus on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC).

Useful links:

[European Commission: Horizon 2020](#)

[European Commission: international cooperation](#)

[European Commission international strategy for Research and Innovation](#)