

Summary

InsSciDE Launch Event, Paris, 26 January 2018

The H2020 project '*Inventing a shared Science Diplomacy for Europe*' – InsSciDE¹ – was launched by **Sorbonne Université professor Pascal Griset, coordinator (CNRS)** on 26 January 2018 in the presence of the 15 research consortium partners from 11 countries, and an assembly of international experts and actors of science diplomacy.

The launch event was hosted by France's National Academy of Medicine, whose **Perpetual Secretary Daniel Couturier** welcomed the participants. Professor Couturier is particularly mindful of the existing inter-European academic network, a valued InsSciDE stakeholder.

Professor Griset presented science diplomacy as the sum of interactions through which science and diplomacy support one another: when diplomats foster science developments across borders, when foreign offices call upon scientific advice to advance policy goals, or when these forces work together to solve problems on an international scale. The 4-year InsSciDE project will create an in-depth cooperation between history and contemporary science and technology studies, in order to reveal the European capital of science diplomacy which today is fragmented, heterogenous and under-utilised. InsSciDE will contribute to the theoretical framing of Europe's science diplomacy experience, and to setting its strategic directions. For this, InsSciDE calls directly on practitioners from scientific and diplomatic communities, addressing the challenge of communication between the two cultures.

Professor Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, InsSciDE expert and member of Avrist explained that science diplomacy brings into play the national interest and geopolitical goals, and should not be confused with international scientific cooperation. Science diplomacy may be used to restore links between countries, or as a lever for regional integration – raising the question of whether science and scientists may be instrumentalized. Drivers of science diplomacy include: attraction of brainpower; cooperation (on e.g. bilateral S&T agreements or multilateral large research infrastructure); influence (science as soft power, national presence in international networks). Professor Ruffini reflected on the sensitive questions raised by the ambition of developing effective science diplomacy for Europe, and acknowledged that InsSciDE, working with practitioners, should characterize with precision what could – or should – be the science diplomacy of the EU, and formulate recommendations for the harmonious division of competencies between the member states and their Union.

¹ *InsSciDE has received funding under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement n° 770523), 2018-2021*

A round table moderated by **Léonard Laborie** (CNRS), InsSciDE deputy coordinator for Science, was entitled '*Scientists and diplomats: intersections and interactions*'.

Laurence Auer, Director of culture, teaching, research and networks, Ministry of foreign affairs, France spoke of the growing criticality of scientific issues in diplomacy. She drew the contrast between her presence as sole diplomat attending a 1997 international climate change meeting, and France's hosting of COP21: the entire French diplomatic corps in Paris worked throughout 2015 principally on climate change, with Mme Auer each week reporting personally on the preparations to Foreign Affairs Minister Laurent Fabius who was to preside the Conference of the Parties. When President Emmanuel Macron issued his "Make Our Planet Great Again" invitation to scientists and engineers, her services rose to the challenge of handling 11,000 responses in 350 languages and from all world regions.

Catherine Bréchnignac, Perpetual secretary of the French Academy of Sciences and French Ambassador for Science, Innovation and Technology pointed out that scientific knowledge is universal, but research is not. She recounted the late 18th century competition between French and British models for defining a standard of linear measurement, competition brought before the political assembly by France's premier diplomat Talleyrand. The French won out with the meter rooted in their calculation of the meridian arc, which would become the universal tool of scientific communication. Ambassador Bréchnignac said while science may be instrumentalized, it is more difficult to instrumentalize the scientists themselves. She suggested that a more complex topography, fractals rather than superimposed discs, would better represent the interaction between the spheres of foreign policy and science. Finally she pointed to the importance of national language shaping how scientists of different cultures and contexts internally frame their inquiry.

Thierry Courvoisier², President of European Academies Science Advisory Council EASAC, recalled that particle physics and space science opened one of the few channels between the US and USSR during the cold war. Science remains a useful tool for talking across boundaries, and there is a need for a forum where matters of global good can be discussed without political constraint. EASAC is a step in this direction, where scientists try to find consensus of opinion that can inform European policy. Prof. Courvoisier warned of the potential of scientific knowledge for building not only bridges but also tools of war.

Flavia Schlegel, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO recalled the foundation of the organization on the ashes of WWII, with its affirmation that 'it is in the mind of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed'. The more fractured the world becomes, the more we need multilateral forums where states talk to each other. UNESCO is in a sense a science diplomacy enterprise, facilitating interstate relationships and establishing networks of scientists. Dr Schlegel urged that InsSciDE look at how women can be drawn efficiently into the field of science diplomacy so that we may use the full intellectual power at our disposal. To achieve this we need an aspirational agenda according to which science, and the citizens who are scientists, will make a positive difference. Science is not a cost, it is an investment. It needs freedom and the right climate to prosper.

² <http://thierrycourvoisier.ch/en/science-and-society/63-launch-of-insscide-a-large-science-diplomacy-project-in-europe>
www.insscide.eu

A second roundtable, moderated by **Claire Mays** (Symlog), was entitled '*Science diplomats: Practices and challenges*'. It gathered science Counselors, Advisors or Attachés from several Paris embassies, all members of an informal network chaired by **Szilvia Szántó**.

Ms. **Szántó** (Embassy of Hungary) explained the importance of the communication and sharing facilitated by this group, whose members represent the diversity of their home countries' political, economic and cultural priorities. She highlighted the unique role within the embassy of a science diplomat, and illustrated the work of promoting Hungary's potential for research and innovation from her brochure '*Au-delà du Rubik's Cube*' to European projects (e.g. [ELI laser](#)) and multilateral commitments (e.g. [ESA](#)), as well as brought up the question of brain and startup drain from the diplomacy side.

Giacomo Bampini³, Embassy of Belgium, General Delegation of Wallonie-Bruxelles, described his role focused on francophone networks, creating opportunities for research, technology transfer and innovation. These can create new jobs thereby fostering social mobility and women's economic empowerment. The science diplomat must keep abreast of the ecosystem, and identify key stakeholders who can further such opportunities.

Nico Schiettekatte, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, spoke of his nation's overarching vision of science and diplomacy for society, its translation into instruments and budgets, and the perspective of a strengthened, expanded toolbox for science cooperation.

John H. Griffith, Embassy of the United States of America, described the decentralized U.S. system of scientific research in which academia, the public and private sector are all actors. State Department diplomats support the federal science agencies abroad, brokering bilateral S&T agreements and promoting cooperation on technical and policy issues. The U.S. sponsors diverse exchange programs such as Embassy Science Fellows which brings federal scientists to work with foreign governments on areas of mutual interest. American libraries, STEM clubs, coding camps, inspiring talks by astronauts and more empower young people across the world to get involved in science and engineering.

Kyrill E. Bykov, Embassy of the Russian Federation detailed network building activities: through organizing seminars, visits and exchange, the diplomat gets scientists talking together. As discussion rages in academic contexts on how to define science diplomacy, day-to-day work of this nature may later be recognized as making up a large part of it. Mr. Bykov pointed out that scientists' exchange gradually prevails over diplomatic actions; scientific cooperation may be used to foster political links, but actual scientific projects need approval by the scientists. Thus, "science for diplomacy" has its limits and works most efficiently for the leading research countries.

Conor Snowden, Global Science Adviser for the British Council based in the UK, who works closely with the British Embassy and British Council offices in Paris, reflected on the Council's role in fostering scientific cooperation despite its not being an "official" diplomatic body in most countries. Scientific excellence is viewed as a key part of United Kingdom culture. Dr Snowden described the UK Newton Fund's co-funding partnership with host countries to support research addressing international development challenges. Pointing to previous UK relations with Argentina or Iran he showed that when there is a deficit of trust, science and education programs continue to maintain links between countries.

³ Join the InsSciDE LinkedIn Group and access Mr. Bampini's description of Science Diplomat duties.
[linkedin.com/groups/13572630](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13572630)
www.insscide.eu

Edgar Morin, sociologist, president of the Scientific advisory board of the CNRS Institute for Communication Sciences as well as the Association pour la Pensée Complexe, closed the proceedings by speaking on *'Science and cross-boundary relations of influence: Approaching complexity in InsSciDE'*. Edgar Morin reflected that science is international, but the world is made of nations. As science must develop its internationality, it needs the help of nations, and nations need the help of science. Science must be controlled by politics but also control its own production. The triple motor of science, techniques and economy which has emerged in the past century drives both great benefits and great destruction; in the search for collective solutions, and for necessary understanding between states, the elevated consciousness and interconnectedness of the scientific community provides a model. Invoking his experience of COP21, with its gathering of scientists, diplomats, policy makers and civil society, Edgar Morin called for a heightened world focus on collective action for the greater good, through the creation of a high council of leaders including spiritual authorities.

