

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

**Lisbon, Portugal  
6-7 November 2023**

Contribution by Latvia

to the CSTD 2023-2024 priority theme on “Global cooperation in science,  
technology and innovation for development”

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

**PRIORITY THEME 2: Global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for Development**

**1. What STI cooperative mechanism(s) at global or regional levels has your country joined in?**

Equal access to quality education, innovation and digitalisation are key priorities for Latvia's development cooperation. In 2022 a quarter of the projects supported by the grant programme of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia included an element of digitalisation.

Latvia's development cooperation policy is being implemented in alignment with the development cooperation priorities and frameworks of the European Union, including "Team Europe" approach and "Global Gateway". In 2022 as part of the European Union's "Digital for Development" initiative Latvia provided contribution to UNICEF GIGA supporting internet availability for schools in various regions. Under "Regional Team Europe Initiative for Digital Connectivity for Central Asia" Latvia also implements various projects applying digital solutions to public administration, such as creating a digital system for the development of legal acts; using artificial intelligence, such as machine translation for enterprises, to facilitate exports; water and wastewater management. Latvia is also working on improving digital skills of women and girls in Uzbekistan by supporting women entrepreneurs in starting or developing their IT business by offering a mentorship programme.

As a member of the European Union Latvia is participating in the EU-level R&D&I programs and initiatives such as "Horizon Europe",<sup>1</sup> Euratom Research and Training Programme (2021-2025),<sup>2</sup> Important Projects of Common European Interest,<sup>3</sup> "Digital Europe",<sup>4</sup> "Copernicus",<sup>5</sup> "European territorial co-operation"<sup>6</sup> and European Institute of Innovation and Technology.<sup>7</sup>

Latvia is also a member of European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST)<sup>8</sup> that offers an open space for collaboration among scientists thereby giving impetus to research advancements and innovation. Opportunities for cooperation are also being developed through the participation of Latvia as an associate member state in the European Space Agency and European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).

Latvia is maintaining active cooperation with other Baltic States – Estonia and Lithuania. Three Baltic States are involved in the Baltic Research Programme which focuses on promoting sustainable cooperation, complementarity, capacity building, as well as further cooperation in research projects at European Union and European Economic Area level.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en)

<sup>2</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/euratom-research-and-training-programme\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/euratom-research-and-training-programme_en)

<sup>3</sup> [https://competition-policy.ec.europa.eu/state-aid/legislation/modernisation/ipcei\\_en](https://competition-policy.ec.europa.eu/state-aid/legislation/modernisation/ipcei_en)

<sup>4</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>

<sup>5</sup>

[https://www.esa.int/Applications/Observing\\_the\\_Earth/Copernicus/Europe\\_s\\_Copernicus\\_programme](https://www.esa.int/Applications/Observing_the_Earth/Copernicus/Europe_s_Copernicus_programme)

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/policy/cooperation/european-territorial\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/european-territorial_en)

<sup>7</sup> <https://eit.europa.eu/about-us/eit-glance>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cost.eu/about/about-cost/>

Latvia, along with other Baltic and Nordic countries, is participating in NORDPLUS<sup>9</sup> educational programme.

## 2. To what extent the existing cooperation programmes are aligned with the development priorities of participating developing countries?

European Union's "Horizon Europe" programme aims to promote international collaboration and to address global challenges. "Horizon Europe" encourages the participation of developing countries through dedicated regional High Level Policy Dialogues on Science, Technology and Innovation and adoption of strategic research agendas, for example, African Union (AU) – EU High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation which adopted the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

Here are some ways in which these programs strive to align with the development priorities of participating developing countries:

- *Focus on global challenges:* addressing global challenges such as climate change, health, food security, and sustainable development. These challenges are of common concern to both developed and developing countries. By participating in these programs, developing countries can access resources, expertise, and collaborative networks to tackle these shared issues.
- Initiatives involve *aligning research priorities* and funding mechanisms with participating countries, including developing countries, through strategic research agendas. By engaging in these joint initiatives, developing countries can shape the research agenda and ensure that it aligns with their own development priorities.
- *Capacity building and knowledge transfer:* cooperation programs recognize the importance of capacity building in developing countries. They often include provisions for training, technology transfer, and knowledge exchange. These activities aim to enhance the research and innovation capabilities of developing countries and support their own development priorities.

While European Union's Copernicus programme<sup>10</sup> primarily serves European needs, its open data policy, focus on climate change, disaster management, capacity building, and collaboration mechanisms provide opportunities for developing countries to leverage Earth observation data and services to address their own development priorities. The specific ways in which Copernicus aligns with the development agenda may vary depending on the regional context and specific projects and partnerships established with developing countries.

The Copernicus program, implemented by the European Union (EU) in partnership with the European Space Agency (ESA), provides Earth observation data and services for a wide range of applications. Here's how the Copernicus program contributes to the development agenda:

- *Open Access to Earth Observation Data:* Copernicus provides free and open access to a wealth of Earth observation data, including satellite imagery, climate data, and environmental information. This data can be instrumental in addressing a variety of development challenges, such as monitoring and managing natural resources, tracking changes in land use and vegetation, assessing the impact of climate change, and supporting disaster management and response.

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nordplusonline.org/about/nordplus/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.copernicus.eu/en>

- *Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation:* Copernicus provides essential information and tools for monitoring and assessing climate change impacts. This can support developing countries in their efforts to adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects. By offering accurate and up-to-date data on weather patterns, sea-level rise, temperature changes, and other climate indicators, Copernicus aids in informed decision-making and the development of climate resilience strategies.
- *Disaster Management and Risk Reduction:* Copernicus plays a crucial role in disaster management and risk reduction by providing real-time and historical Earth observation data for early warning systems, emergency response planning, and post-disaster assessments. Developing countries prone to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, and droughts, can benefit from Copernicus data to enhance their preparedness and response capabilities.

**3. What are the main outcomes of such mechanism(s)? And what are the impacts of the resultant cooperation on your country? Pls. include the gender dimension.**

As a Member State of the European Union Latvia has financially benefitted from the European Union's "Horizon 2020" and "Horizon Europe" educational programmes. From 2014 to November 24, 2022 Latvia has attracted financing up to 150 million euros.

Since Latvia became an associated Member State of the European Space Agency in June 30, 2020 Latvia has attracted financing for 14 projects for 1.5 million euros which has allowed Latvia to develop scientific and industrial competencies.

Latvia is also participating in European Union's Important Projects of Common European Interest support program. While it is too early to assess the impacts of this cooperation mechanism, we expect it to promote the development of new products, technologies and innovations.

Regarding gender dimensions, in Latvia data on the role of gender in the European Union's Recovery Fund investments and the European Union Structural Funds specific objectives are applied according to the horizontal principle – data on the gender of the persons involved in the programs is collected.

**4. What are the main difficulties member countries have encountered or are facing when implementing the cooperation mechanisms?**

There are a number of difficulties when implementing cooperation mechanisms:

- Overall horizontal obstacle is limited capacity for national funding or co-funding;
- Different levels of economic development, different institutional, industrial and technological capabilities and regulatory framework between cooperating countries;
- Lack of direct contacts with universities, research and research funding institutions in developing countries and access to research networks in developing countries;
- National legislative framework and administrative procedures do not always provide the required flexibility to grasp momentum or to react swiftly to the needs of developing countries;

- Capacity of small private innovative companies to come up with new initiatives and implement several projects at the same time is limited.

**5. In respect of achieving the objectives and goals, what are the factors contributing to the success or failure of the cooperation mechanism(s) that your country has joined in?**

In Latvia's experience important factors that contribute to the success or failure of the cooperation mechanisms are national funding and co-funding capacity, research capacity (both human capital and equipment), managerial capacity, efficient networking and matchmaking, effective private sector engagement and mutual trust between cooperating entities.

**6. In your country's view, what role could CSTD play in coordinating and imparting directionality to international STI collaboration and technology sharing?**

The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) plays a vital role in coordinating and providing directionality to international Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) collaboration and technology sharing. Here are some key roles and functions of the CSTD:

*Coordination of STI Policies:* CSTD serves as a platform for coordinating and harmonizing national and international STI policies. It facilitates dialogue and information exchange among member states, international organizations, academia, and the private sector.

*Policy Advice and Recommendations:* CSTD provides policy advice and recommendations to the United Nations General Assembly and other UN bodies on STI-related matters. It conducts research, analysis, and assessments of global STI trends and developments and provides guidance on promoting inclusive and sustainable STI policies and practices.

*Monitoring and Reporting:* CSTD monitors global trends and developments in STI and prepares reports on key issues related to technology sharing, transfer, and collaboration. These reports provide valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to foster a conducive environment for international STI cooperation.

*Advocacy for Inclusive STI Collaboration:* CSTD advocates for inclusive and equitable STI collaboration and technology sharing, with a particular focus on addressing the needs and priorities of developing countries. It promotes the principle of "technology for development" to ensure that technology transfer and sharing benefit all countries, especially those with limited resources and capacities.