



JOINT STATEMENT

FRESH EXPECTATIONS FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION ACROSS EUROPE

5TH JOINT SCIENCE CONFERENCE
WESTERN BALKANS PROCESS / BERLIN PROCESS
LONDON · UNITED KINGDOM · 28 – 30 MAY 2019

The 5th Berlin Process Joint Science Conference convened at the UK's Royal Society in London to take further the process started in Germany in July 2015 and continued in Austria in May 2016, France in June 2017, and Italy in May 2018. The outcomes of the previous conferences were summarised in Joint Statements, which were

endorsed by the Heads of State and Government at the Western Balkans Summits in Vienna (2015), Paris (2016), Trieste (2017) and London (2018). The parties welcome the announcement made by the Polish Academy of Sciences to hold the next conference in 2020 in Warsaw.

Key Recommendations

1. Install national scientific advice mechanisms where missing, and include scientific expertise in the co-design of public policies and societal dialogue;
2. Endorse actions of academic-scientific cooperation, which contribute to reconciliation and good neighbourly relations in SEE, underlining the societal responsibility of science;
3. Support measures to improve science communication in the digital era and to raise awareness for the societal and economic importance of education, science, R&I.

Commitments

1. The parties reaffirm their **unequivocal commitment to the creation of the Western Balkans Research Foundation**, reinforcing the decision of the Heads of State and Government at the 2017 Trieste Western Balkans Summit. This decision needs to be implemented as soon as possible, as the process of brain drain from the WB / SEE has become critical. Moreover, brain drain now structurally hinders WB / SEE scientific communities to successfully acquire funding from European sources. The parties urge the EC and the BP countries to take all necessary steps for the negotiation of a final agreement. The parties reiterate that without measures, which address the specific needs of the WB / SEE to **tackle brain drain**, the latest positive developments are in danger of reversibility. This cannot be a desirable outcome of the enlargement process.
2. The parties commit to **step-up efforts to advance in-house reforms** with the aim of achieving convergence with EU standards, especially with ERA and EHEA requirements, and by protecting freedom of research and academic autonomy. They express readiness to work for this together with the scientific community, the governments, legislators and the EC, stressing the **need for dialogue and co-design of reforms and other measures**. This is the most viable way – if not the only way – of achieving sustainable improvements. The parties from the EU MS involved in the BP are ready to share their experiences. The parties emphasise that international cooperation in HE, R&I – including the regional cooperation in SEE – can and does unfold distinctively from political developments, following well-established cooperation avenues based on shared values, trust and commonly pursued goals.
3. The parties commit to **continue the work in the framework of the BPJSC and emphasise the genuine importance of such a platform**. They welcome the implementation of some of the recommendations and suggestions following the Joint Statements of the past BPJSCs. However, they stress the need for a sustained pace by the national governments in the WB / SEE and the EC in implementing the remaining key recommendations that are in their preponderant responsibility. In the spirit of ownership, they will explore the reshaping of the BPJSC by structuring the work in chapters, including one on scientific advice to decision-makers in questions relevant to the future of the WB / SEE.

Scientific Advice Mechanism

Scientific Advice and Knowledge Transfer

Scientific advice is of paramount importance for designing and implementing public policies as well as for informing the wider public with scientific evidence on issues of daily life. Scientific advice is a sum of informative actions with the aim to provide best possible answers, options for course of action and recommendations on identified questions, thus **improving systematically the decision-making process**. It strictly follows the standards of academic excellence, reputation and integrity. It is independent, transparent and unbiased, discarding potential conflicts of interests. It catalyses state-of-the-art research findings, scrutinises critically the ongoing debates in different spheres and highlights potential externalities and impacts. It communicates the findings impartially and in an understandable language to different target groups. In doing so, it helps to transfer knowledge into society and politics, explaining how to use the available knowledge optimally. Considering these, the parties recommend that **scientific advice should be institutionalised** in form of national scientific advice mechanisms.

Scientific advice can primarily be of two types:

- ♦ **Science for policy**, meaning providing scientific expertise from different sources for policy choices for the broader benefit of a country / region / community;
- ♦ **Policy for science**, meaning providing scientific expertise and recommendations for the design of the policy on education, R&I policy of a country / region / community;

Additionally, scientific advice can be provided in case of emergency or crisis under conditions of urgency.

Co-Design in the Policy-Making and Decision-Taking Cycle

Scientists bear a major responsibility for the well-being of their countries. They need to be proactive and honest **brokers of scientific advice**. Therefore, they should work in conjunction with the civil society and the political and economic actors to create circumstances that enable solutions to current or future challenges. Such collaborations stretch throughout the policy-making and decision-taking cycle, from design to implementation and monitoring. The most suitable approach for this is the **co-design of public policies** between the scientific community and the political actors, including the executive branch and the legislator, by systematically bringing scientific knowledge into the chain of solutions. This type of approach should become an intrinsic part of policy-making in the WB / SEE. Of particular relevance for the region are **processes of transformation** from socialism to democracy and from planned economy to free market. In these processes, the transformative power of education, R&I needs to be used to a larger extent.

Options for Scientific Advice Mechanisms

Scientific advice can be delivered through informal channels and by individual experts or can be structured in accordance with European and international models. Currently, there are **three major models of scientific advice mechanisms on national level**, with hybrid models occurring as well.

- a. The model of a **Chief Scientific Advisor of the government**, with an appointed person in charge of providing scientific advice (usually a scientist with an outstanding track record), supported by a dedicated civil service office; this model is specific to countries from the Anglo-Saxon world, although some models have different Chief Scientific Advisors for ministries or executive branches, offices and subordinated agencies;
- b. The model of scientific advice through a **mandate fulfilled by national academies, national scientific councils or similar bodies**; this model is based on including a larger number of scientists and scientific organisations in the scientific advice process, and on channelling expertise through dedicated structures; the institutionalisation degree may vary from well-established models to ad hoc and less-established ones;
- c. The model of scientific advice that **combines variably the two models above** in a mechanism with several persons appointed and one or more scientific organisations mandated to provide scientific advice; this model can feature a higher or lower degree of institutionalisation.

Legislators may have their own parliamentary scientific services or science and technology assessment offices. Additionally, some ministries and executive branches install expert groups and scientific advisory bodies, which also deliver scientific advice. In most of the cases worldwide, there is an ongoing dialogue and co-ordination between the different actors involved in scientific advice to the central state level. Moreover, the advice is not restricted only to the executive branch and the legislator, but to the wider public (society) as well. In all scientific advice models, scientists involved can bear both on questions raised by the government / parliament and on questions identified independently.

The parties recommend that **every country in the WB / SEE should identify the most suitable model of scientific advice mechanism** adapted to national needs and priorities in an inclusive process between the government, the legislator and the scientific community, building a shared ownership over the chosen model. This model should be open to early-career scientists, the academic diaspora and scientists from abroad. It should contain procedures for measuring progress, quality assurance and ongoing adjustment.

Societal Responsibility of Science and Science Communication

A New Narrative of Science as a Societal Good

The parties recognise the overall **need to enable a positive narrative for education, science and R&I**. They argue this need towards political actors, the wider public and the scientific community itself. The new narrative should emphasise that science is a public good of outstanding importance and that a real increase of economic performance results from an educated and highly skilled human capital, and from excellent R&I output. These aspects should find a long-lasting place in the political narrative on the future development directions of the WB / SEE. All actors should encourage an environment of **critical thinking and a respectful, argument-based dialogue**, with critical thinking skills and reflective capacity being promoted throughout the education lifeline. This is of particular relevance when combating the decline of trust in science and scientific evidence, disinformation and manipulation, and a science-hostile

rhetoric. Equally important is the capacity of the scientific community of self-reflection and self-change, those being values that need constant promotion and high visibility.

Science should also take the role of an **impartial convener for national debates**, be it on factual issues (e.g. climate, digital transformation, energy etc.) or on issues of national interest (e.g. societal change, reconciliation, identity, EU accession etc.). Governments should make better use of the **soft power of science in international relations**, integrating it into foreign policy in the form of science diplomacy (use of scientific cooperation and scientific knowledge to improve international relations and to promote one country's potentials).

Science Communication

The parties agree on the **stringent need to improve science communication**, meaning the impartial intermediation and transmission of scientific evidence, and the raising of awareness on the work of scientists and associated socio-economic benefits. It is vital to (learn how to) use all available dissemination channels in the **digital era**. In doing so, the scientific community should respond timely to current and emerging challenges, focusing on tailored messages for different audiences: the wider public, the policy- and decision-makers and the broader scientific community. Additionally, the content of science communication should be designed to correlate with the specific dissemination channel (TV programmes and documentaries, printed media, social media, video-sharing platforms, visual-based social networks, professional social networks, open collaborative knowledge based websites, blended learning platforms etc.). This can be achieved with the help of **specialised science communicators**, such as science journalists and science promoters; they can act as the interface between scientists and different audiences. In order to foster information exchange and opinion formation, science communication should not be unidirectional (from science to audience only), but rather bidirectional (from science to audience and back through responsive-interactive communication).

The parties seek to exchange best practices from Europe and worldwide on science communication and science-audience interaction, and emulate those to the specific conditions in their own countries, including the use of national and minority languages.

National Roundtables

In order to operate the process of systemic change, the parties reiterate their postulation from the past BPJSC for the WB countries to establish **National Roundtables for the Future of Education and Science**, in the spirit of national ownership of the reforms needed for EU accession. The Roundtables should consist of decision-makers of (science) politics, and the HE and R&I sector, and should be co-chaired by a political and a non-political representative.

Science Promotion and Citizen Science

The parties agree that science needs to be promoted actively in the public sphere, by making sense of science, enlightening the society and by raising awareness for the benefits resulting from education and science. One important field of activity is **science education**, which is focused on learning through specialised pedagogy about the content and working of science (methods of doing science) by citizen groups that are not part of the scientific community. Science education includes a variety of interactive-participative formats for

teaching and learning (e.g. science festivals, science slams, public science campaigns, science nights etc.), formats for the popularisation of science (such as science museums and science promotion centres) as well as formats of citizen science / civic science (the involvement of citizen groups and civil society organisations in scientific research and science communication). These formats need to **cover the entire educational cycle**, from primary education to continuous learning, involving the major stakeholders (academies and scholarly societies, universities, research organisations, schools etc.) and persuading citizens to engage in such undertakings.

The parties will seek to exchange best practices in the field with peers from Europe and worldwide, focusing on the involvement of youth (primary and secondary education level), on modern digital methods and on collaboration with the creative industry.

Education and Science for Reconciliation and Good Neighbourly Relations

The parties highlight the **crucial importance of advancing the reconciliation process in the WB / SEE**, emphasising that such processes will lead to the improvement of neighbourly relations between communities and states. They share the view that **reconciliation is a task for all societal actors** and not merely for the political ones. Considering the political fluctuations in WB / SEE, a decoupling of the reconciliation process from politics and a stronger ownership in this field from the civil society seems a viable option in current times. The specific setting of the post-1990s in the WB / SEE makes it even more difficult to achieve reconciliation, as conflicting issues extend both within countries and throughout the region.

Based on models from other parts of the world widely regarded as successful (particularly South Africa and its Truth and Reconciliation Commission), the parties emphasise the prime **need for restorative justice rather than for retributive justice**. Restorative justice seeks to find consensus among the affected parties on mistakes that occurred, actions that had an offensive and destructive outcome and responsible individuals or groups. It seeks to overcome negative effects of the conflict legacy, looking forward towards rapprochement of former conflict parties and joint undertakings on a commonly agreed basis and conflict narrative (i.e. truth finding and truth sharing). Retributive justice focuses more on determining the right and the wrong and the aggressor and victim in a conflict (with case-by-case differentiations). It also emphasises the punishment of crimes and perpetrators. Thus, **the restorative justice approach reflects a deeper process** and a wider range of measures and actors, being considered more sustainable in the long run. To this end, cooperation among actors of the education and science systems plays a determinant role in the step-by-step advancement of reconciliation.

The parties **agree to pursue measures conducive to reconciliation in the field of HE** – e.g. student and staff encounters in multi-ethnic, -linguistic and -confessional formats such as summer schools and science camps, student and staff exchange by visits in different countries / regions / communities, study visits, joint degrees among universities in SEE etc. – and in the field of scientific cooperation, such as people-to-people research cooperation, multilateral research consortia, research expeditions etc. The parties emphasise especially the need for reciprocal language proficiency among the linguistic groups in the WB / SEE. **Learning each other's languages** is a major step towards mediation of collective identities and mnemonic narratives, consequently towards reconciliation in general. They urge the political actors to support such grassroots efforts by diminishing barriers and providing financial support. The parties will seek to collaborate with the RYCO, which they consider a crucial player for youth exchange and reconciliation in the WB / SEE.

GLOSSARY

BP = Berlin Process

BPJSC = Berlin Process Joint Science Conference

EC = European Commission

EHEA = European Higher Education Area

ERA = European Research Area

EU MS = European Union Member State(s)

HE = Higher education

R&I = Research and innovation

RYCO = Regional Youth Cooperation Office

SEE = South East Europe

WB = Western Balkans

WBP / BP = Western Balkans Process / Berlin Process [Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom as well as the European Commission (*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSC 1244 resolution and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.)]

WBRF = Western Balkans Research Foundation

The term "science" (and related expressions) refers to the entire spectrum of scientific branches: natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, formal sciences, life sciences, applied sciences etc.

This statement reflects the position of the participating parties and not that of the external experts invited as speakers at the conference.

PARTICIPATING PARTIES

NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES (AND ARTS)

Academy of Sciences of Albania (Salvator Bushati) | Austrian Academy of Sciences (Jens Oliver Schmitt) | Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Miloš Trifković) | French Académie des sciences (Olivier Pironneau) | German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina (Jörg Hacker) | Italian Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Maria Cristina Marcuzzo) | Italian National Research Council (Massimo Inguscio) | Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo (Fetah Podvorica) | Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Taki Fiti) | Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts (Dragan K. Vukčević) | Polish Academy of Sciences (Jerzy Duszyński) | Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Ljubomir Maksimović) | Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Tadej Bajd) | The Royal Society (Richard A. Catlow)

NATIONAL RECTORS' CONFERENCES, UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Rectors' Conference of the Republic of Albania / University of Tirana (Mynyr Koni) | Polytechnic University of Tirana (Andrea Maliqari) | University of Sarajevo (Rifat Škrijelj) | University of Banja Luka (Goran Latinović) | University of Zagreb (Damir Boras) | Conference of Rectors of Public Universities of Kosovo / Hasan-Prishtina-University of Prishtina (Marjan Dema) | Saints-Cyril-and-Methodius-University of Skopje (Nikola Jankulovski) | University of Montenegro (Danilo Nikolić) | Conference of Serbia's Universities / University of Belgrade (Ivanka Popović) | University of Novi Sad (Dejan Jakšić) | University of Ljubljana (Igor Papič) | Universities UK (Jamie Arrowsmith)

DISTINGUISHED SCIENTISTS AND EXPERTS *AD PERSONAM*

Andreja Bogataj (Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy Munich) | Vesna Bojičić-Dželilović (London School of Economics and Political Science) | Dhimitër Doka (University of Tirana) | Adnan Efendić (University of Sarajevo) | Josip Glaurdić (University of Luxembourg) | Adhurim Haxhimusa (Vienna University of Economics and Business) | Jana Kolar (Central European Research Infrastructure Consortium CERIC-ERIC Trieste) | Olivera Komar (University of Montenegro / European Social Survey) | Adnan Mehonić (University College London) | Visar Morina (University of Prishtina / Venice Commission, Council of Europe) | Snježana Prijić-Samaržija (University of Rijeka) | Amra Šakušić (University Clinical Centre Tuzla / Mayo Clinic) | Milica Sentić (University of Belgrade) | Tomasz Żornaczuk (Polish Institute of International Affairs Warsaw)