



SPEECH – PACE-Net Conference  
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**ANDREW JACOBS**  
**AMBASSADOR**  
**EU DELEGATION FOR THE PACIFIC**

Honourable Minister, Vice Chancellor and President, Dear Professor Payri, Dear PACE-NET partners,  
Honourable guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to express my gratitude to the organisers for the invitation to attend this PACE-Net key stakeholder conference here in Suva.

I am extremely pleased to be here. I know that my colleagues in Brussels, in particular Laurent Bochereau, acting Director for International Cooperation in the Directorate General for Research and Innovation, regret not be able to participate – the dates chosen for the meeting unfortunately clash with the period of the evaluation of research proposals, which is extremely busy.

Europe and the countries of the South Pacific have strong historical and cultural links going back centuries.

At the geopolitical level, the two regions have embarked together on a large range of policies to strengthen their interaction. We have long worked together on three key issues: governance, regionalism, and sustainable management of natural resources. And we have done a lot together in research.

The EU supported highly, in 2010, the PACE-NET consortium under the Seventh FWP Capacities research programme. This project had the aim of enhancing dialogue in science and technology policy among the EU, its 27 Member States, the 15 ACP-Pacific partners, the 'Pacific overseas countries and territories', Australia and New Zealand. Quite an ambition!

In Europe as in the Pacific, research and innovation are seen as critical engines for boosting sustainable growth, development and employment creation.

The major funding programme for supporting research and innovation is Horizon 2020, about which more later, but I am pleased to note that the European Council of Heads of States and Governments reiterated last month its call for ensuring an "...effective and efficient future European research policy..." and agreed that the new EU multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 must underpin "...the EU's determination to develop its role as an active player on the international scene with regional and global interests and responsibilities...".



The Council, goes on to say that "...its financing instruments will strengthen EU's cooperation with partners ..., projecting EU policies in support of addressing major challenges, increasing the impact of EU development cooperation...». So we have a great deal of support from the EU.

High quality, relevant research and development activities defined as part of the policies of national governments and regional organisations are of course vital. The governments and organisations, including the South Pacific Commission have been active, with the EU, in delivering such high quality activities.

The PACE-NET network played an important role in this context. Over its three years of existence, PACE-NET has established strong policy dialogue on research and innovation, and has delivered valuable results.

Let me highlight some of PACE-NET's achievements:

1) The network has reinforced existing science and technology networks. It has promoted regional integration of those networks. It has enhanced the relationship between research organisations and universities in the South Pacific region, notably with active involvement of research organisations and universities in Australia and New Zealand.

2) Several studies undertaken by PACE-NET, including surveys and desktop reviews have provided research organisations, regional organisations and stakeholders with a more complete picture of science and technology of interest to the Pacific.

3) PACE-NET has set-up dialogues that bring together experts and other stakeholders – listing 40 main stakeholders – from both regions. I would like to specifically thank all the partners, experts and other stakeholders for their intensive work together. I note the creative workshops held in Fiji, Brussels, Nouméa and Brisbane which have delivered substantive policy briefings focused on important topics for the two regions such as fisheries, freshwater resources, agriculture and forestry, health, climate, and biodiversity.

4) As a result of exchanges and discussions between PACE-NET partners and other stakeholders, the idea of a 'Pacific Science Technology and Innovation' policy framework emerged. Presentations and discussions with key actors from the 'Pacific Islands University Research Network' (PIURN) will support intra- and inter- regional knowledge creation and exchange. They will further advance the development of the regional policy framework for science, technology and innovation, adapted to the regional specificities of the Pacific environment.

5) I am confident that the creation of governance mechanisms for such an integrated policy framework will be facilitated by the PACE-NET recommendations. I do hope that such mechanisms will be anchored by the setting up of a new capacity-building research network. It is the evaluation of the proposals for this (and other) networks that keeps my colleagues in Brussels this week!

I mentioned earlier the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation – Horizon 2020. I will tell you more about that now.



Built on the important achievements of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, Horizon 2020 brings together research activities, support to innovation and the European Institute for Innovation and Technology under a single programme. It is open to participation by countries worldwide. But we want our international cooperation to be even more effective than it has been so far. A first step to becoming more effective is to clearly identify the objectives we see for international cooperation.

The European Commission adopted a Communication in September 2012 which defines three key objectives for international cooperation:

- One of these, tackling global challenges, is important to all countries and regions – we need to cooperate in developing solutions for issues such as the need for secure supplies of food and clean energy, dealing with climate change. This is clearly of fundamental importance for the South Pacific region.
- The strategy also foresees the need to support the Union's external policies. Many of the international commitments we have signed up to as the European Union are also underpinned by research and innovation. This concerns, for example, international obligations such as achieving the Millennium Development Goals or our commitments to assist developing countries in developing their economies and societies.
- Finally, we need to recognise that strengthening the Union's excellence and attractiveness as a research partner is important for the Union if it is to benefit fully from research and innovation. We need access to knowledge, people and markets across the globe. But this is not a one way street – in order to cooperate effectively, we must make sure that we also remain attractive to our partners.

Horizon 2020, due to start in 2014, will be the main tool for implementing our international cooperation strategy. International cooperation in Horizon 2020 will take a dual approach. First of all, Horizon 2020 will be open to participation from all countries, allowing European consortia to cooperate with partners from around the globe on the research topics of their own choice.

In addition, there will be targeted cooperation actions, where we, as policy makers, will decide up-front both the area and the partner for cooperation. These targeted actions will be selected on the basis of common interest and mutual benefit.

We will also continue our efforts to develop actions with sufficient scale and scope to generate significant impact. All of this will be clearly set out in a set of multi-annual roadmaps that will specify for each of our partner countries and regions the topics on which we wish to cooperate – for common interest and mutual benefit. Developing these roadmaps and implementing them through Horizon 2020 is one of the cornerstones of the proposed strategy



To conclude, I would like to congratulate the coordination team and all PACE-NET partners for their commitment to the enhancement of our EU-Pacific partnership in science and technology. I would also like to thank the organiser, the University of the South Pacific, to making this event happen.

Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us enjoy our sessions and our discussions with a view to sharing the rich results of our PACE-NET network activities, looking forward to paving the way to new steps for our dialogue.