

New Frontiers in Science Diplomacy – Opportunities for EU-US Cooperation

Washington, 28 September 2015 – On the initiative of the EU-funded [BILAT USA 2.0](#) project, high-level policy-makers, reputable scientists as well as high level experts and political advisors came together to discuss on the importance of science diplomacy and areas of potential cooperation for both sides of the Atlantic.

Dan Hamilton, Executive Director of the SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations, as well as **Olaf Heilmayer**, coordinator of the BILAT USA 2.0 project opened the conference and introduced the two key note speakers of the conference on Science Diplomacy – a topic that politically ranks high both in the USA and in Europe. The Nobel Laureate **Peter Agre**, now at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School and former President of the AAAS conveyed what science diplomacy implies in practical terms and what tremendous success can be achieved by science cooperation illustrating this with lively examples from his own career. His visits to – among others North Korea (DPRK), Cuba or the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – illustrated the efforts, difficulties and challenges science diplomacy faces, like e.g. the lack of infrastructure and transportation or different political systems, backgrounds and standards. **David O’Sullivan**, Ambassador of the European Union to the United States of America, stated that science diplomacy was a powerful tool that could guide political leaders to complex political decisions as it combines evidence-based science with foreign diplomacy. There have been many examples of when scientists cooperated although there has been little or even no political dialogue, therefore science diplomacy could offer one channel of keeping the communication between nations ongoing – as Peter Agre has proved with his work.

The three following roundtable discussions elaborated on energy and Health Science diplomacy, and common approaches and differences in science diplomacy. Key aspects mentioned were among others that cultural differences between regions or nations have to continuously be kept in mind and acknowledged, which is true not only for the collaborating scientists but in particular also of the society the research may affect. Further, very practical questions and challenges arose such as that science was generally international but that the mechanisms to fund this science are to the greatest part national instruments. Competitiveness and its regulation complexities were mentioned as potentially hindering issues for cooperation. However, certain grand societal challenges can only be solved if nations collaborate, as was shown among other examples by the impressive example of European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP). Science Diplomacy needs differentiation which means that cooperation needs to acknowledge and be responsive to capabilities of different countries, researchers and scientific fields.

With an average of 100 participants and an active participation of the audience, the conference was well received and proved the need for an exchange on this topic.

A **report** of the conference is currently under preparation and will be published on the project’s [website](#). View the conference and related materials are here: [agenda](#); [Part 1](#); [Part 2](#); [Part 3](#); [Part 4](#); and [Part 5](#)

BILAT USA 2.0 Coordination and General Project Information

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