

Power of excellence is the only way to sound science diplomacy

Efficient science diplomacy can be pursued only on the basis of excellent scientific and R&D achievements – József Pálincás said to Hungarian diplomats on 3 June, the opening day of a conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Budapest. Science and technology (S&T) attachés are responsible for the visibility of Hungarian RDI results and promoting the international networking of domestic stakeholders, in places of key importance for Hungary's economic and cultural presence.

The professional activity of [the attachés representing Hungary's S&T relations abroad](#) is coordinated by the NRDI Office, while the network embedded in a single system of foreign missions is maintained by the MFAT. In his keynote speech at the conference István Jgyártó, Minister of State for Cultural and Science Diplomacy MFAT emphasized the positive experience drawn from science diplomacy and that the work of science attachés is palpable: they play an important role both in foreign relations and in the development of foreign trade. Presenting the Government's plans, the Minister of State explained that Hungary is committed to promoting innovation representing high added value and considers it a key priority to make the country a natural choice for investment by foreign high-tech companies.

In his presentation József Pálincás, President of the NRDI Office outlined the measures taken so far to facilitate Hungarian research and development activities and increase participation in the international competition for innovation funds, including the comprehensive system of competitive calls for RDI project proposals coordinated by the NRDI Office. He emphasised that direct-access EU funds, the Cohesion Fund, the Structural Funds and domestic funding schemes all play an important role in this. As regards international scientific and technological relations, information must be realistic and based on facts – the President of the NRDI Office added. S&T attachés are particularly responsible for collecting and evaluating information in their respective fields to help policy-makers make informed decisions, and enhance the international networking of the domestic researcher community and innovative businesses. At the same time, the promotion of Hungarian RDI capacities can only lead to true and effective cooperation if based on realities.

In the conference section dedicated to industry-university cooperation Zsolt Monszpart, Vice President for Innovation and General Affairs of the NRDI Office explained in detail the elements of the portfolio of competitive calls stimulating technology transfer, emphasising that the aim is to establish long-term sustainable and successful institutions.

Szonja Csuzdi, Head of Department of International Affairs at the NRDI Office spoke about the mutually supportive role of bilateral S&T relations, EU initiatives and multilateral cooperation. She stressed that bilateral S&T relations are increasingly focused on project-based cooperation in well-defined priority areas. The first agreements in this spirit were concluded with Israel and India, and the number of such collaboration was increased in 2016-17 to five partnering countries (China, Thailand, Iran, Vietnam and Israel). Similar project-based cooperation agreements are currently being prepared with Russia and Turkey.

Nóra Jeney, Deputy Head of Department of International Affairs at the NRDI Office presented the RDI priorities of the cooperation between the Visegrad countries (V4) and the focus areas of the Hungarian V4 Presidency's programme. The Hungarian Presidency primarily focuses on the coordinated representation of interests in relation to Horizon 2020, the EU's framework programme for research and innovation, increased cooperation between the V4 countries' innovation agencies, and the further development of joint regional RDI programmes with international partners (Japan, South Korea and the USA).



József Pálincás, President of the NRDI Office



Nóra Jeney, Deputy Head of Department, NRDI Office



Zsolt Monszpart, Vice-President of the NRDI Office



Szonja Csuzdi, Head of Department, NRDI Office



Smart Hungary exhibition in the foyer



Smart Hungary exhibition in the foyer