

## Conclusion of scientific cooperation agreements

Scientific cooperation with non-EU countries aims to strengthen EU competitiveness, tackle global challenges and support the Union's external policies. At the July 2015 part-session, the European Parliament is scheduled to vote on its consent to three international agreements for scientific cooperation between the EU and Switzerland, the Faroe Islands and India.

### Switzerland

In 2004, Switzerland gained the status of 'associated country', enabling full participation in the EU's Sixth Research Framework Programme (FP6) in exchange for a financial contribution to the programme. The country retained this status under FP7. In September 2013, the Swiss Parliament approved funding for Swiss participation as an associated country in Horizon 2020 (2014-20), the eighth framework programme.

In a [referendum](#) held on 9 February 2014, the Swiss voted in favour of reintroducing immigration quotas. Consequently, the Swiss Federal Council did not sign a protocol to extend the EU-Switzerland agreement on the free movement of persons to Croatia, which had [repercussions](#) on other agreements. Because the seven EU-Switzerland agreements [concluded](#) in 2002 (including those on free movement of persons and on scientific cooperation) are linked in their implementation, the negotiations concerning Horizon 2020 were suspended. On 25 February 2014, the European Commission notified Switzerland that it would be considered as having 'third country' status with regard to participation in Horizon 2020 as of 1 January 2014.

Following negotiations, a new [agreement](#) was signed on 4 December 2014, granting Switzerland 'associated country' status in [selected parts](#) of Horizon 2020, mainly Pillar One – Excellent Science (including European Research Council grants and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions), as well as nuclear energy research, from 15 September 2014 until the end of 2016. Swiss legal entities would have 'third country' status in other parts of Horizon 2020, meaning that Switzerland would have to provide the funds for the institutions and researchers taking part. This [agreement](#) would extend to the rest of Horizon 2020 in January 2017, provided Switzerland has ratified the above-mentioned Protocol concerning free movement and Croatia.

### Faroe Islands

In [2010](#), the Faroe Islands were granted the status of 'associated country' with regard to FP7. Negotiations conducted in 2014 by the European Commission led to a new [agreement](#) to maintain this status for their participation in Horizon 2020 (provisionally applied from 1 January 2014).

### India

The [first agreement](#) for scientific and technological cooperation between the EU and India was signed on 23 November 2001, for an initial period of five years, and was then [renewed](#) in January 2009. Following a positive review in October 2013, both parties favoured a renewal of the [agreement](#) under the same conditions until 2020. [Cooperation](#) with India [focuses](#) on ICT, water, health and energy in the aim of tackling global challenges ([Clean Ganga](#), urban development).

Following the India-EU Joint [Declaration](#) on Research and Innovation Cooperation in February 2012, the Group of Senior Officials in charge of defining the strategy for this cooperation [met](#) in October 2013. Nevertheless, the implementation of this cooperation has since faltered and now faces new challenges. India's participation in FP7 was strong: it ranked third among third countries in terms of its budget share, which amounted to roughly €40 million. However, under Horizon 2020, India is no longer entitled to receiving EU funds automatically and has to support its institutions financially. As no matching fund mechanisms are yet in place, India's participation in Horizon 2020 is expected to decline compared to FP7.

*See our briefing on 'Scientific cooperation with non-EU countries' for additional information.*