

Republic of Moldova participates in European Commission study visit on strengthening science-business links in Austria

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The European Commission organised a five-day study visit to Austria from 7 to 11 September 2026, bringing together 18 representatives from the Republic of Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to explore national policies, frameworks and practical approaches to strengthening science-business links (SBLs) and knowledge valorisation in Austria.

The delegation of the Republic of Moldova was composed of representatives of the **Ministry of Education and Research, the National Agency for Research and Development (NARD), the Technical University of Moldova and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Moldova**. The participation of institutions representing public authorities, academia, research, Horizon Europe support structures and the business sector provided an opportunity to exchange experiences and identify approaches relevant to strengthening cooperation between research and business in Moldova.

The study visit aimed to foster science-business links in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Partner countries and increase private companies' participation in Horizon Europe. More broadly, it provided an opportunity to examine how research results can be brought closer to the market and how public policy, funding and support structures can create stronger links between the research and business sectors.

The delegation examined Austria's policy and implementation frameworks for promoting science-business collaboration, with a focus on upscaling knowledge valorisation capacities and activities in the context of the European Research Area (ERA) structural policies for 2025–2027.

The programme combined policy-level exchanges with practical examples from Austrian funding agencies, universities, research organisations and companies, allowing participants to follow the science-business collaboration pathway from policy design and public support through to the commercialisation of research results and participation in collaborative research and innovation (R&I) projects.

Policy frameworks and institutional support

Participants engaged in discussions with the three Austrian Federal Ministries responsible for research and innovation: the [Federal Ministry of Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure \(BMIMI\)](#), the [Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism \(BMWET\)](#), and the [Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research \(BMFWF\)](#). In addition, the [Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs \(BMEIA\)](#) presented its approach to science diplomacy and international research and innovation cooperation.

The [Austrian Research Promotion Agency \(FFG\)](#) presented its funding instruments and support mechanisms for science-business collaboration, including support services for Horizon Europe applicants and the work of the Austrian National Contact Point (NCP) network. These exchanges provided practical insights into how companies and research organisations can be supported in identifying opportunities, building partnerships and developing competitive European R&I projects.

The [Austrian Council for Sciences, Technology and Innovation \(FORWIT\)](#) presented its structure and activities, including its role in monitoring Austria's R&I system. Participants were also introduced to FORWIT's monitoring dashboard and indicators related to science-business collaboration.

Business participation and Horizon Europe

A significant part of the programme focused on the experience of Austrian companies in European research and innovation cooperation. Companies including [FREQUENTIS AG](#), [TTTECH COMPUTERTECHNIK AG](#), [Infineon](#), [AVL List GmbH](#) and [AT&S](#) shared practical insights into their participation in Horizon Europe and collaboration with research organisations.

The companies presented their experience of preparing and implementing Horizon Europe projects and discussed how European R&I cooperation contributes to their research, technology development and innovation activities. These discussions offered participants from the EaP countries concrete examples of how businesses can engage with research organisations and European funding opportunities.

The delegation also took part in the [FFG Forum](#), where participants met Austrian innovation stakeholders and exchanged views on competitiveness, investment readiness and innovation ecosystems. A targeted discussion with [INVEST in AUSTRIA](#) of the [Austrian Business Agency \(ABA\)](#) focused on Austria as a research and business location and on the role of investment-promotion services in supporting innovative companies.

Universities, research organisations and knowledge valorisation

Participants explored best practices in science-business collaboration at leading Austrian research and higher education institutions, including [Technische Universität Wien \(TU Wien\)](#) and the [University for Continuing Education Krems \(UWK\)](#).

The discussions covered how these institutions organise research support and industry engagement, facilitate participation in Horizon Europe, develop technology-transfer and spin-off pathways, and translate research results into practical applications and market opportunities.

At TU Wien, participants combined discussions on research management and industry partnerships with visits to research and innovation facilities, including the [Pilot Factory](#), the [Center for AI and Machine Learning](#), the [Innovation Incubation Center](#) and the [Technikum](#).

At the [Institute of Science and Technology Austria \(ISTA\)](#), participants examined how basic research can be connected with knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship and commercialisation. The visit included the **"Science in the making" exhibition** at the [VISTA Science Experience Center](#), illustrating approaches to science communication and public engagement. This was followed by an exchange at [XISTA Innovation](#) on technology transfer and support for science-based spin-offs and ventures.

At the [AI:AT Factory](#), participants explored approaches to trustworthy artificial intelligence, including legal, regulatory, ethical and compliance aspects. The programme also featured presentations by [Infineon](#), [AVL List GmbH](#) and the [Fraunhofer Institute](#), as well as pitches by the start-ups [QBDC](#), [Zenta](#) and [Flexam](#).

European cooperation and the Ukrainian research and innovation ecosystem

The [Representation of the European Commission to Austria](#) presented its current strategies and communication activities related to the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034 and the European Semester reports.

Participants also learned more about Austrian support for the Ukrainian research and innovation ecosystem. The programme provided an opportunity to discuss initiatives supporting the resilience of Ukrainian research and innovation and its closer integration into European cooperation frameworks. The [International Coalition for Science, Research and Innovation in Ukraine](#) was also presented by the European Commission.

Peer learning and opportunities for future cooperation

Throughout the five-day programme, peer learning remained central. Participants exchanged experiences and identified approaches that could be relevant for strengthening science-business links in the EaP Partner countries.

For the Republic of Moldova, the study visit provided an opportunity to gain practical insights into Austria's mechanisms for connecting research, innovation and business, while also strengthening contacts with Austrian institutions and organisations working in these areas. The exchanges may support further development of knowledge-valorisation activities, increased private-sector engagement and stronger participation of Moldovan organisations and companies in Horizon Europe.

The programme also created opportunities for participants to establish new contacts and explore potential partnerships, including with a view to future joint Horizon Europe applications. These connections, together with the practical examples presented during the visit, can contribute to further cooperation between research organisations, universities, businesses and public institutions across the participating countries.

The study visit highlighted Austria's integrated approach to supporting science-business collaboration, combining policy frameworks, research and innovation funding, dedicated support services, university and research-industry engagement, knowledge valorisation and direct participation of businesses in collaborative R&I projects.

Silvia Bojinova, Team Leader for Interinstitutional and Multilateral Relations, Unit 0.3 "International Cooperation – Europe and Americas", Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission, coordinated the study visit. The visit was organised with the support of the Global Service Facility, with ZSI and Civitta contributing to its preparation and on-site delivery.

The on-site GSF team included Gorazd Weiss and Inese Gavarane (ZSI), Ivanna Didur and Iryna Sheremeta (Civitta), with additional organisational support provided by Nazar Pavlyuk (Civitta). Diariyana Diallo (WMH Project) supported travel and accommodation arrangements.