Editorial

Science diplomacy, a strategic tool for nations worldwide, has seen its roots firmly established in the collaborative efforts of the Global North. The term gained its official title within the European Union in 2012, marking a pivotal moment in harnessing scientific knowledge and innovation for global cooperation. European science diplomacy stands as a beacon, uniting diverse scientific communities, policymakers, and stakeholders to address crucial global issues like climate change, health, and sustainable development. Through robust partnerships, alliances, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, it propels evidence-based policies and fosters international understanding for the collective betterment of humanity.

This issue delves into the heart of European science diplomacy initiatives. The recent 1st European Science Diplomacy Conference, hosted under the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU by the European Science Diplomacy Alliance on 18-19 December 2023, marks a milestone. The first article traces the evolution of this alliance, built upon the legacies of three Horizon 2020 science diplomacy projects: EL-CSID, S4D4C and InsSciDE. It highlights the significant impact on the EU framework, showcasing extensive work, including training modules, conferences, and workshops, emphasising the dynamic interplay between diplomacy and scientific advancement.

Furthermore, the second article explores the role of EU-led strategic frameworks, such as the European Research Area, in fortifying resilience-building based on solid evidence. The paper underscores the importance of EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation, particularly in steering climate neutrality goals towards 2050.

The third article in the segment redefines STI diplomacy in the contemporary landscape (with examples from Dutch Diplomacy), recognising the increasing importance of economic tools in diplomatic relations. It stresses the need for a more integrated approach, breaking away from compartmentalised government structures and emphasising technical expertise and a broader geopolitical understanding. This paradigm shift calls for significant organisational changes and a stronger focus on protective measures.

The issue culminates in the discussion of strengthening science diplomacy as a pivotal pathway to address biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. Collaborative efforts among nations, scientists, policymakers, and stakeholders stand at the forefront to foster knowledge exchange, research collaborations, and innovative solutions. This holistic approach doesn't just facilitate scientific expertise exchange but fuels global concerted actions to prioritise conservation and sustainable practices crucial for restoring our planet's ecosystems.

We extend our gratitude to the contributors and readers of the *Science Diplomacy* Digest for their continuous support and wish them a prosperous and innovative new year in 2024.

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