

BREAKOUT SESSION SUMMARY

Resilient science diplomacy at the interface of science, policy, and society

19 participants from across Europe, including representatives from young academies across Europe, and ALLEA.

Main Topics Discussed

The session explored how science diplomacy can be strengthened in contexts where scientific evidence, political priorities, and international relations intersect, and which enabling conditions are needed for scientific communities and knowledge institutions to contribute credibly, independently, and responsibly to science diplomacy and science advice.

Key Findings

- Science diplomacy is not a single, fixed practice but a complex, context-dependent field requiring careful navigation among scientific neutrality, policy engagement, advocacy, advice, and diplomacy.
- European science diplomacy framework: *science diplomacy* understood as a strategic interface between science, foreign policy, and international cooperation, through which scientific knowledge, evidence, and research networks contribute to addressing global challenges, strengthening trust in science, supporting democratic values, and reinforcing a rules-based international order. The framework emphasises shared vision, common narrative, and pragmatic code of conduct for science diplomacy, including the use of scientific evidence and foresight in decision-making, open and secure international scientific cooperation, and the contribution of research and innovation to peace, human rights, sustainability, and global public goods.
- The independence of scientists and scientific institutions remains essential, but neutrality and involvement in science diplomacy must be understood in relation to specific contexts.
- Credibility depends not only on scientific expertise, but also on transparency about roles, motivations, and forms of engagement. Trust emerged as a key enabling condition.
- Clear distinctions between advocacy, diplomacy, and advice are needed to avoid confusion and strengthen legitimacy.
- Building resilient science diplomacy requires platforms that foster long-term relationships, transparent engagement, and dialogue between researchers, policymakers, diplomats, civil society, academies, and research institutions.
- *Knowledge brokers* can help maintain relationships and translate between communities.
- Diversity and inclusion are important features to create legitimacy.
- Better engagement of early- and mid-career researchers in science diplomacy needed.
- While recent European science diplomacy framework increasingly recognizes the role of researchers, including through networks such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, there remain open questions about how these opportunities can be fully realized in practice and what the boundaries are between conventional scientific cooperation and science diplomacy.

Outcomes and Follow-up actions

The session concluded that further dialogue, education, awareness-raising, and contextual clarification are needed. For early- and mid-career researchers, science diplomacy currently has a variety of interpretations, and greater clarity is needed to support meaningful participation. The understanding and positions on the science diplomacy framework of the young academies should be synthesized and communicated. In order to strengthen science diplomacy and the corresponding resilience, independence and transparency need to be combined, trusted platforms for engagement built, and broader diversity of actors who contribute credibly and responsibly is needed.