SCIENCE DIPLOMACY IN POLAND AND ITS ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE EVENT REPORT: KEY INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIC TAKE-AWAYS

An event co-organised by the European Commission, the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Academy of Sciences

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Imprint

Title of the event: Science diplomacy in Poland and its role in the European Union

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Photo credit: Polish Academy of Sciences, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The high-level dialogue event titled "Science diplomacy in Poland and its role in the European Union," held at the Staszic Palace of the Polish Academy of Sciences on 17 June 2025 in Warsaw, brought together over 70 key stakeholders from Polish ministries, academia, research institutions, and international organizations. Additionally, more than 50 participants joined the event online to stay updated with the latest developments and discussions in the field of the science diplomacy.

This high-level dialogue event report is summarising key insights and strategic take-aways discussed during event.

Poland, with its robust academic and research institutions, provides a strong foundation for advancing science diplomacy and developing modern training opportunities in the science diplomacy field. Europe needs a strong Polish voice in this rapidly evolving policy area. However, until now, science diplomacy has been neglected in Poland. The discussion offered a unique opportunity to engage with leading science diplomacy experts and practitioners from Poland and abroad.

The event highlighted the importance of integrating science diplomacy into national and international policy frameworks to address global challenges such as climate change and energy issues. It emphasized the necessity of building capacity within academia and various ministries to effectively leverage scientific knowledge for informed decision-making. The discussions underscored the significance of science diplomacy in projecting national interests and advancing the interests of the European Union.

Participants engaged in fruitful discussions on enhancing collaboration between scientists and diplomats, aiming to bridge the gap between these communities. The meeting also showcased the importance of international cooperation and the role of non-state actors, such as NGOs and businesses, in the realm of science diplomacy. Participants delved into the specific challenges and opportunities in the Arctic, a region of critical importance and an example of Polish involvement in science diplomacy.

The high-level dialogue event achieved a solid foundation for advancing science diplomacy in Poland, fostering a deeper understanding of its potential. It set the stage for future initiatives and strengthened the commitment to placing science diplomacy at the forefront of the political agenda.

The organizers of the event express sincere gratitude to all the speakers for their insightful contributions and to all the participants for their active engagement and valuable insights. Joint efforts and shared knowledge have significantly enriched the dialogue and paved the way for future collaborations in the field of science diplomacy.

WELCOME REMARKS

The welcome remarks, underlying the importance of the science diplomacy and emphasizing the current status in Poland, were delivered by the:

Professor Marek Konarzewski, President, Polish Academy of Sciences

Anna Radwan-Röhrenschef, Undersecretary of State, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Magdalena Maciejewska, Director of the International Cooperation Department, Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education representing **Professor Maria Mrówczyńska**, Undersecretary of State, Polish Ministry of Science and a Higher Education

Professor Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, Co-Chair of the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance 2024-2025 (AVRIST), Professor at the University of Le Havre Normandy, France

Summary of the welcome remarks:

Status quo to advance science diplomacy in Poland

- Science diplomacy was neglected in Poland recently, but its significance is now being increasingly acknowledged.
- Efforts are being made to involve Polish academic and governmental leaders in utilizing science diplomacy to enhance national interests.
- Poland is actively developing its academic and governmental capacities to better apply science advice in decision-making processes.
- Various initiatives are underway to promote science diplomacy and create modern training programmes in this area.
- The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has pledged support for science diplomacy, encouraging international collaboration.

International context and collaboration

- The significance of collaborating with international entities to promote science diplomacy has been highlighted.
- Science diplomacy is pivotal in addressing worldwide issues like climate change and energy, offering pathways to resolve problems and reach consensus on various issues.
- The significant role of international collaboration and coherent European approach in the field of science diplomacy has been emphasized.
- Poland's growing influence in European research and innovation ecosystem and its contribution to advancing science diplomacy have been recognized.
- The necessity for a robust national contribution to the European Union Science Diplomacy Framework has been noted.

KEY INSIGHTS OF THE KEYNOTE SPEECHES

Two keynote speeches were presented during the event highlighting two important documents on science diplomacy, published in 2025, Science diplomacy in an era of disruption[1] and A European framework for science diplomacy[2].

Science diplomacy in an age of disruption

Ian Wiggins, Director of International Affairs for the Royal Society, presented a report issued by the Royal Society and AAAS. The speech focused on the following aspects relevant to the science diplomacy development on both national and international levels:

- **Historical context and evolution**: Science diplomacy, while not a new concept, has evolved significantly, necessitating updates and revisions to past frameworks to address current global dynamics.
- **Global and diverse perspectives**: The consultation and development process for the report included diverse global perspectives, ensuring a comprehensive approach to science diplomacy.
- **Changing geopolitical landscape**: The world has undergone substantial changes since publication of the first report in 2010, including increased disinformation and the politicization of science, requiring adaptive strategies in science diplomacy.
- **Role of non-state actors**: The influence of big tech and other non-state actors has grown, playing significant roles in international diplomacy and impacting geopolitical scenarios.
- **Interconnection of science and diplomacy**: There is a growing integration of science into diplomatic practices, making science central to foreign policy and international relations.
- **Inclusive and transparent collaboration**: Emphasis on the importance of diverse global perspectives and the necessity for clear roles and responsibilities in science diplomacy to foster effective international cooperation.

[1] Science diplomacy in an era of disruption (2025). Report by the Royal Society & American Association for the Advancement of Science. https://www.aaas.org/news/science-diplomacy-era-disruption

[2] European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Gjedssø Bertelsen, R., Bochereau, L., Chelioti, E., Dávid, Á. et al., *A European framework for science diplomacy – Recommendations of the EU Science Diplomacy Working Groups*, Gjedssø Bertelsen, R.(editor), Bochereau, L.(editor), Chelioti, E.(editor), Dávid, Á.(editor), Gailiūtė-Janušonė, D.(editor), Hartl, M.(editor), Liberatore, A.(editor), Mauduit, J.-C.(editor), Müller, J. M.(editor) and Van Langenhove, L.(editor), Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/9235330

A European framework for science diplomacy

Professor Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen, Member of the EU Science Diplomacy Steering Team, Professor of Northern Studies and Barents Chair in Politics, UiT, The Arctic University of Norway, highlighted the importance of the European framework for science diplomacy, that was a six-month co-creation process involving 130 scientists, diplomats and other science diplomacy experts.

- **Importance of the development process**: The process of bringing together different sectors, including diplomats, decision-makers, researchers and experts in science diplomacy, is crucial for the development and implementation of science diplomacy. This collaborative process is seen as more valuable than the document itself.
- **Diverse perspectives and inclusivity**: The significance of incorporating diverse geographical and sectoral perspectives in discussions and strategies related to science diplomacy was highlighted. This inclusivity is essential for effective science diplomacy.
- **European framework for science diplomacy**: It serves as a guide for advancing science diplomacy within Europe and globally.
- **Training and capacity building**: The emphasis on training and capacity building for professionals in science diplomacy to enhance their ability to contribute to and navigate this complex field.
- **Strategic goals and instruments**: The necessity for clear strategic goals and well-defined instruments in science diplomacy was emphasized. These are essential for effectively addressing global challenges and opportunities through science diplomacy.
- **Reflection on strategic aims**: Europe needs to reflect on and clearly define its strategic aims in science diplomacy. This reflection is crucial for ensuring that efforts and resources are aligned with strategic objectives, making science diplomacy efforts more impactful and coherent.

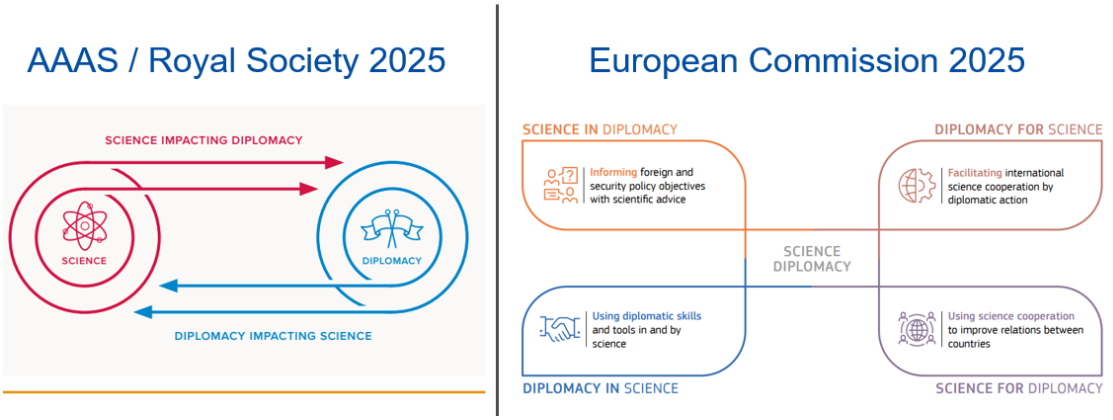

Figure 1: Conceptual basis for the science diplomacy. © European Union 2025

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PANEL DISCUSSIONS

During event two panel discussions engage speakers and participants into the meaningful and lively discussions on the topics such as **science diplomacy and the Arctic** and **science diplomacy training and capacity building needs**.

Science diplomacy and the Arctic

The Arctic region presents unique challenges and opportunities in science diplomacy, requiring navigation of a complex legal environment and fostering international collaboration to address climate change. This panel discussion brought together diplomats, experts and researchers to discuss the complex issue in the Arctic.

Moderator and speakers of the panel:

Moderator: Dr Monika Szkarłat, Vice-Chair of the Social & Human Working Group of the International Arctic Science Committee

Dr Piotr Rychlik, Ambassador, Arctic and Antarctic Affairs, Legal and Treaty Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Professor Pawel Rowinski, ALLEA President, Director of the Institute of Geophysics, PAS

Professor Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen, Professor of Northern Studies and Barents Chair in Politics, UiT, The Arctic University of Norway

Professor Monika Kusiak, Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences

The main highlights of the panel can be summarised as follows:

- **Complex legal environment**: The Arctic has a complex legal environment involving domestic legislations and international laws, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas, requiring diplomatic skills to navigate.
- **Need for international collaboration**: Due to the rapid pace of climate change in the Arctic, international collaboration is essential. No single nation can address these challenges alone, necessitating shared data and cooperative research efforts.
- **Involvement of non-state actors**: Non-state actors, including NGOs and local communities, play a significant role in Arctic research and diplomacy, requiring integration into broader diplomatic and scientific efforts.
- **Dual-use research and security concerns**: The Arctic's strategic importance, particularly in terms of military and security interests, necessitates careful consideration of dual-use research and heightened security measures.
- **Impact of geopolitical tensions**: Current geopolitical tensions, such as the conflict in Ukraine, have disrupted international collaborations, particularly affecting data sharing and joint research initiatives.
- **Technological advancements and limitations**: While technological advancements like drones and satellites facilitate Arctic research, they also introduce new challenges related to data security and access restrictions.

- **Role of observers in the Arctic Council**: Observers, including countries like Poland, have a unique role in the Arctic Council, particularly through scientific contributions, which can influence diplomatic and research agendas.
- **Funding needs**: Changes in funding policies, particularly in the United States, pose challenges to research accessibility and international collaboration, necessitating adaptive strategies from the scientific community.
- **Promotion and awareness**: There is a need for better promotion and public awareness of scientific activities and achievements in the Arctic to garner support and understanding from the broader community and policymakers.

Science diplomacy training and capacity building needs

The panel on science diplomacy training and capacity building needs focused on exploring current possibilities in Poland, challenges, and needs for improvement. It also emphasized the importance of understanding the strategic use of scientific collaborations to address national priorities and global challenges within the realm of science diplomacy. However, it is important to keep in mind the difference between the international collaboration and science diplomacy.

The moderator and speakers of the panel:

Moderator: Dr. Wojciech Karczewski, Director of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange

Mr Paweł Michalski, Head of Strategic Partnership and Development, College of Europe in Natolin

Prof Janusz M. Bujnicki, EU Science Diplomacy WG member, Professor of Biological Sciences, International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, Warsaw

Prof Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, Co-Chair of the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance (AVRIST), Professor at the University of Le Havre Normandy, France

The main highlights of the panel can be summarised as follows:

- **Training and capacity building**: There is a need for specific training opportunities and capacity building in science diplomacy in Poland to enhance the skills of scientists and diplomats in navigating international collaborations and negotiations.
- **Interdisciplinary training programmes at College of Europe in Natolin**: The College has developed interdisciplinary training programmes that partly integrate science diplomacy into their curriculum. These programmes are designed to equip future policy makers and diplomats with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of international scientific collaborations and diplomatic negotiations.
- **Experimental learning initiatives:** The College of Europe in Natolin emphasizes practical and experimental learning through initiatives such as study visits and simulation games. These initiatives allow students to engage directly with real-world scenarios, such as observing the impacts of geopolitical conflicts and understanding the practical applications of science diplomacy. By fostering an environment of curiosity and experimentation, the college ensures that students

are well-prepared to contribute effectively to international scientific and diplomatic efforts.

- **Definition of science diplomacy actions**: To develop comprehensive science diplomacy training programmes in science diplomacy, it is essential to understand that not all international collaborations in research and innovation qualify as science diplomacy. Science diplomacy action involves leveraging scientific collaborations and expertise to address diplomatic goals and tackle global challenges, including the advancement of national interests.
- **Practical and hands-on approaches**: Educational programmes should incorporate practical, hands-on approaches to learning, allowing students and professionals to experience and engage directly with the subjects and challenges of science diplomacy.

CONCLUSIONS AND STRATEGIC TAKEAWAYS

The high-level dialogue event set up the stage for future initiatives in science diplomacy in Poland, emphasizing the need for continued collaboration and integration of science advice into diplomatic efforts. This forward-looking approach is essential for promoting national interests and addressing emerging global challenges.

The main conclusions are formulated as follows:

- **Science diplomacy as a tool**: Science diplomacy is a versatile tool that can be used both as a soft and a hard power, depending on the context and the actors involved. It is essential to use this tool responsibly to advance global and national interests.
- **Importance of science diplomacy**: Science diplomacy is crucial for advancing national interests, addressing global challenges and promoting international collaboration in research and innovation.
- **Institutional support and recognition**: Institutions should actively support and recognize the role of scientists in advisory bodies and international organizations. This encouragement is vital for fostering participation in science diplomacy efforts and leveraging scientific expertise in policy-making.
- **Promotion of science diplomacy activities**: There is a pressing need for better promotion and public awareness of science diplomacy activities. Increased visibility and understanding from the broader community and policymakers can gather more support and resources for these initiatives.
- **Education and capacity building**: Training programmes and educational initiatives are crucial for equipping scientists, diplomats and stakeholders with the skills needed for effective science diplomacy. These programmes should focus on practical, hands-on approaches to learning. Capacity building activities can bridge the gap between scientists and diplomats.
- **Engagement of non-state actors**: Non-state actors, including multinational companies, play a significant role in science diplomacy. Engaging these actors in collaborative efforts can enhance the impact and reach of diplomatic and scientific initiatives.
- **Arctic collaboration and legal navigation:** The Arctic region presents unique challenges and opportunities in science diplomacy, requiring navigation of

a complex legal environment and fostering international collaboration to address climate change. Effective science diplomacy in the Arctic involves understanding and navigating the intricate legal frameworks and promoting collaborative efforts to tackle environmental and geopolitical issues.

- **Technological and security considerations in the Arctic:** Technological advancements in the Arctic, such as the use of drones and satellites, facilitate research but also introduce challenges related to data security and access restrictions. Science diplomacy must address these technological and security concerns, ensuring that advancements are leveraged responsibly and that international collaborations are maintained securely and effectively.

Strategic takeaways to enhance science diplomacy in Poland

The concluding remarks providing strategic takeaways, particularly for Poland advancement in science diplomacy was emphasized by **Professor Marek Konarzewski,** President, Polish Academy of Sciences:

- **Leverage existing strengths in Arctic research:** Poland should capitalize on its existing strengths in polar research, including its two polar stations.
- **Expand cohorts for science diplomacy:** Identify and engage cohorts of students, PhD candidates, and accomplished scientists who are interested in science diplomacy. Institutions like the Polish Academy of Sciences and universities can take the lead in supporting individuals to build a robust network of science diplomats.
- **Increase institutional engagement:** Encourage greater involvement from various ministries, not just the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also those related to research and innovation.
- **Develop training programmes:** Allocate funding for training programmes aimed at training scientists and diplomats. Create structured programmes that provide practical, hands-on experience in science diplomacy.
- **Create a sustainable framework and documentation:** Develop documents summarizing the lessons learned and recommendations from meetings and conferences, ensuring continuity and long-term commitment to science diplomacy initiatives.
- **Integrate science diplomacy into International Strategy:** Recognize and utilize science diplomacy as a strategic tool in international relations. The National Agency for Academic Exchange can play a pivotal role in integrating science diplomacy into Poland's International strategy and allocating necessary resources.

Annex I: Agenda

09:30 **Welcome coffee and registration**

10:00 **Opening remarks**
Prof Marek Konarzewski, President, Polish Academy of Sciences
Ms Anna Radwan-Röhrenschef, Undersecretary of State, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Magdalena Maciejewska, Director of the International Cooperation Department, Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education representing **Professor Maria Mrówczyńska**, Undersecretary of State, Polish Ministry of Science and a Higher Education
Prof Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, Co-Chair of the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance 2024-2025 (AVRIST), Professor at the University of Le Havre Normandy, France

10:30 Introduction of Speakers by **Dr Anna Plater-Zyberk**, Head of International Relations, Polish Academy of Sciences
Keynote Speech: Science Diplomacy in an Age of Disruption
Ian Wiggins, Director of International Affairs for the Royal Society

11:00 **Keynote Speech: A European Framework of Science Diplomacy**
Prof Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen, Member of the EU Science Diplomacy Steering Team, Professor of Northern Studies and Barents Chair in Politics, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

11:30 **Q&A and Discussion**

12:00 **Lunch Break**

12:45 **Science Diplomacy and the Arctic (Panel Discussion)**
Moderator: Dr Monika Szkarłat, Vice-Chair of the Social & Human Working Group of the International Arctic Science Committee
Dr Piotr Rychlik, Ambassador, Arctic and Antarctic Affairs, Legal and Treaty Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Prof Pawel Rowinski, ALLEA President, Director of the Institute of Geophysics, PAS
Prof Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen, Professor of Northern Studies and Barents Chair in Politics, UiT The Arctic University of Norway
Prof Monika Kusiak, Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences
Q&A

14:00 **Coffee Break**

14:20 **Science Diplomacy Training and Capacity Building Needs (Panel Discussion)**
Moderator: Dr. Wojciech Karczewski, Director of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange
Mr Paweł Michalski, Head of Strategic Partnership and Development, College of Europe in Natolin
Prof Janusz M. Bujnicki, EU Science Diplomacy WG member, Professor of Biological Sciences, International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, Warsaw
Prof Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, Co-Chair of the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance (AVRIST), Professor at the University of Le Havre Normandy, France

15:20 **Closing Remarks**
Prof Marek Konarzewski, President, Polish Academy of Sciences

15:30 **End of meeting**

Recording of the event is provided by Polish Academy of Sciences and is available online