

Over the past fifteen years, science and research have increasingly established themselves within the complex realm of international relations as key players in fostering dialogue and global cooperation.

Although it may seem difficult to view scientists and researchers as new ambassadors, scientific diplomacy is becoming an increasingly valuable tool, capable of creating growth opportunities for developing countries and establishing the conditions needed to tackle the major challenges of our time—challenges that require collaboration between nations.

This innovative interaction between foreign policy and scientific research includes activities such as promoting international scientific cooperation, attracting researchers to universities and research centers, building shared scientific infrastructures, and providing technical advice for the development of public policies.

In recent years, the University of Trieste has strengthened its commitment to scientific diplomacy, developing a structured path that has involved academics, diplomats, and representatives of international cooperation networks and initiatives.

A significant milestone in this journey was the technical roundtable organized on March 7 by the University, which featured the participation of Dr. Giuseppe Pastorelli, Deputy Director General for the Promotion of the National System at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI).



“Science unites: it focuses on solving problems and enhances international reputation, but above all, it strengthens relations between countries and enables the sharing and advancement of knowledge,” explained Pastorelli during his speech at the University of Trieste.

For the senior official of the Farnesina, Trieste is a prime example of scientific diplomacy: *“It hosts the main international scientific system present in Italy and is therefore a fundamental pillar of our diplomacy for growth. The Trieste hub represents a gateway to innovation and cutting-edge research for the Global South and allows Italy to contribute to development and maintain an influential network in relations with the Global South.”*

The meeting—held in the presence of Vice-Rector Valter Sergo and coordinated by Prof. Ilaria Micheli, Rector’s Delegate for Development Cooperation, and Prof. Simone Arnaldi—marked a step in a process initiated by the University of Trieste in May 2024, with a first workshop dedicated to scientific diplomacy. This event brought together academics, diplomats, and representatives of projects related to sustainable development, support for refugee scholars, education, knowledge transfer, and international cooperation.

Following this initial discussion, the first version of a background document was drafted and later shared with the academic community to gather additions and feedback. The process continued with another roundtable on September 16, 2024, featuring Prof. Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, a French economist and co-chair of the European Union Science Diplomacy Alliance. On this occasion, the document was refined and discussed again before being submitted to the University's governance in its final version.

The March 7 roundtable thus concluded the development phase of scientific diplomacy activities carried out during the six-year governance period of the University. The meeting provided an opportunity to present the work done by the University of Trieste in recent months, outlining guidelines for future international research agreements and enabling a constructive and educational dialogue with national institutions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.