

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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– CREST –  
Secretariat

CREST 1203/1/03  
REV 1

**NOTE TO CREST DELEGATIONS**

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**Subject : REVISED DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 288<sup>th</sup> MEETING  
OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE  
(CREST) HELD IN IRAKLION, CRETE, ON 27 AND 28 MARCH 2003**

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The meeting was chaired by Dr. MITSOS (European Commission, Director General, Research).

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in telex n° TX01371EN of 17 March 2003.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 287<sup>th</sup> MEETING

The Committee approved the summary conclusions as set out in doc. CREST 1201/1/03  
REV 1.

### 3. INFORMATION FROM THE PRESIDENCY AND THE COMMISSION

a) Ms. SPILIOTI (Greek Presidency) informed the Committee on the following points:

- Art.169, European and Developing Countries' Clinical Trials Platform (EDCTP): the ITRE Committee adopted a compromise text, which will make a first-reading adoption possible if also adopted in plenary. (The plenary of the European Parliament adopted the compromise on 27 March).
- Competitiveness Council of 3 March 2003: this Council adopted, among other conclusions, an important contribution to the Spring European Council meeting on the Lisbon strategy of economic, social and environmental renewal. From a research policy perspective, the recommendations for the further development of the open method of co-ordination and its application to the 3% action plan and several other fields were of particular importance.
- Spring European Council of 20 and 21 March 2003: the conclusions<sup>1</sup> adopted by the Heads of State and Government contain the most detailed political guidelines on research policy since the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council in 2000, underlining the importance of RTD for innovation performance and competitiveness of European industry on the path to the knowledge-based society.
- Preparation of the Competitiveness Council of 13 May 2003: as far as can be foreseen at this point, the main research policy points on the agenda will concern the Commission's 3% action plan, the Green Paper on European Space Policy and the state of play in the negotiations for an EC-ESA framework agreement, the Communication on European defence - Industrial and Market Issues - Towards an EU defence equipment policy, as well as ITER.
- Up-coming events organised by the Presidency:  
Workshop on Security issues, Athens, 8-9 May;  
GMES Forum, Athens, 5-6 June;  
Ministerial meeting on EU - Balkans Scientific and Technological co-operation, Thessaloniki, 26-27 June.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. SN 100/03 (Presse)

- b) Delegations raised a number of questions, in particular with regard to the date of the adoption of the model contracts, the implementation of the Innovation activities in the second specific programme, co-operation with intergovernmental RTD organisations in general, and in particular with COST and INTAS, space policy, and the 3% Action Plan.
- c) Mr. ESCRITT (Commission services) gave the following information, also in response to the various questions:
- Implementation of FP 6: first calls with an overall volume of about 5 bn Euro closed from 6 March. At that date, around 4,000 proposals were received, of which half concern mobility. The new independent Evaluation Service Provider (Getronics) has started operating from its office at Square Orban - a visit could be arranged in the margins of next CREST, interested parties could contact Mr. Graham STROUD (Graham.Stroud@cec.eu.int). A total of 39,000 experts have so far volunteered to be evaluators, either through self-identification or nomination by scientific organisations (500-600). Model contracts and relevant cost-models were adopted in early March; care has been taken to avoid any disadvantage during the evaluation to proponents who might have used outdated cost-models.
- Mr. Escritt gave also an outline of the calendar for future revisions of the work programme.
- Advisory groups: Commissioner Busquin had met on 10/02/03 all chairs and vice-chairs.
  - The inter-institutional seminar on bio-ethics in stem-cell research will be held on 24 April at the Charlemagne building, Brussels. This is intended as an open discussion and exchange of information, and no conclusions will be adopted.
  - 3% Action Plan: the Commission intends to adopt this communication by the end of April.
  - Co-operation with intergovernmental RTD organisations: the issue will be on the agenda of the horizontal configuration of the Programme Committee which is foreseen to meet on 21 May.
  - COST: it is now the turn of the ESF to come forward with an application for a Specific Support Action.

#### 4. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

Mr. LAGET (Commission services) presented to the Committee the main content of the communication<sup>1</sup>.

Delegations generally welcomed the communication which had already received an excellent response in many national universities. The main remarks covered the following fields:

- The need for preserving the diversity of European higher education (D/FIN). The Finnish delegation suggested that the communication was somewhat too narrowly focussed on economic considerations and not giving sufficient weight to the cultural importance of universities.
- the communication was not sufficiently focussed on universities, as it included all forms of tertiary education (FIN/UK).
- the importance of the Bologna process (D/A) and the new instruments of FP 6, both developments could encourage research training (NL).
- the need to reflect the diversity of the situation in the candidate countries (PL). Rapid increases in student numbers do not always reflect progress, they are sometimes merely a consequence of high levels of youth unemployment.
- the need to make studies in science more attractive, and to improve conditions for the mobility of researchers (P).
- the need for improved quality of scientific research and better co-operation between universities, research centres and industry (B/SLO/NL). Universities and pure research centres must continue to co-exist, as they have different vocations. Universities must get more involved in applied research, in order to attract more funding from industry.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 5355/03 EDUC 10 RECH 22 - COM(2003)58 final.

5. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE EU RESEARCH ACTIVITIES FOR 2002

Ms. DE LA TORRE (Commission services) presented this report to the Committee.

The report contains statistical data about the year 2001 although it covers until March 2002.

Compared to the year 2000, the following facts were highlighted regarding the implementation of FP5:

- Overall financial volume was 3,7 bn Euro, slightly smaller than in 2000;
- Average success-rate was 48% (compared to 28% in 2000);
- Many more links between research actors were created with roughly the same number of participants and financial resources of 2000, and SME participation was 23%, also better than in 2000.

Delegations welcomed these results.

With regard to the open method of co-ordination, the German and French delegations emphasised their opinion that this method should be kept as informal as possible. The role of CREST in it should be strengthened, in particular in evaluating and co-ordinating the inputs from the many advisory groups created by the Commission.

The French delegation underlined the urgency of undertaking strategic reflection in the programme committee, and the need for a strategic road-map; the Polish delegation remarked that it was unfortunate that this report about 2001 came only in 2003; this delegation also regretted that it did not contain more details on the performance of candidate countries. The Italian delegation asked for the reasons for the markedly improved success rate.

6. CLUSTERING EXERCISE: PRESENTATION OF THE REPORTS ON "SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND MEDIA" (CLUSTER 1) AND "SCIENCE, SOCIETY AND FORESIGHT" (CLUSTER 6)

Ms. SAMUELSON (S) delivered an interim report to the Committee, stressing that success in the clustering exercise was totally dependent on the participation of Member States, and that, overall, achievements had been impressive. Cluster 1 has completed its work, which has given rise to many new ideas. It was now planned to develop an FP 6 proposal based on the work of this cluster. Additional participants in the consortium would still be welcome.

Cluster 6 (science, society and foresight) was moving towards an ERA-Net proposal, and had set the September meeting of CREST as the deadline for the activities of the cluster.

7. PRESENTATION OF GREEK NATIONAL RTD POLICY

Mr. DENIOZOS, Secretary-general for research and technology at the Greek ministry of development, informed the Committee about the national RTD policy of Greece.

Delegations raised a number of questions, in particular concerning the role of the Structural Funds in improving RTD infrastructure, the problem of brain drain of highly qualified human resources, measures taken to stimulate the participation of Greek researchers in the Framework Programme, internationalisation and opening up of Greek research programmes, and co-operation between universities and industry.

Mr. DENIOZOS answered that the greatest motivation for Greek researchers for active participation in the Framework Programmes was the scarcity of national funds, and the high number of Greek researchers doing their post-graduate studies in other EU Member States, providing them with excellent opportunities to find partners for joint projects. Greece is now also providing matching funds for participation in Eureka. Opening up of Greek RTD programmes is encouraged, Greece has the intention of joining ESA, and two additional Greek organisations are joining ESF. The government makes efforts to limit brain drain by finding more employment opportunities for university graduates in the Greek economy.

The Chairman, Dr. MITSOS, thanked Mr. DENIOZOS for his detailed and informative presentation.

8. EUROPEAN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AREA

a) LISBON STRATEGY - RESEARCH ASPECTS: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF 21 MARCH

Mr. KIND (Commission services) informed the Committee about the Competitiveness Council's contribution to the Spring European Council, in which it recommended that the open method of co-ordination (omc) should in the first instance be applied to five fields - the 3% objective, human resources and mobility, science and society, networking and opening-up of national programmes, and research infrastructures. At the European Council of 21 March, the Heads of State and Government called for ERIA to be strengthened by the application of the omc in support of research and innovation policy. Furthermore, a stocktaking mechanism for the omc is to be developed.

The Commission plans the following concrete measures for the implementation of the mandate given by the Spring European Council:

- The 3% Action Plan, which will be adopted by the Commission by the end of April, will serve as a basis for the use of the omc.
- A communication on careers in research is expected to be adopted in June. Concerning researcher's mobility, the Steering Group for the Implementation of the Mobility Strategy is already engaged in activities that contain elements of omc.
- With regard to implementation of the Science and Society Action Plan, the clustering exercise, in which CREST is involved in the framework of the Action Plan, could be developed further.
- In the networking of national RTD programmes, the Commission intends to wait for about one year and assess the impact of CREST initiatives, ERA-Net, and possible further initiatives under Art.169 of the Treaty, as well as the initiatives to create a European Research Council.
- RTD infrastructures will be further studied by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures, and a report might be submitted later this year.

Mr.KIND noted that, because of the very different nature of the five fields, there would be no single model for omc that could have universal application. He therefore recommended a "learning by doing" approach, taking the fields one-by-one as they arise.

The Chairman, Dr. MITSOS, concluded that

- With regard to the open method of co-ordination, there is agreement on a need for a light and flexible approach, with an attitude of "learning by doing";
- CREST should play an active role in the open method of co-ordination;
- A more concrete discussion will be possible at the next meeting of CREST, on the basis of the Commission's Action Plan "Investing in research".

#### b) OPENING OR NATIONAL RTD PROGRAMMES

Mr. VAN DER PLAS (Netherlands delegation) informed the Committee about the results of the kick-off meeting concerning "plant genomics", which took place in Ghent, Belgium, on 12 and 13 March. Ten participating countries (co-ordinator: the Netherlands) are currently preparing an ERANet proposal in this field.

It is recalled that in the field of "marine sciences", the kick-off meeting took place in Dublin in Autumn 2002. A follow-up meeting took place in Lisbon on 26 March. These meetings have led to an information exchange in standardised form on existing national programmes between 9 participating Member States. Now a feasibility study on possible ERA-Net proposals is underway, with different regional clusters (e.g. North Atlantic, Polar Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea...).

In the field of "chemistry", the kick-off meeting took place in Brussels on 20 December 2002, under the co-ordination of Prof. TUNDO (Italy), and in co-operation with COST-chemistry and INTAS. A follow-up meeting is foreseen at the end of April.

With regard to "astrophysics" and "complexity and complex systems", progress has been slower, and kick-off meetings have been deferred to a later date. Those will be funded exceptionally on the condition they would take place soon. Subsequent meetings, however, will not be funded.

The Chairman, Dr. MITSOS, underlined the importance of the CREST-initiative for mutual opening-up of national RTD programmes in the selected areas, which has acted as a "nursery" for ERA-Net proposals. The Commission will support kick-off meetings in the two sectors where these have not yet taken place.

c) RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES: STATE OF THE ART AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Prof. PHOTAKIS (head of the institute of laser technology, Crete) made a presentation on the role of RTD infrastructures in the European research and innovatiob area, and informed the Committee on the work in the European strategy forum for RTD infrastructures, underlining the importance of European RTD infrastructure facilities as catalysts for integration and poles for the attraction of scientific talent.

Delegations raised a number of questions, in particular concerning the state of play with regard to a European Spallation Source, the co-ordination within the Structural Funds for the financing of RTD infrastructure, the scope for improved co-operation with large Russian RTD facilities, and the comparative advantages of funding new large-scale RTD infrastructures on the territory of candidate countries.

The Commission (Peter KIND) said this contribution from the Greek Presidency to the debate about the role of research infrastructures in the European Research Area is very welcome and important.

He added that the Commission has been advocating for many years a more coherent approach towards policy making for research infrastructures and that, therefore, it wants the ESFRI to be a complete success.

Mr. DENIOZOS (Secretary-general for research and technology at the Greek ministry of development) stressed that funding decisions in the Structural Funds are taken by the Monitoring Committee on national and/or regional level, there is little funding of RTD infrastructure, and little scope for European co-ordination. He suggested that more infrastructure funding could be achieved through the use of Art. 169, mutual opening-up of national RTD programmes, and through co-ordination with intergovernmental RTD

organisations.

The Chairman, Dr. MITSOS, thanked all participants for their active contribution to the effort of implementing the European Research and Innovation Area, and concluded the meeting.

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