

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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– CREST –  
Secretariat

CREST 1204/1/03 REV 1

**NOTE TO CREST DELEGATIONS**

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**Subject : SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 289<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE  
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE (CREST)  
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2003**

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In the absence of Dr. MITSOS, the meeting was chaired by Mr. RICHARDSON (European Commission, Deputy Director General, Research).

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in telex n° TX03562EN of 24 July 2003.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 288<sup>th</sup> MEETING

The Committee approved the summary conclusions as set out in doc. CREST 1203/1/03  
REV 1.

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

- a) Mr. FONTI (Italian Presidency) informed the Committee on the Work Programme of the Italian Presidency. Work in the research field will strongly focus on the 3 percent target and the open method of coordination, where an exchange of views has already taken place at the informal ministerial meeting of Competitiveness ministers in Rome in July 2003. Adoption of a Council Resolution would take place at 22 September "Competitiveness" Council.

Other research issues at the September Council include the presentation of the King Report on the comparison of the two European candidate sites for ITER, the bioethics of embryonic stem-cell research, and the EC-ESA Framework Agreement.

- The development of human resources and the improvement of researchers' career is an important topic for work after the September Council. It is likely that a resolution will be adopted by the Competitiveness Council in November, following an examination of the Commission's Communication.

In addition, the following activities organised by the Presidency will take place:

- Infrastructures - conference in Trieste, 20-21 November 2003
- Gender issues in science - conference in Rome, 5 December 2003

- b) Ms. SPILIOTI (Greek delegation) informed the Committee on the work during the second half of the Greek Presidency, in particular :

- The discussion on ITER set out in the Presidency conclusions, which has led to the setting up of an independent expert group chaired by Prof. King which would examine the merits of the two European candidate sites for ITER;
- The discussion on European space policy and the adoption of Council Conclusions, where the importance of space technologies in increasing competitiveness of European enterprises and implementation of a wide range of European policies, including the Common Foreign and Security Policy, was underlined.

- The debate on European innovation and the defence equipment policy, which led to Council conclusions and the invitation to the Commission to explore the scope for supporting security-related RTD activities for peaceful purposes, within the legal boundaries enshrined in the Treaty;
- The adoption, in co-decision, of the Decision on a European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Platform (EDCTP) to combat the three poverty-related infectious diseases (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria);
- The conference held in Thessaloniki in June 2003 on RTD co-operation between the European Union and the Balkan countries.

Other topics treated under the Greek Presidency included biodiversity, European Union support for Sustainable Development in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea region, Euro-Mediterranean RTD co-operation (with a conference in Cairo, Egypt), a conference on GMES and a Foresight conference. International relations in the RTD sector were improved through the renewal of an association agreement with Israel, and the signing of S/T co-operation agreements with Morocco and Tunisia.

- c) Mr. ESCRITT (Commission services) informed the Committee on the implementation of FP 6, following the conclusion of the first calls for proposals. High interest (over 11.000 proposals) and the good quality of the proposals allied to a limited budget had resulted in the average success-rate of proposals not exceeding 20%. The average size of proposed projects has increased. Among the New Instruments, "Integrated Projects" has been the instrument of choice, while the scientific community has been more reluctant to embrace Networks of Excellence.

SME participation has been generally encouraging, although more needs to be done to reach the 15% target, and participation by acceding countries needs to be improved.

Research centres and universities have strongly participated, but large industry participation also needs to be improved. The new evaluation mechanisms have worked well. The Commission is in the process of evaluating the experiences from the first calls, and is preparing the necessary improvements for work programmes and future calls.

Outside the Framework Programme, the pilot project "regions of knowledge" has started to establish and disseminate best practices in regional RTD policy. Work on the security research pilot action continues. The communication on career development for researchers will shortly be adopted by the Commission.

Delegations raised a number of issues for further discussion at the Programme Committee meeting on 25 September, including success rates, problems for small Member States and acceding countries participating in Integrated Projects, ways for improving the attractiveness of the Networks of Excellence, questions concerning CRAFT, NEST, "Priority 8" and the two-stage evaluation procedure .

The Commission welcomed the interest of delegations and announced its intention to provide the relevant Programme Committees with more comprehensive information in an electronic form suitable for further data processing .

#### 4. CREST FUTURE ACTIVITIES WITH REGARD TO THE 3% ACTION PLAN AND THE METHOD OF OPEN CO-ORDINATION

Messrs. SARAGOSSI and ESCRITT (Cion. services) gave a presentation to the Committee on the 3% Action Plan and the implementation of the Open Method of Co-ordination, on the basis of the information notes circulated by the Commission to delegations in preparation for the meeting.

Delegations expressed unanimous support for the Commission's timely initiative and indicated their willingness to cooperate actively in the exercise.

The Chairman thanked delegations for their support and encouragement, and concluded that:

- CREST will be the main instance for defining and overseeing the application of OMC to the 3% objective, and has agreed to work on the basis of the timetable proposed by the Commission,
- The application of OMC to the 3% objective involves 2 levels:
  - = a collective monitoring of broad national policy developments and initiatives;
  - = the implementation of actions for which competence lies mainly within Member States (the 25 actions identified in the note sent in advance to delegations).
- In terms of modalities, CREST has agreed that:
  - = specific actions should be grouped into 6 thematic areas;
    - = human resources;
    - = the public research base and its links to industry;
    - = SMEs and research;
    - = fiscal measures for research;
    - = intellectual property and research;
    - = research public spending and policy mixes;
  - = actions related to "human resources" will be addressed by existing groups (the Steering group for the implementation of the Mobility Strategy and the High Level Group on increasing human resources for science and technology) but will keep CREST fully informed of their activities.
  - = 5 expert groups will be set up to support CREST in the other thematic areas
- Member States and Acceding Countries are thus invited by 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003 to:
  - = Designate, preferably among the CREST participants, a national contact point for OMC relating to the 3% target;

- = comment on the number and composition of the six suggested groupings;
- = designate experts for the various groups in which they wish to participate, indicating where they intend to take a leading/more active role and ensuring, where appropriate, the involvement of experts from relevant policy fields.

5. INFORMATION ON THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON INCREASING HUMAN RESOURCES FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr.GEROLD (Cion. services) briefed the Committee on the work of the High Level Group on increasing human resources for science and technology, chaired by former Portuguese Research Minister Prof. Mariano GAGO.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed to discuss progress in the opening of national programmes at one of the next meetings of CREST.

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