

EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 13 July 2004

**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL
RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**– CREST –
Secretariat**

CREST 1204/04

NOTE

To: CREST delegations

**Subject : DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 294th MEETING OF THE
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE (CREST)
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 29 JUNE 2004**

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

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in communications CM 2429/04 of 15 June 2004 and 2589/04 of 25 June 2004.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 293rd MEETING

The Committee approved the summary conclusions set out in doc. CREST 1203/1/04 REV 1.

3. INFORMATION FROM THE PRESIDENCY AND THE COMMISSION

- a) Mr. ENGLISH (Irish Presidency) informed the Committee on work during the second half of the Irish Presidency, in particular:
- the outcome of the informal Competitiveness Council meeting in Dromoland Castle, cty. Clare;
 - state of play in the ITER negotiations;
 - events organised by the Irish Presidency in relation to research;
 - state of play concerning mobility of third country researchers (see c) iv) below);
 - conclusion of the EU-ESA Framework Agreement and the EU-Switzerland s/t co-operation agreement;
 - the Commission's communication "Towards a European Strategy for Nanotechnology"¹;
 - the Court of Auditors' special report 1/2004 on the management of indirect RTD actions under the 5th Framework Programme (FP5)².

The Chairman thanked the Irish Presidency for its efforts and acknowledged the substantial results achieved. He then provided brief information on the Commission's recent Communication "Science and technology, the key to Europe's future Guidelines for future European Union policy to support research"³, and the state of play with respect to the current evaluation of the effectiveness of the instruments of the Framework Programme ("Marimón report"), which is expected to be presented at the informal Competitiveness Council in Maastricht, at the beginning of July 2004.

- b) Messrs. FENGER and VAN KOOIJ (incoming Netherlands Presidency) presented the work programme of the incoming Presidency.

¹ Doc. 9621/04 RECH 101 (COM(2004) 338 final).

² Doc.8595/04 FIN 208 RECH 75.

³ Doc.10740/04 RECH 134 (COM(2004) 353 final).

- c) Mr. ESCRITT (Commission services) informed the Committee on the following developments since the 292nd meeting of CREST:
- i) EURAB (European Union Research Advisory Board): the new board has been constituted (configuration EURAB 2), thanks are due to Helga NOVOTNY, who continues as chair, and her team for the excellent work achieved;
 - ii) ESFRI (European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructure): the forum has established its value in identifying demand for key research infrastructures. It should now be provided with a new mandate and organisation enabling it to fulfil a more strategic role, namely, to work out a road map with a 20-year-perspective, for European research infrastructure development, containing practical recommendations, including on the issues of financing (FP, structural funds, EIB/EIF).
 - iii) Five-year-assessment of Community RTD policy: a High-Level Group of experts was set up on 23 June, chaired by Mr. Erkki OMALA (research director, NOKIA); it consists of 13 experts supported by professional evaluation experts. Their report should be ready by the end of November.
 - iv) Mobility of third-country researchers: two Recommendations and one Directive¹ are under negotiation by the Council bodies, with Justice and Home Affairs having the lead responsibility. There has been good progress so far, with political agreement on the Recommendation on long-term admission on 8 June 2004. Adoption is foreseen later in 2004 after the European Parliament has given its opinion.
Concerning the Directive, the Commission supports the Dutch Presidency's efforts to achieve a political agreement later in 2004, with formal adoption in early 2005 again after receiving the European Parliament opinion, but the Commission will not endorse compromises not being in line with the envisaged objectives of the Directive. While the timetable for adoption would be difficult to predict (co-decision procedure applies), the Commission hoped that adoption could take place in the first half of 2005.
As to the Recommendation on short-term visas, political agreement could be reached very shortly.

¹ Doc. 7815/04 MIGR 18 VISA 57 RECH 65 COMPET 46 (COM(2004) 178 final).

- v) Recent communications: the communication on "Towards a European Strategy for Nanotechnology"¹ and the Environmental Health Action Plan² have been adopted by the Commission and transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council.
 - vi) Implementation of FP 6: so far, over 100 calls for proposals have been launched, with the most recent being two joint calls on hydrogen technologies published on 29 June.
- d) In response to questions from delegations, the Chairman announced that more detailed information on the work of ESFRI could be provided to the next meeting of CREST (depending on the availability of the relevant Commission personnel).

4. 3% AND OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION

- (i) As an introduction, the Chairman underlined the importance of the work of CREST in this field, probably the most strategically important task CREST has ever been entrusted with; it is therefore a very important test for its potential to deliver practical results.
- (ii) Mr. SARAGOSSI (Commission services) indicated that the final reports from the five expert groups set up under the responsibility of CREST were circulated in advance of the meeting and thanked the chairpersons, rapporteurs and participants for their hard work. While the work of the five expert groups has now been completed, a significant effort to achieve concrete, actionable recommendations will be required when drawing up the CREST report. The CREST report should concentrate on
 - good practices in the national schemes and their transferability to other countries;
 - guidelines for the development by Member States of policy measures in important areas;
 - recommendations for Community action; and
 - identification of critical benchmarks and indicators.

¹ Doc. 9621/04 RECH 101 (COM(2004) 338 final).

² Doc.10491/04 ENV 342 SAN 113 + ADD 1 (COM(2004)416 final).

- (iii) Mr. Chris DARBY (United Kingdom delegation, co-ordinator for the final report) indicated that the Reports of the five expert groups are supporting material for the preparation of the CREST report and should therefore not be adopted as such by CREST. He proposed the following timetable, which was accepted by the Committee:
- 6 July: CREST members to send written comments to CREST rapporteurs;
- 14 July: rapporteurs to provide draft findings and recommendations for the CREST report;
- 16 July: 295th CREST: discussion of draft findings and recommendations for the CREST report;
- 30 July: Rapporteurs will provide a consolidated draft CREST report, to be sent to CREST delegations for comments;
- 6 September: Deadline for comments by CREST delegations;
- 17 September: Final draft report to be sent to CREST;
- 1 October: 296th CREST - final discussion and adoption of CREST report;
- 12-13 October: Session at Directors-General level in the frame of the High-level conference "Investing in Research and Innovation" organised by the Netherlands' Presidency. This will involve the presentation of the CREST report and discussions, with a focus on the implementation of the CREST recommendations and ways to improve the OMC in the second cycle.

- (iv) The Committee received presentations and final written reports from the five expert groups

- Public Research Base and its Links with Industry (Mr. SANDBERG, chair);
- SMEs and Research (Mr. CORADO SIMÕES, chair);
- Fiscal Measures for Research (Mr. DE GROENE, chair);
- Intellectual Property Rights (Ms. PROSSER, chair);
- Public Research Spending and Policy Mixes (Mr. SERRIS, chair).

A progress report from the Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility (Mr. VIS, Commission services, on behalf of Mr. LIBERALI, chair, Commission services) was also made available to the Committee.

Delegations made a number of detailed observations, which were noted by the chairs and rapporteurs of the expert groups. Mr. SARAGOSSI (Commission services) underlined in particular the importance of addressing the transnational dimension of the key issues and recommendations and the possibility of introducing guidelines and implementing modalities in a phased approach.

- (v) The Netherlands delegation, supported by the Irish delegation, emphasised that considerable work has been done and the momentum now established should not be lost. The Netherlands delegation added that introducing a form of voluntary peer review in the second cycle could be useful and that it was willing to define concrete modalities in cooperation with the Commission and interested delegations.
The German delegation emphasised that while much had been achieved, more work lay ahead in making the recommendations more concrete, and in addressing conditions for the transferability of good practices.
- (vi) The Chairman summed up the results of the discussion, asking the rapporteur team to go beyond the results of the five expert groups in making clear, practical recommendations for moving forward in the various areas covered, and in delivering an operational and result-oriented final report. The modalities of the next stage of the OMC process will be discussed once the CREST report is finalised.

5. BASIC RESEARCH

Mr. CANNELL (Commission services) presented the potential key questions for the presentations on "National Funding Agencies and Basic Research" (see Annex I) to the Committee. The suggestion is that volunteering delegates would make short (approx. 20 minute) presentations at future CREST meetings.

The Danish, Austrian, Norwegian, Swiss, German, United Kingdom, Spanish, Irish, Netherlands, Finnish and Latvian delegations agreed to make such presentations. These delegations will agree a timetable with the Commission for doing this.

6. CREST EVALUATION NETWORK

Mr. KEKKONEN (standing CREST rapporteur on Evaluation) presented the draft Action Plan prepared by the CREST Evaluation Network in respect of information to be provided on national schemes and input that could be provided for the five-year evaluation exercise.

Delegations supported the approach while underlining that duplication of work with other evaluation bodies (including in the OECD) should be avoided. A small modification was introduced to page 1 of the Action Plan.

The Committee adopted the Action Plan of the CREST Evaluation Network (see Annex II).

7. AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING (16 JULY 2004)

The meeting will take place in Brussels, with the following items on the agenda:

- 3% and open method of co-ordination (covering the presentation and discussion by the rapporteurs of the draft findings and recommendations of the CREST report);
- information on foresight activities;
- an exchange of views on the Science and Society Action Plan;
- basic research: first presentations on National Funding Agencies and Basic Research;
- European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructure (ESFRI) (depending on the availability of the relevant Commission personnel).

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. WEITGRUBER (Austrian delegation) informed the Committee of Austria's intention to invite CREST participants to a short presentation of the recent reforms of the Austrian education-research-innovation system, scheduled to take place in the evening of 30 September 2004 (the evening before the 296th CREST). The presentation will be followed by a traditional Austrian buffet reception.

Key questions for the presentations on "National Funding Agencies and Basic Research"

Policy aspects

- Mandate and mission of funding agencies (including the role of the scientific community in their management and governance).
- Is basic research their only/main mission?
- Has their mission evolved? Have any models or “best practices” outside the country influenced this evolution?
- Allocation of overall budget: who decides and on which criteria?
- How is priority setting worked out? Is the approach bottom-up, targeted or a combination of both?

Operational aspects

- Disciplinary structure (one or several agencies, allocation of budget by discipline, interdisciplinary projects)
- Selection mechanism (peer review?)
- Main funding mechanisms (fellowships, individual grants, collaborations)
- Executive board (profile, mandate, appointments)
- Staff profiles and numbers
- Evaluation: Are funding agencies and their activities regularly assessed?

Presentational guidelines: The answers to each question should highlight any issues that can be regarded as “best practice” or have a particularly “innovative” character.

CREST EVALUATION NETWORK

I. **PROPOSED ROLE**

To prepare and inform the discussions in CREST - through input on evaluation issues, information, and analyses at short and medium term – helping support better coordination of European RTD evaluation, through:

- contributing to an information base on the organisation of national policy/ programme evaluation systems;
- reflections and other informed analysis on the experience of implementing and using evaluation..

II. **ACTION PLAN**

1. Contribute to an information base:

<p><i>a. Information for each country on the <u>organisation of national policy/ programme evaluation systems</u>, based on the existing information collected through the European RTD Evaluation Network, comprising:</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The <u>legal base</u> for evaluation – e.g. <i>acts or other statutory requirements on the role for, organisational structure, implementation and use of evaluation;</i> ➤ The <u>actors</u> involved in designing and implementing evaluation – e.g. <i>evaluation users, those carrying out evaluation, professional evaluators and independent experts, co-ordination and administrative roles, at national and regional levels, private and public sectors;</i> ➤ National <u>standards</u>, policy guidelines and best practices for the implementation of evaluation – e.g. <i>de jure and de facto standards, quality control, implementation guides, codes of conduct;</i> 	<i>By 31July 2004</i>

- The criteria used in evaluation – e.g. *mandates and terms of reference used, scope of evaluation activities, indicators;*
- Methods and techniques used in evaluation – e.g. *qualitative and quantitative, surveys and systematic data collection, panels and studies, administrative arrangements;*
- Experience with the need for and use of evaluation in policy making; e.g. *reasons for evaluations, measures of use and impact, impact on priority setting and resource allocation, effectiveness of approaches and techniques, barriers to uptake of conclusions and recommendations;*
- Evidence of possible interactions (learning) between national and the EU RTD evaluation systems, e.g. *experiences with uptake and adaptation of approaches and techniques, use of external (from outside the country) evaluators and experts.*

By 30 Sept 2004

b. Provision of studies and other analyses at national level on Community research, to be used as an input to the Five-year Assessment (1999-2003), complementing the existing information collected by the European RTD Evaluation Network comprising such as:

- national impact studies – analysis of the impact of the Framework Programme at a national and regional level;
- studies on national participation in the FP;
- reports on national strategy for FP research;
- other national evaluation data to be determined;

By 30 Sept 2004

2. Provide reflections and other informed analysis of the evaluation of research in the European Union:

<p><i>a. For each country, a short (3-page) summary to be used as an input to the Five-year Assessment, addressing the key impacts of the Framework Programmes in each country (in prioritised order), based wherever possible on available evidence, such as:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ scientific excellence ➤ technological development and innovation ➤ competitiveness ➤ human resources ➤ quality of life and environment ➤ policy making - including design of national legislation and RTD programmes ➤ financial leverage, etc <p>For each country, preliminary views on the challenges and opportunities of ways to improve research evaluation coordination</p>	<i>By 30 Sept 2004</i>
<p><i>b. In the light of the above information and of the Five-year Assessment, provide a report to CREST to help structure discussion on the challenges and opportunities of improved coordination of research evaluation in the Community, taking into account in particular the implications of ERA at the national level</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the actors ➤ configuration of actors and linkages ➤ common tools ➤ standards ➤ system goals ➤ system management 	<i>By early 2005</i>