

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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– CREST –  
Secretariat

CREST 1208/04

NOTE

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To: CREST

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Subject : **DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 297<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE  
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE (CREST)  
HELD IN ENSCHEDE (Netherlands) ON 21-22 OCTOBER 2004**

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The meeting was chaired by Mr. ESCRITT (European Commission, Director).

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in communication CM 3738/04 of 14 October 2004. Points 1-6 and 8 were treated on 21 October, Points 7, 9 and 10 on 22 October.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 296<sup>th</sup> MEETING

The Committee approved the summary conclusions as set out in the revised document CREST 1207/04 REV 1.

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

a) Mr. VAN KOOIJ (Dutch Presidency) informed the Committee on:

- the results of the "Brain Gain-the Instruments" Conference on 29-30 September 2004 in The Hague,
- the conference on "Investing in Research and Innovation" which took place in Noordwijk-aan-Zee on 12-13 October 2004,
- the informal meeting of Directors General which took place in the margins of the Noordwijk conference and which included an exchange of views on the CREST report on the first cycle of the application of omc in favour of the 3% objective (doc. CREST 1206/04).

Mr. VAN KOOIJ also gave an overview of forthcoming events under the NL Presidency (see also overview in the summary from last CREST meeting doc.1207/04 REV 1), namely:

- European University Association conference, "Research Training as a Key to a Europe of Knowledge", 28-30 October, Maastricht University;
- Conference "Permanent Access to the Records of Science", 1 November, The Hague;
- Conference "Priority Medicine for the Citizens of Europe", 18 November;
- "European Leaders in E-Science", a series of Pan-European Events from 18-24 November;
- Competitiveness Council and Joint (EU/ESA) Space Council on 25 and 26 November in Brussels;
- Conference "Images of Science" on 6 and 7 December;
- 298th meeting of CREST on 10 December 2004 in Brussels.

b) Mme. DE LA TORRE (Commission services) informed the Committee about the preliminary results of the Open (Internet) Consultation regarding the Commission Communication on the future of research. The consultation closed on 15 October 2004.

Around 1700 replies had been registered. In general, the interested parties showed support for strengthened research at European level. The six axes of the existing FP were evaluated differently from respondents: among these axes, "Human Resources", "Technology Platforms" and "Collaborative Research" received the most widespread support. "Basic Research" received more positive replies from interested parties in Italy, Greece and Portugal than in other countries; "Co-ordination of national programmes" was strongly supported by respondents in Italy, whereas "Research Infrastructures" was mentioned as a priority particularly by respondents from Germany, France, Portugal and Greece.

#### 4. PRESENTATION OF DUTCH RTD POLICY

- (i) Mr. DE GROENE (Ministry of Economic Affairs, The Netherlands) gave a presentation on "Innovation Policy in the Netherlands". There were clearly some strengths and some weaknesses to be indicated. In spite of a high quality in scientific research, there was insufficient output in terms of short and medium term commercial successes and too little interaction between the financing efforts of the public sector and the private sector. Funding from the private sector would still be insufficient to reach the Barcelona objectives. The Dutch RTD policy has developed a number of mechanisms (e.g. the Innovation Platform) and policy instruments (for example the innovation vouchers, help for start-ups, certain partnership schemes and the direct funding of certain key technologies). The priorities of Dutch RTD policy would be closely co-ordinated with European objectives and has received undoubted momentum from the Lisbon agenda.
  
- (ii) Mr. VAN BOCHOVE (Ministry of Education, The Netherlands) presented an overview on the Dutch research and science policy focussing on the main actors involved, their internal structures and available budgetary and human resources, as well as the thematic priorities followed so far. Whereas the central position of universities was unquestionable, the system as a whole could still be improved in terms of greater flexibility and better human resource management. During the past years, important adaptations of Dutch research and science policy have already been implemented, including a better targeting of talented people and their needs as well as an easier accessibility and greater flexibility of the research system. These adaptations have already shown first encouraging results.

## 5. PRESENTATION OF JRC ACTIVITIES

Mr. SCHENKEL, acting Director-General of the Joint Research Centre, presented an overview of the five-year-assessment of the Joint Research Centre activities (1999-2003) and future core areas under the JRC Work Programme for 2003-2006:

In general, the result of the evaluation of the panel of independent experts has been positive and encouraging. Therefore there was no need for radical changes, but rather a consolidation of past efforts. For the forthcoming years three priority themes of action have been identified, namely "To make JRC a Quality Brand Label", "Refocusing and Integration" and "To Develop a Security Culture".

## 6. 3% OBJECTIVE AND OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION (OMC)

The Chair informed CREST that an executive summary of the CREST report had been included in the final document.

### (i) Conclusions of the NL-EU Presidency conference "Investing in research and innovation" (12-13 October 2004)

The Chair presented a short oral report on the Noordwijk conference.

Mr. GUY, moderator for the directors general informal meeting on 12 October, presented the results of the analysis of the questionnaire that had been sent, in advance of the event, to the directors general as well as the main conclusions of the parallel sessions.

The Committee formally adopted the CREST report on omc (doc. 1206/04) and was informed that it would be transmitted to Council with a view to its endorsing the progress made and encouraging the work to be carried forward.

Mr. SARAGOSSI (Commission services) presented the activities that are being launched or planned to support national policy development in the context of the 3% Action Plan.

First, activities to support omc 3% in areas that will be selected for the next cycle: collection and analysis of data on national policies and actions (with IPTS through ERAWATCH, and studies, for example on public financing mechanisms for research), funding of experts to assist in the implementation of peer reviews. These activities will also help monitor progress in the implementation of some of the more specific recommendations of the first cycle report.

Second, several activities are being initiated or planned that will contribute to support national policy development in other areas or on specific issues: expert groups (involving policy makers, academic experts and stakeholders) set up by the Commission on the role of foundations and on public procurement; a working group, chaired by the Commission, on the territorial aspects of fiscal measures and studies (for example on the barriers in national R&D programmes to transnational cooperation and technology transfer, on the involvement of industry in defining public research objectives, and on improving IPR systems and their use).

Mr. SARAGOSSI invited Member States, that are not participating yet but would be interested to join the group on territorial aspects of fiscal measures, to inform the Commission and provide the name of their representatives in view of the next meeting.

(ii) Discussion on omc model methodology for the second cycle  
(with a view to further analysis by the proposed sub-group)

Mr. DARBY, the coordinator of the CREST rapporteurs for the first cycle, presented his view that the sub-group, which had met informally in the margins of the Noordwijk conference, should now be established formally and decide on either a model or a "modus operandi" for the second cycle of omc. The sub-group should work on a problem-led approach with variable geometry. The omc projects should be developed around fairly narrow problems rather than broad policy areas. Member States should then choose the projects where they wish to participate themselves in a collaborative effort (bottom-up approach).

After a discussion, the following was agreed by the Committee:

- (1) A sub-group was formally established with the mandate to examine and to propose to CREST an omc 3 % model. Its mandate is set out in the CREST report (see doc. 1206/04, p.8.);
- (2) Mr DARBY (UK) was nominated to chair the sub-group, Mr HUGHES (IE) was nominated its rapporteur;
- (3) The sub-group will consist of representatives from Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Finland;
- (4) An initial report by the sub-group to be presented to CREST on 10 December would focus on the "model/modus operandi" of the second cycle and on possible work packages corresponding to different types of topics/output;
- (5) CREST delegations would, in the meantime, provide their suggestions on priority topics for the second cycle. This input should be sent to the Council Secretariat and Commission by 21 November. It would be used by the sub-group since discussion on the modus operandi would inevitably involve an examination of these aspects; the Commission would also make a suggestion for focussing the omc 3 % second cycle at the 10 December CREST meeting.
- (6) Decisions on topics or themes constituting the next stage of omc could be agreed by the CREST Committee after discussion at its meeting in January 2005.

(iii) Presentation by the Commission on ERA-WATCH

CREST took note of a short status report on ERA-WATCH produced by Commission services DG Research and JRC, dated 15 October 2004.

## 7. BASIC RESEARCH

- a) The Committee received three further presentations on national schemes on basic research by the following delegations:

for Austria: Ms HAIDAR (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture)

for Finland: Mr KARJALAINEN (Science Policy Division, Ministry of Education)

for Latvia: Mr SILINS (Latvian Academy of Science)

- b) The Chair stated that for the next CREST meeting Israel, Portugal and Estonia had already volunteered to present their national basic research systems. Furthermore, the Swiss, Swedish, Polish (and possibly Belgian) delegations had previously indicated their willingness to give presentations at a future CREST meeting.

- c) Following discussion on future work in this area, the Chair concluded that the issues could be categorised, within the context of the 'key questions' for the presentations on National Funding Agencies and Basic Research which had been presented to delegates at the CREST meeting on 29 June, under the following overall headings:

- Governance of national basic research agencies;
- Priority setting and distribution of funds among disciplines;
- Peer review systems and other forms of evaluations  
(e.g. criteria, weighting, types of expertise used, level of evaluation, frequency);
- Implementation instruments and problems  
(e.g. success rates, oversubscription of programmes, monitoring and review).

It was suggested that any summary or synthesis of the presentations should be based on this structure. The Chair also suggested that a delegate could act as a rapporteur for this work.

8. FOLLOW-UP ON THE CREST EVALUATION NETWORK ACTION PLAN

Mr KEKKONEN (Chairman of the Evaluation network) summarised the state-of-play on the follow-up to the Crest Evaluation Network Action Plan. The input by Member States has been insufficient so far to come to conclusions or definitive results. This might be due to the tight time schedule or the complexity of the work plan.

Ms. DE BOISSEZON (Commission services) encouraged the Member States to continue to send in information, focusing on points such as best practices in evaluation methods, structures, legal base and the use of evaluations.

In response to the Chair, Mr Kekkonen proposed to revise the Action Plan and re-schedule its deadlines to the end of the year (the specific input envisaged for the current 5-year assessment exercise is no longer needed). The issue will be taken up again at the CREST meeting on 19 January 2005.

9. AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING (10 December 2004)

The meeting will take place in Brussels. The agenda should include the following items:

- 3% and open method of co-ordination
  - = Report from the sub-group on the second cycle of the 3 % omc model
- National Basic Research
  - = Further presentations by Member States
- Science and Society

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