

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL
RESEARCH COMMITTEE

– CREST –
Secretariat

CREST 1209/1/04
REV 1

NOTE

To : **CREST**

Subject : **DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 298th MEETING OF THE
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE (CREST)
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 10 DECEMBER 2004**

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 4499/04 of 29 November 2004.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE 297th MEETING

The Committee approved the summary conclusions as set out in document CREST 1208/04.

3. INFORMATION FROM THE PRESIDENCY AND THE COMMISSION

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

- the results of European University Association conference, "Research Training as a Key to a Europe of Knowledge", 28-30 October, Maastricht University;
- the results of the Conference "Permanent Access to the Records of Science", 1 November, The Hague;
- the Research Topics at the meeting of the Competitiveness Council (25-26 November);
- the first "Space Council" (held jointly and concomitantly with the Competitiveness Council on 25 November);
- the "European Manufacturers' Conference" in Enschede;
- the results of the Conference "Images of Science" on 6 and 7 December.

Furthermore, two summary papers on the results of the Conference "Brain Gain - the Instruments" in The Hague (29/30 September 2004) and the Conference "Investing in Research and Innovation" in Noordwijk (12/13 October 2004) were circulated.

b) Mr. DIEDERICH informed the Committee on the main points to be dealt with during the Luxembourg Presidency:

- the continuation of the second cycle of the 3 % OMC and investment in R&D;
- Mobility of researchers;
- the future European Space Programme;
- Nanotechnologies;
- Discussions on the proposal for the Seventh Framework Programme.

- c) Mme DE LA TORRE (Commission services) informed the Committee that the raw statistical results of the Open Internet Consultation regarding the Commission Communication on the future of research are now available on the web; a more thorough analysis would follow.

A new web-based consultation has already been launched regarding the thematic priorities of the seventh research framework Programme (collaborative research) and is open until the end of the year.

Moreover, Mme DE LA TORRE gave an overview of forthcoming Communications and Staff Papers by the Commission. These would cover:

- Five-Year-Assessment of the Framework Programme (1999-2003);
- Universities and the knowledge society;
- Third implementation report on a mobility strategy for the European Research Area;
- Implementation of the strategy and Action Plan on Life Sciences and Biotechnology;
- Action Plan to fight diseases caused by poverty;
- Nanotechnologies Action Plan;
- Implementation of the 3 % Action Plan (Action Plan: "Investing in Research").

4. 3% OBJECTIVE AND OPEN METHOD OF CO-ORDINATION (OMC)

- (i) Presentation and discussion of the proposal of the CREST sub-group on the OMC 3% second cycle modus operandi

Mr Darby (Chairman of the sub-group) and Mr Hughes (Rapporteur) gave a short presentation of the report of the sub-group concerning the modus operandi for the second cycle of the OMC concerning the 3 % objective (document DS 822/04).

It was considered that the modus operandi should follow two main objectives, namely the "Review of national strategies/Monitoring progress of actions" and "Developing recommendations and actions for specific topics."

In this regard, the work would be built on:

- unbureaucratic, voluntary reporting;
- a rolling work-programme with a continuous selection of priority topics;
- leadership by certain countries in relation to chosen topics;
- enhanced mutual learning and peer review;
- development of guidelines and mutual reinforcing of EU and Member States' actions.

A small advisory group would be set up to prepare future cycles and work modules, implement the rolling work programme and oversee the preparation of the annual CREST report.

Commission services suggested some changes to the report (on the importance of assessing the impact of national measures, the lead country and the mutually reinforcing Community and national actions).

Following favourable comments by delegations on the sub-group report and on the need to limit the number of topics (to be chosen in January 2005) and to define a common template, the Chair concluded by stating that:

- a) The modus operandi as proposed in the sub-group paper had been accepted and should serve as a basis for further work. The definitive version of document DS 822/04 (including the changes proposed by the Commission) would be made available shortly, following the Committee's discussions, and would be distributed as a CREST document;
- b) Members of the CREST sub-group on the second cycle modus operandi - as well as other CREST members - were invited to express their interest in developing a common template for reporting on national strategies.

(ii) Presentation and discussion on suggestions for priorities for the second cycle

The Committee discussed possible priorities and topics for the second cycle on the basis of a table presented by the Commission services (Mr. Xabier GOENAGA) which also took into account the suggestions made by Directors General in the context of the 12 October informal meeting in Noordwijk and suggestions made by nine CREST members.

The topics presented were as follows:

- a) Promotion of the reform of public research centres and universities, in particular the promotion of transfer of knowledge to society and industry;
- b) Promotion of more effective industry-PRO links, including the implementation of guidelines developed by European associations;
- c) Improvement to the design and implementation of national policy mixes;
- d) Design of measures to promote the growth of young research intensive SMEs;
- e) Improved coherence and effectiveness of 'Intellectual Property Rights ownership'-regimes for publicly funded research;
- f) Promotion of sound evaluation methods of fiscal measures for research in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Several CREST delegations considered that the Commission proposal was a good basis to select topics for the second OMC 3 % cycle. The discussion indicated that there was consensus on the need to limit the scope of the topics. However, the nature of the work in some areas may require the topic to be more generic, e.g. in the policy mix area. The scope of the topic should be proposed by the lead country. Some countries raised the need for fact sheets. These should be developed by the lead country and other delegations, together with the support of the Commission.

The Belgian delegation volunteered to lead the topic on SMEs and the Spanish delegation to lead the topic on the reform of public research centres and universities, in particular to promote the transfer of knowledge to society and industry.

The Chair concluded that:

- the indication of interest by some delegations in a number of topics had been noted, but would be regarded as preliminary; further discussions would take place at the January meeting of CREST;
- a decision on first priority topics, lead countries and work modules will be taken at the January meeting;
- CREST delegates should inform the Commission services (Mr Isi Saragossi, Mr Xabier Goenaga) by Friday, 17/12/04 on the priority topics which are of interest to their country and priority topics their country would like to lead or co-lead.

(iii) Presentation and discussion on the R&D scoreboards: National R&D scoreboards and EU Industrial R&D scoreboard

Mr GAVIGAN and Mr LAGET (Commission services) presented an overview concerning the national R&D scoreboards and EU Industrial R&D scoreboards.

CREST welcomed the overview provided by the Commission and noted that the question of national R&D scoreboards merited special attention as a monitoring activity, given that, within the 3 % objective, two thirds of the efforts should come from the private sector.

Analysis shows that some of the questions to be addressed in the future should cover the means of companies to maintain R&D programmes during an economic downturn, ways of supporting emerging knowledge-intensive industries and the means of increasing investment in R&D, also by small and medium-sized firms.

The Commission Services also informed CREST on the Top 20 R&D-spending companies based on data from seven Member States. This has helped to develop indicators on the dynamics of R&D intensive firms and to obtain a picture of the evolution of the R&D/Sales ratio in different countries. In view of the limited data available, this should, however, be seen as a pilot effort determining which type of analysis could be requested and carried out in the future.

5. SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

Mr GEROLD (Commission services) presented an oral report on this subject. This included an assessment of the Science and Society Action Plan whose clusters have, in the meantime, led to a number of ERA-NETs which are complementary to the Member States' own efforts. The objectives of the Science and Society Action Plan have thus been fulfilled and there is no longer any need to continue with the cluster exercise.

The Committee also took note of a final written summary report on the "Science and Society action plan" by the rapporteur of the sub-group (Mme SAMUELSON).

Mr GEROLD then referred to the recently created "Forum on University-based research" (University forum) which is working as a follow-up to the conference "The Europe of Knowledge 2020: a vision for University-Based Research and Innovation" held in Liege in April 2004. This forum supports the Commission in formulating recommendations for concrete reforms for enhancing the role of universities in FP 7, in building the ERA and achieving the Lisbon and Barcelona objectives. The work and membership of this expert group are open and transparent.

In the context of the Forum's work, a seminar will be held in March 2005 to extend the Forum's work to a wider audience and to which the Directors General of Research Ministries - amongst others - will be invited.

A number of delegations expressed the wish to be actively involved in the conceptual work on university-based research. More information on the work of the Forum, including the list of Forum members, would be welcome in order to create and enhance possible synergies, given that the reform of public research centres and universities would also be one of the topics of the second cycle of OMC. The Commission will keep CREST informed of the Forum's work.

Some delegations expressed interest in receiving a more detailed report on the impact of the Science and Society Action Plan, expected to be made available in March 2005 and carried out by external evaluators. In a similar vein, the involvement of the Helsinki Group was confirmed by the Commission.

6. BASIC RESEARCH

The Committee took note of two presentations on national basic research systems, given by Mr VAIKMÄE (Ministry for Education and Research- Estonia) and Mme BONJACK (Israel Science Foundation)

Portugal and Switzerland confirmed their intention to give presentations at the next meeting in January; some other delegations (Sweden, Belgium, Poland) had already indicated their willingness in this regard.

7. AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place in Brussels on 20th January 2005. The agenda would include the following items:

- National Basic Research
 - = Further presentations by delegations (Portugal and Switzerland)
- 3 % and OMC
 - = Discussion and first decisions on thematic priorities and on lead countries for the second cycle
