



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 16 February 2009

**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

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**Crest  
Secretariat**

**CREST 1205/09**

**NOTE**

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To:	Crest delegations
Subject:	Draft summary conclusions of the 324th meeting of Crest held in Brussels on 16 January 2009 (Directors General level)

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The meeting was chaired by the Director General of the Research Directorate-General of the Commission, Mr. Jose Manuel SILVA RODRIGUEZ (items 1 to 6) and the deputy Director-General, Ms. Anneli PAULI (items 7 to 11).

**1. ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

The Committee adopted the provisional agenda as set out in doc. CM. 4723/08

**2. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE  
323<sup>rd</sup> MEETING**

The Committee approved the draft summary conclusions of the 323rd meeting held in Brussels on 4-5 December 2008, set out in doc. CREST 1211/1/08 REV 1.

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

- **Presidency**

The Presidency informed the Committee of the events organised by the CZ Presidency, including the following:

- Conference on Evaluation Impacts of European research coordination (EUFORDIA), Prague 24-25 February 2009;
- Conference on Strengthening the ERA through research infrastructures, Prague 24-25 March 2009.

- **Commission**

The Commission informed the Committee that:

- The report on the FP6 ex-post evaluation is expected to come out in the beginning of February; the report will be presented at the next CREST meeting;
- the European Recovery Plan includes RTD related initiatives in certain sectors (automobile, manufacturing, building) on which the Commission is reflecting on appropriate instruments for their implementation;
- Commission communications will be forthcoming regarding ICT;
- the European Parliament is scheduled to adopt its opinion on the proposal for a Legal framework for European research infrastructures in March; the ITRE Committee of the EP will also shortly finalise its report entitled "Better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers", by the Rapporteur Pia Elda LOCATELLI;
- the Commission hopes that a first reading agreement is possible on Article 169 initiative regarding a Metrology research and development programme undertaken by several Member States (EMRP);

- The Memorandum of Understanding associating Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Seventh Framework Programme entered into force on 1 January 2009.

Upon request the Commission informed the Committee that a number of sectoral studies are under way by Commission services regarding developments in ERA which are relevant for the specific domains concerned.

#### **4. REPORT OF THE DECEMBER LISBON MUTUAL LEARNING EXERCISE**

The Committee adopted the "CREST Report on the 2008 mutual learning exercise on the basis of the 2008-2010 national reform programmes".<sup>1</sup>

#### **5. WHERE ARE WE IN RELATION TO THE ERA VISION 2020?**

The Committee took note of the presentations by the Commission on "Science, Technology and Competitiveness key figures report 2008/2009" and "Developing the European Research Area: A Toolbox - Preliminary Elements".<sup>2</sup> In the discussion, the questions put forward by delegations included the following:

- How could more recent data be obtained and used and how could the consistency of (national) data be improved? Could there be more information on envisaged future budgets and tendencies?
- How could the "knowledge triangle" concept be better taken into account, including its higher education and innovation elements, in addition to RTD?
- Is the enterprise sector sufficiently taken into account?
- Is the division to "low", "medium" and "high" tech sectors still relevant?
- Is the input and role of the Associated countries duly accounted for?

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequently issued as doc. 1201/09.

<sup>2</sup> The presentations given at the meeting have been made available to delegations.

- How can synergies be achieved between "research" instruments and others such as structural funds? How can European and national policies be matched to respond to global challenges?

It was noted that the CZ Presidency and incoming SE Presidencies will take forward the discussion on tools in ERA.

## **6. TAKING FORWARD THE LJUBLJANA PROCESS AND THE ERA INITIATIVES**

The Committee endorsed the approach set out in the "trio-Presidency" Working document of 8 January 2009 on the organisation of the new CREST structures ("GPC" for Joint Programming and "SFIC" for International S/T cooperation) set up by the Competitiveness Council at its meeting on 2 December 2008, with a view to taking forward work on these two initiatives, subject to subsequent decisions by the GPC and SFIC on the organisation of their work. In this context, the representative of the Council Secretariat noted that (as set out already in the above working document), in the light of the Council acts concerned (the Council Resolution of 1995 on CREST as well as the Council conclusions of 2 December 2008), these two new structures are independent configurations of CREST without a hierarchical relationship to CREST "proper". The Presidency announced the first meetings of GPC and SFIC for 13 and 18 February 2009, respectively. It has also been agreed that the structures of GPC and SFIC might need to be adapted subject to the outcome of the overall governance settings to be achieved under the SE presidency.

The Commission gave a presentation on "Developing the governance of the ERA" containing further suggestions in this respect.

In the discussion, delegations referred to a number of issues of relevance to the governance of ERA initiatives, such as:

- The need for horizontal coordination between various initiatives and structures concerned, to achieve the “Vision 2020” as a whole, including initiatives not covered by Council conclusions of December 2008 (such as infrastructures, human resources, knowledge transfer); and the need to elaborate the role of CREST and the Council in this respect;
- The relationship between CREST and the new configurations; the need to ensure a certain level of coherence of the working methods (in full respect of the dedicated structures of GPC and SFIC);
- The need to ensure efficient and light governance, avoiding overlaps and bearing in mind the limited human resources available;
- The role of Associated countries, to be addressed in the working methods of the new groups and in the overall governance of the ERA;
- The role of the Commission services;
- Possible cooperation with other relevant international fora, such as the Economic Policy Committee, G8 and OECD;
- Possible impact of Lisbon Treaty to governance of the ERA;
- The importance of the Steering group on Human Resources and Mobility (SGHRM), although outside the CREST framework, actively continuing its work, adapting its working methods as necessary.

The SE delegation informed the Committee that ERA governance will figure prominently on the agenda of the incoming SE Presidency.

On this basis, the Chairman concluded that:

- In general, ERA governance is an on-going process on which decisions should be taken as and when necessary;

- It has been confirmed that there is no hierarchical relationship between CREST and the new configurations of GPJ and SFIC. However, it should be understood that CREST would be kept duly informed of the activities of the new configurations. Representatives to these Groups should be designated as soon as possible and they should start their work;
- The Chair of the SFIC will be designated by this group itself.

In addition, the Committee decided to establish a CREST Working Group on Knowledge Transfer, in follow-up to Council conclusions of 30 May 2008 to provide "light and effective governance arrangements" to this initiative, without prejudice to possible further decisions on the governance of ERA. Delegations are invited to nominate their experts to this Group. The Commission will convene and chair the first meeting, pending a decision by the Group on its chairmanship. The offer of the Commission to provide the secretariat for this working group was accepted.

The Chairman further informed delegates that, as indicated in the Council conclusions on the European Partnership for Researchers, the SGHRM will continue its work with an adapted mandate and that CREST will be kept informed of the progress of its work. The Committee acknowledged that it will be up to the SGHRM to adapt its mandate and to reconsider its working methods in the light of the challenges of the Partnership and the Council conclusions and to elect a chair from amongst its members, while the Commission will continue to provide the secretariat.

The Commission also informed the Committee of its intention write to Member States and Associated countries requesting them to nominate representatives for the Working Group on Knowledge Transfer and to review the appropriateness of their current representation in the SGHRM.

## **7. COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL KEY ISSUES PAPER**

Within the context of the preparations of the Key Issues Paper, CREST held an exchange of views based on questions prepared by the CZ Presidency focussing on (i) private and public R&D investments in 2009 and subsequent years, (ii) the organisation and reinforcement of interactions within the knowledge triangle, and (iii) integration of the Ljubljana process in the Lisbon agenda.

The Committee took note of delegations' responses to the questions put forward by the Presidency.

The Chairperson acknowledged the useful and instructive nature of the discussion which, inter alia, showed that the present economic downturn is both a threat and an opportunity for the RTD sector, and expressed the wish that all Member States and Associated countries would stimulate each other and cooperate in order to maximise the impact of their actions.

## **8. INTERNATIONALISATION OF R&D**

The Committee decided to postpone this agenda item to its next meeting.

## **9. CREST OMC CYCLES**

### **9.1 OMC evaluation**

The Rapporteur of the Expert Group presented the report on "The Open Method of Coordination in Research Policy: Assessment and Recommendations", drawing attention to its recommendation for a "coordination through learning" approach to OMC.

Following the discussion, the Chairperson concluded that the added value of OMC has been demonstrated but that even more could be achieved. The OMC should be seen in connection to ERA initiatives and be used in a strategic way.

## 9.2 Timing and focus of a next OMC cycle within the context of the Ljubljana process

The Commission suggested postponing this agenda item to the next meeting. In summarising previous discussions on this subject the Commission indicated that some delegations have expressed interest in extending work on two current topics (i.e. universities and peer review of policy mix (Cyprus); no objection from other delegations) and that several delegations were in favour of postponing consideration of any new topic to a later stage given the important work associated with the ERA initiatives. Moreover, it invited other countries to determine if they are interested in a peer review of their policy mix.

The Chairperson concluded that the Committee would return to this question and take decisions at the next meeting on the current topics on which work would be continued (taking account of the results of the working group on universities to be presented also at the next meeting) and that the question of possible new topics will be addressed at later stage.

## **10. AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING (3 APRIL 2009, BRUSSELS)**

Items expected to figure on the agenda of the next meeting include:

- Ljubljana process
- The role of universities in the ERA
- Involvement of Bosnia-Herzegovina as an observer

In addition, agenda items 8 (Internationalisation of R&D) and 9.2 (CREST OMC cycles – Timing and focus of a next OMC cycle within the context of the Ljubljana process) were postponed to the meeting on 3 April.

## 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- One delegation stressed that it is particularly important to ensure an appropriate agenda for CREST meetings at Directors General level, which should focus on strategic issues such as agenda item 6 at the present meeting.
  
  - The SI delegation informed the Committee on its willingness to host a Ministerial Conference on the Ljubljana process in June 2009 in Ljubljana focussing on aspects regarding the involvement of Western Balkan, Eastern European and Neighbourhood countries.
  
  - The Chairperson thanked Mr Paul-Erich Zinsli (CH) who attended his last meeting with the Committee.
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