

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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Crest  
Secretariat

CREST 1211/1/09  
REV 1

**NOTE**

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To:	Crest delegations
Subject:	Summary conclusions of the 327th meeting of Crest held in Brussels on 17 July 2009

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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, 2, 4 to 6) and the deputy Director-General, Ms. Anneli PAULI (item 3).

**1. ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

The Committee adopted the provisional agenda as set out in doc. CM 2926/1/09 REV1.

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

The Committee approved the summary conclusions of the 326th meeting held in Prague on 11 and 12 June, set out in doc. CREST 1210/09.

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

- **Presidency**

The Presidency debriefed the Committee of the events organised by the SE Presidency, notably the following:

- Conference: New World New Solutions, on 7 and 8 July in Lund, Sweden: the outcome of this conference is part of the Lund Declaration;
- Conference: The Knowledge Triangle Shaping the Future of Europe on 31 August – 2 September 2009 in Gothenburg, Sweden.

- **Commission**

The Commission informed the Committee that:

- a Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation to implement joint programming in the research area of neurodegenerative diseases, particularly Alzheimer's as well as the Communication on neurodegenerative diseases would be adopted on 22 July 2009;
- the 2010 Work Programmes are currently being finalised and their adoption is foreseen for end July. They will include the initiatives foreseen in the European Economic Recovery Plan, i.e. the Public-Private Partnerships;
- the adoption of the Communication on Financing Low-Carbon Technologies was foreseen for September;
- that the two Commission research agencies (REA and ERCEA) have been granted administrative autonomy from the Commission;
- Mr. Herbert Reul (EPP, DE) has been selected as the Chairman of the ITRE Committee in the newly elected European Parliament;
- Member States can send suggestions for experts for the mid-term evaluation of FP7.

- **ERA INITIATIVES:**
- **High Level group on Joint Programming (GPC)**

The SE Presidency informed the Committee that:

- GPC agreed on the roadmap for the remainder of 2009 on 23 June;
- as the first step in this continuous process of identification and substantiation of themes for joint programming the aim of the Presidency is to have a first set of themes for joint programming agreed still during its term; themes which prove not to be enough mature will be left for future lists to be identified and substantiated by GPC.

- **Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC)**

The DE delegation informed the Committee that:

- SFIC adopted its Rules of procedure;
- the Chairman, Mr Volker Rieke, submitted to SFIC a draft Work Programme for approval which includes the following three main objectives to be achieved in 2009/2010: establish effective and efficient working structures for SFIC, generate an impact on the international S&T cooperation activities of Member States and the European Commission, and foster the international dimension of the ERA;
- at its meeting on May 25 2009 the Forum agreed to set up two ad hoc task forces with the mandate to prepare the next meeting of SFIC, scheduled for October 1, 2009, namely task force I: information sharing and task force II: priority setting.

- **CREST Working Group on Knowledge transfer**

The Chair, Mr. Klaus Uckel, presented to the Committee short update of the Working Group activities since the approval of its mandate by CREST at its meeting on 11 and 12 June 2009. In particular he mentioned the creation of two sub-groups, one on assessment of different aspects of international knowledge transfer and developing common guidance in this field, another on establishing monitoring system and development of indicators.

- **Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility (SGHRM)**

The Chairman, M. Fulvio Esposito informed the Committee that SGHRM has been re-launched after the adoption of Council conclusions on European Partnership for researchers in September 2008, with a view to implementing the partnership. To this end a new mandate was approved as well as the Work Programme. The main aim at this stage is to provide an input in the form of recommendations to a Joint EPSCO/Competitiveness Council which is scheduled during the Spanish Presidency in 2010.

#### **4. DEBATE ON ERA GOVERNANCE**

Following an informal workshop of key stakeholders on the ERA instruments, held on 24 June in Brussels, the Lund conference (see above) and with a view to future discussions on the reinforced ERA governance during the Swedish Presidency, CREST held a debate on the basis of a number of proposed questions concerning ERA governance and instruments, grouped under two subheadings:

1. How to improve the overall landscape of instruments and processes related to ERA?
2. How to organise and manage the partnership for ERA?

The debate was conducted in three parallel break-out sessions, chaired by Sweden, Spain and the Commission. The results of these debates, the summaries of which are set out in the annex, were presented to the plenary by the rapporteurs of each parallel session. No further comments were made by delegations at the plenary.

## **5. AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING (KIRUNA, SWEDEN, 28 AND 29 SEPTEMBER)**

The Chairperson indicated the following agenda items to be discussed at the next CREST meeting:

- Ljubljana Process
  - Discussion on the reinforced ERA governance
  - ERA targets and indicators: state of the policy expert group report and discussion
  - Forward-looking activities in the context of ERA
- Discussion on post 2010 Research agenda
- Presentation of Science and Research Policy in Sweden
- Preparation of a 4<sup>th</sup> mutual learning exercise on Lisbon National Reform Programmes
- Discussion on the CREST 2010 provisional work programme

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Portuguese delegation informed the Committee of the newly established research infrastructure, namely the International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory (INL) created by the joint efforts of Spain and Portugal to foster nanotechnology and nanosciences in Europe.

## REPORTS FROM THE RAPPORTEURS OF THE PARALLEL SESSIONS UNDER ITEM 4 OF THE AGENDA

**Parallel session I:** Chair: SE  
**Participating delegations:** BG, CY, IL, IT, LV, NL, NO, PL, PT, UK

### *1. How to improve the overall landscape of instruments and processes related to ERA?*

#### **Overlaps/gaps**

The general opinion was that overlaps in instrument is not a big problem. One overlap that has caused some problem was mentioned; the JTI in ARTEMIS and ENIAC that overlap with similar activities in Eureka. Delegations considered gaps to be a more serious problem than overlaps. One such gap that was mentioned was the lack of instruments in social sciences and humanities.

#### **New instruments and need for coherence**

The general observation was that one should be cautious with introducing new instruments. Many of them were felt to be overlapping, Joint Programming, EIT, JTI were mentioned. It was felt that the affluence of instruments results in a loss of transparency.

Before introducing new instruments one should try to make use of existing ones. When introducing new instruments, it has to be done in a more coherent way than is applied at present. There were however mixed messages on the coherence between research and innovation instruments where some delegations thought the Commission should do better while some also appreciated that the Commission is making efforts and that we are not better at Member States level.

Generally there is a need for more reflection on a more comprehensive strategy. Here a better governance could play a role. One observation was that present instruments might not be the best to tackle e.g. Grand Challenges as discussed in Lund. Vision 2020 should be the goal when developing new instruments. FP 8 should support this goal. A gap mentioned is support to infrastructures.

Several delegations emphasised user perspective when developing instruments. For participants the most important is to get fund for a specific target, the type of instrument is not so important. Sometimes there is a feeling that different instruments compete for the best researchers. Present instruments are also administratively cumbersome which has lead to lower industry participation. Administration should focus more on goals than procedures. Simplification needs to progress, in particular to improve industrial participation. A review of the financial regulation is needed.

## **2. *How to organise and manage the partnership for ERA?***

### **Overall ERA governance**

Initially it was noted that one of the reasons for the slow progress of ERA is the lack of political commitments and the fact that ERA is not a top priority in Member States. This leads to problems for accountability of ERA and of getting adequate resources. Therefore an important task is to raise its political profile. It is also important to make ERA an important part of Lisbon post 2010. It should cover knowledge triangle.

Some delegations felt that one way of raising the political profile of ERA could be to arrange a Ministerial meeting to oversee progress of ERA. Of course caution must be taken however so this does not lead to a proliferation of meetings. Participation in the number of groups already involved in the development of ERA is in particular a problem for small countries. Some Member States felt it could be an idea to use existing councils for this purpose, in particular informal competitiveness councils. When considering an appropriate arrangement, the participation of Associated Countries should be considered. The link to stakeholders must also be catered for when designing an ERA council, the idea of an ERA Forum was mentioned as a possibility to open up for stakeholders.

The issue of the knowledge triangle as part of ERA Vision 2020 was discussed. Arrangements to handle the knowledge triangle vary between Member States including the establishments of ministries to handle this (UK) to inter ministerial groups to handle the issue (NL, SE). Reference was also made to the fact that Community programmes are a driver support the development of the knowledge triangle, e g in Structural funds. The group was reminded that some of the new Member States had argued for a council including all vision 2020 initiatives (education, research, innovation).

### **CREST**

In developing the partnership of ERA, it was felt that CREST has an important strategic role to play. The fact that CREST rests on a mandate dating back in 1995 gives reason for a review. As an example, the knowledge triangle was not discussed at that time and is not covered by the mandate.

A new mandate should determine the role of CREST. The work on OMC is an important role for CREST and should be continued. A clear division of tasks for the Research Working Group (RWG) and CREST must be drawn up. Legal matters (Council Conclusions, regulations) should be handled in RWG whereas policy discussions should be more the remit of CREST. As a consequence CREST should be used as a sounding board for early discussions on policy initiatives from the Commission. Presentations of Communications by the Commission should be handled in RWG.

A clearer mandate should also support the profile and visibility of CREST. As an example it is unclear what the Commission's view on CREST is.

A stronger profile of CREST could also increase the interest of stakeholders to use CREST for input in policy making. It was proposed that CREST could arrange meetings with stakeholders on specific topics. The seminar arranged by the SE Presidency on June 24 was mentioned as a good example and should be continued. It was also noted that ERAB has a very low visibility.

On the different configurations of CREST, delegations felt that although they may be needed, they should be given a time limited task. It was also suggested to move the chair of CREST to MS to follow the development in the new CREST groups.

**Parallel session II: Chair: ES**

**Participating delegations: BE, CZ, DE DK, EE, EL, ES, HU, SK, TR**

**1) How to improve the overall landscape of instruments and processes related to ERA**

**ERA is a fuzzy concept**

There was general agreement amongst the group that ERA and the ERA Vision 2020 is a politically correct concept but imprecise in its description of the situation. As such, it is difficult to communicate to the RTD stakeholders (researchers, RPOs, etc.) in the Member States. But, without a clear understanding of what ERA is and where it should lead to, the stakeholders cannot take up and implement ERA.

**Processes – instruments – programmes**

Participants discussed that the distinction of instruments (=tools to execute FP7) and programmes (e.g. FP, CIP, EIT) is unclear as the terms are often used differently. Also, the inflational use of “processes” causes more confusion in this respect with a clear picture of their interrelation missing.

**Too many instruments?**

Another aspect is the criticism that there are too many instruments, which call for simplification. Paradoxically, stakeholders ask for new instruments as well as for reduction of the variety of instruments. Here, the group stressed the importance for evaluation of the effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses of each instrument and for an evaluation of the complementarity and coherence of instruments in the context of ERA.

The discussants agreed that the issue is not one of overlap of existing instruments and processes but one of identifying the gaps between them, on regional, national and European level.

Equally important is to have a coherent link and integration of instruments and processes on these three levels where the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined (ownership question: who does what?).

**Opening up of programmes**

The group agreed that a one-size-fit-all strategy, implemented top-down is neither feasible nor welcomed by the MS. There exist already good practices on national and regional level – mutual learning should be reinforced. Further, the participants agreed that MS should stronger be encouraged to open programmes, always taking into account the principle of mutuality.

## **2) How to organise and manage partnership for ERA?**

### **ERA in the post-Lisbon era**

According to the group, ERA should integrate the knowledge triangle and its governance mechanisms should adequately reflect that in the post-Lisbon developments.

Also, there was agreement for some concrete indicators by which we are capable of measuring the progress of ERA, but first it is necessary to know what we want to measure, especially in view of the role of ERA in post-2010.

### **Constraints of legal structures by Community law**

The participants agreed that the governance of ERA is trapped in the Community legal structures, hindering the efficient integration and implementation of the knowledge triangle in post-Lisbon. Examples from other areas such as the ECOFIN Council configuration, the successful implementation of the Bologna process, the set-up of the “Space Council” (no official council configuration but called into life by MS) etc. need serve as good practices for discussion on ERA governance.

### **Coordination vs. flexibility**

There was common agreement to allow more room for flexibility in the interplay of ERA with other intergovernmental- and EU initiatives. There is no necessity for overall coordination but a flexible approach on whether to take initiatives on board or not.

In the following discussion, the group raised the idea for an overarching committee overlooking education, research and innovation and agreeing that no new structure should be formed but the role of CREST re-defined:

### **Rethink CREST**

There was common agreement that it is time to redefine the mandate of CREST in order to cope with the high ambitions of ERA. Also, developments in CREST only reflect the lack of coordination on national/regional level in the Member States.

In the group, opinions and questions circulated of the characteristics of a new CREST:

- Intervene in early-stage policy making
- Monitor the progress of ERA, probably have a more coordinating role?
- Role in post-Lisbon reporting?
- Its relation to research working party?
- Introduce new working methods: yearly programming; clearer output and more concrete conclusions/follow-up actions
- Enhance its impact on Community policy making

The Spanish delegation informed the group that Spain might consider the organization of a ministerial conference on ERA during the respective presidency in the first half of 2010.

### **Part 3) Stakeholder involvement, communication**

Here, discussion came back to the initial issue that the communication and engagement of RTD stakeholders depends on a clear vision of what ERA is. In general, the group stressed the importance to find out ways to integrate all actors in opinion- and decision making processes. The group expressed its compliments to the Swedish presidency from the preparatory workshops, which were organised and which are seen as adequate, flexible and transparent channels of communication. The group also discussed pros and cons of other means of communications:

- ERA expert groups: sometimes their input is lost as access to background documents, meeting reports etc. is difficult
- Online consultations: problem of representation (whose opinion is heard the most?), intransparent
- EC communications: sometimes lack of insight into information sources, the communications draw upon.

**Parallel session III: Chair: Commission**  
**Participating delegations: AT, CH, FI, FR, FYROM, IE, LI, LT, LU, MO, MT, RO, SI**

This note summarises the main points arising from the break-out session of the CREST-DG meeting on ERA instruments and governance with the above participants.

#### **Landscape of ERA instruments**

- The instruments relevant for ERA include instruments not only at EU level but also at intergovernmental, national and regional levels.
- As the issues to address with R&D instruments are complex, it is unavoidable that the landscape of instruments should be complex as well; but there is scope for much more coherence, coordination and legibility.
- No clear gaps or overlaps were identified; but there is a need for thorough review and evaluation of the existing instruments, in order to reach a conclusion in this respect.

#### **Design of ERA instruments**

- This discussion did not address ERA *governance* « instruments » (which would more properly be called processes) but only ERA *funding* instruments.
- These funding instruments should be designed in accordance with two equally important requirements:
  - User needs; this was considered to be an essential test of ERA's worth; and
  - Clear policy objectives; in this respect, EIT was mentioned as an example of "instrument without a clear objective"; which did not mean that EIT was unnecessary, but rather that a more integrated "knowledge triangle" policy should be developed.
- Instruments need both long-term stability and in-built possibilities for flexibility / agility.
- There is a wide scope to simplify and harmonize the rules across funding instruments, including across different levels (EU, national, regional) and also « within » instruments as in the case of ERA-Nets: while the flexibility of ERA-Net scheme was appreciated, some more consistent rules of operation across individual ERA-Nets would make it easier from the perspective of end-users.

- Several participants stressed the need for a Web portal of ERA funding instruments, including opened-up national programmes; it was felt that this could be an essential element to make ERA a concrete reality in the eyes of researchers and research institutions. Other participants remarked, however, that such a project would be resource-intensive and would require careful planning and maintenance arrangements.

### **ERA general governance arrangements**

- A clear need was identified to raise the political profile of ERA. This requires a high-level political mandate (European Council level) to ensure sufficient national commitment.
- ERA should be anchored in the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy; for example, a more sophisticated guideline on ERA should be developed in the future "integrated guidelines" as a basis for national programmes and reporting; conversely, some of the key features of the Lisbon strategy could usefully be transposed to ERA (e.g. requesting the appointment of « ERA coordinators » at national level).
- The development of ERA should be organised and focused around strategic objectives and a roadmap, which still need to be developed; the first draft roadmap prepared by the CZ presidency is a welcome starting point which needs considerable further work; a possible source of inspiration is what has been developed in the higher education area.
- Sectoral governance arrangements should also be developed, possibly around "grand challenges", based on good practice such as in agriculture and energy (SCAR, SET-Plan).
- While most of the discussion focused on interactions between the Commission and Council / Member States, participants mentioned the need to look also into the roles of the European Parliament and national parliaments in ERA governance, particularly if the Lisbon Treaty enters into force.

### **ERA-related groups**

- The existing ERA groups (CREST + specific configurations + SGHRM, knowledge transfer group and ESFRI) are acknowledged to be useful, yet participation imposes a heavy burden on national administrations from small/medium sized countries.
- CREST is seen as having an important role to play. Its importance for associated countries was stressed as it allows them to participate to the governance of ERA. The idea of a stable co-chair from the Member States was raised and discussed: it was remarked that such a co-chair, if needed, should be stable and not rotate with the presidencies; but several delegations also expressed satisfaction with the current chair arrangement, particularly given that CREST work-programme and agendas are now discussed systematically with the "quintet" of presidencies, and the need for change was questioned.
- It would be useful to develop some long-term planning up to 2020 in very broad terms linked to the lifecycle of Community policies: as the reviews of Community instruments will mobilise the competent EU and national administrations in the years 2010-2013 and 2017-2020 approximately, the years in-between could be a good time to plan an in-depth review of ERA governance and policies.

### **Knowledge triangle**

- Merging the existing governance structures in charge of the three sides of the knowledge triangle (education, innovation, research) was not seen as a viable option. Finding the right people in each of these fields was already seen as a challenge in many MS, it would become impossible with such a wide remit. Moreover, this would start undesirable powergames.
- A much more promising avenue of work would be to examine how to strengthen concretely the interactions between these governance structures. For example, to solve well-identified cross-cutting issues, one could have recourse to time-limited networks of « champions » appointed by the relevant groups on the three sides of the knowledge triangle (and/or any other relevant policies, e.g. employment, competition, etc.).
- Joint group meetings and joint ministerial meetings could be useful but only for taking decisions cutting across their competencies, on well-focused issues and after in-depth and conclusive preparation (as is currently being done for the joint Competitiveness (Research) / Employment Council meeting foreseen under the Spanish Presidency).

### **Stakeholders**

- The consultation of stakeholders should be designed carefully, giving proper weight to major stakeholders and « multipliers ». In this respect, online consultations should be treated and analysed with caution.

The Commission has extensive links with European stakeholders / stakeholder organisations, and similarly national administrations with stakeholders of their countries; a missing link is between national administrations and stakeholders of other member states or their EU-level organisations. This might be addressed through occasional meetings of CREST with the relevant EU-level stakeholders and stakeholder organisations on well-identified issues.

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