

**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL
RESEARCH COMMITTEE**
Strategic Forum for International
S&T Cooperation

Secretariat

CREST-SFIC 1351/09

NOTE

Subject : Draft summary conclusions of the 1st meeting of the Strategic Forum for
International S&T Cooperation (SFIC), held in Brussels on 18 February 2009

This constitutive meeting of Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) was chaired by Ms. Miroslava KOPICOVA, representative of the Czech Presidency of the EU.

The Forum drew the following conclusions:

1. Chair

It was noted that the Forum had received one candidacy for the Chair, that of Mr. Volker RIEKE (DE). The Forum decided unanimously to elect Mr. Volker RIEKE as the Chair for the period of two years, in accordance with the Council conclusions of 2 December 2008 (doc. 16763/08) who then co-chaired the meeting with Ms. KOPICOVA. The Forum also noted that the principles and procedures for the election of future Chairs should be addressed in the SFIC “rules and procedures”.

2. SFIC rules of procedures

As set out by the Czech Presidency, SFIC reconfirmed that, as a basic principle, the CREST rules of procedure apply unless otherwise decided by the Forum or the Council Conclusions.

- a. Minutes: The Forum agreed that SFIC minutes would be produced within 10 working days after each meeting and be put to delegations for written approval electronically via e-mail.
- b. Number of representatives: The group confirmed that Article 1 of the CREST rules applies; therefore, SFIC will consist of up to two representatives from each Member State and two representatives from the Commission. Delegates should be nominated by name. Each delegation can be assisted by advisers when examining certain items on the agenda. The Forum may return to this question if needed with a view to ensuring both flexibility and continuity of representation. Final nomination of representatives should be forwarded to the Council Secretariat to allow for an update of the “list of members”.
- c. Secretariat: Secretariat will be provided by the Council Secretariat which will provide the usual support, such as organisation of meetings, minutes for each meeting, assistance to the Chair, etc.
- d. Information policy: The Forum recalled that in accordance with the CREST practice only SFIC documents of general interest would be published unless otherwise decided. A dedicated section on the CREST website will be established for these SFIC documents as well as a new e-mail address which will serve as the main channel of communication (crest.sfic@consilium.europa.eu). In parallel, additional possibilities for sharing working documents and publishing additional SFIC results (i.e. the use of the CIRCA site) will be explored. A proposal will be developed by the elected chair for the next meeting. Specific principles will be developed for the sharing of certain documents internally taking into account their nature and the need for confidentiality.

- e. Voting: The Forum decided to stick to Article 9 of the CREST rules of procedure, according to which opinions and reports of SFIC must be submitted for the approval of all its members. Mention must also be made of any possible minority views. However, if it emerges that this approach needs to be fine-tuned for certain specific cases, SFIC could return to this question.

- f. Working Groups: The Forum recalled the possibility referred to in the Council conclusions that its work could be supported by an appropriate working group if deemed necessary. The Forum agreed to return to the question of how best to organise its work, including through possible working (sub)group(s), in the context of establishing its work plan. The Commission offered to provide the secretariat for the possible working group(s). In combination with a draft work programme for SFIC to be presented for the next meeting, the chair indicated that he could put forward suggestions in this respect .

- g. Reporting to the Council: It was recalled that when the Forum is interfacing with the Council, the Council will follow its usual working methods involving its preparatory bodies as appropriate.

- h. Role of the associated countries to FP7: Upon request from delegations to discuss the role of the associated countries in SFIC, the Forum agreed to follow the CREST practice (necessary consensus of SFIC with subsequent consultation of COREPER) with the intention that the current FP7 associated countries will be invited as observers as of the next meeting of SFIC, scheduled for May 2009.

Hence, a note will be prepared for COREPER by the Council Secretariat containing the intention of the SFIC to invite all current associated countries to FP7 which are observers in CREST to participate as observers also in SFIC. It was agreed that further modalities regarding their participation will be elaborated with a view to maintaining the possibility for deliberations amongst Member States and the Commission only, when specific issues on the respective agenda so require.

Delegations were invited to provide possible additional comments or suggestions on other aspects of SFIC rules and procedures by 6 March 2009 to the Council Secretariat .The rules and procedures will be drafted by the Council Secretariat and will be submitted to SFIC at its next meeting for endorsement.

3. Timetable

The Czech Presidency informed the Forum that a second meeting would be organised in May 2009. This second meeting will focus on the adoption of SFIC rules and procedures and on exchanging views on the provisional work programme of SFIC for the next two years.
