

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

Secretariat

CREST-SFIC 1355/09

NOTE

Subject : Summary conclusions of the 2nd meeting of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC), held in Brussels on 25 May 2009

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Volker RIEKE (DE). To this meeting, representatives of the countries associated to the Seventh Framework Programme were also invited for the first time, in line with the orientations of the meeting of SFIC of 18 February 2009 (doc. 7189/09). The Chair also noted that, as no objections were received to the draft summary conclusions of the meeting of SFIC of 18 February 2008 (doc. 1351/09), this summary conclusions was deemed to have been adopted through the written procedure.

The Forum drew the following conclusions:

1. Draft for Rules and Procedures

The Forum examined the draft by the Chair (doc. 1352/09). Delegations addressed the issues of the election of the Chair, the number of the representatives of each Member, the frequency of meetings and the appropriate formulation for the quorum of SFIC, on which certain further

specification was suggested. The Chair undertook to have the draft text revised on the basis of the discussion and submit it for the approval of the Forum by written procedure.

2. **Provisional Work Programme**

The Forum broadly endorsed the three main objectives of the draft Work Programme (doc. 1352/09) drawn up by the Chair on the basis of the SFIC mandate set out by the Council and the contributions received from delegations. Delegations stressed the need to maintain the strategic nature of the Forum and set an appropriate and realistic level of ambition for the work of SFIC considering the available resources. Relevant programmes and mechanisms at European and national level, bilateral as well as multilateral, should be included in the considerations.

The Chair undertook to revise the draft on the basis of the discussion and submit it for the approval of the Forum by written procedure.

The Forum agreed to set up two ad hoc Task Forces with the mandate to prepare the next meeting of SFIC on the following topics:

1) Information sharing

In this respect, delegations stressed the need to establish effective working structures and to encourage targeted information sharing and pooling in general, building as far as possible upon existing structures. It should be identified which information can and should be shared, what is the right format and IT tools for processing this information, and who can facilitate such operations. It was also noted that, beyond readily available written public information, the sharing of insight, experience and motivations is also important. The relevance of networking of missions and embassies in third countries was also stressed. The Task Force should put forward concrete proposals for the next meeting of SFIC.

2) Priority setting

The Task Force would prepare the ground for the basis of decisions of SFIC with respect to:

- defining selection criteria for international cooperation (global challenges and other relevant S&T areas) and with a strategic focus on selected sub-areas;
- analysing the type of instruments available and not covered today from an integrated perspective under the knowledge triangle paradigm;
- considering the appropriate instruments for the implementation of the activities concerned.

In view of the need for a harmonised strategic choice of priorities for international cooperation, the Task Force should seek information exchange also with other fora, notably the GPC.

Delegations were invited to provide to the SFIC Secretariat by 29 May 2009 their designation of experts, if any, as members of the Task Force(s) and indicate their possible interest to chair one or the other of the Task Forces. For the second Task Force (Priority setting), delegations were invited to put forward suggestions for the draft criteria for the identification of these global challenges and priorities.

The Commission offered to provide the secretariat for the Task Forces.

3. Possible Operational Working Group

The Forum agreed to await the results of the two ad hoc Task Forces prior to deciding on the possible permanent Working Group.

4. Next steps

The Forum agreed on a tentative date of 1 October 2009 for the next meeting. The Task Forces should provide their input for this meeting early enough for distribution to members before mid September 2009. The Chair also indicated that, in principle, the Forum should meet four times a year. It was agreed that, to the extent possible, a longer-term plan for dates of meetings should be established, to guarantee a proper planning.

5. Agenda for the next meeting

The Forum agreed that the following items should be included:

- Information sharing (to be prepared by Task Force)
- Priority setting (to be prepared by Task Force)
- Platforms for dialogue (stock-taking of existing fora and/or policy dialogues on international S/T Cooperation, such as those for Neighbouring countries, Africa, the Mediterranean and Latin America).