

## 32<sup>th</sup> e-IRG delegates meeting

Dublin, Ireland, 21-22 February 2013

### Public Summary

#### *Opening and welcome*

New delegates to e-IRG are Mark Asch (FR), Anne Decourchelle (FR), Roar Skålin (NO) and David de Roure (UK).

The aims of the new e-IRG strategy were recalled: to inspire future e-Infrastructures in Europe and beyond, to become the main advisory body on e-Infrastructures internationally and develop e-IRG as the platform facilitating coordination for all components of European e- Infrastructures.

#### *Reports and News*

The e-IRG Roadmap 2012 has been published and the upcoming e-IRG White Paper is in the preparatory phase.

Two eligible proposals have been submitted for the topic 'INFRA-2013-1.2.1: GÉANT' of the last FP7 Call, which has a budget of 41.8 M€ available. The impact of the agreement at the European Council meeting on 8.2.2013 on the Horizon 2020 budget is unclear. On the ERA Communication priorities two areas are of particular relevance for Research Infrastructures and the e-Infrastructures community: 'Optimal transnational co-operation and competition' which includes effective investment in and use of research infrastructures, and 'Optimal circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge' which includes promotion of digital ERA. The public consultation 'Research Data e-Infrastructures: Framework for Action in H2020' will be online from 27.2.2013 until 27.3.2013. The structure of the data e-Infrastructure framework for action is based on 7 'action fiches' each covering a specific domain. The groups addressed in the Call for Expressions of Interest for Horizon 2020 Advisory Groups will be composed of 20-30 individual experts and representatives of organisations. The deadline is 6.3.2013 at 17:00 CET. A questionnaire from DG CONNECT concerning metrics at [http://bit.ly/DAE\\_Metrics](http://bit.ly/DAE_Metrics) consists of two parts and is open until 15.3.2013. Other future events and important dates, besides the three aforementioned deadlines, are: e-Concertation meeting (Brussels, 6-7.3.2013), Research Data Alliance Conference (Gothenburg, 18-20.3.2013) and ICRI 2014 (Athens, April 2014). The first Horizon 2020 call will probably be end 2013.

The main goal for ESFRI is the implementation of the projects in the roadmap. ESFRI is waiting for a report of an assessment group that has looked into bottlenecks (expected in April 2014). The main issue for ESFRI is to see how many projects will be implemented by 2014. In parallel ESFRI is looking at the need for an update of the roadmap including new projects, possibly in 2015. In this update process ESFRI will probably be more active in including more former EE countries and SEE countries. The slowdown in the amount of money made available to projects by the EU countries is obvious, this could be a reason why the SSH projects have been successful, since they are cheap

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compared to other projects. The first projects that have created a roadmap were success stories. There are two challenges during the implementation of the Roadmap; sustainability for the new institutions for 15-20 years and the establishment itself. ESFRI worked at establishing sustainable RIs, thus the projects discuss together setting up associations.

The e-IRG delegates reported the following news from their countries:

- Estonia: The NREN is going through a difficult process of restructuring. The e-Infrastructures are joined together.
- Italy: Due to the elections there will be a new parliament, government and changes in the ministries. A supercomputer was installed at CINECA with 26% higher performance than top system on the green500 list (>3000 Mflops/W). The distributed computer infrastructure is used at over 50 sites and has 1.7 M 2007specint. Its use was in January 2013 33% more than in January 2012. The largest user groups are HEP and big data.
- Germany: New HPC installation in Jülich, JuQueen an IBM BlueGene/Q with 28 racks. HLRN (Berlin and Hannover) have signed a contract for a Cray system. The problems with the EGI membership fees have been solved; users, ministries and providers will pay the decreased fee. The number of votes in the EGI Council will stay at the level of 70.
- Poland: One of the results of a national project from structural funds 2011 will be by the end of 2013 a 100 Gbps network connecting 5 HPC data centres and 100 Gbps from these centres to metropolitan networks (star topology). In January the Ministry of Research announced the call for extension of the Polish RIs (similar to ESFRI's Roadmap) with deadline mid-March. The Platon project finished in 2012 with as services: distributed storage and computing on demand (very close to cloud services). There was a lot of discussion on their sustainability and they are offered by the national network as added value to universities. There is a special discussion on sustainability of storage services, which has the interest from libraries etc.
- Denmark: The restructuring of e-Infrastructures (DeIC) was already reported in the previous meeting. There is an interesting national debate on how to finance HPC and data. Now it is a lump sum. DeIC has locked their 7 M€ until there is a national deal. It is discussed if there should be HPC at national level HPC or for each university separately? If national who should have it? If distributed should these university subsidise? Should the centre(s) placed outside the country: Iceland or Finland?
- Switzerland: The CSCS has upgraded the main HPC system to 750 Tflop/s, which should be extended to 1 Petaflop/s at the end of the year. SWITCH has started the project for the upgrade of the Swiss NREN to the 100 Gbps technology. A grant of 70 Mio. CHF has been provided to the Swiss research and education ICT and library communities for a 4 year

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project aiming at developing integrated tools for the access, processing, storage and archiving of scientific information.

- Finland: Update of the RI Roadmap; the one in 2009 never got funding and the question now is: are e-Infrastructures a strong component of RIs? Also a huge centralisation of 1000 persons of the State ICT. A question is if the CSC activities should be seen as part of the state ICT activities or should they be special purpose, as CSC wants. Inauguration event of Kajaini on 25-26.4.2013. National research data project with multi million budget. The project is looking at: metadata catalogue, PIDs, storage and curation of research data. Will have dropbox-like service for storage. Discussion now on how much should we in Finland look abroad.
- Greece: The RIs in Greece are been taken care by GRNET. A peculiarity is that in Greece there are many small universities, so it is not possible to install infrastructures all over the country. Okeanos (Ocean) provides virtual machines with dropbox type storage, virtual Ethernet, remote firewall etc., all open source. A 5 M€ open call for large national HPC system purchase. Greek PRACE (PRACE.GR) is being established, installation expected end 2013.
- Spain: The Spanish NREN, has deployed RedIRIS-NOVA, based on a dark fibre network, with 14.000 km and with 53 points of presence. RedIRIS-NOVA actually is fully operational, and covers the Peninsula, connecting with the Portuguese NREN, and reaches also the Canary Islands. First phase of Petaflop centre as contribution to PRACE. Spanish supercomputing network continuously being upgraded with Tier-1 and Tier-2 services.
- Croatia: Approaching EU membership. Preparing a RI roadmap: one call last month and a last one in June. CARNet will be allowed to gain dark fibres from state-owned companies. Work is done in a preparation of RI e-infrastructures (network, computing, storage) projects for Structural funds. Open access declaration has more than 2000 signatures.
- Luxembourg: New law allows private entities to apply for public funds. This allows the NREN (private body) to apply for funding. LU is restructuring the research network. The NREN will move to a new campus and share the ICT infrastructure.
- United Kingdom: 600 M€ have been allocated for HPC, big data, network etc. but not clear how much for what. JANET is looking with JISC into which national infrastructure to set up. JANET has rolled out a new network extending the fibre network. The capacity to EBI in Cambridge has been extended to meet the demand. Looking into industrial use of public infrastructures: catapult centres (discipline oriented) where SMEs can get access to HPC and storage facilities.
- The Netherlands: On 1.1.2013 SARA formally merged with SURF and is now called

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SURFsara. Vancis (previously the commercial part of SARA) also incorporated in the SURF family. Now an integrated approach to e-Infrastructures is possible in the Netherlands.

- Norway: The current finance of e- Infrastructures ends in 2014. Looking at stronger collaborations between universities and the Research Council. Would like not to focus on hardware but on services to scientists. The HPC budget will remain about the same as now (8M); the budget for data/storage will increase.
- France: Trying to setup a national strategy for e-Infrastructures. The idea is to put data as unifier for the different strategies that exist now (RENATER for the network, GENCI for HPC). PRACE 2.0: financing ends in 2015 and the PRACE council met (in Dublin) to agree on the strategy for 2015-2020. The proposal is to fund Tier-0 at 50%-50% with the EC and it will be presented at the next Competitiveness Council meeting. Hopes to get 10M€ for investment in big data/clouds; it will be partially used in HPC nodes, partially in the network. GENCI has a four year plan with around 20 M€/year with a 2M€ increase each year until 2016. France is heavily investing in HPC.
- Hungary: 100 Gbps connection between CERN (Geneva) and its Remote Data Centre at the Wigner Institute in Budapest is operational since January 2013 as a joint service provided by DANTE (GÉANT) and the NIIF Institute (the Hungarian NREN). The NIIF Institute has recently been approached by the government to take over the school network system and due to this additional function the Hungarian NREN now serves more than 20% of Hungary's population. Structural funds will hopefully play again a major role in developing the e-Infrastructure in the country but certainly the difficulties with exploiting them in the more developed central region will arise again although most of the e-Infrastructure centres are operating in that central region. Maybe e-IRG could compile in the forthcoming some recommendations to the EC about applying less rigorous regulations when structural funds are to be used in developed regions dominantly for the interests and benefit of the less developed convergence regions
- Slovenia: Because of the economic situation it is not the best time for new investments. We keep existing services running. There is a small project for cloud computing and storage and a bigger NREN project for schools. Confirms the issue for structural funds mentioned by Hungary.
- Belgium: Has a new minister for science and policy. The NREN is growing. Coordination of the grid went from the NREN to a university, which has applied for federal funding for the EGI membership fee. Both regions (Flanders and Wallonia) have HPC systems and Belgium has entered PRACE (represented by the Walloon region).
- Ireland: Financial recovery, reduction of jobs. One of the activities is to establish one national e-Infrastructure body. Are looking forward to organising the workshop in Ireland.

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- Bulgaria: Call for RIs including e-Infrastructures open until the middle of March; funding 10M€. Second programme for 2014-2020 for science and education (structural funds). Yesterday the government submitted its resignation so the next three months stalling.
- EC: We have seen movement in several countries of increased use of public infrastructure by companies, e.g. in France. This contradicts last week's decision of the European Council where the budget was severely reduced including Horizon 2020. In the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the broadband part was eliminated and the European level services part 50% reduced. The EP has still to vote on the budget. Kostas Glinos informed that Pekka Karp will be retiring from EC as of 1.4.2013 and thanked him for his contributions here and most broadly to e-infrastructures. A new Commission contact person will be appointed for e-IRG. Until then Kostas Glinos probably will attend the e-IRG meetings himself.
- Sweden: SNIC has a new Board. An action plan for the new strategy is being prepared.

#### *e-IRG as Coordination Platform*

e-IRG is aiming to provide a platform for e-Infrastructure organisations to meet, identify common interests and strive towards enhanced services. During the previous meeting e-IRG encouraged major e-Infrastructure providers (DANTE, EGI, PRACE,TERENA) to discuss coordination among themselves. According to the e-IRG chair, users want unified services and a single interface.

The discussion between the e-IRG delegates turned out that users should be more involved in policy making, therefore user communities should be invited to the next e-IRG workshop. User associations like the League of European Universities (LERU) and EIROforum, which have developed a vision on ICT infrastructures, should also invited. But it was also said that e-IRG must express its expectations to the users. Additionally it was seen as necessary to invite more organisations to the upcoming e-IRG workshop, especially data organisations like EUDAT and OpenAIRE.

#### *e-IRG Workshop in Dublin*

The e-IRG workshop in Dublin will take place 22.-23.05.2013. A programme committee chair by Peter Wittenburg is in place. There will be 3 tracks; "e-Infrastructure Coordination" on the Implementation of the ERA Communication, "Legal Interoperability – Open Access" will address legal issues and harmonisation, and "Data Interoperability and Services" will address policy directions in RDA and iCordi high-level strategy.

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### *ERA Communication*

The ERA COM actions mention e-IRG in three places; develop a Charter of Access, define evaluation principles and impact-assessment criteria and monitoring tools for combining funds from different sources, and alignment of EU and national approaches to eRI development and use. According to Pekka Karp (EC) the Charter of Access refers to both physical and virtual access and it contributes to the borderless and seamless ERA, which is key. Kostas Glinos (EC) indicated that the action on legal interoperability is quite related to the Task Force on Legal Issues and that there is an IPR discussion in Germany, which might result in important restrictions. If such restrictions come true, then e.g. data access would be very difficult. Once the problems that inhibit the alignment of approaches (AUP, state-aid-rules, IPRs) are identified, then the options can be identified. To put the problem on the table and know the landscape would already be an achievement. The EC cannot force countries to change, but at least we know the problem well. There is also a related issue with ESFRI for the access in RIs that was agreed unanimously in the Council.

### *Nominations*

Lajos Balint's nomination for the Horizon 2020 Advisory Group was supported by e-IRG. Leif Laaksonen steps down as e-IRG's representative in the ESFRI Implementation Group.

### *White Paper 2013*

The topics of the e-IRG White Paper 2013 and the responsible champions are:

- Integration of Infrastructures (The Netherlands)
- Data Management Policies (Poland)
- Big Data – Access and Standards (Greece, Italy)
- Cloud Computing (Belgium)
- Open Science (Germany, France)
- Legal Issues (United Kingdom)

The coordination of infrastructures and user involvement are relevant for each section so that these points should be addresses in each section.

'Integration of Infrastructures' will contain some recommendations, which might be controversial but they try to address the actions required to make progress in the field. According to Arjen van Rijn the text is very relevant and he invited the delegates to provide comments.

'Big Data – Access and Standards' is merged from two chapters. A draft will be available end of March. The standards part will focus on data and will address which standards exist for data and which are suitable for big data. To avoid the risk of creating something not in-line with RDA a person from RDA will participate in the work to ensure that RDA material is included.

It is planned to present the final version of e-IRG's White Paper 2013 at the Dublin Workshop in May and publish it soon afterwards.

### *ESFRI/e-IRG Working Group on Policies*

A new ESFRI/e-IRG working group was created to look into the policy implications of the Blue Paper on Data Management such as:

- What would be required from the ESFRI Member States at the policy level to accommodate the recommendations?
- What changes should be implemented at the EC level?
- What recommendations related to RIs in HORIZON 2020 can be given?
- What aspects from the report should be taken into account in future assessments of RIs?

The working group has created draft recommendations, which will be presented to the ESFRI Council in March 2013. The approved conclusions will be included in the Data Management Policies chapter of the White Paper 2013.

### *Cloud Computing Recommendations*

The recommendations from the e-IRG Task Force Report on Cloud Computing will be included in the e-IRG White Paper 2013 section on cloud computing, covering user involvement and coordination and also the European status of cloud computing.

### *Task Force on Legal Issues*

The Task Force on Legal Issues (TFLI) has started working; topics to be addressed will be among others Pre-Commercial Procurement and Public Procurement for Innovation. TFLI will pave the way for the EC study providing orientations and recommendations. It is planned to have something substantive for the e-IRG workshop in May, which is not necessarily complete.

### *Social Media*

e-IRG has started a pilot for the use of social media for dissemination activities. The pilot will start with LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. It is planned to have an entry on Wikipedia. An evaluation of the pilot will take place in May.

### *e-IRG Action Plan*

Three new actions related to the ERA COM were added to the e-IRG Action Plan; 'Charter of Access for the use of RIs', 'Common evaluation principles' and 'Alignment of EU and national approaches to eRI'.

### *AOB*

Ivan Maric promoted a link for a conference in Riga on user participation. It was observed that inviting users in workshops and user conferences is important. (<http://www.eunis2013.lv/>).

The Chair thanked Pekka Karp for his valuable contributions to e-IRG. Pekka Karp said that he had enjoyed the e-IRG meetings and events and wished all success to e-IRG in its mission, promoting the alignment and interoperability of EU and national e-infrastructures and achieving a seamless and open digital ERA.