41th e-IRG delegates meeting
Riga, Latvia, 2 June 2015
Public Summary

Report and News

e-IRG Chair and Board

The e-IRG Chair Sverker Holmgren informed the delegates about the main activities since the last meeting. He had participated in several events including:

- EC consultation workshop entitled "From platform operators to service providers", 25 March, Brussels.
- Final conference of CHAIN-REDS project, 31 March, Brussels.
- Digital ERA forum (ex-e-IPF), 23 April, Brussels.
- EGI Conference 19-20 May, Lisbon.
    - The Chair gave a presentation on e-Infrastructure Commons and participated in a panel.
- Meeting with RDA Secretary General, 1 June Stockholm.

News from the Commission

DG Connect: Anni Hellman

The evaluations of all WP14-15 calls have been completed. 34 projects will be funded including 8 Centres of Excellence, 8 VREs (1 for skills for e-Infrastructures) and 6 data and computing projects. GEANT, PRACE, OpenAIRE, EGI, OpenMinTed and RDA will receive funding. 9 clusters are being built to create synergies among the projects: VREs, BMS, Earth, SSH, Open Scholar, Skills and Training, Integration of data and computing, International cooperation.

An eConcertation meeting is planned later this year.

Many comments were received on the draft WP16-17. The main change compared with WP14-15 is the new architecture. It includes integration and consolidation of platforms, prototyping platforms, support policy and international cooperation, the Human Brain Project and SKA. The deadline for the calls is 16 March 2016. In June the draft WP16-17 will go into inter-service consultation (to all DGs). The RI PC will meet on 25 June and a written procedure will be used for acceptance by the Program Committee in July. Adoption of the WP16-17 will be in autumn. The total budget will be 221 M€ for the two years.

The Expert Advisory Group on Research Infrastructures including e-Infrastructures will change half of its members by the end of this year.

DG RTD: Philippe Froissard

The structure in the WP16-17 for DG RTD is similar to that in WP14-15. One Call (100M€) supports pan-European RIs and has 4 actions: design studies for new RIs (20M€), support of new ESFRI projects (which are now being evaluated, 8-10 will be inserted in the new roadmap, 40M€), opportunities for other RIs (non-ESFRI) and Research Cloud. There will be a call to support integrating activities (for older projects and for new user communities). There will also be a call to support cooperation between industries and academia for technological platforms. The deadline is also 16 March 2016.

All the proposals of the last call have been evaluated. All the 15 proposals for support of ESFRI projects have been evaluated favourable. A different call aimed to foster innovation (PCP and support for PCP) is in evaluation until end of this month.

The 3rd ICRI Conference will be on 3-5 October 2016 in Capetown, South Africa. It will be jointly organised by DG RTD and the South African Department of Research.

On a question on a plan for creating a "global e-IRG", it was stated that cooperation with strategy partners outside Europe is essential and information on strengths and opportunities needs to be gathered. The Group of Senior Officials (GSO) on global RIs has identified a number of potential global RIs, whose required support demands further work.

Report of recent developments in the member countries
Last week PRACEdays including side events took place. Next PRACEdays will be in the week of 9 May 2016 in Prague.

Last month the largest HPC system in Greece became operational. It has 10.000 cores and has costed 4M€. It is complemented by the cloud system for research "Okeanos" built by GRNET (by 10-15 people in 2 years).

At the request of the Nordic Council of Ministers a follow-up to the Nordic e-Science Action Plan has been created. The new document[1] addresses e-Science, Education and Infrastructure.

It was agreed that this item of the agenda is given more attention in the future, allowing the exchange of knowledge among countries.

EC workshop "From infrastructure operators to service providers"

This workshop organised by DG CONNECT on 25 March had a format that facilitated discussions. The original idea was to focus on e-Infrastructure Commons, but instead it was decided to address specific components. The approach used was "participatory leadership" where the participants work together in small teams to find out what is the most important for them. The idea is to also use this technique at the eConcertation meeting.

On the relation to e-IRG and if e-IRG should take action, it was agreed that e-IRG will have to decide on how to relate to the evaluation of the e-Infrastructures including KPIs, along with the national perspectives and the exchange of information among Member States.

Collaboration with ESFRI

Conclusions of the Competitiveness Council
The conclusions[2] of last Friday's meeting of the Competitiveness Council are relevant to e-IRG. The document states among others: "*STRESSES the importance of PRACE, a world-class European High Performance Computing (HPC) infrastructure for research that provides access to computing resources and services for large-scale scientific and engineering applications; ACKNOWLEDGES the need to develop the new generation of HPC technologies and CALLS for the reinforcement of the interconnected network of data processing facilities GEANT. In this respect, INVITES ESFRI to explore mechanisms for better coordination of Member States' investment*

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[1] http://www.nordforsk.org/no/publikasjoner/publications_container/nordic-escience-action-plan-2-0-escience-and-einfrastructure-in-an-international-context

[2] Link Conclusions: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9360-2015-INIT/en/pdf

strategies in e-Infrastructures, covering also HPC, distributed computing, scientific data and networks".

The Chair has talked with the ESFRI Chair John Womersley. ESFRI had an e-Infrastructure working group that was shut down when the ESFRI/e-IRG cooperation developed. It was decided that e-IRG should approach ESFRI to work together, or on their behalf, to address this point. The Chair was given a mandate to continue the discussions with ESFRI and report back to the Executive Board.

e-Infrastructure part of the ESFRI Roadmap landscape analysis

John Womersley has asked e-IRG for this input and the Chair has proposed him that the overarching working group (OAWG) creates a draft analysis on e-Infrastructures. This request shows that there is trust and openness between ESFRI and e-IRG.

Each SWG is preparing its own landscape analysis which includes a short section on e-Infrastructure. The OAWG can develop the overall e-Infrastructure landscape. This should be a short section. Information can be extracted from the guidelines document as input for the landscape analysis and the support project has already started this activity.

It was decided that e-IRG should provide this input to ESFRI and that the support project should help OAWG that is responsible for this task. The timeline is to bring this document up at the first Luxembourg meeting.

Joint networking activities; workshop during the ICT 2015 conference in Lisbon.

A proposal for a joint networking session of e-IRG and ESFRI at the ICT2015 Conference has been submitted to the EC. The session will be used as platform to discuss policy issues for RIs and e-Infrastructures on a global scale. If the session is awarded the "language processing" participatory method may be considered as a format.

Many proposals have been received and the evaluation process has started. By 30 June there should be a decision on the final package for proposals.

A G7 meeting will take place in September in time to bring in some news at the ICT2015.

Report from the last ESFRI meeting

Rosette Vandenbroucke attended the meeting that focused on the initial evaluation (eligibility phase) of the ESFRI 2016 Roadmap proposals. She presented the Guidelines document. An interesting discussion took place among the ESFRI meeting attendees on sustainability and preservation of research data.

In response to this discussion the chair said that there is a need to look at who should preserve the large datasets produced by RIs and how this should be done, i.e. management and long-term preservation and the corresponding business models. It was agreed that the Executive Board with the support project create a proposal for a new guidelines document that can be discussed at the next e-IRG meeting. The document should include the latest developments, e.g. relevant efforts by RDA. Experts from Member States and RDA should be involved. It was also decided that the Executive Board and the support project will work on a proposal on the impact of national models that can be discussed at the next e-IRG meeting.

Implementation of the e-Infrastructure Commons

Status and impact of the e-IRG White Paper 2013

The Chair presented one slide with the following conclusions:

- The e-Infrastructure commons is now a well-established concept. At European level, there is a general agreement amongst most stakeholders that the approach is valid. The implementation views are different. Stakeholders should agree on how to do it. The impact at national level is still unclear.

The input to the EC included:

- e-IRG input for WP16-17 submitted on 16 June 2014 (responding to 7 questions)
- e-IRG response to a request by Thierry van der Pyl "WP2016-17 structure for the consolidation of the e-Infrastructure Commons" submitted on 3 December 2014.
- Comment on the WP16-17 presentation by DG/CONNECT at the Riga delegates meeting on 16 February submitted to the EC on 9 March.

The Chair said that some of the e-IRG input has been taken into account. It was stated that the formal way is to provide input through the RI PC and that the e-IRG delegates should be well connected. The e-IRG direct input was also appreciated by the EC. Philippe Froissard said that DG RTD does not ask ESFRI to comment on proposed Work Programs, but in practice the link between ESFRI and RI PC is very strong. The Chair concluded that e-IRG should continue providing input to the EC and that we should reinforce our message to our RI PC members and on higher national level.

The "European Science Cloud" initiative within DG RTD

Philippe Froissard presented this agenda item. The topic in WP16-17 refers to the data aspect. The European Open Science Cloud is a result of the Science 2.0 consultation. It resorts under DG RTD because DG RTD is responsible for the Science 2.0 consultation. However, it is not dealt with in isolation but jointly with DG CONNECT. It is a pilot action to demonstrate how availability of scientific data and data-analysis services can be ensured through a cloud infrastructure. It addresses federation, networking and coordination of existing RIs and scientific clouds to increase data findability, accessibility and interoperability. Particular attention will be on storage, access and re-use also for the needs of the 'long tail of science'. It will build on existing infrastructures and be stakeholder driven. The budget will be 5-10M€ and one project will be funded.

A High Level Expert Group will be set up to work on recommendations to be taken up by proposers by the time the call opens. The ToR of the group is being prepared. The HLEG will interact with existing bodies including as e-IRG, so probably e-IRG will be consulted by September.

Follow-up on the discussion on the KPIs and the role of e-IRG in the evaluation.

The Chair recalled that there is a text[3] in the draft WP16-17 on the role of e-IRG in the evaluation. e-IRG should be proactive and create a proposal on how to undertake this task. He proposed that a new working group could prepare this proposal. It is important to react quickly and to connect with the RI PC members. He asked for volunteers and the mandate to take a decision on the working group in the Executive Board which was agreed. It was noted

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[3] „The activities shall include the collection and aggregation of relevant policy information with impact on the development of EC-funded e-infrastructures, including KPIs and cost-related information, in coordination with the funded e-infrastructure initiatives and made available in open formats for reuse. The collected information shall enable the e-IRG with the support of independent expert panels to provide strategic advice on the evolution of the European e-infrastructures landscape and associated costs."

that KPIs should not only address the engineering point of view but also the non-technical, e.g. sociological. It was also noted that care must be taken not to go on the wrong track with KPIs and referred to the difficulties that GEANT and the NRENs have had in finding KPIs.

Reports from other initiatives

PLAN-E: Research within eScience

The Chair informed that PLAN-E was started by the Netherlands eScience Center. The second meeting was hosted by the Nordic eScience initiative in Copenhagen. The Chair attended as Director of the Nordic Science Initiative. PLAN-E is an informal body, without appointed national representatives as e-IRG. The focus is on research within eScience and not on e-Infrastructure services. Several persons represent providers, but in some countries the separation is less clear.

Reports on Policy Documents

e-IRG Roadmap

The update of the Roadmap 2015 was presented that includes a new approach to data and services: knowledge point of view, top-down approach, cooperation between e-Infrastructures. In summary:

- Develop new models in research, innovation, and learning to cover services related to data infrastructures, virtual environments and multi-domain scientific workflows.
- Easy access and efficient use of knowledge implemented in a European Science Knowledge Base for exchanging information between disciplines and projects.
- Virtual Research Environments (VRE) with integrated environment of visualization, computation services, data storage, measurement devices.
- Scientific workflows.
- New aspects for the Roadmap 2015 are opening e-Infrastructures for massive data collection using new (mobile) technologies. Examples are The Internet of Things especially in aspects of sensors, Crowd sensing and Machine to machine technologies (both wireless and wired).

The delegates provided the following comments:

- The e-Infrastructure Commons should be an integral part of the document.
- The Roadmap should reflect on e-IRG related developments rather than on technologies. Pull out the consequences on strategy and policy that may have an impact on e-IRG areas, e.g. privacy. More concrete ideas on governance are needed.
- We are still guided by some general policy documents (Riding the wave, etc.) while in the meantime GEANT, EGI, PRACE etc. have written new strategies. e-IRG should do a gap analysis of how these strategies are compatible with the general documents. The roadmap should be realistic.
- The Internet of Things and mobile environment will be new features of the e-Infrastructure that will belong to the RIs because connections will be needed. On the ESFRI Roadmap there are several new projects with references in this direction.
- It needs to be checked whether recommendations from our previous document have been taken up by the governments.

It was decided to establish a new working group to create the updated Roadmap which should

not only include the vision for the future but also a reflection on the impact of previous e-IRG recommendations and input from e-IRG workshops. A new draft will be produced for the first Luxembourg meeting.

Task Force on Legal Issues follow-up
The conclusion is that there is no need to revisit the TFLI report now.

Task Force on Data Analytics and Computing
The Task force had held a teleconference and work is in progress. At the September Luxembourg meeting there will be at most a very early draftavailable. The final report can be adopted at the end of this year.

Task Force on Long Tail of Science
The ToR was approved. The work on the document will start in September and a draft version is expected at the second e-IRG meeting in Luxembourg.

e-IRG Mission and Vision

The support project has produced new text on the e-IRG mission, vision and objectives. The Executive Board will finalise the update of the e-IRG vision, mission and objectives.

Knowledge Base

9 countries have responded to the list of questions: Bulgaria, Finland, France, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Spain. It is important to have the national information. It was decided to continue to include national e-Infrastructure information in the Knowledge Base. The support project will come up with an updated proposal including a shorter template using more links to national and European information.

Long-term planning of e-IRG Workshops

Coherence of themes over several e-IRG workshops
The Executive Board has concluded that workshops should reflect the priorities of the countries, but be in some way be linked to form a line or workflow among workshops. This will happen for Luxembourg and the Netherlands and it may be good to plan for this also in the future.

Activities during the Luxembourg EU Presidency

The first delegates meeting will be an official Presidency event. The meeting will be on 17 September at the European Convention Center in the City of Luxembourg.

The second delegates meeting will be hosted by RESTENA, the Luxembourg NREN, on 23 November in the City of Science, Belval – a new university campus. The provisional theme of the workshop is the future landscape of e-Infrastructures. The workshop is organised by e-IRG, RESTENA and LCSB (Luxembourg Centre for Systems Biomedicine). The first day will be on 24 November and will end with a joint dinner for the workshop participants and the GEANT Association members. On 25 November there will be half a day of workshop ending with a lunch. The GEANT Association Assembly will take place on 26 November.

Activities during the Netherlands EU Presidency

The Netherlands has chosen Open Science as theme of the EU Presidency. The theme of the e-IRG workshop will be the status of the e-Infrastructure Commons progression: how is it organised, how it is funded, etc.

The activities will take place in Amsterdam. The dates are not yet known. It will be connected to the Open Science event or to the ESFRI Roadmap launch.

AOB

The Charter of Access will be published very soon; within a few days.

Closing

The Chair thanked Ilmars Slaidins for his hospitality.