Public summary of the 46ᵗʰ e-IRG delegates meeting
Bratislava 26-27 September 2016
Institute of Materials & Machine Mechanics (26 September)
EU House- European Information Center (27 September)

Reports and News

Report from the e-IRG Chair and Board

The e-IRG Chair Sverker Holmgren informed the delegates about the main meetings/events where he was present or invited, including:

- Workshop on Governance and Funding of the European Open Science Cloud, June 29, Brussels.
- ESFRI EB+SWG Chairs meeting, July 8 , Brussels.
- e-IRG Bratislava Workshop PC meeting, September 2, Bratislava
- PLAN-E meeting September 8-9, Lugano (the Chair participated for NordForsk). It was explained that the goal of PLAN-E is e-Science/Research and not e-Infrastructure itself.
- ESFRI EB+SWG Chairs meeting + ESFRI Forum, September 22-23, Matera.

News from the Commission

A report was not available, as there was no official representation from the EC,

Report from ESFRI

The Roadmap 2018 update process was presented at the Matera meeting and will be finalised next week. The launch of the update will take place at ICRI 2016 conference in Cape Town, South Africa. There will be an information day on the Roadmap update 2018 in Malaga on 17 January 2017, combined with an interactive Exchange of Experiences workshop on submission on the 18th.

Collaboration with ESFRI and other initiatives

ESFRI Roadmap 2018 process

ESFRI has sent 4 internal documents for input from e-IRG: ESFRI Roadmap 2018 guide, questionnaire for submission of proposals for Roadmap 2018, monitoring questionnaire for 2008 and 2010 projects, and periodic review questionnaire for landmarks. The statements and questions in the Roadmap guide and the questionnaire for submission need to be reviewed. In the monitoring questionnaire and the periodic review for landmarks, e-IRG is asked to provide a "limited number of generic instructions aligning with the minimal entry-level key requirements for Implementation and Operation" on e-Needs.

ESFRI Working Group on e-Infrastructure investment strategies

The Chair of the group is now invited in the ESFRI Executive Board and Strategy Working Group Chairs meetings, and has more insight in the ESFRI activities. He stated that the mandate of the group will end at the end of the year, and that after discussions it was decided that the ESFRI WG on e-Infrastructure investment strategies has a joint meeting with the ESFRI EB.

One of the main goals of the meeting, would be to get into some conclusions and also a firm commitment from the funders inside the group, to work further with the ideas on further coordinating investments. The meeting is expected towards the end of October or beginning of November. He added that more time may be needed and that it will be difficult to finish by the end of the year.

The role of small countries was also discussed, and the Chair stated that the same discussion is also happening as part of PRACE. Some delegates claimed that it is very difficult for small countries to build their own data/computing centres, and that it is not appropriate having EU-supported data/computing centres only in the big countries.

Evaluation report from the Overarching Working Group (OA WG)
The document is highly relevant for the ESFRI Roadmap 2018 process. The Executive Board has agreed to publish the document as an e-IRG document after formal endorsement by the delegates. The document is based on the presentation given by Arjen van Rijn during the joint ESFRI-e-IRG meeting in March 2016, summarising the experiences of the e-IRG OA WG team members involved in the preparation and evaluation of the e-Needs of the ESFRI 2016 Roadmap.

Joint ESFRI-e-IRG booth at ICRI2016
A joint ESFRI-e-IRG booth will be organised at the next International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI 2016) in Cape Town in October. Following a similar setup as ICRI2014, it was jointly agreed by both groups. The Chair stated that the decision for this came from the support projects and was agreed at the EB level. The joint booth was appreciated and it was stated that it is important to show that ESFRI and e-IRG are working closely together.

Connection with RDA
There are two main points in relation with RDA: a) The e-IRG workshop in Bratislava with some focus on data issues. B) RDA has been working to establish a group of people involved in the practicalities of data (not policy), coming from ESFRI and other projects. These people have been invited to participate in the RDA Group of European Data Experts (GEDE). The main idea is to promote the use and re-use of research data. The Chair explained that during the November events, first the GEDE face-to-face meeting will take place in parallel with the e-IRG meeting, and then there will be a session in the e-IRG workshop where GEDE will present themselves and provide their input and views on e-Infrastructures and their services. It was stated that e-IRG should discuss and comment on RDA and other initiatives, especially in the closed meetings.. e-IRG will use the RDA expertise in the e-IRG long tail of data document, where RDA experts are involved.
The Chair also reminded that e-IRG has decided to work on a document on long term preservation of data, and already decided to invite RDA. This task force will be revived at the November meeting, with an updated Terms of Reference (ToR) and possibly new membership.

Input to the EC Work Programme 2018-2020

The Chair stated that the EC Scoping Paper on the WP 2018-2020 has not been distributed officially, but that the delegates informally got access to it thanks to some delegations. The Chair continued by saying that the document will be discussed in the Research Infrastructure Programme or Management Committee (RI PC) at the end of this week. e-IRG delegates can

link to the RI PC members. Possibly these comments can be re-iterated in the next Advisory Group on RIs.

The e-IRG has endorsed a Roadmap and several recommendations for the EC. e-IRG delegates are encouraged to provide their inputs via their national delegates. The (now endorsed for public consultation) e-IRG Roadmap document can be also used as a source of comments and recommendations. The Scoping Paper may also be discussed at the next meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Research Infrastructures including e-Infrastructures (27 October).

The impression is that there is strong focus towards communities with high requirements, which is understandable but not always beneficial. Less emphasis should be put into the high goals and other needs should be also considered.

A main recommendation to the EC and the Scoping Paper is to make sure user communities are given the opportunity to get organised and empowered to express their views on what the EOSC should be. Innovation is also important but concrete proposals on how it can be pursued along with operations is needed. Finally, harmonisation among the different EC programmes, such as e-Infrastructures and FET is also desirable.

Election of the new e-IRG Chair

The second and final term of the current e-IRG Chair Sverker Holmgren ends at the end of the year and thus a new chair needs to be elected. According to the e-IRG bylaws the designation of the new Chair has been prepared by a Search Committee consisting of three delegates.

The Search Committee reported on its findings. There were two candidates nominated by the deadline, but one of them did not accept the nomination. Gabriele von Voigt from Germany was thus the only candidate. She also got the support from the corresponding German Ministry. The Search Committee reported that they considered Gabrielle von Voigt well suited for the position, and proposed to elect her as Chair for the next three years.

After a presentation by Gabriele von Voigt of her candidateship, including her suitability and motivation, a session with questions and answers from the candidate Chair, and a private session without the candidate Chair, it was unanimously decided to elect Gabriele von Voigt as the new e-IRG Chair, starting from 1st of January 2017.

Implication of the restructuring of DG Connect on e-IRG

As presented in the previous meeting, DG Connect has been restructured with new Directorates and Units with some implications on e-IRG. HPC and the new quantum technologies were drawn together in a new Unit C.2 High Performance Computing and Quantum Technology. Unit C.1 e-Infrastructures and Science Cloud now includes the Open Science activities. e-IRG activities now span more than one unit in DG Connect. The former director of the Directorate C Digital Excellence and Science Infrastructure Thierry van der Pyl retired, and the acting director is Thomas Skordas. In the previous meeting, the issue was discussed in length, focusing on the EC counterparts to e-IRG.

It was initially agreed that e-IRG will write a letter to the new Directorate C director when appointed, so that the issue of the counterparts to e-IRG is discussed.

A request on the usefulness of ERA groups, including e-IRG, arrived during summer to the Member States. The request was probably initiated by the European Research Area Committee - ERAC , formerly CREST (Scientific and Technical Research Committee). Several e-IRG delegates answered positively about e-IRG, but the outcome of the request is not known yet.

There are also other EC units in different DGs, including DG RTD, dealing with Open Innovation and Open Science, along with the Open Science Cloud, which are relevant to e-IRG. It was agreed that a small group will prepare a short report with this mapping and come up of EC structures/groups relevant to e-IRG for the next delegates meeting.

e-IRG Policy Efforts

e-Infrastructure Commons Future / e-IRG Roadmap WG

The Chair of the Roadmap WG explained that the goal for the meeting is to endorse the e-IRG Roadmap to enter its consultation phase. It was proposed to first send it to pan-European providers, giving them a head-start and then also to ESFRI WGs as main user groups. And start the public consultation after a few weeks. This process will result on a consulted and finalised Roadmap by the end of the year. The Chair added that there was written feedback from some delegates, which can easily be integrated before consultation. The Roadmap WG and the EB can quickly consider these comments.

The Chair summarised that some editorial work can help in making the document to be better presented. And that consultation with ESFRI groups is important. It was also agreed that some repetitions, especially in the landscape section, were unavoidable. He concluded that the document can be endorsed, taking into account the proposals for editorial updates, and that the EB can take up the responsibility to approve the final document. After that the open consultation can start.

Evaluation of e-Infrastructures and the development of related KPIs

The Chair of this WG, stated that the invited stakeholders are eager to be involved in the process and continue the work. He added that since there was no representation from user communities, a next meeting can be organised with a decent number of users, but also providers. He recognised that involving the users is not easy, as there is a broad range of them. Representatives from ESFRI projects should definitely be invited, but also others included in the OpenAIRE list (such as libraries, publishers and also private entities such as SMEs).

The e-IRG KPI document should focus more on the framework, the process and recommendations to identify KPIs (than the actual KPIs). It must also come up with categorisations and higher-level/aggregate KPIs for evaluating the performance and impact of the Commons and the EOSC. As the goals may differ for the different stakeholders, the goals of the document have to be very clear. The document will act as the framework for the upcoming projects, namely e-IRGSP5 and eInfraCentral to take over and come up with lower-level KPIs.

Long Tail of Data document

The Chair stated that the document has already been endorsed in the previous meeting. Some small editorial errors were reported, and thus an editorial check will be performed. It was decided to publish the document.

Guidelines document on Long-Term Preservation of Scientific Data

The Chair stated that this point was discussed as part of the "Connection with RDA" topic and that the decision was to revive this group with a new ToR and perhaps a new membership at the next meeting.

Activities during the Slovakian EU Presidency

The next e-IRG events will take place from 14-16 November (noon-to-noon). The e-IRG meeting will take place on 14-15 November (noon to noon), while the e-IRG workshop will take place 15-16 November (again noon-to-noon). The GEDE meeting will take place in parallel with the e-IRG meeting. A report on the current outlook of the e-IRG workshop programme was presented. The skeleton includes a session on the role and expected outcome of the RDA GEDE group, a session on collaborative services for the e-Infrastructure Commons (such as a service catalogue, a helpdesk, and AAI), a session with input to the e-IRG Roadmap, and a round-table discussion with all involved stakeholders.

Activities during the Maltese EU Presidency

The first Delegates meeting during the Maltese EU presidency will take place on 9 March 2017 and the e-IRG meeting and workshop on 8-9 June 2017.