<p style="text-align:center">**Public summary of the 45th e-IRG delegates meeting**
20-21 June 2016
Amsterdam Science Park</p>

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:

- Presentation on e-IRG for the Swedish Council of Research Infrastructures, March 18
- Open Science NL Presidency event, April 4-5 - Amsterdam
- Meeting in the ESFRI WG on investment strategies for e-infrastructures May 13 – Brussels.
- Expert Advisory Group on RI+eRI May 19 – Brussels. The Chair could not participate, and the e-IRG EB appointed Rosette Vandenbroucke (BE) as representative.
- ESFRI EB+SWG Chairs meeting June 2 – Geneva
- ESFRI Forum meeting June 3 – Geneva

News from the Commission
DG CNECT

Anni Hellman informed on the following activities of DG Connect:

- DG Connect reorganisation. The updated structure of DG Connect was mentioned (covered in a separate agenda item further below).
- Call evaluations have been done and some level of information was given to the Research Infrastructures Programme Committee (RI PC) meeting. The total available budget for both topics was 43.5 M€. 52 proposals were submitted in the User Driven innovation call, with an oversubscription rate of 180% (2,8 times). Overall, fewer proposals were received compared to the previous call (including the VRE's call).
- The staff working document on the HPC strategy is now public.[1]
- Regarding the consultation for the next EC work programme (WP2018-20), there were 4 consultations under Excellence in Science, namely on FET Flagships, FET proactive, Mathematics and e-Infrastructures. On the e-Infrastructure one, there were 30 responses from major e-Infrastructures, including GEANT, EGI, EUDAT, OpenAIRE, AARC. The main questions were on the main challenges for the realisation of an integrated European e-Infrastructure from the perspective of scientific data-related needs, on cooperation between European e-Infrastructure providers and users, on the lack of industry engagement in e-Infrastructures, and finally on skills and competences.
- On the upcoming International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI2016) in South Africa, concerning e-Infrastructures, one session on data and one on skills are being planned. There will also be a RDA Europe meeting on the day before the kick-off, mainly targeting the African community.
- On the ICT Proposers Day, there will also be an e-Infrastructure session.

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/staff-working-document-implementation-action-plan-european-high-performance-computing-strategy

Collaboration with ESFRI and other initiatives

ESFRI Roadmap 2018 process

ESFRI launched the Roadmap 2016 in Amsterdam on 10 March. But the plan for the next Roadmap update (Roadmap 2018) is already on the way. ESFRI has a very structured process (described in a 10-page document). e-IRG can learn a lot on this from ESFRI. The launch of ESFRI Roadmap 2018 is planned to take place at ICRI 2016 in October. e-IRG has to start working on the ESFRI Roadmap 2018 process.

It was noted here that a lot of ESFRI RIs want to build their own e-Infrastructures. This is indeed a challenge, but it is also a challenge for e-Infrastructures to take into account the ESFRI RIs needs. Besides, ESFRI structured process leads to a national process and national discussions, while the Sciences are looking into developing their own silos, but work is being done to provide horizontal services. A number of e-Infrastructures can fit in the Roadmap 2018 but if they want to do so, they have to start discussions now at governmental and political level, and will need the support of at least 3 Member States.

ESFRI Working Group on e-Infrastructure investment strategies

The status of the ESFRI Working Group on e-Infrastructure investment strategies was presented. The background for this group (action on ESFRI from May Competitiveness Council), the Terms of Reference (to formulate related recommendations on the e-Infrastructure investment strategies), and the initial reflections from the Working Group as presented at the last ESFRI Forum meeting in Geneva, were explained:

- The typical life-cycle of e-Infrastructures is different from RIs. There are frequent investments/upgrades required. Hence the WG sees that it should include investments, upgrades, operation and user support.
- All e-Infrastructure components have to be there: network, storage, management and different forms of computing. The Commons will also be included in the discussions.
- There is a central role of data management and data storage. This is one of the main reasons for collaboration between RIs and e-Infra. Data is always present! But in the discussions there is focus on HPC.
- Coordination of e-Infrastructures at EU level needs national e-Infrastructure Commons, i.e. Pan-EU e-Infrastructures need to be facilitated and anchored nationally.

Next, the status of PRACE, which is an ESFRI Landmark was presented. PRACE is firmly established, has already delivered a lot, and continues to deliver. It also cooperates with the industry, including resource allocations. This can be seen as a success. So, the vehicle for the provisioning of HPC services is PRACE, and the ESFRI WG noted to amplify the offer of production-class HPC services. PRACE could also host the two production-class HPC resources mentioned in the European Cloud Initiative Communication, and can benefit from EU initiatives on the co-design of new HPC initiatives, such as IPCEI. On a future HPC landscape, it was noted that PRACE builds heavily on national contributions including sustainability, with regards to both new investments and operational costs. If the total cost becomes too large (which is not the case today) then there could be a "truly shared" approach (gather money in a central spot). On a future e-Infrastructure landscape, the WG suggests that funding mechanisms via EU RI projects are explored. Users are empowered to select, so such a channeling through users is possible.

Joint ESFRI-e-IRG booth at ICRI2016

There has been an initial agreement between e-IRG and ESFRI to have a joint booth (in fact two adjacent booths integrated into one). Exhibitor applications have been submitted and waiting for the results. The e-IRG booth can also host material for other e-Infrastructure projects.

Collaboration with RDA

The RDA Group of European Data Experts (GEDE) has been created with experts from major RI and e-Infrastructure projects. A GEDE meeting will be organised in the framework of the e-IRG workshop in Bratislava (14-16 November). RDA will be also invited to the Programme Committee of the next e-IRG workshop.

News from ESFRI

Giorgio Rossi is the new ESFRI Chair. The new Executive Board to support the new Chair and the new SWG Chairs has been agreed. There will also be a new Working Group on Long Term Sustainability and e-IRG can possibly contribute through ESFRI. The plan for the Update of the Roadmap 2018 including the proposed time plan has been presented by Giorgio Rossi and discussed at the last ESFRI Forum meeting.

Restructuring of DG Connect and its effects for e-IRG and e-Infrastructures

A presentation was given on the restructuring of DG Connect and its effects for e-IRG and e-Infrastructures. New Directorates and Units were formed, while there will be no more an admin and finance unit in each Directorate[2]. The Directorate relevant to e-Infrastructures is now called "Digital Excellence and Science Infrastructure". Thierry Van Der Pyl has retired and there will be a new Director. Acting Director is now Thomas Skordas (from C4- Flagships). The relevant units to e-IRG are C1 ("eInfrastructure & Science Cloud"- Augusto Burgueño-Arjona) and C2 ("HPC and Quantum"- Gustav Kalbe). The new Deputy Head of Unit C1 will be Cristina Martinez. Gina Serafim will be the new Project Officer for the Support Project. C1 will be moving to Luxembourg within the next two years and C2 will be also in Luxembourg. e-IRG is relevant to both C1 and C2. It was proposed to approach the new Directorate C Director to discuss about the counterparts of e-IRG.

The Chair summarised the main points of the following discussions: e-IRG will write a letter to the new Directorate C director of DG Connect towards the end of the year, so that the issue of the counterparts to e-IRG is discussed.

Search Committee for the new e-IRG Chair

The Chair reminded that his second and final term will come to end 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 is prepared by a search committee, which is formed by three e-IRG delegates from three different countries. This committee has to be nominated.

Three delegates were appointed as members of the Search Committee for the new e-IRG Chair, namely Anna Wetterbom (Sweden), Lajos Balint (Hungary) and Roar Skålin (Norway). The e-IRG EB will make the final decision regarding the search committee (including the chair for this committee) using a written procedure.

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[2] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/sites/digital-agenda/files/organi_en.pdf

Interim evaluation of H2020 progamme

The Chair stated that the EC is conducting an interim evaluation of the H2020 programme. For Research Infrastructures including e-Infrastructures a small group has been appointed. The Chair introduced Alf Game, who made a presentation on the evaluation plan and the e-IRG involvement.

Alf Game has been an ESFRI member and also the ESFRI representative in e-IRG in the past. A presentation about the H2020 interim evaluation was given. It introduced the group members and their background and then the purpose of the group, which is to perform an evaluation of the H2020 programme on Research Infrastructures, including e-Infrastructures, providing an evidence-based report. Comparison is made on the extent to which it has delivered against the set objectives and advise on the implementation of the remaining part of the programme and possibilities for the next programme beyond 2020. Regarding the input from e-IRG, Alf Game stated that there are issues already addressed in recent reports and already discussed, but there are also other issues as well. Do the H2020 financial instruments work for the e-infrastructure needs? Impact and e-Infrastructures: How does developing e-Infrastructures for research sit along-side the aim of building the digital economy? What are your best achievements so far in the e-Infrastructures part of the programme? The presentation closed by noting that in DG RTD impact derives more directly from the investments, while for e-Infrastructures it may be different, as the impact may also come from the research use.

The Chair summarised the main points and noted that Alf Game has asked for input from e-IRG. Something more concrete than the discussions during the meeting is needed, and it was agreed to send input by the end of July.

e-IRG Policy Efforts

e-Infrastructure Commons Future / e-IRG Roadmap WG

The Chair of the e-IRG Roadmap group gave a presentation about the status of the document. The scope of the document and the process were referred, as well as the main sections of the document:

- The vision: The e-Infrastructure Commons acts as cornerstone, however, there have been different views on whether the notion of the Commons is old or should still be used. There was a new section describing the main components of the Commons, namely the resources, the community and the governance. This section should be checked whether it is concrete enough or still vague, and be made to contain enough hooks that can be used later on in the document. A question that needs to be answered is how this vision enables research. ESFRI can be involved and provide input here, but there are also other types of users.
- The landscape analysis: This constitutes a representation of the current state of affairs of the EU e-Infrastructure landscape, including networking, data storage, computing, and skills/e-Scientists. The landscape of policy dynamics is also included in this section. References to the EOSC and a dialogue with users (such as ESFRI) is important.
- Challenges: The challenges are partly policy-related and partly technological ones, but the document is not intended for a technical audience.
- Recommendations: The recommendations are partly re-iterating previous ones, but clear links between them and previous chapters do not always exist.

The delegates split in four groups to discuss the status of the Roadmap. The groups worked on

what had been decided already, i.e. the structure and some key decisions. Focus was given on the implementation issues. Regarding the timeline, a first version should be endorsed in the September meeting.

A document was prepared with the summary input from the four groups.

The main points are that e-IRG must interact with its surrounding environment, namely ESFRI, the ESFRI e-Infrastructure WG on investments, Alf Game's group, the EC Cloud Communication, the expert group on RIs including e-Infrastructures, etc. It should also be ensured that the text is persuasive rather than dictative.

Interaction with the European Commission/ WG on Evaluation and KPIs

The Chair of the WG, summarised the current status of the document. It is still a draft version, and it is not yet in a mature state. The WG plans to have a f2f meeting to finalise important points. In September it will be in a similar phase as the roadmap is now. In September the type of output and the concreteness of the output needs to be discussed. In conclusion, the aim should be to finalise the document at the end of the year, possibly in the November meeting.

The initial plan for this document was that such an evaluation and KPIs are important for the EC. However, the responsible person from the EC will be leaving the unit. The issue remains relevant and important even under the C1 unit (e-Infrastructures), but it is unclear who will be the EC counterpart. It was clarified that the group will come up only with a framework, a methodology and a categorisation of KPIs and it cannot go through all the KPIs and come up with proposed KPIs.

Scientific Data / Long Tail of Science

A document has been delivered as promised in the previous meeting. There was only one major comment, namely that it does not include computing and that these sections may need to be taken out. The Chair stated that the document has been discussed and that it needs to be endorsed, although some more editorial changes may be needed. If no major concerns are raised the document will be considered adopted.

Activities during the Slovakian EU Presidency

The next e-IRG delegates meeting will take place 26-27 September and the one after that on 14-16 November. On 26-27 September there is also an ICT proposers' day in Bratislava including an e-Infrastructures information session on 26 September, 13:00-16:30.

AOB

The Chair and delegates applauded Anni Hellman for her contribution to e-IRG, as she has now moved to a new unit in the DG restructuring process.