

ECRI 2007[★]


★ *european conference on research infrastructures*

The development of a common strategy for Europe

John Wood, ECRI 2007, Hamburg, 5th June

Introduction

On 4th April 2007 the European Commission has adopted the Green Paper 'The European Research Area: New Perspectives'.

With the Green Paper the European Commission has launched a broad institutional and public debate on what should be done to create a unified and attractive European Research Area, which would fulfill the needs and expectations of the scientific community, business and citizens.

One of the main dimensions on which the consultation is focused is: “developing world-class research infrastructures “

Common Strategy for Research Infrastructures

Excellent research needs a range of high-quality research infrastructures (e.g. radiation sources for new materials, clean rooms for nanotechnologies, data banks for genomics and social sciences, observatories for earth sciences).

European-level research infrastructures provide a service to the whole European research community. Due to high building and operating costs, it makes sense to share much of these infrastructures.

There is the need for the development of a common strategy for Europe.

Building on the Research Infrastructures Roadmap

A step towards better planning of research infrastructures at European level has been achieved with the creation of the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI). In 2006, it established a European 'roadmap' for new and upgraded pan-European research infrastructures.

Immediate priorities are:

1. to ensure that the roadmap effectively includes the bulk of planned and foreseen research infrastructures in Europe;
2. to complement the roadmap in areas not yet adequately covered;
3. to endorse its proposals at political level;
4. to mobilise the necessary funding.

Making the most of all sources of funding

The EU budget (7th Framework Programme and cohesion policy programmes) is not big enough to provide core financing for the construction of new pan-European infrastructures, in addition to supporting open access to infrastructures of European interest and stimulating their coordinated development and networking.

The mobilisation of national, private and other sources of funding is essential. Attracting investment from industry is particularly important given its current low level of involvement, even for infrastructures of direct interest.

An appropriate legal structure

Another difficulty for setting up new forms of Pan-European research infrastructures is the lack of a legal structure allowing the creation of appropriate partnerships.

ESFRI Workshop on the most appropriate legal instruments for pan-European infrastructures (14/12/2006):

experts agreed that **Art. 171 ECT** could be used as a **legal basis** for creating a legal form for a pan-European research infrastructure.

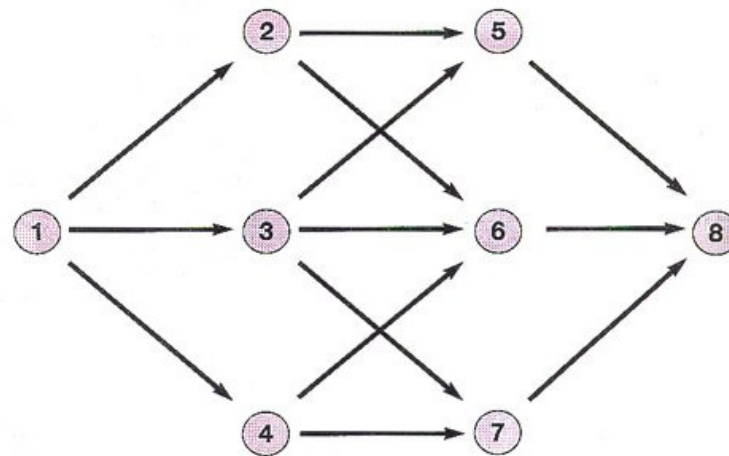
Further developing e-infrastructures in Europe and the world

Many of the infrastructures envisaged are of a distributed nature, composed of various elements integrated via e-infrastructures including data repositories and highspeed networks such as GEANT and on grid technologies, which play an essential role by enabling these elements to operate together in ways that remove traditional constraints related to time, geography, discipline and institutions.

Europe should continue with the extension to other continents of GEANT and grid electronic infrastructures, which constitute powerful instruments for international cooperation and the establishment of global research partnerships.

Decision mechanisms

- Identification of needs by ESFRI
- Community funding mechanism
- Synergies with EU cohesion policy instruments
- Member States
- Industry
- EIB
- other financial institutions



Policy and Legal changes

An European legal framework should be developed to facilitate, in particular, the emergence and operation of new forms of research infrastructures of pan-European interest, including electronic infrastructures. Policy and legal changes to encourage the private sector to invest more in research infrastructures have to be analysed.



Management and Access

There is a need to define common and transparent principles for the **management** of, and **access** to research infrastructures of European interest, including the ones sited outside Europe



A global forum

A global forum on research infrastructures should be created, involving third countries and international organisations, where Europeans could speak with one voice through for example:

- ministerial representatives
- European Commission
- ESFRI members



The future

It will be necessary to ensure coherent planning, parallel development and integration between European Research Infrastructures (and in particular with e-Infrastructures) which should be deployed globally and across Europe, including peripheral regions.

The longer-term continuous improvement of research infrastructures can be ensured through :

- some programmes associated with them ?





The ESFRI meeting in Vienna