



Report of the networking session
“Policy Aspects of Research- and e-
Infrastructures of Global Scale”
at ICT 2015

Rosend Llurba, NWO & eiRGSP4

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<http://e-irgsp4.e-irg.eu>

Around 35 persons filled the small room to its maximum capacity during the networking session on “Policy Aspects of Research- and e-Infrastructures of Global Scale” that was jointly organised by e-IRG and ESFRI during the ICT 2015 event in Lisbon on 22 October 2015. The session consisted of six short five minutes presentations followed by an interactive part.

Fotis Karayannis (e-IRGSP4 and Str-ESFRI) introduced the background for organising the session and its objectives. For large Research Infrastructures (RIs) it is necessary to collaborate at international scale due to the complexity, high-construction and operation costs or the global nature of the challenges that have to be addressed. The objectives of the session were to present and discuss the latest policy aspects in RIs and e-Infrastructures with emphasis on cross-cutting issues such as access to data.

Conclusions ICRI 2014

Yannis Ioannidis (ATHENA Research Center and University of Athens, ESFRI delegate) presented conclusions from the 2014 International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI 2014). The ICRI conferences that are held every two years are key international events for global issues on RIs and are attended by policy makers, technologists, researchers and industry. The topics are RIs in all scientific areas and horizontal e-Infrastructures at all scales: national, regional and global (GRIs). ICRI 2014 was organised by the European Commission and the Greek EU Presidency in Athens on 2-4 April 2014 and was attended by 763 participants from over 60 countries.

Yannis Ioannidis presented the ICRI 2014 conclusions on requirements. These requirements are inclusiveness for truly global RIs and Open Access to data. The latter requirement implies:

- Access, use, reuse – Now and in the future
- Accessibility, comprehensibility, assessability, revisability
- Data network development
- Training and free mobility of staff
- Security and privacy
- Public and commercial interest balance

The conclusions on the way forward included:

- Encourage global cooperation in RIs
- Coordination with ESFRI and Group of Senior Officials (GSO)
 - GRI framework endorsed by all interested countries
- GRI goals to be agreed up-front
 - International roadmap
 - Decision-making process and legal framework
 - Each nation able to make own decisions plus conflict resolution
 - Technology integration – Innovation partnerships with industry
 - Sustainable funding: business models and long-term funding

ICRI 2016 will take place in Cape Town, South Africa (first ever outside Europe) on 3-5 October 2016 and will address: GRIs essential for grand challenges and as innovation hubs, the development and sustainability of global/regional RIs and the way towards an international roadmap.

GSO activities and report

The next speaker Juan Bicarregui (STFC and RDA) introduced the GSO activities and report. The Group of Senior Officials (GSO) on GRIs was established in 2008 at the G8 Ministerial meeting in Okinawa to provide a non-binding and open forum for policy exchanges on GRIs, to inform and improve international cooperation, to share information about existing and planned new RIs and to establish principles for the development of new partnerships and collaborations. The GSO mandate was renewed in 2013 at the G8 meeting in London where Global Challenges, GRIs and Open Scientific Research Data were addressed and where it was concluded that scientific research data should be open.

The GSO report was issued in October 2015 just before the network session. It describes successively the mandates given by the G8 Ministers, a Framework for RIs of global interest, the Landscape of RIs of global interest, policy areas, new initiatives of relevance for GSO (e.g. RDA), and future actions for the GSO (e.g. new collaborations and case studies). A list of 48 GRIs is provided in an Annex.

The GSO has set up a number of sub-working groups to tackle the following policy areas: Promoting Access to RIs, Access to data and data management, Alignment of evaluation criteria and prioritisation processes, Life Cycle issues, and Legal framework for GRIs.

The G7 ministerial meeting in Berlin in October 2015 stated on GRIs that “further progress on sharing and managing scientific data and information should be achieved, especially by continuing engagement with community based activities such as the Research Data Alliance RDA” and that “we encourage the GSO to continue their work on convergence and alignment of inter-operable data management that could accomplish an effective open-data science environment at the G7 level and beyond.”

Yannis Ioannidis explained in his second presentation that in May 2015 the Competitiveness Council gave to ESFRI the mandate to explore mechanisms for better coordination of Member States investment strategies in e-Infrastructures also covering HPC. Since the e-IRG consists of experts in e-Infrastructures ESFRI has invited e-IRG to participate in this endeavour that will take place during the next 12 months. A working group will be formed and it is expected that the e-IRG Chair will have a prominent role. Key is that the working group will work on investment strategy, not technology strategy. The outcome might have impact for Europe as a whole but also for the individual Member States that might have to change their strategy.

e-Infrastructure Commons vision

Arjen van Rijn (NIKHEF and e-IRG) introduced the e-Infrastructure Commons vision of the e-IRG which is described in the e-IRG White Paper 2013. It is an ecosystem of ICT services for scientific research:

- where users enjoy the freedom to choose the services they need from a mix of public e-Infrastructure and commercial services
- where providers have the freedom to innovate, and
- which is attained through a joint strategic effort between users and primary strategic actors and suppliers

Arjen van Rijn then presented the following recommendations for the different strategic actors:

- International user groups (ESFRI and other RIs): *define your e-infrastructure strategy*

- International e-Infrastructure organisations: “join forces”
- National governments and funding agencies: *fund an innovative and sustainable national e-infrastructure; empower and fund user communities*
- European Commission: *encourage and facilitate innovation; empower international user groups*
- Existing e-Infrastructure providers: *innovate or perish*

Finally Arjen van Rijn invited the audience to join the discussion on the progress of the e-Infrastructure Commons at the e-IRG workshop, Luxembourg, 24-25 November 2015 and at the e-IRG workshop, Amsterdam, 9-10 March 2016 that will take place in conjunction with ESFRI 2016 Roadmap Launch.

Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures

The last short presentation was by Rosette Vandembroucke (VUB and e-IRG) on the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures. This is an EC document that defines principles and guidelines to be used as a reference when defining access rules and conditions for access to RIs. The document, however, has no legally binding nature. The stakeholders involved in the creation of the Charter included besides the EC: e-IRG, ESFRI, EARTO, LERU, CESAER, EUA, Nordforsk, and Science Europe. Rosette Vandembroucke explained the procedure that had been followed by the EC, ESFRI and e-IRG to create the Charter which included several sessions with all stakeholders. She ended the presentation with the lessons learned. Positive aspects were that the definition of the charter with cooperation between stakeholders was very well received, that it was written by a selected group of three (because in practice it is impossible to write a document with many stakeholders) and that the consultation in different phases worked well. Negative aspects were that it is difficult and takes much time to reach complete consensus and that the danger is that the content becomes too general (it is not possible to add all details for each infrastructure). The Charter is a European Charter but it is also applicable to global RIs.

Interactive session part

Marcin Ostasz (BSC and e-IRGSP4) moderated the interactive part of the networking session. The questions and discussions that took place can be summarised as:

- The separation between RIs and e-Infrastructures is getting blurred. There are opportunities for RIs that are maturing. In the next years we will be pushed to new governance structures which have to be managed carefully but are welcomed. Sustainability is important.
- On a question whether the new Centers of Excellence will be taken into account for the consolidation of the policies it was commented that the focus will be on e-Infrastructures but that there will be some links.
- On the relation of the new working group with the Digital ERA Forum it was mentioned that the issue is that there are so many policy forums and that maybe they should report to them as well.
- On the question to give examples where there was disagreement during the creation of the Charter of Access, Rosette Vandembroucke clarified that there were no real conflicts but discussions about the words to use.
- It was noted that important keywords are: trust and dealing with legacy, and that workflows are also important for researchers.

- On the question if e-IRG is planning to include discussions of policies of access for the private sector it was mentioned that this has been addressed in the Charter of Access, that it was also highlighted by e-IRG in a White Paper and that it was addressed in a report by the e-IRG Task Force on Legal issues. It is not easy in practice and should be dealt with at European level. It might be used at the e-IRG workshop in Amsterdam.
- On the question whether there is a global open science movement it was affirmed that this movement is global. RDA addresses it and also other groups in the US and the EC.

References and presentations

- [EU Charter for Access to RIs](#)
- [G8 Science Ministers statement](#)
- [GSO Framework for global RIs](#)
- [GSO New Progress Report 2015](#)
- [GSO communiqué about new GSO report](#)
- [ICRI 2014 Conference Conclusions](#)
- [Slides of the Presentations during the session](#)
- [e-Infrastructure Commons summary document](#)



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