

# ***Towards a Central European Research Infrastructure Consortium (C-ERIC)***

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*based on a presentation for the  
38<sup>th</sup> ESFRI meeting (September 2011)*

## *The background*

The Central-East European Area has an *excellent historical scientific tradition*, but due to developments in the last century has had *fewer opportunities to invest in large research infrastructures*.

This situation is however changing, thanks to a *coherent effort by all countries in the area*, that have developed or are in the process of developing roadmaps for Research Infrastructures (RIs), and have already invested in RIs both at international and regional level, in all cases *referring to the quality criteria developed in the Pan-EU ESFRI context*.

This follows the EU 2020 indications for the *more effective use of EU and national resources*, as for example the use of Structural Funds to build RTD and innovation capacity.

## *The background*

This has also allowed to build transnational initiatives between existing RIs and in particular in the wide research area connected to Advanced Materials and Analytical and Synthetic approaches at the Nano-Science and Nano-Technological level, with already on-going successful joint initiatives involving partnerships in ***Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy*** (in particular the Trieste Area), ***Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia*** and connected with other countries including those outside EU.

## *The background*

*In 2010 **Elettra** took the initiative for starting the process of setting up an ERIC for “Advanced Facilities for Materials” and “Analytical Facilities” in the Central-East European Countries, in the framework of the creation of a common ERA.*

*Due also to its geographical position, Elettra attracts users from Central European Countries. For example, in 2010 Elettra had 154 visits of CE scientists, which represents 15% of the total users.*

AUSTRIA	12
BULGARIA	1
CROATIA	40
CZECH REPUBLIC	36
HUNGARY	10
POLAND	5
SLOVENIA	50
TOTAL CENTRAL EUROPE	154

Following a positive reaction of **Austria**, **Poland**, **Romania**, and **Slovenia** (which designated their representatives) it was decided to propose a *Working Group* dealing with the setting up of such an ERIC.

*February 15<sup>th</sup> 2011*

Representatives from ***Austria, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia*** met in Wien to define the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the C-ERIC Working Group.

It was decided to send an invitation to other possible interested Countries.

It was conclude to have an official *proposal to set-up an ERIC ready by the end of 2011*, aiming at a possible final approval and setting-up before the start of the next EU framework programme for research, development and innovation.

*May 6<sup>th</sup> 2011*

Representatives from *Austria, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia* met again in Ljubljana. Additionally ***Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary*** and ***Serbia*** accepted the invitation.

Moreover ***Cyprus*** and ***Greece*** reacted positively although they didn't send delegates.

*June 26<sup>th</sup> 2011*

The MoU, establishing the CERIC Working Group, was signed on June 26<sup>th</sup> during the Salzburg Group meeting held in Bregenz by *Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia.*

*Croatia* signed it in July, *Serbia* in August, Italy in September.

Signature of the remaining Countries is expected in the near future.

## Memorandum of Understanding

### For the Establishment of a

### European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) of Analytical Research Infrastructures

#### *Central European Research Infrastructure Consortium "C-ERIC"*

#### The Signatory Countries

HAVE CONSIDERED the Council Regulation (EC) No. 723/ 2009 of 25 June 2009 which offers the possibility to create new entities (ERICs) coordinating local research infrastructures of excellence, with the objective to attract the best users worldwide and offer to them unique instrumentation and advanced services,

RECOGNISE that a number of potentially complementary analytical research infrastructures represent an excellent foundation for the Central European Region to launch an ERIC and maximise the corresponding possible additional EU support, for the following reasons:

- The existence and construction of top-level instrumentation and facilities such as the Elettra synchrotron in Basovizza for materials preparation and characterisation, structural investigations, imaging and biology, nanoscience and nanotechnology
- The very positive potential effects on research through a stronger partnership for coordination and international outreach involving the relevant infrastructures in the Signatory Countries

- The possibility to offer an integrated and wider set of services to researchers by pooling complementary capacities and thus further strengthen their regional and European significance
- The beneficial impact on the economic development of the entire region and the prevention of brain drain
- The favorable effects on education at different levels in all Signatory Countries

On this basis, the Signatory Countries express the intent, without making a legal commitment, to develop the concept further with a view to create an ERIC including regional partner centers in each of the Signatory Countries to further strengthen the regions' position in research in Europe, and to intensify scientific co-operation across national boundaries.

The potential Signatory Countries have set up a working group<sup>1</sup> including one or two representatives from each of them, with the mandate to:

- Identify and analyse the range of possible joint activities within an ERIC, its development potential as well as the options related to the legal, administrative and financial issues concerning the creation of the ERIC
- Define the strategy and prepare administrative documentation required to submit a proposal to the European Commission and have the ERIC set-up not later than December 31, 2012 in time for the first relevant call for proposals in the next EU framework programme for research, development and innovation
- Suggest possible names and main locations for the joint activities

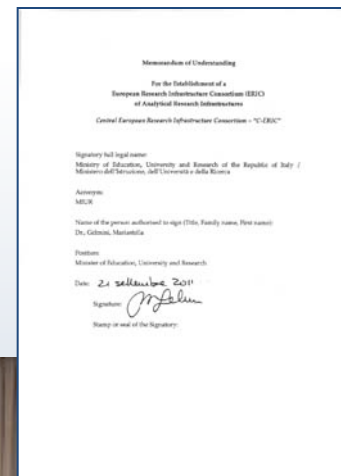
This working group will draft the required documents to set up an ERIC and report to the Signatory Countries for the appropriate follow-up needed at institutional and governmental level including the possible necessary fiscal and legal measures accompanying the proposal.

The agreements and procedures for the creation of the ERIC will recognise the previous investments, cash and in kind, already made in the concerned infrastructures and laboratories of each Signatory Country and will build on a concept of participation in kind. The ERIC will remain open to the possible inclusion of additional partners in all phases of its creation, and afterwards.

This Memorandum of Understanding is done in English only, in as many copies as there are Signatory Countries, each text being equally valid.

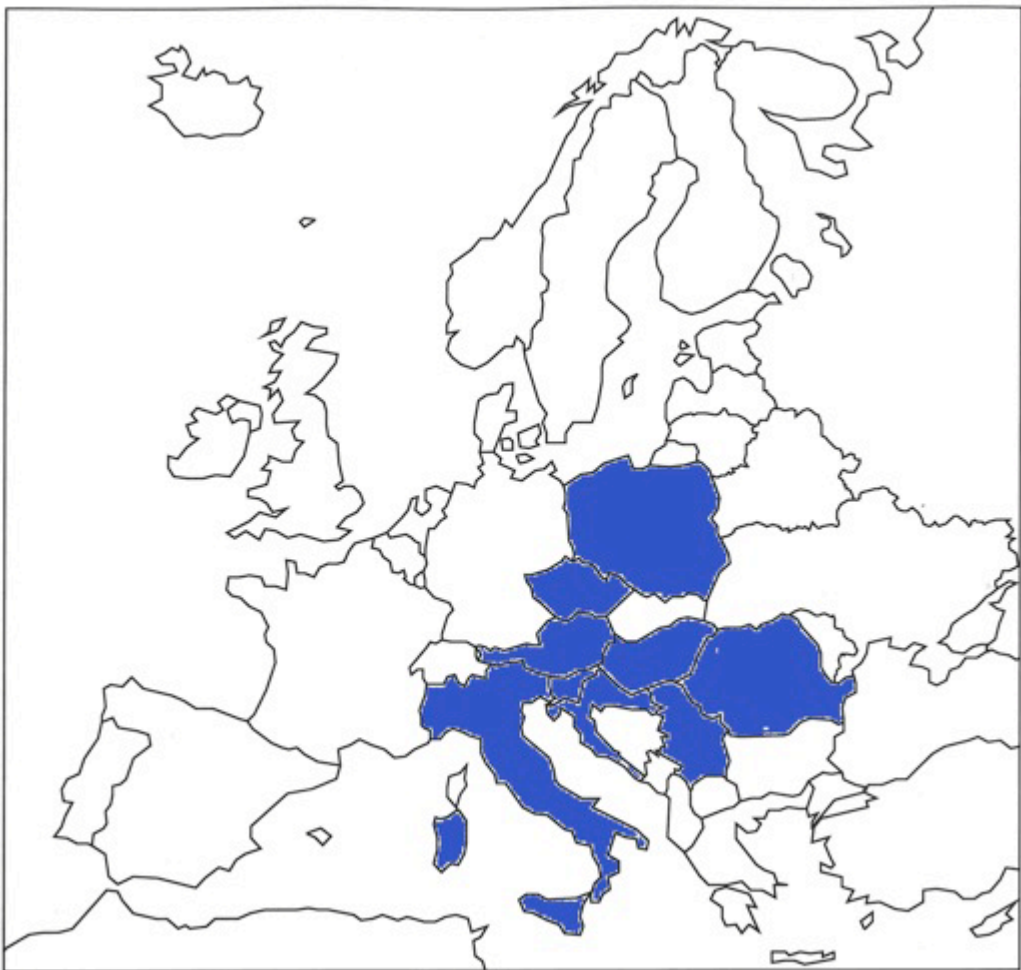
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<sup>1</sup> Members of the working group are listed in Appendix 1.



Bregenz, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011





## Members of the Working Group

***Austria:*** A.Stoklaska, D.Weselka

***Croatia:*** H.Meštrić

***Czech Republic:*** J.Hrušák

***Hungary:*** D.L.Nagy

***Italy:*** G.Margaritondo  
(Chairman), G.Paolucci

***Poland:*** M.Stankiewicz

***Romania:*** A.Cucu, L.Pintilie

***Serbia:*** V.Nedović, D.Djukić

***Slovenia:*** A. Kralj (S. Možina),  
J. Plavec

***Secretary:*** F. Mazzolini

**C-ERIC** will be a **distributed research facility**, set up as an ERIC by a group of proposing countries (*Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia*) and open to other interested countries. It will have:

- a) a common access point describing and offering the available services;
- b) a common entry point for users proposals and a common evaluation system to select them and allocate access time to the integrated services;
- c) free and open access based on quality selection only;
- d) support and logistic services as required;
- e) a common legal form, allowing a single and effective governance;
- f) a single management board in charge of its integrated operation.

The **C-ERIC participating selected national facilities** shall act as *national entry points* for the Consortium and shall:

- coordinate their research activities (e.g. joint approval and mutual opening of research programmes)
- offer open access to users and an integrated and wider set of services, available to researchers through peer review selection
- contribute in kind to joint activities (e.g. through providing access to the facilities, or jointly developing new instruments with the involvement of local industries)
- make optimum and coordinated use of respective national resources, collaborate in seeking funding for these activities and share such acquired funding
- develop a common IP policy
- coordinate promotion and marketing activities.

The specific scope of this ERIC concerns the offer as an integrated service to external researchers of the access to centres having analytical and sample preparation capabilities, to support research projects in different research topics such as Structural Biology, Nano-Materials, Cultural Heritage and Environment and to their various technological and industrial outcomes ranging from energy to biomedical and of interest to most manufacturing industries.

C-ERIC's mission is to bring the integrated service to world-level quality thus contributing to the attractiveness of the European Research Area and stimulating a beneficial impact on the scientific and economic development of the entire region, also helping to introduce a strong interchange between scientists and technicians and attraction of scientists from other regions.

*March 22<sup>th</sup> 2012*

C-ERIC Working Group meeting in Copenhagen (ICRI2012).

*March 2012*

Pre-submission of the C-ERIC proposal to the EC (*Step1*).

*August 2012*

Signature of the C-ERIC official proposal by the interested Countries and subsequent submission to the EC (*Step2*).

*December 2012 (?)*

C-ERIC established.

# “ESFRI WG REGIO” & “CERIC WG” meetings Trieste, September 12<sup>th</sup> 2011



