

EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 29 July 2009

**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL
RESEARCH COMMITTEE**
**Strategic Forum for International
S&T Cooperation**

Secretariat

CREST-SFIC 1356/09

NOTE

Subject : Work Programme SFIC 2009-2010

Delegations will find attached the Work Programme 2009-2010 of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) as adopted through written procedure on 10 July 2009.

SFIC Work Programme 2009/10

The following document comprises two parts: The first part (Rationale) recalls the framework provided by the Council for the work of a Strategic Forum on International S&T Cooperation (SFIC), notably the respective Council conclusions from December 2nd, 2008 as well as the framework provided by reports and recommendations of the CREST OMC working group on internationalisation of R&D, which were adopted by CREST on December 7th, 2007 (report 2007) and the CREST opinion of April 3rd, 2009 (report 2008). The second part provides the proposal for a SFIC work programme based on the above mentioned framework. For this purpose, the framework has been synthesised into three general objectives for the coming two years, which are underpinned by a number of concrete activities in order to achieve these objectives.

I. Rationale

The following background should be recalled for the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation, SFIC:

- The invitation of the Council for Member States and the Commission to collaborate within a dedicated configuration of CREST to drive forward the European Partnership for S&T cooperation (Council Conclusions of December 2nd, 2008) and the respective SFIC mandate set out in the Annex of these Council Conclusions:

- *systematically sharing and structuring information on the S&T cooperation activities and objectives (whether ongoing or planned) of the various partners;*
- *pooling relevant knowledge concerning third countries, in particular analyses of their S&T resources and capabilities;*
- *ensuring regular consultation between the partners in order to identify their respective objectives and common priorities in terms of S&T cooperation with third countries ("what and with whom?");*
- *where appropriate, coordinating activities of a similar nature implemented by Member States and the Community, (with variable geometry);*
- *if necessary, proposing initiatives to be implemented with appropriate ways and means;*
- *networking of Member States' and the Commission's scientific advisors in key third countries,*

- The recommendations of the CREST OMC Working Group “Internationalisation of R&D – Facing the Challenge of Globalisation: Approaches to a Proactive International Policy in S&T” in its Reports 2007 and 2008, adopted by CREST on December 7th, 2007 and April 3rd, 2009, respectively.
- The CREST Opinion (30 April 2009, doc. 1207/09) which acknowledges the set of reports of December 2008 of the OMC Working Group and, along the lines of its recommendations, suggests the following topics for particular consideration of SFIC:
 - *to develop an integrated concept for systematic, efficient information exchange on S&T and S&T policies in Third Countries and on the cooperation activities with Third Countries.*
 - *to foresee activities for the coordination of marketing activities of the European Community, the Member States and Associated Countries in Third Countries aiming at promoting the values of the European Research Area worldwide.*
 - *to develop reliable and comparable indicators for an impact assessment of policy measures towards the internationalisation of S&T. Respective tools for data collection should be proposed as well.*

II: Work programme for SFIC during 2009/2010:

Based on the above mentioned rationale, the following draft work programme covering the years 2009/2010 is proposed:

II.1. General Objectives of SFIC

Based on the cited Council conclusions as well as the preparatory work of the CREST OMC Working Group, it is suggested that SFIC work should be structured along the following three main objectives to be achieved in 2009/2010:

- 1) Establish effective and efficient working structures for SFIC
- 2) Generate an impact on the international S&T cooperation activities of MS and the European Commission
- 3) Foster the international dimension of the European Research Area

II.2. Implementation

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives the following activities¹ are proposed in line with the SFIC mandate as outlined in the Council conclusions and in compliance with the EU institutional framework:

II.2.1): Establish effective and efficient working structures for SFIC :

Activities under this objective are directed towards developing effective SFIC working structures reflecting the spirit and modalities of the new partnership between MS and EC and establishing interfaces and/or dialogues with international fora and organisations, as well as third countries of interest.

This objective will also contribute to further strengthening evidence-based policy-making, by reflecting the state-of-the-art of S&T internationalisation approaches and to establishing SFIC as a relevant European actor when international cooperation in S&T is an element in multilateral organisations and structures.

- Develop and implement appropriate tools for information-sharing among SFIC members, including pooling relevant knowledge and information on third country cooperation, such as analysing and disseminating the results of evaluation reports, impact assessments, project reports (e.g. INCO-Nets, Era Net), assessment of S&T agreements.
- Identify and develop regular contacts with relevant stakeholders worldwide, with an emphasis on other regional structures, such as ASEAN, MERCOSUR, AU, etc. Contacts and existing dialogue platforms, e.g. developed by INCO-Nets are relevant in this respect .

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More detailed actions and deliverables will be subsequently elaborated.

- Identify and develop appropriate mechanisms for regular exchanges with other policy fields with a potential impact on international S&T cooperation activities of SFIC members, including development and trade policies or sectoral policies such as agriculture, energy, transport or environment.
- Contribute to developing and implementing measures allowing an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of international S&T cooperation policy measures, including corresponding indicator development.
- Establish networking and information exchange structures between scientific counsellors of Member States and the Commission.
- Consider developing 'marketing' measures to increase the visibility of SFIC (i.e. SFIC logo, joint SFIC events with regional organisations in third countries, calendar sharing of major events of COM and MS/AC).

II.2.2) Generate an impact on the international S&T cooperation activities of SFIC members

The CREST OMC working group identified and analysed the portfolio of instruments applied by EU Member States and Associated Countries and derived recommendations on how to enhance coherence of these activities. During the first year (2007), the working group focussed on S&T cooperation with China, during the second year (2008), the focus was on cooperation activities with Brazil, Russia and India.

However, in order to develop a consistent cooperation strategy along the lines of common objectives of the Member States and the Community SFIC will take 'global challenges', such as health, climate change, energy, etc., as a starting point for the design of an ERA-wide set of international S&T activities but will also consider other relevant S&T areas. Eventually, the most appropriate strategic cooperation countries/regions will be identified for each selected global challenge, building on the available analytical work of various sources (CREST OMC working group, IncoNets, Evaluation and Country Reports, ERAWATCH, etc.)

Consequently, the following activities are proposed:

- Identify a limited number of global challenges and other relevant S&T areas as well as relevant strategic partner countries/regions on which SFIC should focus in the first two years.
- Identify joint cooperation objectives and potential instruments for enhanced S&T cooperation on these topics/countries or regions based on the analysis of evaluation reports, impact assessments and other analytical material.
- Design and propose strategic policy measures in the selected fields with a view to implementing a coherent set of ERA-wide international S&T activities, including more coherent bi-lateral activities, joint activities involving Member States and the EC following a variable geometry approach. Develop an approach towards a coherent set of accompanying measures, including marketing activities of the European Community, the Member States and Associated Countries in Third Countries aimed at promoting the values of the European Research Area worldwide.
- Contribute to the future strategic orientation of established and upcoming bi-regional dialogue structures on Community level with regard to S&T policy issues.
- Contribute to and interact regularly with other international research policy fora, including intergovernmental organisations, such as G8, OECD and UN organisations.

II.2.3) Fostering the international dimension of the European Research Area

One of the central objectives to further develop the European Research Area (ERA) and to realise the Vision 2020 is to foster the international dimension of the ERA. This is a multi-level task and has implications on several current ERA initiatives and their governance. SFIC should regularly exchange with these initiatives to ensure a coherence of objectives, topics and instruments.

As the Rietschel Report² states, globalisation "makes it absolutely essential that the EU shifts towards a more internationalist position". The report calls for a confident, scientifically capable, innovative Europe, taking an outward-facing role in the world.

Activities under this objective therefore also aim at supporting the Member States and the Community to further mainstream the international dimension in their research programmes, contributing to developing strategies both for geographical and thematic targeting of international research cooperations and assessing current instruments of international cooperation.

The following activities are proposed:

- Exchange regularly and create synergies with other current or upcoming ERA Initiatives such as ESFRI, Joint Programming (dedicated CREST formation), CREST Working Group on Knowledge Transfer, the Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility, etc.
- Analyse relevant background information, like review of the different instruments of the Framework Programme and of national research funding programmes and their potential for fostering strategic cooperation with key third countries.
- Compile and transfer the results of international cooperation projects like INCO-Nets, ERA-Nets as well as national instruments for international cooperation into strategic policy formulation.
- Contribute to a strategic vision on the development of international cooperation with a view of optimizing the synergy between the national, the Community and the multilateral level, including the framework programmes.

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