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Short summary report of the meeting of the H2020-ICT National Experts' Group

Held in Vilnius, 5 November 2013

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair opened the meeting noting that two Member State delegations could not attend the meeting and had delegated their votes on the Horizon 2020 LEIT-ICT Work Programme and on the three parts of the Factories of the Future Work Programme for which DG CONNECT is responsible. As a consequence the Irish delegation would vote on behalf of the Cypriot delegation and the Polish delegation on behalf of the Bulgarian delegation.

Thereafter the agenda was adopted.

2. SHORT SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING OF 22 OCTOBER 2013

The short summary report of the previous meeting was approved, subject to a textual change requested by the German delegations (clarifying its point of view on the postponement of the vote on the Horizon 2020 LEIT-ICT Work Programme).

3. HORIZON 2020 LEIT-ICT WORK PROGRAMME 2014-2015 – UPDATED DRAFT VERSION

The Chair and Mr Møller reported on the final comments on the Horizon 2020 LEIT-ICT Work Programme 2014-2015 that had been received from delegations. These mainly concerned:

- Evaluation criteria
- Added value of support to web-entrepreneurs
- Added value of financial instruments
- Added value of support to innovation actions
- Added value of Collective Awareness
- Added value of PCP

The Chair and Mr Møller explained the rationale that had been followed when addressing these comments. In the discussion thereafter the following issues were raised:

- The question was raised if the discussions in the Horizontal Committee would have repercussions for the 2015 part of the Work Programme. More clarifications were needed as to what extent different parts of the Work Programme (that would be presented for opinion later in the meeting) could still change. Therefore, it also needed to be made clear on what exactly the National Experts' Group had to express its opinion (Austrian, Dutch, French, German and Italian delegations).

- It was asked what would be the consequences of a possible negative vote in one of the shadow committees for the overall Horizon 2020 Work Programme (German delegation).
- The need for specific evaluation criteria for LEIT-ICT was discussed. Delegations further questioned if specific evaluation criteria for the different parts of Horizon 2020 should be discussed within the Horizontal Committee. They also asked to what extent their inputs on the matter would be taken into consideration by the Horizontal Committee (Austrian, German, Italian and United Kingdom delegations).
- It was asked how a mix of small and big projects will be evaluated and how the selection process will be implemented. In that respect, it was remarked that clear indications on the weights that will be put on research and innovation actions on the one hand and innovation actions on the other are required (Croatian, French, Hungarian and United Kingdom delegations).
- It was asked which consequences the on-going discussions in the ERC-FET-Marie Curie Committee to reduce the priority on ICT could have for DG CONNECT (Norwegian delegation). The Polish delegation also asked if more clarifications could be given on the position of quantum technologies.
- The French delegation questioned the successfulness of previous PCP actions in the CIP programme. It was also proposed to delay some actions on PCP, especially given the fact that the Work Programme could be adapted for 2015 (French and United Kingdom delegations).
- The expected outcome of the proposed topics regarding Collective Awareness was questioned. It was asked if these should not rather be addressed under Societal Challenge nr. 6 (French and United Kingdom delegations). On the other hand, the Italian delegation supported the topics.
- The added value of the topic on web-entrepreneurs was questioned. It was asked if this topic is not redundant with the KICs (French and United Kingdom delegations). On the other hand, the Norwegian and Swedish delegations found that this innovation action could be beneficial for European companies.
- It was asked how KPIs will be monitored (Polish delegation).
- It was requested to specify in the Work Programme, rather than in the General Annex, that VAT can be considered an eligible cost (Hungarian delegation).
- It was asked when exactly the second call will be published (United Kingdom delegation).
- Although there had been possibilities to discuss the Work Programme and even if comments had been taken into account, the followed working procedures had not been very comfortable for many delegations. Because there had only been little time for adopting the Work programme, it still contained inconsistencies and immaturities. The main lesson to be learnt was that if a work programme with such radical changes is being presented, more time should be foreseen to discuss it (Spanish delegation).
- The French delegation said that many of its concerns still remained (mainly on ICT 10, ICT 15, ICT 35 and ICT 37). It made some proposals for additional changes and clarifications in the text.

Note was taken of all comments and questions. European Commission staff provided the following answers:

- At the last meeting of the Horizontal Committee some delegations had made a plea for one year work programmes. This could result in disclaimers in the different H2020 work programmes. The Horizon 2020 LEIT-ICT Work

Programme however clearly has a two year logic. No drastic changes will be made to it; only the part on fast track to innovation will require further elaboration for 2015.

At this meeting the National Experts' Group would be asked to express an opinion on the Work Programme text as it had been uploaded on CIRCABC on 31 October as well as on three parts of the Factories of the Future Work Programme for which DG CONNECT is responsible, subject to final revisions necessitated by legal and budgetary issues.

At a later stage a final discussion on implementation issues still needed to take place in the Horizontal Committee.

- Since no previous experiences existed, it was not clear what would happen next in case of a negative vote from one of the shadow committees.
- The common evaluation criteria were set out in the General Annex and should therefore be decided by the Horizontal Committee. There would be specific weighting for impact for innovation actions. DG CONNECT had been working together with DG RTD on the criteria but could not ensure the Horizontal Committee would have a full picture of the contributions from the different configurations of the Committee. National coordination had to take place.
- There will be a single budget per topic and all proposals submitted for a particular topic or subtopic with a distinct budget will have to compete with each other. The proposals with the highest score will be retained and it will be the evaluation panel deciding on scores and rankings.
- The budget allocated to FET will be administered by DG CONNECT. However, FET is clearly multidisciplinary and the members of the ERC-FET-Marie Curie Committee come from different parts of the administrations. The main challenge will be to make the members aware of the achievements and added value of FET in FP7.

Quantum technologies are covered by three ICT topics. There is a debate taking place if quantum technologies should be kept as a part of FET Open only or also be covered by a FET Proactive topic.

- The deepest experience with PCP is in the ICT domain (mainly via the CIP programme). It is important to keep on building on that experience.
- The first call on Collective Awareness showed that there are a lot of new players in the area. As the programme committee for Societal Challenge nr. 6 wants to cut budgets for ICT, putting these new players can better be done in LEIT. This will strengthen the bottom-up approach to innovation, bringing innovation through social innovation networks.
- With the topic on web-entrepreneurs the Commission was aiming at creating common platforms for and support to web-entrepreneurs and stimulating a few application developments. The topic is part of the promotion of innovation in Horizon 2020. Web-entrepreneurs play a central role in the internet economy and the Commission expects a solid community responding to the calls.
- Throughout Horizon 2020 few KPIs will be monitored. This will be part of the annual reporting to the European Parliament. On top of that, there will be indicators benchmarking the successes of projects.
- From a legal point of view it was questionable if VAT could specifically be addressed in the Horizon 2020 LEIT-ICT Work Programme 2014-2015.
- It is the aim to publish the second call on 15 October 2014.
- It is correct that the Work programme contains radical changes, but these had been discussed between Council and European Parliament over the last year and a half. The Commission would now be implementing the Work Programme and a regular reporting would be done to the H2020-ICTC. It was likely that the new

instruments would require some fine-tuning, like it had also been the case when IPs and NoEs had been introduced.

- There had been extensive interaction with the National Experts' Group and the major comments had been taken into account where possible. The Chair proposed not to take any newly presented changes and to proceed to the vote.

The agreement of the National Experts' Group with the Horizon 2020 LEIT-ICT Work Programme 2014-2015 and with the three topics in the Factories of the Future Work Programme 2014-2015 was asked on the proposed texts only subject to verification of legal and financial issues.

Both texts received a positive opinion. The French delegation expressed a negative opinion. Although it agreed to more than 90% of the content of the Horizon 2020 LEIT-ICT Work Programme 2014-2015, it believed that some of the actions were redundant with similar actions in other work programmes. The United Kingdom delegation abstained. It considered that several implementation aspects were still not clear.

As the National Experts' Group is an informal shadow committee, its opinion on the two work programmes is to be considered as a preliminary agreement to be confirmed by the official Horizon 2020 ICT Committee configuration.

4. HORIZON 2020 - IMPLEMENTATION

Mr Møller presented the further roadmap for the Horizon 2020 implementation. He focused on the presentations that would be given during the ICT 2013 Event and briefly addressed the launch events that will be organised on the national levels.

Mr Møller also said that the Commission was finalising the Model Grant Agreement as well as the guides for applicants and evaluations. Finally, he announced the upcoming call for evaluators and reviewers.

The Chair said that the National Experts' Group's members would be kept further informed about Horizon 2020 implementation issues.

Thereafter, Mr Marro gave a presentation on the SME instrument. He sketched the three different phases of the instrument and their main features. He also explained the evaluation process. Mr Marro concluded his presentation also describing the specificities of the ODI instrument.

The presentation was followed by a question & answer session, in which the following issues were raised:

- The United Kingdom delegation asked if there are possibilities for single organisation participation. Mr Marro answered that it is indeed possible and that a lot of such cases are expected.
- The Irish delegation asked if there will be any restrictions on how SMEs can spend the lump sum in phase 1. Mr Marro answered that SMEs will be free to spend the lump sum as they want for addressing activities related to this phase.
- The Irish delegation asked if more information could be given on universities and subcontracting. Mr Marro answered that universities can be involved as subcontractors, but will not receive any direct funding from the Commission.
- The French delegation asked if projects could start prior to acceptance and if the work already done would then be considered as eligible cost. Mr Marro answered that the rules of the Financial Regulation will be followed. If a project starts

earlier, the costs will be related to what follows after the start date only. In particular for phase 2, costs should be related to the work carried out. For phase 3 no direct funding is foreseen.

- The Belgian and Luxemburg delegations asked which companies will be eligible. Mr Marro answered that all legal entities that are an SME will be eligible. However the instrument is to support projects with an EU dimension for SME having clear commercial ambitions.
- The Croatian delegation asked if it will be possible to skip phase 1. Mr Marro answered that it will be possible to directly apply for phase 2. However, companies which profile or project may be not mature enough, are strongly encouraged to participate in phase 1 first.
- The Croatian delegation asked what will be the expected review period. Mr Marro answered that evaluations will be carried out in a continuous wave. Proposals will be sent to different evaluators. Mr Marro further said that time-to-grant for phase 1 would be three months. For phase 2, time-to-grant would be five to six months.
- The Spanish delegation asked if more clarifications could be given on disruptive innovation. It further asked if also stronger technological developments would be supported. Mr Marro answered that the definition of disruptive innovation had to be taken in a flexible way. More information will be given in guiding documents or web pages.
- The French delegation asked if there will be some kind of guarantee on the IPRs of a proposal. Mr Marro answered that specific attention will be paid to evaluators (e.g. through a declaration on conflicts of interest and non-disclosure of the evaluation discussions).
- The United Kingdom delegation asked if an estimation could be given of the expected number of proposals. Mr Marro answered that a high number of proposals is foreseen. Measures will be taken to avoid oversubscription, e.g. SMEs cannot make several applications for phase 1 at the same time, they cannot apply for phase 1 and phase 2 at the same time, etc.
- The Belgian delegation asked when the clock will start ticking. Mr Marro answered that the clock will start at the cut-off date.

The Chair concluded this agenda point by saying that the National Experts' Group would be kept informed about the SME instrument.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair presented Mr de Graaf as the new Director responsible for policy coordination (Directorate F).

The French delegation asked if a date for the first formal meeting of the H2020-ICTC was already known. The Chair answered that the formal committee will be established on 1 January 2014. Thereafter, the Commission will ask the committee to formally vote on the Horizon 2020 LEIT-ICT Work Programme 2014-2015, but the date of the first meeting is not yet decided.

Annex 1: List of participants at the H2020-ICT Experts Group Meeting of 5 November 2013

Austria (AT):	Mr Walter PRINZ Mr Thomas ZERGOÏ
Belgium (BE):	Mr. Gérard GUILLOUD
Bulgaria (BG)	Absent
Croatia (HR):	Mr Mario KOVAČ Ms. Katarina VUKUSIC
Czech Republic (CZ):	Mr Jiri KADLEC
Cyprus (CY)	Absent
Denmark (DK):	Mr. Christian HOLSTEIN JENSEN
Estonia (EE):	Ms. Merle LUST
Finland (FI):	Ms. Katja AHOLA Mr Timo TASKINEN
France (FR):	Mr Frédéric LAURENT Mr. Patrick SCHOULLER
Germany (DE):	Mr Rubén CANTERO-ÁLVAREZ Mr. Friedrich GILLESSEN Ms Andrea KÖNDGEN
Greece (EL):	Mr. Nikolaos PREKAS
Hungary (HU):	Mr Sándor BOTTKA Mr Ferenc KNEISZ Ms Edina NEMETH
Iceland (IS):	Mr. Bjorn Thor JONSSON
Ireland (IE):	Mr Stephen O'REILLY
Italy (IT):	Ms Paola INVERARDI
Latvia (LV):	Mr. Atis KAPENIEKS Ms. Dina BERZINA
Liechtenstein (LI):	Absent
Lithuania (LT):	Mr. Valentinas KVIETKUS
Luxembourg (LU):	Mr Younis HIJAZI
Malta (MT):	Ms Marie Claire TONNA
Netherlands (NL):	Mr Wolfgang TOSTMANN Mr. Roy KEESENBERG

Norway (NO): Ms. Kim DAVIS
Mr. Paul GRETLAND
Mr. Gard JENSSEN

Poland (PL): Mr Andrzej GALIK
Mr Piotr KEPSKI

Portugal (PT): Ms Filipa DUARTE
Mr Carlos SALEMA

Romania (RO): Ms. Dana PETCU

Slovak Republic (SK): Mr Martin KLIMO

Slovenia (SI): Ms Andreja UMEK VENTURINI

Spain (ES): Mr. Mariano ALCANIZ RAYA
Mr Fernando RICO RÍOS

Sweden (SE): Mr Bogumil HAUSMAN

United Kingdom (UK): Mr. Lee VOUSDEN
Mr Jonathan Paul MITCHENER

Commission

Mr Zoran STANCIC (Chair) Ms Annalisa BOGLIOLO Mr Thierry BOULANGE Mr Gerard DE GRAAF Mr Pierre MARRO Mr Morten MØLLER	Mr Alessandro BARBAGLI (ICTC Secretary) Mr Eric CASTEELS (short summary report) Ms Carine MATHY (secretary)
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