1. About the consultation

   - Objective of the consultation

      The European Commission is preparing a legislative proposal to support the implementation of a joint European Research Programme in the field of Metrology (EMRP) based on the integration of the national programmes in this field.

      The initiative comes from a wide group of EU Member States who are willing to integrate the scientific, financial and management aspects of their national metrology programmes. By means of Article 169 of the Treaty, the Community can participate actively in this voluntary integration by means of providing additional financial support for EMRP.

      With this consultation, the Directorate General for Research intends to consult all stakeholders and interested parties on the key principles of setting up such an EMRP using the Article 169.

      Metrology should be understood in its widest sense as covering both the theoretical and practical aspects of measurement in all fields of research: ranging from standardisation, reference materials to instruments, measurement standards, techniques and procedures.

   - Who is consulted?

      Contributions are welcome from any interested parties, involved or affected by metrology research. Examples include researchers and research institutes dealing with metrology research, users of metrology research etc.

   - How can I contribute?

      Contributions can be sent in on-line via until 8th July 2008. An acknowledgement of receipt will be issued for each contribution received.

   - What will happen next?

      All contributions will be analyzed and used as input for assessing the impact of the Article 169 EMRP legislative proposal. A summary of the outcome of the consultation will be published on the "Article 169" website of the Directorate General for Research.
The timetable for the adoption of the EMRP Article 169 is as follows:
- May-July 2008: public stakeholder consultation via web questionnaire
- 25 June 2008: ad-hoc stakeholder workshop
- Autumn 2008: final draft of the legislative proposal and impact assessment
- End of 2008: adoption by the Commission of the EMRP Article 169

2. Key ideas in the forthcoming proposal

○ Why a European initiative in metrology?

Several independent studies have shown that the challenges of on-going provision of cutting edge metrology in Europe are daunting. It is clear that operating solely independent national research programmes as a way to address European needs is reaching its limits. Even the largest national metrology public R&D programmes (Germany, UK and France) fully accept that acting alone they can no longer assemble critical mass across all of the metrology research topic areas that need support.

Member States recognise the need to act together with a view to develop new capabilities in strategic areas of metrology and significantly improving the diffusion of knowledge in this area. They are prepared to commit their existing national programmes, or significant elements of them, into a single joint programme based on Article 169.

○ Key principles

The EMRP initiative is underpinned by over 4 years of preparation by the Member States.

For example, lead by the iMERA ERA-NET project and in expectation of Article 169, the Member States have restructured the metrology organisation in Europe, launching a dedicated legal entity, EURAMET e.V. - a non-profit making organisation set up in Germany in early 2007. In all, 32 European countries have joined the EURAMET organisation.

It is expected that 21 of the EURAMET countries will participate in the potential Article 169. The initiative will bring major benefits for the newer Member States, some of whom will participate directly, whilst the remainder will benefit from the spin off knowledge transfer and access to standards. The countries wishing to participate in the EMRP Article 169 have already identified budget lines, agreed liability and cost sharing, and have fully developed work programmes, management and governance structures.

Furthermore, with the help of an ERA-NET Plus project ("iMERA Plus"), EURAMET e.V. has piloted the EMRP by implementing a first joint call for proposals, addressing a limited number of themes from their work programme. The success of this joint call has demonstrated the ability to corral national resources from 21 countries, organise and execute a joint call and selection process.
3. Your views count

Fill in the questionnaire on-line:
http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=emrp

4. Further information

- EURAMET: http://www.euramet.org
- iMERA: