

May 30, 2003 – Cracow, Poland

The representatives of the Academies of Sciences of V4 countries discussed the following Agenda items:

- I. European Research Council
 - II. Regional R&D Programs based on Art. 169
 - III. On the Central European Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities published electronically
- Ad I. As far as the European Research Council is concerned the following conclusions were reached:
 1. The academies of the V4 countries support goals set by the Barcelona and Lisbon declarations and consider the creation of the European Research Council (ERC) vital in putting these political declarations into practice as a cornerstone in building a European Research Area.
 2. We acknowledge and support actions taken by the ESF in mobilising the European research community in a strategic discussion on future of funding science in Europe finalised in the report of an ESF appointed HLWG on „New structures for the support of high-quality research in Europe“.
 3. The academies of the V4 countries consider the activity of the ERC Expert Group headed by F. Mayor of key importance in putting the idea of the ERC into practice and urge to implement the following recommendations into a final document.
 - The ERC should be built up gradually but with the vision and potential to become a major funding body of research in Europe complementing current programs of the EU.
 - The ERC should focus on excellence as the basis for its decisions without a „just retour“ restriction.
 - The ERC, as a European-dimension funding body, must not be restricted to any particular discipline or program. It should bring European context and added value of a competition on European level to the support of long-term fundamental curiosity-driven research judged on the basis of excellence and merit via a peer review procedure.
 - Financing research supported by the ERC should complement and not replace the available funding schemes.
 - The finances of the ERC should come mainly from the EU budget by its repartitioning and adjustments based on Lisbon target and the Barcelona declaration (namely to turn Europe into the most competitive economy with a 3% GDP funding level of R&D by the year 2010), but not at the expense of the Framework Programs.
 - If needed, appropriate corrections or amendments of the EU Treaty allowing for the creation and financing the ERC independently of the European Commission mechanisms should be implemented.

The possible national contributions to the ERC budget were discussed. It was suggested that they could be calculated in proportion to the national budgetary spending for R&D and not the GDP, as commonly done. Such a rule would be helpful for the V4 countries.

- Ad. II. The application of the FP 6 instrument of Article 169 were presented and discussed with emphasis on the possibilities and limitations. It was agreed to continue the exchange of views of the V4 academies on the potential use of the above-mentioned article to raise domestic support for the program of regional research activities. The proposals of foreseeable research programs will be exchanged with the aim of elaborating research projects (e.g. environmental studies involving air and water pollution, waste management, assessment and mitigating natural and man-made disasters etc.)
- Ad. III. The proposal to establish the Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities was extensively discussed. It was pointed out that the proposed journal could be a useful tool for increasing the visibility of papers dealing with social sciences and humanities published in national languages of the V4 countries. At the same time the need of further discussion on its objectives as well as on the technical and financial problems of its realisation was articulated. A workin group has been set up with the aim to prepare and present at the next forum the progress report for eventual approval.