

V4 Academies Meeting

Smolenice Castle, 29-30 November 2011

Minutes

The representatives of the four Visegrád Academies of Sciences, delegates of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and a representative of the Max-Planck-Society (MPS) met on the 29-30 November 2011 at the Congress Centre of the Slovak Academy of Sciences at Smolenice Castle.

President's Welcome and Approval of the Agenda

The President of the hosting Slovak Academy of Sciences Prof. Jaromír Pastorek welcomed all participants. The proposed programme was adopted.

1) Horizon 2020 - a new framework to support research and innovation.

The initial presentation was delivered by Prof. Domokos Szász, since May 2011 Vice-President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) – responsible for international relations and for sciences.

Concerning the issue of Horizon 2020, Prof. Szász pointed out that in the period 2012-2020, Hungary shall increase the share of expenditures on R & D to GDP from currently 1, 15% to 1, 8%. He asked whether these modest plans are realistic - in particular, in the time of crisis. Another problem is to find the ways to ensure the increase of both government and business financed R & D, and to promote more efficient use of R & D support. Another question is how the V4 countries can promote the aforementioned goals. The Vice-President of HAS also presented the key figures of programs of HAS to ensure government financed R & D support (i. a. he mentioned that the total budget of HAS 2012 shall be about 182, 5 million HUF (about 0, 6 million €). The suggestion of the President of HAS has been to divide the R & D support to 3 main categories:

- Discovery (or "Blue Sky") research (about 25% share)
- Targeted research (research for national goals: health, sustainability etc.) - about 35 % share
- Technological development, innovation (about 40% share).

2) Cooperation and membership of research organizations in the European associations with regard to the current situation in ESF and ALLEA

Assoc. Prof. Fedor Gömöry, the Scientific Secretary of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) said that the key motivation of SAS membership in European science associations is to get involved in the international collaboration by means of networking of researchers and participation in science policy activities. He underlined that in the past years the membership in the European Science Foundation (ESF) was the best way to meet these objectives. On 24 November the General Assembly took place, whose main task was to elect the new Executive Director and the approval of the budget. Pär Omling from Sweden was elected as new President and Martin Haynes from Ireland as the new Executive Director. These personnel decisions should facilitate the transfer of activities from ESF to the newly established institution, Science Europe. The draft budget for covering the ESF activities

programme in 2012 was approved. Due to gradual damping of activities the ESF budget has been reduced. The members' fees will be reduced. As ESF shall be completely dissolved by 2015, SAS is looking for other options in order to ensure networking of researchers by means of participation in e.g. ERA-NET-s and Joint Programme Activities, as well as to continue to participate in the European Science Policy through membership in organizations like ALLEA, EASAC or ScienceEurope.

Following to the initial presentation Dr. Ján Sedlák representing the Slovak Research and Development Agency (National Grant Agency) informed the participants of V4 Forum about the results of ScienceEurope Meeting in Berlin from 21 October 2011. He said that Science Europe (SE) has about 50 member organizations, both RPOs and RFOs. After brief presentation of SE structure and its governing bodies he briefly outlined the mission and vision of the institution. The mission of SE is i.a. to promote the collective interests of RPOs and RFOs and its ambition is to be a recognized representative of the predominant national RPOs and RFOs in Europe. SE shall collaborate with other entities such as universities, academies of sciences, scientific intergovernmental organizations and the European Commission. One of the key goals of SE is to improve the ERA Framework Conditions for the benefit of research and researchers, as well as to establish the scientific community as the third voice in the European Research Area.

Due to absence of Dr. Rüdiger Klein, the Executive Director of ALLEA, who should also join the V4 Academies Forum, the meeting participants focused mainly on issues concerning ESF and Science Europe.

3) Using of European structural funds to finance research activities

Katarzyna Walczyk-Matuszczyk, the Polish National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU has presented the issue in both European and national (Polish) point of view. As first she has delivered a brief information about the Architecture of the European Funds in the period 2007-2013. The total Structural Funds budget earmarked for the indicated period is about 350 billion €, of which Poland will together with national financing draw up to 108 billion €. This sum exceeds the funds allocated for Europe in frame of the Marshall Plan after the World War II.

The main objective of the Structural Funds is to promote growth-enhancing conditions and factors leading to real convergence for the least developed Member States and regions. The Polish NCP stressed that the GDP per capita in the richest region of EU is 13 times higher than GDP in the poorest region. From around 270 regions of the EU are 32, in which the GDP per capita is lower than the 50% of EU average. This group includes 5 Polish voivodships.

Poland adopted the National Cohesion Strategy for the period 2007-2013, in order to create conditions for the improvement of the competitiveness of the economy based on knowledge and entrepreneurship, ensuring the increase of employment and push forward the social and economic cohesion.

The financing of R&D and research infrastructure in Poland from European Structural Funds is organized under the Operational Program Innovative Economy by 9 priority axis, of which the Axis 1 - Research and development of modern technologies and Axis 2 - R&D infrastructure seems to be the most important. The examples of Polish success stories related to the use of Structural Funds include the building and upgrading of the Faculties of Biology, Physics and Chemistry at the

University of Lodz or the establishing of the Research-Education Centre of the Engineering and Environmental Faculty at the University of Life Sciences in Warsaw.

4) Evaluation of research institutions

Prof. Jiří Drahoš, the President of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic presented the issue on the example of the evaluation of the institutes of AS CR in the years 2009-2011. He informed briefly about the key figures of the evaluation - altogether 665 reports have been drawn up concerning 406 research units from 52 research institutions. The strategic objectives of the evaluation were i. a. the enhancing of scientific quality and production on both national and international level through excellence and identification of strong and weak points. Prof. Drahoš continued with short overview of evaluation methodology, evaluation process and evaluation tools. Finally he informed the V4 Meeting participants about the categorization of AS CR Research Institutions upon evaluation results and he compared the current evaluation results with the results from the period 2005-2009.

5. Young Researcher Award. Four outstanding researchers in chemical sciences were presented with the Young Researcher Award: Luděk Kaluža (ASCR), Szilárd Varga (HAS), Maciej Szaleniec (PAS) and Marek Bučko (SAS). They briefly presented the results of their current research activities.

The representatives of V4 Academies postponed the decision on topic of the next Young Researcher Award (YRA). It was agreed that each V4 Academy has to propose the YRA topics for the next three years (so called 3-years Plan) and the final version of this plan should be determined upon mutual discussions between the V4 Academies.

Assoc. Prof. Fedor Gömöry has concluded the V4 Academies Forum on behalf of SAS President, Prof. Jaromír Pastorek. He expressed his sincere thanks to all participants for their presence and the fruitful and mutually rewarding discussion. Afterwards Prof. Szász presented the proposal for invitation to the next V4 Academies Forum scheduled for 24-25 May 2011 in Hungary (Mátraháza).

Statement. The presidents and vice-presidents of the V4 Academies: Jiří Drahoš, Jaromír Pastorek, Andrzej Górski and Domonkos Szász have decided to formulate the separate Statement which formulates the common position regarding the approval of Horizon2020 and the membership of Academies as Research Performing Organizations in Science Europe.