

Strengthening European Research Cooperation through Partnership

EuroHORCs Perspective on Networking and Coordination of National Programmes

It is broadly recognised – in both scientific and policy circles - that the European Research Area (ERA) calls for a scientific revitalisation based on both:

- competition and
- cooperation and coordination

in order to cope with the drawbacks of current – nationally and sectorally – fragmented research and innovation funding mechanisms increased competition, partnership and networking are key elements of a road map to proper knowledge discovery and usage in Europe.

The objective to enhance Europe-wide competition for excellence in science at the individual (team) level is the core mission of the European Research Council (ERC), which will soon be established with the advent of the 7th Framework Programme (FP 7). This will create a European benchmark for excellence at the individual (team) level.

Time has come to address more explicitly the other weakness in the ERA, viz. fragmentation of national research systems in Europe ¹. Here, significant value added can –and should - be attained through increased cooperation in a competitive setting.

In the present note EuroHORCs offer a position statement on the potential role and common actions by the national research organisations to overcome fragmentation and create value added through coordination of national research funding at the European level.

Fragmentation: a diagnosis

Fragmentation refers to undesirable limits to the potential scale and scope in European research, caused by the limits of resources (critical mass in funds, expertise and excellence) in individual national research programmes and the lack of coordination between national research funding programmes.

The consequences of the current fragmented national research systems in Europe are:

- *suboptimal mobility*: national barriers in research funding obstruct and counteract the mobility of (young, talented) researchers that is necessary to build and spread excellence and to create international synergy;
- *suboptimal impact*: a lack of the scale and scope in science-driven European research that is required to address global research challenges;
- *suboptimal efficiency*: a primarily national focus on research funding is likely to lead to unnecessary or undesirable duplication;
- *suboptimal use of infrastructure*: lack of coordination of investments in medium-sized (national) research infrastructures leads to insufficient use and prevents the development of a European-wide system of infrastructure and hampers potential synergies in international collaborative research;
- *suboptimal networking of research performing organizations*.

In conclusion, an exclusive orientation on national research programmes weakens Europe's position in the global context, due to lack of focus and critical mass, a lack of a joint profile and a common voice, and hence a lack of visibility which may lead to a loss of opportunities.

National research organisations (both funding agencies and research performing bodies) are critical agents in improving the current sub-optimal functioning of research systems in the ERA.

¹ At request by the former EU Commissioner for Research (Busquin) a Task Force consisting of EuroHORCs SC members and representatives of the EC and ESF has over the last year has discussed partnership models for enhanced cooperation of national research organisations in the framework of the EuroHORCs' activity plan.

EuroHORCs perspective

The organisations represented in EuroHORCs play a pivotal role in the ERA, with a joint annual budget of more than 20 Billion Euro. EuroHORCs is an informal platform to discuss general issues of relevance to the European Research Organisations. However, based on the so-called Oegstgeest Declaration on Reinforced Research Cooperation in Europe (May 19, 2003), in the past years, EuroHORCs, - in cooperation with ESF - have also developed various cooperative instruments to counter fragmentation in the European research systems.

Several important lessons have been learned:

- effective coordination and a shortening of the time required for decision making on joint programmes and on the funding of research requires harmonisation and synchronisation of national procedures and timing in decision-making;
- effective and transparent funding procedures require bottom-up coordination or - even better – common peer-review and selection procedures (including acceptance of the outcome of international peer review);
- whilst there are some real legal barriers, most of the barriers are of a technical and procedural nature and are best solved at the working level after decisions have been taken at the strategic level by the leadership of EuroHORCs members.

EuroHORCs will develop new action lines for transnational research cooperation, based on:

- scientific excellence;
- transparent organisation and decision making;
- high quality peer review;
- political independence;
- administrative efficiency.

EuroHORCs will focus on:

- challenges for (primarily science-driven) research that cannot be met within individual national research systems;
- removing barriers for transnational collaborative research.

*To realise this, EuroHORCs will aim to strengthen existing and to develop new initiatives on **a variable geometry and voluntary basis**, whenever appropriate in partnership with the EC and/or using ESF as an implementing agency.*

EuroHORCs activities to cope with fragmentation: a rolling agenda

In the next years EuroHORCs will take the responsibility to minimise fragmentation in the ERA from the perspective of national programmes and work towards addressing the various bottlenecks outlined above. Strengthening the networking of research performing organizations will be part of some of the relevant activities. The EuroHORCs rolling agenda includes the following actions:

- A. promote international mobility of researchers and remove barriers through the Money Follows Researcher scheme;
- B. promote international competition among and mobility of the young most talented researchers through the EURYI Awards;
- C. strengthen and expand joint financial support for science-driven, transnational collaborative research addressing questions of scale and scope in science through the EUROCORES Scheme;
- D. harmonise funding procedures and cooperation in peer-review to facilitate transnational collaborative research on shared national priorities (science-driven and society-driven) using ERANET, ERANET Plus and Article 169 initiatives;
- E. cooperate in and coordinate access of scientists and investments by the national research organisations in national medium sized research infrastructures with a European interest;
- F. develop scientific 'Foresights';
- G. at a more general level remove barriers in national procedures for the mutual opening up of national research funding schemes.

Action Line A: Money Follows Researcher

Creating a real single European Research Area requires removing barriers to the mobility of European researchers. Therefore, based on the experiences in cooperation as agreed between DFG Germany, EPSRC UK, and NWO Netherlands on a bilateral, and between DFG FWF and the Swiss SNF on a trilateral basis, EuroHORCs have agreed in 2004 to allow researchers to move into the other organisation's country to take with them the remainder of a current grant, under the following conditions:

- the grant can be continued within the term and objectives originally set at the new institution;
- the remaining period of the grant should be no less than six months;
- the consent of both institutions involved (relinquishing and accepting) must be sought;
- funds for personnel cost are to be spent according to local rates and scales;
- the question of equipment will have to be considered case-by-case: while funds for consumables/expendables can be transferred without a problem, major investments should normally remain with the granting organisation or the home institution;
- where results of commercial value are likely to be generated from the project, the two institutions should agree to formalise ownership and exploitation arrangements which recognise the contributions of the Investigator and any research staff employed on the project.

Current status

The Money Follows Researcher scheme has attracted much interest: 24 organisations in 16 European countries are participating in this scheme. To this purpose they have signed a Letter of Intent , which can be downloaded from the EuroHORCs website: www.eurohorcs.org

Issues for the future

In the coming years EuroHORCs will aim at intensifying and enlarging the participation in this scheme and at the same time monitor and evaluate its impacts and possible bottlenecks.

Action Line B: European Young Investigator (EURYI) Awards

The aim of EURYI Awards, launched by the EuroHORCs for the first time in 2003 and for 5 consecutive years, is to encourage and enable outstanding young researchers from all over the world to work in Europe to enhance the development of European science and to build up the next generation of leading European researchers. The scheme especially encourages foreign researchers to come to Europe and European researchers who have been working outside of Europe to return. EURYI Awards is an instrument to allow distinguished young researchers to develop and pursue an independent research career, including the development of a research group where appropriate, aimed at opening up new lines of research including novel methodologies. The European Commission provides funds for the running of the scheme.

EURYI Awardees should have an excellent research record and show the potential to become world-class leaders in their areas of research. The principal criteria for EURYI Awards are:

- the research quality and potential of the applicant,
- the originality and groundbreaking, forward oriented character of the research proposal and its feasibility,
- the potential of the proposed research programme to improve the position of European research at world level.

Current status

The scheme – a common pot without a *juste retour* principle - is open to young researchers from anywhere in the world who have between 2 and a maximum of 8 years of postdoctoral experience after the award of the (first) PhD (or equivalent qualification, eg MD) on the closing date of the call, taking into account career breaks.

- Award holders are expected to devote their full working time to research and the activities described in the proposal. To this purpose applicants must request their full salary (even if they are already employed by the host institution) to ensure they can be released from any other commitments. The applicant is responsible for agreeing suitable arrangements with a host institution before submitting an application.
- The award will last for a 5 year period, subject to satisfactory progress. The award holders are expected to start their project within six months after the decision on the award.
- The total value of an award will normally be no less than 750 kEURO over 5 years and shall not exceed a maximum of 1250 Keuro
- Awards will be subject to the terms and conditions of the participating organisation through which the EURYI Award is submitted. This includes existing practices concerning eligible costs.

The assessment of applications will be undertaken in two stages, Stage One (S-1) at national level and Stage Two (S-2) at European level. S-1 will be carried out by the participating organisations based on peer review procedures and in accordance with the guidelines issued by the EURYI Management Committee. The European Science Foundation will manage the European phase (S-2) of the review process and coordinate the funding of the awards.

The time schedule is as follows:

- Application submission: From 1 September to 30 November every calendar year
- Assessment process: S-1 National level: 1 December– 30 March
- S-2 European level: 1 April – 31 July
- Announcement of awards: Beginning of August
- Starting date of award: within six months of October
- Additional information: www.esf.org/euryi

Issues for the future

With the foundation of the European Research Council (ERC) the possibility has arisen to stop EURYI, given new specific scheme in this field. The same goes for the plans of the European Commission to offer co-funding to national research councils in the Marie Curie Excellence programme. Both developments encourage rethinking of the positioning of the EURYI scheme of the EuroHORCs, for example in the direction of further emphasising the distinctive Award character, complementing the ERC which will operate a young researchers grants scheme. The ultimate aim is to establish a solid brain gain programme, attracting the best talent to Europe.

Action Line C. EUROCORES

The EUROCORES Scheme enables researchers to develop cross national collaboration to address frontier science themes requiring such collaboration. The EUROCORES Scheme provides a flexible framework which allows national basic research funding organisations to support top class European research in and across all scientific areas. With a grant of the European Commission the ESF provides programme coordination and support for the networking of funded scientists. Research funding is provided by participating national organisations.

Following an agreement with participating funding organisations, the ESF publishes a Call for proposals for each EUROCORES programme inviting Collaborative Research Project (CRP) proposals from the scientific community. CRPs consist of a number of Individual Projects (IPs) based in different European countries. CRP proposals are assessed through a common International Peer Review managed by the ESF. Based on the experience of the first four EUROCORES Programmes in the fields of Humanities, Materials, Medical and Geosciences, a EUROCORES Programme normally involves 9-23 funding organisations and usually funds 10-20 CRPs (selected out of 50-150 outline proposals) consisting of 40-80 IPs with a total Programme budget of 5-12 M€.

Participating national funding organisations fund successful CRPs through the IPs. Each CRP is typically funded for 3 or 4 years.

Current status

EUROHORCS members support the recently streamlined EUROCORES Scheme and, when participating, will commit themselves to the deadlines for decisions in the new procedure. They are conscious that a further shortening of these timelines is highly desirable if EUROCORES is to be an effective mechanism that is attractive to the best scientists in Europe.

Future Issues

In a partnership EuroHORCS and ESF are considering a scheme, in which:

- EuroHORCS members – in variable geometry and on a voluntary basis – will commit to a (virtual) pooling of national resources to fund collaborative transnational projects of shared interest in multi-annual perspective.
- ESF will be responsible for the operations and execution of the scheme, including the scientific networking and integration, based on international standards in peer review and in research funding.
- EC will be requested in the context of ERANET Plus to provide a top-up of 30% of pooled national resources as an incentive and a contribution to the scientific networking of projects and the coordination of the programme, without thematic restrictions. The criteria for obtaining EC support would be:
 - Participation of national research organisations from at least 5 countries;
 - Indicated financial volume for the participation in the Call to an amount of at least 5 M€.

The procedure for this scheme – which might be called EUROCORES Plus – would then be:

1. Identification of research Themes based on science-driven needs

In order to:

- better identify pressing European research needs where cooperation would lead to achieving the necessary scale of research efforts to make real scientific progress at the frontiers of science (for instance, because the complexity or the scale of the research questions addressed require (multidisciplinary) cooperation across national borders, or in order to allow researchers in 'pockets of excellence' across Europe to collaborate to increase the impact of the European contribution in the scientific domain concerned (often in the humanities));
- provide a clear frame for national research organisations to decide on whether or not to participate in a given programme (this could, for example, be attractive for research councils covering specific scientific domains only);

a prior identification of science-driven themes is needed.

The ESF will organise this process within three months after the suggestions for Themes have been received, following an annual open Call to the scientific community and the EuroHORCs and ESF MOs. The equivalent of the present EUROCORES Committee could be in charge of the selection based on scientific quality and added value criteria, thus ensuring that the scheme remains science-driven.

Following the annual Call, around five or more Themes are selected. In the selection phase, the interest of national research organizations (NROs) is taken into account. The Themes identified in this way will then be transformed into EUROCORES Programmes involving the scientific community and interested NROs (variable geometry). All ESF Member Organisations and EuroHORCs are asked to indicate their commitment for the Programmes. Those Programmes which receive a sufficient commitment (participation of NROs from at least 5 countries and a minimum volume of research funding of 5 M€ per Programme) go to the next phase.

2. Generation, assessment and selection of transnational collaborative research projects and commitment of funding by NROs

For each of the Programmes proposals for Collaborative Research Projects are selected in two steps:

- A. A proposal outline step (pre-proposals) with the following features:
 - Issuing of a Call;
 - The Call text should include the conditions of the programme, the selection procedure and (in order to give the scientific community an idea of the size of the programme) an indication of the maximum financial participation by the interested national research organisations;
 - Actions in the Proposal Outline Step:
 - Before the launch of the Call: national research organisations must have decided on the indication of their likely maximum (financial) participation
 - Call for pre-proposals;
 - Review panel selection of the pre-proposals to be invited to submit a full proposal.
- B. A full proposal stage for the selected pre-proposals with the following features:
 - The participating national research organisations should give a binding commitment to finance their share in successful full proposals respecting the ranking of the Review Panel;
 - The number of pre-proposals which is selected should be such that, under condition of sufficient quality, in the full proposal step a success rate of about 30-40% can be achieved;
 - A strict single stage international peer review of the full proposals, followed by a ranking by a high level review panel;
 - Decision at the European level on the best projects which should be financed by the participating national research organizations.
- C. Submission to ERANET Plus:
 - The 30% top-up by the Commission is used to fund: 1) the management of the scheme and scientific networking; 2) funding and where necessary 'provide lacking funds' for the highest ranked proposals.

Important elements for this step would be:

- Hard commitment of the participating national research organisations
- Writing of full proposals
- Peer review and ranking of full proposals
- Funding decisions by participating National Research Organisations
- Decision by the Commission on the top-up.

3. Timeline for the EUROCORES Plus procedure

The following schedule is being proposed and should be in line with the envisaged EC procedures for ERANET+ and should comply with the wishes of the research community for less time consuming procedures.

1	Identification of themes		3 months
		Pre-commitment by NRCs	1 months
2	Assessment and selection		
	A. Pre-proposals	Issuing call in the viable Programmes	
		Call for pre-proposals	2 months
		Review by panels	2 months
	B. Full proposals		
		Formal commitment by NRCs	1 month
		Writing of full proposals	2 months
		Peer review and ranking	3 months
		Funding decisions by NRCs	1 months
	C. Submission to ERANET Plus		2 months
			17 months

The timeline of 17 months is extremely ambitious and requires a strong commitment for the EuroHORCs to synchronise decisions about the indication of likely maximum financial level participation and the decision to actually contract funds a priori in one month periods. Compliance with EU guidelines on timelines is of course necessary and will have to be specified at a later stage.

Action Line D. Cooperation and Coordination of National Programmes: ERA-NET, ERA-NET Plus and Article 169

In recent years, the ERA-NET instrument of EU FP6 has become an important vehicle for many EuroHORCs members to shape their multilateral cooperation and coordination in certain (thematic) common priorities, as such complementing the EuroHORCs cooperation in various bi- and trilateral arrangements. In past years, many EuroHORCs member organisations have already pro-actively initiated and participated in ERA-NET initiatives (in 15 out of 68 ERA-NETs a EUROHORCs member organisation is the coordinator), aimed at:

- information exchange: inventory and systematic sharing of information on national programmes, programme management, research facilities and projects;
- benchmarking: compare approaches to research funding and identify best practices in programme management and proposal review;
- coordination: tuning and joint development of policies and priorities;
- common activities: create a platform for the development of joint funding activities (transnational calls).

In the view of EuroHORCs, ERA-NET has proven to be a promising incentive and potentially valuable tool in the formation of ERA. By participating in different ERA-NETs in variable geometry, EuroHORCs member organisations have gained valuable experience which will contribute to joint activities in the future.

Major advantages of the ERA-NET instrument are:

- bottom-up formation of networks by national funding bodies incl. national research organisations; (bottom-up meaning that national funding bodies decide in which ERA-NETs they participate)
- concrete work plans towards concrete milestones and end results, based on a common vision, clear division of tasks and responsibilities;
- adequate financial resources to cover organisation (overhead) costs, in the first years through EU funding;
- opportunity to learn from one another to improve one's own procedures
- information exchange – e.g. on research facilities.

Current status

At present, ERA-NET is considered an appropriate instrument for national research organisations to cooperate on specific national thematic interests and priorities (both science driven or society driven). Among others, it provides reliable platforms and work plans to facilitate harmonising of procedures, identification of best practices and development of joint funding activities in certain fields of research. Its broad scope and durable nature can be viewed as complementary to the ESF activities (EUROCORES) which are designed to accommodate flexibility in the selection of themes for cooperation and in the organisation of science-driven transnational calls on topics of European scale and scope.

Issues for the future

For optimal functioning, however, several issues require further consideration, most importantly:

- the potential value of incentives to combine national funding activities;
- creating the proper boundary conditions for the effective organisation of complex joint funding activities following international quality standards;
- a mechanism for national councils to set priorities in funding for either ERANETS (Plus) or EUROCORES (Plus).

It can be foreseen that a natural process of self-selection of ERA-NETs will take place based on desire of its members to continue existing ERA-NET initiatives; developments and opportunities in FP7; and changing (thematic) priorities within the participating organisations. Furthermore, for individual EuroHORCs member strategic choices may be necessary regarding the continuation of ERA-NETs.

Several factors are likely to be important to individual EuroHORCs members regarding their ERA-NET participation in the future:

- the desire and/or prospects for development into long-term networks or perhaps durable structures around certain shared national priorities or themes (incl. the option to develop into Art.169 in order to create more pilots apart from EDCTP²);
- EU-support in FP7 for the continuation of existing and new ERA-NETs as well as support for joint activities through ERA-NET plus will be related to the (fit with) thematic priorities.
- the degree to which the above-mentioned bottlenecks can be addressed.

In the view of EuroHORCs, the efficiency and impact of joint activities (e.g. joint calls) will be enhanced by the availability of a professional organisation at the European level capable of:

- organisation joint funding activities for EuroHORCs members in variable geometry; organising the management/ coordination of funded projects, including the proposal review according to general best practices identified by EuroHORCs;
- accumulating and institutionalising experiences in transnational funding and coordination of national programmes in (basic) science.

To strengthen multilateral thematic cooperations, notably ERA-NET initiatives, as a vehicle for the (thematic) networking of EuroHORCs member organisations and other relevant national funding bodies, EuroHORCs members participating in these initiatives will in next years:

- promote the internal coordination of their participation in the various ERA-NETs
- encourage ESF to continue to strengthen its organisation to develop into a flexible, professional organisation capable of supporting the joint funding activities of different ERA-NETs or other variable geometry cooperation (including joint calls with US programmes, in particular with NSF);
- seek support from ERA-NET Plus funds in FP7 as an incentive to combine national funding in joint funding activities (given the EuroHORCs focus on science-driven initiatives and scientific excellence).

² European Developing Clinical Trials Partnership (<http://www.edctp.org>)

Action Line E: EuroHORCs- ESF- EC cooperation in the field of Medium-sized Infrastructure

The EuroHORCs in its meeting of October 22, 2005 have decided, that:

- there is a role for EuroHORCs to effectuate the efforts and investments in research infrastructures on national level, by identifying the threshold between national investments and coordination versus the need and added value for future European coordination among EuroHORCs;
- for the exchange of information and other possible cooperation measures among the EuroHORCs, more insight is needed on the actual large scale facilities that are being (this can be partly) funded and/or managed by research funding organisations, in their respective countries;
- information sources on research facilities, as well as information gained through Forward Look activities and previous inventories of the ESF and current inventories by the EC can be used when applicable;
- the ESF, based on its experience in organizing Forward Looks and collecting information on research infrastructures, as well as carrying out surveys on this matter, will be asked, on behalf of the EuroHORCs, to carry out an inventory to prepare the basis for future EuroHORCs collaboration.
- after consultation the EC and learning about their intention to simultaneously undertake a second round of a European Research Infrastructure Survey, they would join efforts (EC, ESF and EuroHORCs).

Current status

The European Commission (EC), the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the EuroHORCs are undertaking a second Survey of European Research Infrastructures, updating the one realized by the EC in early 2005¹.

This Survey addresses Research Infrastructures in operation (or currently in the process of being updated, forecasted to be operational in 2006), recognised as fundamental for researchers' work. By focusing on Research Infrastructures in operation in 2006, this survey is complementary to ESFRI's work in developing roadmaps for future Research Infrastructure needs.

The overall objectives of this Survey of European Research Infrastructures are:

- To identify the current scenario of major Research Infrastructures in Europe and respective trends and developments;
- To contribute to the analysis of the European map of current Research Infrastructures, the relations between the Research Infrastructures, the science community and the public/private organisations, their possible evolution;
- To help estimate the weight of the Research Infrastructures, measured in financial terms and population involved in the various disciplines, their uniqueness and openness of access in the European Research Area, as well as an assessment of the maintenance and replacement effort;
- To identify and raise awareness of European Research Infrastructures' needs and importance.

The Survey was launched on 1 March 2006, with a deadline of 31 March 2006. A final report (open access-web based) is expected to be ready by autumn 2006.

Issues for the future

EuroHORCs will aim at institutionalising the periodic survey and also in particular will address the issue of 'access fees' and MO for a (PM).

Action line F: Foresights

EUROHORCs have a need for platforms to address issues of common concern in strategic and operational science policy, for example creating the scientific basis for priority setting. This requires instruments for foresight to establish priorities and fora to discuss the ensuing joint science policy development. Research foresight is a process to support the development of research agendas and the setting of priorities in science. At the European level, topics for foresight will generally be in areas which require cooperation of researchers and research organizations from across Europe and will nearly always be highly interdisciplinary. Instead of developing their own foresight, EUROHORCs wish to use the ESF Forward Look instrument to address their needs. Where appropriate the Commission will join EUROHORCs in such requests for Forward Looks.

Forward Looks are meant to develop high level authoritative visions on the direction of science and on priorities; for EUROHORCs, for the scientific community and for partners such as the Commission. As a matter of principle, Forward Looks will involve as clients national research agencies and organizations, as well as European ones.

Current status

A programme for Forward Looks will be built by ESF from:

- Responses to Calls among the scientific community and MOs;
- Dedicated requests from EUROHORCs or commissioned by external bodies, for example the EC, or ESFRI on research infrastructure, in the framework of preparing the setting of research priorities;

With its Forward Looks, ESF aims to make an impact which is similar to that of the foresights of the US National Academies of Science. Therefore, Forward Looks will involve eminent scientists, as well as policy makers, in the discussion about where broad areas of science could and should go. Input from the wider research community in Europe will be sought in this process. The discussion will be placed in the global context of the research domain concerned.

It is important to turn the results of Forward Looks into action. With the input from Forward Looks, authoritative, trustworthy advice will be provided on specific science issues, on research infrastructure, or on issues of science policy. Recipients of such advice will be identified in advance and will be science organisations (e.g. EUROHORCS), the European Commission and other European institutions, groups of universities, regional or national authorities.

In order to take stock of the state of the art in foresight, it is proposed to organize a workshop bringing together the Chairs of the ESF FLs to date, representatives of MOs involved in foresight, representatives from the NAS, the ITS in Sevilla, the EC Foresight Unit and scholars in foresight. In order to properly prepare such a workshop, it will not be held before January 2007.

A Call for ideas for Forward Look topics which could be of interest to EUROHORCs, will be launched. Two parallel tracks will be followed for identifying such topics, together leading to a proposal to the ESF Governing Council in April 2007 for the launch of maximally four Forward Looks paid from the ESF General Budget. Additional ones could be foreseen if they are externally funded.

Issues for the future

Further work is needed on the development of effective mechanisms for the identification of topics for foresight which are shared by a sufficient number of EUROHORCs, as well as finding ways to include the Commission in the process of identification of such topics.

Another issue for further work is the follow up of Forward Looks with mechanisms for decisions on priority setting in EUROHORCs organizations and the Commission.

Action Line G: Future actions: practical cooperation and harmonisation

In the view of EuroHORCs more is needed in the development towards ERA based on excellence and impact of basic research.

As part of the rolling agenda, EuroHORCs members will explore possibilities for harmonisation, identifying best practices, and, where desired and possible, joint funding activities. Following concrete work plans, these cooperations will yield several products of general value to research funding in ERA, e.g.:

- inventories and web-based tools for information exchange;
- best practice guidelines for the organisation of (trans-national) funding activities in Europe;
- reports describing inherent barriers to trans-national cooperation and the coordination of national programmes, and possible solutions;
- internationalisation and training of staff (programme managers) across national research organisations;
- develop guidelines on IPR issues;
- concrete joint calls (at least one per ERA-NET) providing valuable experiences, including experiments with common pot mechanisms and harmonisation of procedures.

In next years, EuroHORCs – in close cooperation with ESF - will take up these tasks as part of its own activities. For this, committees of EuroHORCs members will prepare activities for harmonisation and (support) meetings to draw general lessons which can then be implemented by EuroHORCs members at will.
