



20 years  
Anniversary  
of e-IRG

# e-IRG Communiqué on the e-IRG Workshop under Swedish EU Presidency



Malmö, 21.-22. June 2023

27 July 2023

## Summary

The [e-IRG Workshop organised in the framework of the Swedish Presidency](#) of the Council of the Union coincided with the 20-year anniversary of e-IRG. To celebrate this long-term commitment to policy making for the European e-Infrastructure landscape, a separate [anniversary session](#) was implemented in order to emphasize on the achievements and developments during the last 20 years, but also to provide an outlook into the future developments of European e-Infrastructures. This special session was organized with the goal of providing an overview of the most impactful actions of e-IRG at European, national, and institutional level, and also hint on ideas for the future potential of e-infrastructures on key policy issues, as seen from their own point of view. Besides the 20-year anniversary session, and following an organized visit to both MAX-IV and ESS infrastructures, there were also three more focused sessions, as is quite often the case in e-IRG workshops, on issues that concern the Presidency, are of great concern with regard to recent developments, or have been suggested by the participants of previous workshops or EU and MS delegates. The first session, entitled "[Authentication and Authorisation Infrastructures \(AAI\) coordination in the ERA and beyond](#)", discussed the current developments in AAI and the need for coordination and interoperability across different service providers. The second session entitled "[Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructures](#)" was motivated by the NIS2 EU Directive that pertains to safeguarding the security of *Vital Digital Infrastructures*, which are crucial for sustaining society. This EU directive covers all government agencies in the domain of Digital Infrastructures, which means that most e-infrastructures must adhere to it. The third session entitled "[Coordination among generic \(domain-agnostic\) and thematic \(domain-specific\) infrastructures in the new ERA](#)", evolved around the topic of coordination between thematic and generic infrastructures at institutional, national, regional and EU levels. In fact, the core of this session is a constant topic of focus for e-IRG given the extensive work done in recent years, and more specifically the [e-IRG National Nodes document](#) in 2019 and the [e-IRG White Papers 2021](#) and [2022](#).

## Full version

In further detail, the anniversary event organized on the first day was hailed by many individuals that had previously been involved both in the creation or growth of e-IRG and had acknowledged its value during its 20-year course for the stakeholder organisations they belonged to. In its first part, the event started off with a small recollection from a key-person involved in the creation of e-IRG, [Vasilis Maglaris](#), in charge of the Greek NREN GRNET at that time. It was 20 years ago, during the Greek EU Council Presidency, when the first e-IRG workshop, entitled "Towards Integrated Networking and Grid Infrastructures for eScience and





Beyond – The EU eInfrastructures Initiative", took place in Athens, in June 2003. Following that, several active and long-standing members of e-IRG and the e-IRG Secretariat recapitulated its achievements and set the background on which this session evolved. The [impact of e-IRG in the evolution of the Dutch national landscape](#) was given by both organisations that heavily contributed to its current state (NIKHEF and SURF). At a more localized level, yet equally important for the researcher, the impact of applying e-IRG's recommendations and suggestions at the institutional level was given for [the case of Chalmers University in Sweden](#). Chalmers is essentially a model case of e-Infrastructure Commons being applied at the source for the end user, since its e-infrastructure and all related services (computing, AI, data etc) are provided with an approach that differs from the one provided by most other models which are often thematically separated in local levels.

The second part of the anniversary session started with [a video from previous e-IRG Chair Gudmund Høst](#), reaffirming the importance of collaboration among e-Infrastructures. The main focus of the second part was on the future of e-Infrastructures, revolving around the potential and will for better coordination, and laid out [the vision of a seamless user experience presented by the e-IRG Chair, Stefan Hanslik](#). In this [session](#), all major players, starting with the EC (DG Connect), EOSC Governance Board and Association and Data Spaces provided their own view on how and why coordination is needed and can be beneficial. Following that, major e-Infrastructure stakeholders such as GEANT, EGI, EUDAT, OpenAIRE, and PRACE gave [position statements](#) on the future of e-Infrastructures and key related policy topics, as well as their view on the role of e-IRG. Finally, the [user perspective](#) was given on key policy topics for the future and the role of e-IRG from representatives of ESFRI clusters, Science Europe and the EOSC Future User Group. As Andreas Petzold, ENVRI\_FAIR (representing the ESFRI Clusters) plainly stated "[Further consolidation of e-Infrastructures is needed so that scientists can focus on their research](#)", and in Bregt Saenen's words "[Open Science is a strategic priority for Science Europe and its members](#)".

The anniversary event was followed by a tour to two very important research infrastructures located in Lund. The [Max IV](#) and [ESS](#) visits that were made possible by the e-IRG Secretariat and the local organizers, the Swedish Research Council and Chalmers University, were an exciting break and provided the participants with the opportunity of seeing first-hand the effect of large research infrastructures in science output and understanding their related electronic infrastructure needs.

[The first session of the second day](#) focused on providing to the participants with a point of view of how major e-infrastructures experience and deal with Authentication and Authorisation Infrastructure issues. Starting with GÉANT's view, and according to [Klaas Wierenga](#) "*trust enables effortless access to educational resources across diverse e-Infrastructures*" and "*by nurturing trust, we can enhance the connections between service providers and establish a user-centric experience for all involved*". [Valeria Artizzone](#), EGI presented how EOSC AAI will be implemented at the macro level and how it will be working on the cross-infrastructure/domain aspects. [Anders Sjöström](#), Lund University, showed how the Puhuri project can facilitate easy and efficient access to high-performance computing (HPC) and related services throughout Europe. Pierre Gronlier, GAIA-X discussed how the Data Space Support Centre (DSSC) aims to establish a Network of Stakeholders that includes all relevant organizations and how it deals with authentication towards this goal. [Luděk Matyska](#) explained why the Life Science AAI should be seen as the representative of EOSC Community AAI, and presented the challenges it currently faces.





In the second session, the EC provided a brief overview on the timeline and history of the NIS2 Directive, as well as its pillared structure, its harmonised security requirements & incident reporting and the sectors NIS2 covers. GÉANT's Alf Moens then explained how NIS2 will require going from trust to compliance and how it will affect European e-Infrastructures. Matthew Viljoen gave EGI's point of view on security and the effort to clarify that collaboration is needed between different e-Infrastructure CSIRT teams and summed up in that *"security is everyone's concern."* On the same topic, three very brief statements were made by Gilles Massen on behalf of RESTENA which will start providing some core security services, Cristian Panigl, on how ACONet in Austria plans to deal with regard to the unknowns of NIS2, and János Mohácsi and how the Hungarian KIFÜ plans to implement it for e-Infrastructure national services.

During the third session, which started off with a talk by the EC DG R&I representative Michel Schouppe, working in the newly restructured Open Science and Research Infrastructures unit A4 in DG R&I, it was emphasized that a key challenge for the Research Infrastructures and e-Infrastructures in Europe is to cope with fragmentation at various levels. In fact, Schouppe mentioned that *"the advisory role of e-IRG to develop an inclusive ecosystem in the current landscape is relevant"* and that *"coordination among RIs and e-Infrastructures needs to go beyond recommendations to actual strategies/contributions towards more integrated/joint services"*. Following this, there was a short report from the high-level RI conference on "The Potential of Research Data: How Research Infrastructures Provide New Opportunities and Benefits for Society." Volker Beckmann then reported on the current news from the ESFRI-EOSC Joint Task Force, whose scope is primarily to improve coordination and which just recently had decided to focus on two main topics in the upcoming period, namely contribute to reducing the fragmentation of the research data landscape in Europe by stimulating the connection of ESFRI RIs/ERICs with the EOSC federation and assist in increasing FAIR research data productivity in Europe. Finally, the e-IRG Chair Stefan Hanslik, reported on the Coordination meeting among European e-Infrastructure-related organisations that took place on 11 May. This meeting was organized in order to record the view of e-Infrastructures on the potential of the creation of a coordination body (e-Infrastructure Assembly). The e-IRG Chair also announced that observers from the EOSC-A and the e-Infrastructure Assembly will be invited to the next e-IRG meetings.

The meeting concluded with a short panel and the main conclusion was that coordination among EOSC and e-Infrastructures, including e-Infrastructures themselves, and also among Research Infrastructures and e-Infrastructures and related stakeholders, inline with the ERA Policy Agenda action 8 related statement, needs to be reinforced in the next period. e-IRG will be hosting its next workshop under the Spanish EU presidency in the November-December period, in Valencia, again as a hybrid event.

e-IRG Workshop under Swedish EU Presidency (<https://events.geant.org/event/1450/>)

Creative Commons Attribution 4.0  
International (CC BY 4.0)

