

**Minutes Inaugural Management Committee Meeting
of COST 281 Action
European Commission, Avenue de Beaulieu 9,
1160 Brussels
Room BU9 – 4th floor – room 33
26th September 2001, 10.00 am**

1. Opening of Cost 281 Action

As chair of the first part of the meeting (up to no. 7), Mr. Peter Wintlev-Jensen opened the meeting officially launching COST 281 Action by remembering the recently deceased Ulf Bergqvist. All participants rose and honored Prof. Bergqvist by one minute's silence.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda proposed by European Union scientific secretary Peter Wintlev was fully adopted.

3. Presentation of COST

In his survey lecture, Mr. Peter Wintlev-Jensen reviewed the objectives and the mission of COST actions in connection with the policy of the European Union Commission aimed to encourage and support initiatives launching coordinated research action. COST 281 is one of more than hundred currently existing projects (see annex no. 1, charts of presentation).

In the following, he went into the expectations of the EU Commission towards COST 281 Action. COST 281 is mainly meant to provide early peer-reviewed scientific advice, to identify existing need for interaction and, among other things, to ensure that science remains impartial as well as independent.

The CEC will fund the action with 41.000 € per year to cover the cost for secretarial work, meetings, seminars and workshops, short term scientific missions (STM) and publications. Should the number of subscribed countries further increase, additional funds might be granted.

Further, Mr. Wintlev-Jensen referred to the TIST COST websites containing reports on earlier actions and a calendar of forthcoming events.

4. Presentation of the delegates

All participants of the new Cost 281 Action (see annex no. 2 or www.cost281.org, Memorandum of Understanding, COST 281) got the opportunity to present themselves, their respective position and special field of interest as well as their expectations towards the new action (see annex 3, list of participants).

5. Agreement on internal regulations and procedures of the committee

Mr. Wintlev-Jenson discussed the general regulations and procedures for the election of the chairman and his vice-chairs, the secretary and the steering committee within the EU CEC scheme. As these regulations are only meant as a rough guideline, he pointed out that it was up to the participants to establish their own rules for the election of chairpersons.

6. Election of chairperson and two vice-chairpersons

On the initiative of the chairman of the past COST 244bis action Arne Wennberg, Norbert Leitgeb from the Technical University of Graz, Austria, was proposed as chair of the new action COST 281. He was elected by unanimous vote without any abstention or objection. As the first vice-chair Arne Wennberg proposed Maila Hietanen, Finland, who was also elected by unanimous vote as well as the second vice-chair René de Seze, France, proposed by Arne Wennberg. All three accepted the election and Norbert Leitgeb officially took charge as chair of the inaugural meeting.

Norbert Leitgeb began by talking about the importance of the new action 281 specifying that he was not prepared to present new programmes or schedules but will rely on the preliminary work done by Ulf Bergqvist in preparation of COST 281 action and MoU.

7. Decision on secretariat and steering committee

Gerd Friedrich proposed as scientific secretary by Arne Wennberg too was elected by unanimous vote. Gerd Friedrich accepted the election.

During the following discussion participants agreed on establishing a steering committee consisting of ten members in total. Consequently, the assembly proposed and elected the following six representatives (by unanimous vote): Thomas McManus (Ireland), Yngve Hamnerius (Sweden), Paolo Vecchia (Italy), Georgy Thuroczy (Hungary), Luc Verschaeve (Belgium) and Joe Wiart (France). All candidates accepted the election except Luc Verschaeve who explained that he needed the (in the meantime given) approval of his organisation.

The task of the steering committee will be to establish permanent working-groups. Proposals on this issue can be brought forward until the next management committee meeting.

8. Presentation of COST 281-related activities by each delegate

In favor of in-depth discussion on the future working schedule participants agreed not to launch into lengthy presentations of their research activities. Instead they will submit written information to the secretary to be included in the COST 281 database.

9. Programme discussion, overall time schedule and organisation of the action's activities

Norbert Leitgeb pointed to the importance of emphasizing – similar to the earlier actions COST 244 and 244bis – that COST 281 strictly defines as an independent and unbiased organisation; however, this definition must be confirmed by good and reliable scientific efforts.

Statements in behalf of COST 281 should be issued exclusively by the steering committee based upon decisions of the management committee. COST 281 should serve as a forum for discussion and as a “watch dog” providing advice to EU CEC and other support-seeking organisations.

The steering group shall provide a list of actions to be decided upon at the next management meeting which – following the proposal made by Guglielmo d’Inzeo - will be held in Rome in spring 2002. All participants agreed that the new action should be based on the “aim of action” presented by Ulf Bergqvist in Helsinki during the EBEA congress in September 2001 (see annex 4 or www.cost281.org.) Further, the steering committee should use the forum of the “Joint EU-Japan-Korea-US Scientific Workshop” to discuss the outlines of the actions to be seized in near future by COST 281.

According to Norbert Leitgeb, COST 281 should encourage Short Term Missions (STM) to respond to current demands as successfully was done by the former COST 244bis action. The assembly shared his opinion. As a first STM action a commentary to the “Hyland report to the STOA of the European parliament” shall be presented. Tom McManus announced that there will be an official request for this expertise by the Irish Ministry.

10. Relationship between COST 281 and other activities

The assembly confirmed the need for maintaining good relations with other organisations such as WHO, ILO, IARC, ICNIRP, CEN/CENELEC, IEEE, IEC, ICOH, URSI, BEMS; EBEA, and other COST actions. Norbert Leitgeb promised to contact all mentioned organisations in order to publicise the official launch of COST 281 combined with an offer for cooperation.

11. Next MC meetings/workshops

The next workshop in which COST 281 will participate, will be a closed joint workshop (participation is limited) of BFE and FGF dealing with “microdosimetry” taking place in December 2001 in Dresden.(see annex 5). (Interested parties should contact with Gerd Friedrich (friedrich@fgf.de))

As mentioned above, the first management committee meeting will be held in Rome next spring. The exact date will be shortly announced via e-mail and via internet (www.cost281.org).

12. Other

?? **Joint EU-Japan-Korea-US Scientific Workshop.**

?? As a follow-up event to two earlier meetings, the EU CEC will host a joint meeting including representatives from Japan, Korea and the USA in Brussels, October 29 - 30. Its objective will be to coordinate activities in the field of EMF research; it will be held as a closed **Joint EU-Japan-Korea-US Scientific Workshop**. The purpose of the workshop is to present and discuss the scientific background of the current debate on this topic as well as of various associated political issues aiming for an international perspective. Specifically, the workshop will address the „state of the art“ concerning mobile telephony and health; emerging technological developments (e.g. 3G/UMTS technology); scientific information as a basis for risk communication and the development of relevant policies; national and international outlooks for future research related to health aspects of electromagnetic fields (EMF), and possibilities of co-operation.

?? The first day of the two-days-workshop will be devoted to presentations of the current “state-of-the-art”, chaired by Leeka Kheifets.

?? Cost 281 was asked to organise the second day of the meeting dealing with the topic “Research agenda for the future” and including issues like: importance of WHO-EMF project, outcome of 5th framework programme, coordination of national research programmes, etc. The event will be chaired by Graham Worsley. In the afternoon there will be an open

discussion among delegations about opportunities and modalities for international coordination and cooperation.

?? **Co-operation with ISPRA**

- ?? On initiative of ISPRA a meeting took place prior to the inaugural meeting of COST 281 to exchange views on co-operations between COST 281 and ISPRA on the issue initiated by the former COST 244bis STM "Mobile telecommunication base station – exposure to electromagnetic fields". (see annex 6; paper on ISPRA objectives).

Gerd Friedrich
Scientific secretary