



## **Minutes**

### **COST 281 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING, PARIS, SEPTEMBER 20 AND 21, 2004**

The MC meeting was attended by 62 participants on September 20, and by 63 participants on September 21. In his speech, chairman Norbert Leitgeb addressed the following issues:

#### **Membership in COST 281**

Actual number of members: Now 24 signatories of the COST 281 MoU with Estonia. Portugal has announced it will apply for membership. All participants had consented to accept Portugal as a new member prior to the meeting, as soon as the membership application was filed. At present, more than 221 entities are engaged in the COST 281 action.

#### **Joint EU/Japan/Korea/USA meeting June 2004 in Washington, DC**

The chairman reported that COST 281 had represented the EU in this series of meetings. Previous meetings had been held in Brussels and in Japan. There had been a useful exchange of views, but it was unfortunate that Chinese delegates had not been able to attend due to visa problems. The next meeting would be held in November 2005 in Seoul.

#### **ICNIRP**

The chair reported that the Blue Book in RF was in preparation

#### **Steering Committee**

Rene de Seze (France) was retiring from the steering committee due to heavy workload. Gunhild Oftedal (Norway) was elected as his replacement. The chairman also advised that Tom McManus (Ireland) had retired.

#### **Short Term Scientific Missions**

The chair confirmed that STSM's having identified issues that were still unresolved had become working groups. Graham Worsley suggested that this was a good opportunity to consider launching new STSM's. There was the possibility that the new COST line up would be in favor of proposals to launch new STSM's even if not included in the budget. He suggested that specific information about STSM's, how long and for which activities funding would be available, should be circulated to MC members.

#### **Statistics WG**

Joe Wiart reported progress in establishing this WG, and invited nominations for a statistician to attend.



### **Associated workshops**

Gerd Friedrich reported that there would be a closed workshop in Schriesheim, near Heidelberg, Germany, held jointly with FGF: "Are RF Fields able to raise the risk of cancer?" The WHO workshop on hypersensitivity will be held in Prague, on October 25-27; a workshop in Finland is also planned for spring 2005. It will deal with the topic of high-throughput array methodology.

Dina Simunic requested more detail on associated events, particularly on who could attend, and that MC members should be able to attend if an event was held under the auspices of COST 281. She criticized the ICES event having taken place after the Paris workshop for being by invitation only, and said that if COST 281 members could not attend then events should not be associated with COST 281. Norbert Leitgeb answered that due to the limited number of attendees, you should apply very quickly, since the earliest applications would be considered.

### **Next COST 281 workshop**

The next workshop and MC will be held at the ETH, Zurich, on 17-18 February 2005 in conjunction with the EMC symposium, which will take place on 14-18 February. Offers to host the Autumn 2005 meeting were invited. Norway was suggested.

### **Research matrix and EMF Net questionnaire**

The Chairman said that a matrix of research expertise would be circulated, and asked members to complete the questionnaire on new technologies that had been sent out and was circulated at the meeting.

### **Report of the COST 281 secretariat**

As secretary, Gerd Friedrich reported on the budget of the action. In the current financial period, 71,371 euros have been spent for activities. The secretariat produced three newsletters, which were circulated to the members and other interested parties. According to the rules of the action, progress reports and work plans were delivered to the respective bodies of EU. The secretariat tries to be as fast as possible in providing information about the action via the internet (see [www.cost281.org](http://www.cost281.org)).

### **Future of COST 281**

The chairman addressed the action inviting views on whether or not there was a need for a continuation of COST 281, bearing in mind the FP6 EMF-Net. The action was due to close by June 2006. Gunhild Oftedal pointed out that EMF-Net did not include non-EU members. Graham Worsley reminded the MC of the different philosophy behind COST actions, particularly its bottom-up approach, whereas EMF-Net has a more rigid structure and has to deliver the objectives agreed in the proposal. EMF-Net was fully funded, whereas COST only funded specific activity. Joe Wiart said it was important to have a forum to discuss specific issues such as exposure of children.



Graham Worsley later suggested a possible name for a new action: "Scientific problems in human interaction with RF EMF's". He said this name confirmed and would stand for the way COST 281 has evolved, and allow for specific WG's to be established e.g. on children.

### **Afonso Ferreira – COST TC TIST Secretary**

Afonso Ferreira welcomed the opportunity to speak to the COST 281 MC, and explained some of the changes that had taken place in the management of COST. He said he was keen to minimise bureaucracy, but that this was not always possible. In particular now they had devolved responsibility to the ESF, the Commission was asking for quarterly reports from all actions: a spreadsheet, a 1/2 page scientific report and lists of all items of expenditure larger than 3000 euros.

He reminded the MC that they were the "legal body" and not the steering committee. The TC TIST was the only COST Committee that had a concept of a devolved secretariat for the actions [all other COST Committees e.g. transport, had a scientific secretary based in Brussels who arranged workshops, allocated funding etc.] He said that continuing with the TC TIST model that allowed COST actions to manage their own affairs might require justification. He also said they were interested in finding new instruments [in addition to the existing workshops and STSM's]. One suggestion that had been made was for training schools. He was keen to try to double the budget for COST in FP7, and meanwhile advised that there was funding available for new STSM's. The duration of a STSM was up to one month.

He also said that a centralised web site had been suggested, but he wondered if this was suitable for the actions, which had their own sites. He was concerned to hear that COST 281 only funded one delegate per country. The chair explained that this had been a difficult decision that had been taken because of the lack of funds for the action, which was large with many active members. But in the future the action will follow the new guideline and reimburse two delegates out of each member state.

*Gerd Friedrich*  
*Secretary of COST 281*