



Communiqué on the e-IRG Workshop under Belgian EU Presidency

June 2024



The e-Infrastructure Reflection Group (e-IRG) was pleased to organize its Belgian EU Presidency Workshop, which was held as a hybrid event on June 5, 2024 at the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) in Brussels after the official Delegates meeting of e-IRG. This prestigious workshop, hosted by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO) and the Belgian National Research and Education Network-NREN (BELNET) as an official EU presidency event, took place within the framework of the “Conference on Research Infrastructures” and the “ESFRI Forum meeting,” echoing the successful format of the Lund events under the Swedish EU presidency. The workshop convened e-IRG stakeholders both in Brussels, Belgium, with around 100 participants from around the globe.

Theme: Sustainable e-Infrastructures for Research Results Valorisation

Aligned with one of the priorities of the Belgian EU Presidency on Research and Innovation being “Improving the valorisation of research results”, the overarching theme of the workshop was “Sustainable e-Infrastructures for research results valorisation.” The event comprised two key sessions:

Session 1: The e-Infrastructure Contribution to Data and Research Outputs Valorisation

Wednesday, June 5, 2024, 13:30-15:30

This session explored the pivotal role of e-Infrastructures in enhancing the valorisation of research results. Valorisation is the process of creating value from data and research outputs, transforming them into sustainable products and solutions that benefit society. This is crucial for bridging the innovation gap and aligning academic research with societal, policy-making, and industrial needs, thus stimulating the EU’s industrial recovery and revitalisation.

Contributions from various e-Infrastructure components were given, including generic (domain-agnostic) computing and data infrastructures such as EGI and OpenAIRE, highlighting how open infrastructures and open scholarly communication organisations can support and transform research outcomes, unlocking their value. Thematic contributions were also provided from the OSCARS cluster of clusters project, emphasizing the role of thematic (domain-specific) Research Infrastructures in the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) . The work of the EU Data Spaces Support Centre (DSSC) was also presented, highlighting the Data Spaces Blueprint Architecture and the links with EOSC. The global dimension was also given, as this is reflected in the Research Data Alliance and its set of activities around the RDA Global Open Research Commons.





In the discussion that followed, there was a debate about the progress of EOSC and how this is perceived by

the different stakeholders, and the fact that EOSC should be seen as a process. Also, on the EOSC scope and boundaries, which have not been clarified, allowing different interpretations, and the fact that it is a moving target, as it is shaped by new developments, such as the EOSC nodes ecosystem (national, EU, thematic, etc.) and their federation. One key message from the thematic communities was that in order to get EOSC to become successful, there is a need to “get Science back to EOSC”.

Session 2: Sustaining the Role of e-Infrastructures in EOSC and Beyond

Wednesday, June 5, 2024, 16:00-18:00

Building on the discussions from the Valencia e-IRG Workshop, and the animated discussions in the previous session, this session kicked-off presenting some highlights on the future of Research Infrastructures and the upcoming Work Programme. It addressed the sustainability of Research Infrastructures (RIs) and e-Infrastructures, an issue pertinent to the new ERA policy agenda 2025-2027.

The session navigated through the complex funding landscape, which now includes multiple streams beyond the Horizon Europe Framework Programme, such as the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF Digital), the Digital Europe Programme (DEP), national/regional funding instruments, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).

Key topics included the contribution of Research Infrastructures, particularly e-Infrastructures, to the EOSC Federation and the EOSC nodes ecosystem. The session underscored the importance of compute, storage, networking, and related (e-Infrastructure Commons) services, alongside value-added services for open science. The potential role of NRENs in EOSC was presented with the Belnet paradigm. The view from the recently established e-Infrastructure Assembly was also presented, being that there are long-standing “e-Infrastructure Commons” services that should continue to be reused, along with a human network and collaboration framework, including user and technical support. It is reminded that the e-Infrastructure Assembly is an informal body composed of representatives from EGI, EUDAT, GEANT, OpenAIRE and PRACE, along with e-IRG acting as an observer. It was one of the e-IRG Recommendations in the past and also recently as part of the [e-IRG White Paper 2022](#). Similar messages were presented as part of the newest e-IRG Paper entitled “[Recommendations on European e-Infrastructures for Research and Education](#)”.

The role of thematic Research Infrastructures in the EOSC nodes federated ecosystem was finally presented. Besides the process on the EOSC federation with EOSC Association handbook and the new EOSC Tripartite Group working on this, the main point of federating RIs into EOSC, is bringing “Science” back into the core of EOSC. RIs are the main scientific powerhouses of the EU, providers of high-quality scientific data, and such data and services need to be federated and made accessible across communities. EOSC has played a strong role in advancing Open Science and should be the community for Open Science practices and activities. Realizing Open Science in Europe necessitated coordinated efforts among e-Infrastructures and Research Infrastructures at both national and European levels. The panel discussed challenges and opportunities in this context.

The contributions of the invited speakers to session 1 came from Javier Lopez Albacete (EC/DG-RTD – acting as an RDA co-Chair), Tiziana Ferrari (EGI), Natalia Manola (OpenAIRE), Anca Hienola (FMI) and Clara Pezuela





(FIWARE). The contributions of the invited speakers to session 2 came from Cathrin Stover (GEANT), Dirk

Haex (Belnet), Ron Augustus (Surf), Jos van Wezel (EUDAT) and Andy Götz (ESFRI-EOSC TF/EOS). The two sessions were chaired by the e-IRG Chair Stefan Hanslik and the e-IRG co-Chair Chris de Loof, and the two panels by Ignacio Blanquer (e-IRG delegate Spain and EOSC-A director) and Roxanne Wyns (LIBIS/ KU Leuven). The detailed timetable with all the presentations are available in the corresponding Indico pages: [e-IRG Workshop under Belgian EU Presidency \(5 June 2024\): Timetable.](#)

e-IRG facilitated this important dialogue on the future of e-Infrastructures and research valorisation, by inviting all major stakeholders and interested parties to join this significant event, contributing to the advancement of these topics.

About e-IRG

The e-Infrastructure Reflection Group (e-IRG <https://e-irg.eu>) is a recognised advisory body in the area of e-infrastructures to the European Commission, Member States and Associated Countries. e-IRG was founded in 2003 and consists of national representatives nominated by the responsible ministries in the Member States and Associated Countries. e-IRG produces policy documents, which include recommendations to the various stakeholders. The concept of the e-Infrastructure Commons introduced in the e-IRG Roadmap 2012 and taken up further in the e-IRG White Paper 2013 and the document "National Nodes - Getting organised; how far are we?", is recognised as the foundation of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). The e-IRG White Paper 2021 identified some good practices in terms of coordination on institutional, national and regional level to further the implementation of the e-Infrastructure Commons. The e-IRG White Paper 2022 is taking the topic of coordination and collaboration further addressing the European e-Infrastructures and their interconnections.

The e-Infrastructure Reflection Group is dedicated to facilitating the development and sustainability of e-Infrastructures in Europe to foster research and innovation across all scientific disciplines.

e-IRG papers in Zenodo: [e-Infrastructure Reflection Group | Zenodo](#)

