I. BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

The proposed information has been developed by the Energy Community Secretariat. It reflects the performance of the Energy Community Work Programme for the period 2008–2009 as adopted by the Ministerial Council (Conclusion 5, Ministerial Council meeting 18.12.2007).

Major information concerning the performance on each of the Programme points is hereby presented (see Annex). The text follows the structure of the Work Programme and respectively the sequence of the priority areas as described in it.

The report reflects the status of performance as on 20.10.2009.

The report and its annex contain main summary information. For more details, the interested persons are invited to consult the Energy Community website, where all concrete implementation related reports, prepared by the Secretariat within the period 2008-2009, are publicly available.

II. KEY FINDINGS

The current status of implementation of the Work Programme of the Energy Community indicates the following major trends:

1. In general, the envisaged tasks are performed as specified. Partial differences in the time frame are to be noted, which, however, does not influence the substance of the performance.

2. There are no particular areas of concern related to the full implementation of the Work Programme by the end of 2009.
3. The performance of the tasks is sufficiently backed up financially, which also provided adequate framework for organizing more than 80 events within the Work Programme period as well as to launch by the day of this report most of the envisaged studies.

III. CONCLUSIONS

On this ground, it might be concluded that the Work Programme of the Energy Community represented a solid basis for promoting and achieving the objectives of the Treaty establishing the Energy Community. This is backed up by optimal financial means and ambitious but realistic tasks list, planned efficiently within the indicated time perspective.
The Energy Community Work Programme 2008-2009 includes activities, related to the following:

1. Activities of general nature towards the implementation of the Treaty
2. Electricity
3. Gas
4. ECRB Activities
5. Environment
6. Renewables
7. Competition
8. Security of Supply
9. Energy Efficiency
10. Investments
11. Social Dimension
12. Regional and Cross-border issues
13. Cross-cutting activities

In addition, the current report focuses on the activities, related to the Oil Dimension, which is explicitly referred to in general terms in the Energy Community Work Programme 2008-2009.

I. ACTIVITIES OF GENERAL NATURE TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY

1. Review of the Implementation of the Treaty

a) Official implementation reports were prepared and submitted to the PHLG and MC meetings, focusing on different aspects of the implementation process. For more details, the relevant documentation of the PHLG and MC meetings can be referred to.

b) Further to the reporting as above, the implementation process was actively supported by the Secretariat via missions on the spot and operational consultations with all Contracting Parties and some of the Observer countries, as well via Workshops dedicated to the particular areas.
Concrete support by the Secretariat in developing primary and secondary legislation and in developing market rules was provided to most of the Contracting Parties. This was organized via:

- Discussions with the relevant stakeholders during the missions in the Contracting Parties;
- Analysis of draft legislation and market rules as prepared by the Contracting Parties.

It should be noted that – unlike the starting period of activities after the Treaty entered into force – there was gradual change of the approach by the Secretariat when working with the Contracting Parties. While within the initial phase the aim of the Secretariat was to help the Contracting Parties to outline common approach towards the implementation process (via e.g. templates of roadmaps, training on issues of general nature etc.), within the Work Programme period in question more and more attention was paid to the individual needs of each Party. In parallel, however, the common approach towards issues of principle nature and interest was further intensified.

2. **Assistance to the Observers in the process of integration in the Energy Community**

a) The Secretariat has provided operationally information and administrative support to all Observer countries, which have so requested.

b) When requested, the Secretariat participated in the meetings, organized by the European Commission, for negotiations with Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine.

c) The Secretariat reviewed the drafts of the Electricity and Gas Laws of Republic of Moldova, as requested and discussed them in details during the mission in Chisinau.

d) The Secretariat participated at the meetings of the Working Group for drafting the Law on the Principles of the Functioning of the Market in Natural Gas in Ukraine.

3. **Development of Plans for bringing the Contracting Parties’ Network Energy Sectors in line with the Generally Applicable Standards of the European Community**

This work was started in 2008. Following the intensive activities on the topic and the guidance of PHLG, the Secretariat organized also a training workshop on the issue in February 2009. Further, the issue was discussed at two PHLG meetings. However, the work in this aspect must continue.
4. Analysis and development of a concept for institutional correspondence in relation to the implementation of the acquis under the Treaty – Article 24

Following previous discussions, including at the Workshop on the implementation of the Treaty (10-11.04.2008) and during the 8th PHLG meeting in June 2008, the Secretariat elaborated a Draft Decision on the adaptation of the acquis communautaire on electricity and gas to the institutional design of the Energy Community, which was reviewed by PHLG in September 2008. On this ground, the European Commission was invited to consider next steps as this is within its competence in accordance with Article 79 of the Treaty. The topic becomes more actual also in the context of the so called EU 3rd Energy Package. Thus, it is already envisaged that it will be targeted within the first half of 2010.

5. Dispute settlement

Upon proposal by the Secretariat, the Ministerial Council adopted Rules of Procedure for Dispute Settlement under Article 90 of the Energy Community Treaty. Under these Rules, the Secretariat has so far registered five cases upon complaint by energy companies. The Secretariat reports regularly to the Ministerial Council and the PHLG on the development of these cases.

In each case, the Secretariat has made an in-depth legal analysis and made concrete proposals for its resolution. As a matter of principle, the Secretariat will always sound out the possibilities for amicable settlement with the government concerned. This has led to intense cooperation and negotiations between the Secretariat, the respective government and the complainant in all five cases. This generally involves meetings on the spot with all relevant stakeholders. Following the Secretariat’s intervention, one case was resolved already in 2008. Another one is already at an advanced stage in the formal preliminary procedure (Reasoned Opinion in July 2009). In all pending cases, the Secretariat offers and provides full assistance and support to the domestic authorities – including regulatory authorities – to bring their legislation in line with the Energy Community acquis.

Not only does the dispute settlement mechanism constitute an important tool to foster compliance with the Energy Community Treaty, as has been acknowledged by the Ministerial Council for several times. It also allows the Secretariat, on behalf of the Energy Community, to assess the true state of implementation of Energy Community laws and assist the Contracting Parties in overcoming hurdles to full implementation.

II. ELECTRICITY

1. Monitoring activities in relation to the implementation of the acquis

a) Following their request, the Secretariat undertook on regular basis concrete missions in all Contracting Parties aiming at:
- monitoring and reviewing the proper implementation of the acquis;

- providing support to the Contracting Parties on development of primary and secondary legislation along the requirements of the Treaty.

b) Furthermore, the Secretariat assessed and commented draft acts of primary and secondary legislation in electricity prepared by several Contracting Parties, as to support their efforts in developing a legal framework in line with the Treaty requirements.

c) The findings and outcomes of the monitoring process were regularly reflected in the implementation reports submitted to PHLG and MC.

2. Review of state of play and support to the Contracting Parties in the process of development and integration of the electricity market

a) The Secretariat targeted operationally these issues on a regular basis – thus, the topic was covered in separate Implementation reports both for PHLG and MC.

b) In addition, particularly within 2009 i.e. after the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of Coordinated Auction Office (December 2008), the regional approach was a key target. The process of development of the CAO where the Secretariat plays operationally coordination role, including via the support of the work of the ECRB CAO Implementation Group, turns to be important cornerstone and challenge for the Work Programme period for identifying regional cooperation in establishing the regional electricity market.

Although work in progress, there are concrete positive steps in this direction – still on administrative and coordination level – which, however, are necessary prerequisites for successful cooperation.

c) In addition, within the period in question some studies in relation to the electricity market development were finalized or their outcome is soon to be seen. These studies cover some of the most pressing issues, namely cross border trade of electricity and regional balancing.

III. GAS

1. Monitoring activities in relation to the implementation of the acquis

a) Within the period and following their request, the Secretariat undertook missions several times in all Contracting Parties. This was one of the tools, via which the Secretariat was permanently reviewing legislation and acts of strategic nature, prepared by some Contracting Parties as to follow its development along the Treaty requirements.
Besides, concrete assistance in drafting such legislation was provided. Thus, via the missions, the Secretariat performed concrete monitoring the implementation of the acquis.

b) Further, as till now, the Secretariat analyzed and commented draft primary and secondary legislation, prepared by the Contracting Parties, as to support their efforts in developing a legal framework in line with the Treaty requirements.

2. Review of state of play and support to the Contracting Parties in the process of development and integration of the gas market

a) Concrete support in implementing the relevant elements of the acquis as well as in drafting network codes was provided to the Contracting Parties.

b) Particular focus on the implementation of Regulation 1775/2005 was paid within the period as the deadline for its implementation expired by the end of 2008. The Secretariat organized also a training workshop on the issue in March 2009. However, still the results in this aspect are not sufficiently encouraging for the most of the Contracting Parties.

c) Further, concrete steps towards promoting the Energy Community Gas Ring as a key regional concept in the area of gas have been undertaken. This work, however, shall continue.

A move in this direction was also the decision of creating a separate Working Group. The PHLG (March 2009) noted the proposal of the Secretariat on the cooperation on gas infrastructure investments and the respective proposal to create a Gas Ring Group (replacing the existing the Joint Gas Working Group). The PHLG agreed with the proposed approach and requested to be regularly informed on the outcome of the discussions within the group. The focus of the Group shall be:

- To share information on the status of on-going and planned investment projects in gas transmission infrastructure and gas storage facilities;

- To discuss investment options and priorities as regards interconnections – within the overarching concept of Energy Community Ring.

d) The Secretariat has coordinated contribution of the Contracting Parties, even those without gas market currently, in the activities regard the GTE+ 10 years Network Development Statement. The activities will continue, as well as the coordination by the ECS side, in order to integrate the all Contracting Parties into the picture of the future EU gas network.
IV. ECRB ACTIVITIES

The main activities of the ECRB in the Work Programme period follow the ECRB Work Programme 2008-2009, which is subject to a separate report. From the point of view of the Energy Community Secretariat, it should be noted that the ECRB activities were supported actively by the ECRB Section of the Secretariat. In 2008 and the first half of 2009 in the following major areas were addressed:

a) Gas:
   • The definition of conditions for the improvement of interconnection, interoperability, transparency and the harmonisation of operational rules for natural gas transportation
   • The development of a common regulatory approach for the development of the Energy Community Gas Ring
   • Interconnection and interoperability of transmission-and transit pipelines, capacity calculation and its transparency
   • The structure of a future common gas market in the Energy Community.

b) Electricity:
   • Congestion management and transmission capacity allocation
   • Regional balancing
   • Compatibility of market rules
   • Regional wholesale market opening
   • Harmonization of licensing regimes
   • Cross border cooperation of regulators in relation with investment projects of regional dimension

c) Costumers:
   • Best Practice Guidelines on the Protection of Vulnerable Households Customers
   • Quality of electricity service.
   • Tariffication methodologies, transparency of prices.
   • Good regulatory governance.

In addition, specific work was dedicated to supporting the setting up of a South East Europe Coordinated Auction Office (SEE CAO) via the SEE CAO Implementation Group providing a discussion platform for regulators, transmission system operators and traders on SEE CAO related aspects and progress.

V. ENVIRONMENT

The Secretariat continuously monitored the implementation of the parts of the acquis of which the implementation deadlines have expired, i.e. the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and the Wild Birds Directive. In March 2008, a workshop organized by the Secretariat provided in-depth training for the implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive. With respect to the application of this
Directive to concrete projects, the Secretariat, with the active participation of donors and the EC Commission, in 2009 started to become involved. In one Contracting Party, it arranged for individual training of senior environmental officials in an EU Member State.

As regards the Sulfur in Fuels Directive, the Large Combustion Plants (LCP) Directive and the Directive on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC), the Secretariat took stock of the situation within the Contracting Parties by sending out a questionnaire prepared by the European Commission. The results of this survey as well as challenges in the implementation process were discussed at a Workshop in March 2009 focusing on the LCP and IPPC Directive. The stocktaking will be continued well before the expiry of the implementation deadlines.

Furthermore, the Secretariat was actively involved in preparations for a structure allowing for multilateral efforts in climate change combating in the region. In October 2009, the Secretariat will contract a study on climate change mitigation in the Energy Community.

VI. RENEWABLES

The formal fulfilment of the envisaged obligations, related to the RES acquis under the Treaty, was noted almost two years ago, by submission of the Plans on implementation the Directive 2001/77/EC and the Directive 2003/30/EC. The Secretariat monitored the realisation of the Plans during 2008 and 2009 and reported about the progress achieved by the Contracting Parties to PHLG on regular basis. Upon the request, the technical assistance has been provided – on the spot, during the missions and by analysing the draft legislation.

The work in the area of renewable energy continued actively along the decisions of the Ministerial Council. Thus, following the principle decision of the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community in December 2008, concrete steps have been undertaken within 2009.


The objective of the study is to analyse the conditions and modalities for the development of renewable energy resources in the context of the implementation of the New Renewable Directive 2009/28/EC in the Contracting Parties of the Treaty establishing the Energy Community. The study concerns not only the Contracting Parties, but also Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Turkey, as candidate countries to the accession to the Energy Community.

The tasks to be performed under the study concern:

- Task 1 – Review the current state of development of renewable energy in each of the Contracting Parties and candidate Contracting Parties;
- Task 2 – Analysis of the impact of the new requirements of the Renewable Directive have for the Contracting Parties and Candidate Contracting Parties considering the available renewable energy potential and the provisions for cooperation among EU Member States and Contracting Parties as foreseen in the New Renewable Directive;
- Task 3 – Calculation of targets to be achieved by 2020, based on the methodology prepared by the European Commission;
- Task 4 – Evaluation of the costs associated with the fulfilment of the mandatory targets referred to under Task 3, assessment of the investment opportunities, the associated employment possibilities, GHG savings and reduction in fossil fuel consumption.

2. Steps towards institutionalizing the activities on promoting the Renewable Energy

In June 2009, the Ministerial Council established a Task Force on Renewable Energy as an expert team that will assess the impact of the new EU Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources in the Contracting Parties and candidate Contracting Parties of the Energy Community. Thus, procedurally, the RE TF will investigate and propose to the PHLG the modalities for a possible further adoption by the Ministerial Council of the new Renewable Directive within the Energy Community Treaty.

RE TF is expected to build on the existing knowledge, legal and institutional framework in the renewable energy already in place in the region covered by the Treaty in order to facilitate the Energy Community to act in accordance with its Article 35. Furthermore, the Task Force shall use as additional information the one provided via a special study on the impact and modalities for further adoption in the Energy Community Treaty.

A dedicated workshop for the kick-off the new initiatives in promotion of the renewable energy in the Energy Community has been organized by the Secretariat in April 2009.

The 1st RE TF meeting has been held on October 8, 2009 and the Work Programme for the period 2009-2011 including the task to support capacity building in the area of Renewable Energy to be fulfilled in cooperation with the Donors Community has been adopted.

The 1st RE TF meeting concluded that intensified efforts in assessing the modalities for implementation of the Directive 2009/28/EC has to be made in the upcoming period. The 2nd RE TF meeting is planned at the end of February 2010 with the aim to agree on the adaptations of the Directive 2009/28/EC that will be submitted to the PHLG for consideration.

VII. COMPETITION

The Secretariat continuously monitored the implementation of the competition acquis, focusing not only on the substance of the laws on competition and State aid, but also on procedural efficiency and case law in the energy sectors. To this end, the Secretariat
engaged in an active dialogue with competition authorities in all Contracting Parties. The first Energy Community Competition Workshop, organized in 2008 with some 80 participants, focused on the relation between sector energy law and general competition law and the challenges of applying them by the competent institutions. One of the key objectives of the Workshop was to better involve competition authorities in the regulation of the energy sectors and to enhance their cooperation with the national regulatory authorities.

With respect to State aid, the Secretariat will contract a study on the existence and impact of State aid in the electricity sector in October 2009.

VIII. SECURITY OF SUPPLY

In this relation, the Secretariat followed the conclusions of the PHLG and the MC – particularly those taken in 2008 with explicit focus on the Procedural Act on the Establishment of a Security of Supply Coordination Group.

A List of Representative Organizations, proposed by the European Commission in line with Article 2(4) of the Procedural Act on the Establishment of a Security of Supply Coordination Group, was also agreed.

The first meeting of the Security of Supply Coordination group was organized in the frame of the Gas Forum (September 2009).

Substantial amount of analytical work was done by the Secretariat along the participation in work of the Gas Coordination Group in EU, on behalf of the Contracting Parties. Especial efforts were done in the context of the gas crisis in January 2009, and currently in the preparation of the Contracting Parties towards the winter outlook for 2009/2010.

The steps undertaken by the Contracting Parties so far along the Roadmaps for implementation of Directives 2005/89/EC and Directive 2004/67/EC were discussed in the context of information, prepared by the Secretariat. It was recalled that – considering that the deadline for implementation is end of 2009 - the implementation of the two directives requires special attention.

Upon to the request of the Gas Forum, the Secretariat started with assessment of the Contracting Parties’ needs in order to comply with the planned measures of the new Security of Supply Regulation, in preparation, repealing the Directive 2004/67/EC. An initial report should be passed to the PHLG meeting to take place in December 2009.

IX. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Within the period, the Energy Efficiency Task Force was the major player, working in the field of energy efficiency along the mandate, approved by the Ministerial Council in 2007 and subsequently extended, and along the Work Programme of the Task Force.

At the 6th Task Force meeting on 5 May 2009, the acting Chair presented the results in the realization of the Task Force’s Work Programme and concluded that this was
accomplished and went beyond the requirements; this refers to the preparation of the Energy Efficiency Action Plan by each Contracting Party, based on the model prepared as part of the Work Programme.

Regarding the three end-use Directives under consideration (energy services, energy performance in buildings and energy labeling), the Task Force expressed clear opinion that it is feasible to include these in the Acquis enforceable under the Treaty establishing the Energy Community, through a relevant Decision of the Ministerial Council. Thus, such a decision will be submitted to the Ministerial Council in December 2009.

Based on the members’ progress report, additional technical assistance for the finalization and implementation was offered by the GTZ thought its new regional programme Open Regional Fund – Energy; this offers also a capacity building and institutional strengthening component for the implementation of the Plans.

In the area of energy efficiency in buildings (public and residential), the Task Force received valuable assistance from the SYNENERGY Programme (jointly funded by USAID and Hellenic Aid). This came in form of assistance for the preparation of the Energy Efficiency Action Plan – the buildings component, but also as training for investments planning for energy efficiency in buildings.

X. INVESTMENTS

On the ground of the list of priority infrastructure projects, as adopted by the Ministerial Council in December 2007, the Secretariat continued monitoring the development of the projects via regular information, collected from the Contracting Parties, as well as public information sources and the donors’ community reports. The outcome of this monitoring was regularly presented to the PHLG and the Ministerial Council.

Further to this, the engagement of the Energy Community in the area of investments went through a set of key investment related events. This refers mostly to the highest level investment conferences, which are now established annual events. Within the Work Programme period, these were organized in Prishtina and in Sarajevo (co-organized with EBRD), bringing together each time more than 120 people, representing governments, regulators, private investors, international financial institutions etc.

The highest political level participation was one of the marks of the event.

In the area of investments, the Secretariat also worked to support in practical terms the Contracting Parties in relation to development of concrete projects. Thus, e.g. work was done with the Steering Committee of the Infrastructure Projects Facility and the Contracting Parties to propose solid infrastructure projects for the technical assistance offered under the IPA Investment Project Facility. Up to date, five projects have been approved in 2008-2009 and are being implemented, and eleven have been submitted for the 3rd selection round in October 2009.
XI. SOCIAL DIMENSION

The Assistance to the Contracting Parties by ECS for the implementation of Article 3 of the Electricity and Gas Directives are permanent subject of discussions within the overall implementation of the two directives. Further, they are targeted by the ECRB and its Customer Working Group.

Both the 1st Social Forum (18-19 November 2008 in Tirana) and 2nd Social Forum (13-14 October 2009, Zagreb) outlined the need for further focus on promoting the cooperation among the social partners on national and regional level, as well as on vulnerability as key focus of attention.

The Secretariat assisted the Contracting Parties’ work in all these aspects, including with the organisation of two training workshops, with the financial support of the EC TAIEX Programme, for preparation of the national Social Action Plans. Most Contracting Parties are very advanced with their Plans, and also each identified the Social Acquis which will serve as the basis for their social policy development.

As a particular focus of attention to the social issues in the Energy Community context and following invitation by the Secretariat, Mrs. Meglena Kuneva, EU Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, visited its premises on 15.05.2009 and delivered a lecture on the topic ‘MAKING ENERGY MARKETS WORK FOR CONSUMERS’.

XII. REGIONAL AND CROSS-BORDER ISSUES

In addition to the work, outlined in brief under the items on electricity, gas and security of supply as above, the Secretariat was operationally managing the studies, launched by the Energy Community, related explicitly to the CAO. These studies focus on legal, technical and financial requirements for establishing a Coordinated Auction Office for cross border capacities in the Region. First results from these studies have been presented by the consultants to the 14th Athens Forum in May 2009.

XIII. OIL

At its meeting in December 2008, the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community decided on establishing the Oil Dimension of the Energy Community by extending the Treaty to oil under concrete conditions.

In addition, an Oil Forum was established as to advise the Energy Community on matters related with the oil sector. It was decided that the Oil Forum shall meet annually.

The first Oil Forum met in Belgrade on 24-25 September 2009. Prior to this, the Energy Community benefited from a very efficient workshop, organized by HANDA (the Oil Stock Company of Croatia) and the IEA.
A major focus of attention of the work along the Oil Dimension is linked to analysis of the status quo and eventual inclusion of the acquis to be implemented of the relevant EU Oil Stocks Directive, which shall be concretely considered by the Ministerial Council in 2010.

The discussions so far clearly outlined the importance of the oil stocks in the context of the overall security of supply, which was proved in concrete terms during the gas crisis in January 2009. Two concrete issues were agreed to be of utmost concern - institution building and the cooperation between the governmental institutions and the private business.

**XIII. CROSS – CUTTING ACTIVITIES**

Achievements out of the cross-cutting activities being supportive function to all other areas of work are in first line linked to the areas of event management, website administration and its maintenance, establishment of internal working procedures and others.

1. As regards event management the Secretariat so far has supported the organization of some 80 events; little less than 10 events are still planned by the end of 2009 – for a first time a workshop on statistics as new area of activity is planned. This includes both administrative and substance preparations. However, the Secretariat would like to explicitly underline the very important, constructive and efficient support by the Presidency and the Vice-Presidency of the Energy Community, as well as by the donors. The cooperation is essential and paves way to the smooth conduct of all Energy Community events.

2. The event administration has undergone further process related improvement particularly in 2009. Major achievements are noted as the procedures relevant for the event registration are concerned (on-line registration) as well as web based access to the meetings’ related documents. To this end, the possibility to subscribe for the latest uploads in the area of one’s interests helps the user to stay better up to date with the latest policy developments.

3. Based on the requirements of the Work Programme of the Energy Community and its relevant institutions (like ECRB), the work on studies launched in 2008 and 2009 (see Annex 3) was conducted by the Secretariat (public procurement, study management and evaluation etc.).

4. The Secretariat and its general functions of administration and legal actively supported work of the Budget Committee establishment on 30 January 2008, which meets regularly several times a year.

5. Last but not least – substantial change to improving the visibility of the Energy Community and its activities has been achieved. The 1\textsuperscript{st} edition of the Energy Community Legal Framework and the Energy Community Factsheet were published November 2008 and March 2009 respectively. Both documents can be downloaded on-
line (Press and Public Information – section of the Energy Community website). Furthermore, regular news items accompany the process (News – section of the Energy Community website). The news items outline the key conclusions of the Energy Community events, inform about the latest policy developments and visits at the Secretariat. Whilst 50 news items were posted on-line in 2008, the number of news items amounted to 62 by mid October 2009. Further to the news items, the time period 2008-2009 has been marked by ongoing increase in issued press releases, interview and information requests.

In addition, the Secretariat undertakes periodically initiatives to provide more information to national authorities from the Contracting Parties and Observers (ministers, regulatory authorities), ambassadors, non-governmental institutions etc. Together with the Regional Cooperation Council, it also organizes half a day parliamentary workshops, where the parliamentarians dealing with energy policy issues are briefed about the Energy Community process.

Furthermore, the Director of the Secretariat as well as its experts represented the Secretariat at high-level conferences, academic lectures and similar events, thus enhancing the visibility of the Energy Community in the region and beyond.

Following the Secretariat’s initiative, all international organizations, dealing with energy and located in Vienna, were united in September 2009 in the so called “Vienna Energy Club”, where they can exchange views and information on their work as to provide for more efficiency and to avoid overlapping. The initiative was strongly supported by the Austrian governmental institutions.