

EOSC Tripartite Governance Meeting

16 April 2024, Brussels

Report

The fifth EOSC Tripartite Governance Meeting was organised by the Belgian EU Presidency and brought together 57 participants from the European Commission, the EU Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) that make up the EOSC Steering Board, as well as representatives of the EOSC Association.

The meeting was opened by the Belgian Secretary General of the Flemish Authority's Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), followed by a video message from the European Commissioner Ivanova. These opening words were followed by the welcome of the EC, the country co-chair of the EOSC-SB and the President of the EOSC Association.

As the next item on the agenda, the EC presented the status on the development and deployment of the **EOSC EU Node**. The contracted consortia started their activities in mid-February. An extensive handover of content from the EOSC portal most recently further developed in the context of the EOSC Future project to the EOSC EU Node has now taken place and the launch of the EOSC EU Node web presence is scheduled for the second half of April. The EOSC EU Node roadmap foresees the development, deployment and testing of the various components of the EOSC EU Node until late summer 2024, with the EOSC EU Node planned to be launched by mid-August 2024 and presented during the EOSC Symposium 2024 (21-23 October in Berlin) as a key event for wider outreach.

Towards the development of the **EOSC Federation**, important efforts have been undertaken to prepare for the formation and enrolment of national, regional, thematic and institutional nodes and service providers. The EOSC Association presented the work to establish the Node concept with their members and to develop specifications for the operationalisation of the EOSC Federation (an 'EOSC Federation Handbook'). The aim of the handbook is to cover the essential elements of the EOSC Federation such as its purpose, its value propositions, the description of a node, and the rules for joining and governance. To align efforts, create greater synergies and ensure coherence among the many EOSC stakeholders, it was proposed to set up a group under the umbrella of the tripartite governance, composed of experts to be nominated by the three parties. Initially its main task will be to prepare commonly agreed positions, to support the decision making and strategic guidance of the Tripartite governance on issues related to the EOSC Federation, such as the requirements and procedures for

enrolling a candidate node and the rules and policies to be applied across the Federation. The group shall support the process towards the formation and efficient functioning of the federated web of data and services, EOSC, involving all relevant stakeholders. The EOSC Association will coordinate the further evolution of the handbook by including writing contributors and experts, with the oversight and endorsement of the EOSC Tripartite group. The aim is to have a mature draft of the handbook ready to be tabled at the November European EOSC Tripartite meeting.

All parties welcomed and supported the proposal to set up a group composed of members of the EOSC SB Policy Subgroup, the EOSC Association, the EC and other external experts as needed.

As a recommendation for the further work of the group and the tripartite governance in general, the participants of the meeting suggested that:

- Members of the EOSC SB should consult in their own countries and consider with their own stakeholders and constituencies which elements are necessary to form their own national nodes or other nodes originating from their own country.
- The diversity of countries regarding the development of the EOSC Federation and the specification of the EOSC node requirements should be considered.
- The purpose and characteristics of the EOSC nodes and the EOSC Federation should be further worked out.
- Open Science and research data management activities should build on existing initiatives and experiences and capitalise on the extensive experience and investments in research infrastructures.
- Emphasis should be put on the identification of the most relevant partners/stakeholders for EOSC.
- The added value of EOSC, its opportunities and the benefits for Member States and institutions to invest in EOSC and to upgrade their infrastructures should be articulated.
- A transparent process for the identification of potential candidate EOSC nodes should be developed, the requirements, tasks and responsibilities for becoming a candidate EOSC node and the further processes for the implementation of the EOSC Federation should be defined. This includes clear communication and management of expectations. The optimal geometry and number of nodes should be worked out in order to create a solid federated structure.

The participants decided to establish the proposed Tripartite Group and to define its composition and working procedures at a first meeting at the end of April.

Following the resolutions of the last Tripartite Event in Madrid in November 2023, the discussions of **EOSC post-2027** were based on the refined analysis of the institutionalised scenario based on a Joint Undertaking and the non-institutionalised scenarios based on the current legal framework. It summarises the legal, procedural, financial and technical details of a Joint Undertaking, as well as further information on the non-institutional scenarios with focus on how the EC can provide support through a Framework Partnership Agreement and

via the possibility to entrust EU budget to an external entity through Contribution Agreements. This analysis was the result of several meetings between the EOSC SB Policy Subgroup, the EOSC Association and the EC.

The topic was introduced by the EC and the EOSC Association, which appreciated the constructive cooperation of all parties involved in the tripartite governance over the past months and underlined the importance of the commitment of all EOSC stakeholders, in particular the MS and AC. The EOSC Association suggested to analyse in more detail the option of an institutional partnership based on Art. 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, after having met with two organisations that are based on that article.

It was agreed to focus on successfully setting up and rolling out the EOSC Federation, as this would facilitate decision making regarding the most appropriate future governance and financing model. For the time being, strategic considerations on EOSC Post-2027 could be based on further elaborating on the principles required for a successful and sustainable implementation of EOSC, considering the relevance of all stakeholders and aspects. In view of successfully setting up the EOSC Federation there was agreement on the importance of developing a common understanding among all stakeholders in order to make an informed decision on the way forward. Comparisons with other networks, initiatives and fora would be helpful, and the individual scope, roles and funding mechanisms of these examples should be carefully considered and reflected in the context of EOSC. In discussing the proposal for a configuration with low entry barriers for MS/AC to join, particularly in terms of budgets, it was recalled that the current form of governance follows this approach and that it was decided beforehand to establish something more stable and sustainable with a higher level of involvement by MS/AC.

The successful initial establishment of the EOSC Federation and its *de facto* operability will help to define the necessary commitments, financial resources and forms of governance. Therefore, the focus in the coming months should be on the development of the EOSC Federation and its respective elements, taking into account all relevant aspects and investments that will be required for the establishment of EOSC Nodes and their enrolment in the EOSC Federation. This development should be guided by the Tripartite Group to be set up as agreed at this meeting, which will form the basis for more frequent discussions, considering the views and needs of all stakeholders and MS/AC. The operation and validation of the EOSC federation by the scientific community will also facilitate the discussions on the future governance and financing model of the EOSC. This discussion needs to continue in parallel to this development.

The participants agreed to continue the work through regular meetings of the Tripartite Group and to present the first results at the next European Tripartite Meeting to be held in Hungary in November 2024.

The meeting was closed by final statements from the Co-Chairs of the Tripartite Governance.