

"Possibilities for European Commission cooperation support in positron research including EPOS within the Framework 6"

(by Zsolt Kajcsos)

The present time is in a way an "interregnum" with respect to the European Commission supports given for research and development and cooperation in science, as the Framework 5 area ends just this December, and the new area, called Framework 6 or, more expressively "European Research Area" is still not published in the final form. However, the ideas are being planned, the basic rules are being set, and some essential information is already available at

<http://europa.eu.int>

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research>

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/era/index_en.html.

I have also some preliminary information from meetings I have previously attended, also as the member of the COST (*Cooperation in Science and Technology*) Technical Committee for Physics. With the help of a Power Point presentation I am going to give some details, which will be probably quite near to the final lines and numbers, but I do not think that they should be repeated here. Instead, I would like to mention that, as already announced, there will be a large-scale conference in Brussels (11-13 November 2002),

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2002/index_en.html,

where the Framework 6 program will be launched.

Checking the basic intentions of the plans, it becomes clear that the two main modes of support will be to belong to an

Integrated Networks (IP)

or to a

Networks of Excellence (NoE).

Furthermore, it turns out that there will be one priority topic, which is fully compatible with most of the research done (and to be done) with the various methods of positron annihilation spectroscopy (PAS): this is the one characterized by the terms:

nanotechnology, multifunctional materials, production

Clearly, in our case the first expression is not only a slogan which we want to impose on our research.

If you visit those web- sites and the connected links, you will find out that the final documents are still not available, they are promised for the end of September –early October.

In addition to the large-scale support available for applications with a well-developed scientific project and broad European participation, the other, much looser possibility for cooperation will be also maintained. This is the COST- EUREKA cooperation system, which gives only a very moderate support enabling to held small-scale workshops or to finance some short study trips. However, the great advantage of those schemes is that they generally lead to the elaboration of a common project which will gain successfully the intended support. Furthermore, those groups, who take part in European Commission-acknowledged cooperation generally more easily (and successfully) apply for support in their homeland.

I would like to mention at this place that in 2001 at the Bratislava Positron Workshop on Polymers there was a suggestion from Charles Dauwe for a COST Project proposal, and his initiative was followed with quite a lot of enthusiasm for a while by some of us. The present situation is still the stage of the “sleeping beauty”, as Frans Maurer has taken over the coordination but, due to his other new engagements, he has not pressed strong enough some perspective cooperation partners for written contributions to the proposal. It was also a problem that there was an intention to include practically the whole application spectrum of PAS, whereas Frans wanted to limit it to his field, to polymers. However, we should keep this option in mind!!!!

My estimation of the present situation with respect to EPOS is the following:

we should prepare the ground to be able to apply for support for the EPOS cooperation, as soon as possible. However, without having the actual experimental possibilities at our disposal, the position is weak. In order to strengthen this position, and also to signal the seriousness of our intentions, we should possibly build a loose Committee of the users (or even a Steering Committee and a technical Committee), which should also work indeed together to put forward sound scientific proposals. Furthermore, we should not forget that in the present stage of preparation and design work, some essential decisions will have to be met, which will influence the performance of EPOS. It would be probably advantageous to arrive to the optimal decisions via fruitful discussions among the people who may positively influence these proceedings. To this aim, and also for an indirect support to the perspective partners at their home laboratories (as we have to realize that it will be maybe three years to achieve the stage when not only the home resources might be available!!!), I would like to call serious attention and considerations to these questions, but warning ourselves also at the same time that a proper balance should be found and we should not overdo things! A demonstration of broad participation from all Europe, from East and West, but also from the North and South would definitely give a good starting momentum.

It is for sure a gain, also for the EPOS project, if in the meanwhile there would be some other projects including PAS in any other form of European Commission-supported cooperation schemes. For this reason not only the above COST proposal, but any other possible option of topics other than polymers should be also considered. In the COST framework there are no pre-set preferences! By the way, any suggestion has to follow well-defined formal requirements, there should be a Memorandum of Understanding prepared, etc., but details might be easily learned e.g., from the COST home page and links there:

<http://cost.cordis.lu/src/home.cfm>

The Action Proposals are presented to the COST Technical Committee for Physics (which I have the honor to chair at the moment). After debating over the proposals (on the scientific value and actuality) with the inclusion of independent evaluators, a recommendation for support will be given to the Research Directorate General of the European Commission. (Our next meeting will be held in Brussels on the 15th of November, where we will be also informed about new guidelines for the coming years). Up till now, about half of the proposals was supported.