

Rationale

The role of the regional scientific co-operation among Southeast European countries and between them and the rest of Europe for revitalizing the national S&T&I systems and integrating them into European Research Area has been discussed on several fora¹. It has been recognized that the development of sound research collaborative projects in some fields of highest priority such as: life sciences, environmental sciences, material science, information and communication technology, problems of sustainable development etc might serve as a breeding ground for developing regional expertise, establishing centers and networks of excellence fostering the reinforcement and stabilization of human potential in science in these countries. The “**Euroscience Workshop on European Research Area, Regional Scientific Co-operation in Southeast Europe, pathways for stabilizing the RTD Potential**” is meant to explore further ways and practical means to support local and (inter) regional research activity. The role of grass-root scientists in this process is essential, and all bottom up initiatives of this kind should be encouraged by policy-decision makers, local and European, as well. Being a pan-European organization, Euroscience encourages the building of strong local sections mobilizing the grass-root scientists, science journalists and other strata in the society for further progress in constructing the European Research Area as *conditio-sine-qua-non* of the European knowledge based society.

The problems, including the delicate economic environment seem to be pretty similar in Eastern Europe, therefore stronger regional cooperative links could & should contribute to solving common problems.

¹ *Exempli gratia*: High-Level Expert Workshop on the preparation of FP 6, 11-12 December 2000, Vienna, Austria, UNESCO/AE/ESF Expert Conference on reconstruction of the scientific cooperation in South East Europe, Venice 24th/27th March 2001, Round Table of the ministers of science of the Southeast European countries held in the framework of the 31st general conference of UNESCO in Paris, 24th October 2001; Ministerial conference in Sofia, 3rd of December 2001; "Workshop on Co-operation in Research, Science and Technology with the SEE-Countries within the framework of the SAp" in Bad Honnef 14th/15th March 2002, High- level Conference at UNESCO, 4-5 April, Ministerial conference in Bucharest on 10th April 2002 Ministerial Conference, Sofia, 29-30 September 2003, High Level Officials Meeting, 20-22 February 2003, Thessaloniki, Greece

The recently created local sections in Bulgaria and Serbia& Montenegro should contribute together with the older one in Romania to the rebuilding of the scientific co-operation among the countries in Southeast Europe and between them and the rest of Europe.

This Workshop may not solve the problems but, hopefully, will trigger a chain of events that will eventually provide practical solutions leading to increasing motivation of young or/and experienced researchers to pursue a scientific career, most important, in connection with their home country.

This volume gathers the contributions to the Workshop as submitted by the authors by the deadline to match the ESOF 2004.