

Opening EGI Conference 2021 – Arjen van Rijn

I like to welcome you all warmly to this 2021 EGI Conference! It is still an online meeting, something we have by now come to find normal. I hope, however, that our EGI community will be able to meet each other face to face at some point in time.

Because that is what we are: a community. We have been working together for more than two decades. We are a federation of organizations providing resources for a common good: scientific research. We come from a legacy of federating computing infrastructure and are moving into federating infrastructure and research: software, data and applications. Federation is our core competence!

We see that the boundaries are blurring between the various ‘flavors’ of computing: High Throughput Computing, High Performance Computing, Cloud Computing, simply because research needs it. We see the concept of federation being taken up in industry, such as within the GAIA-X initiative. We see federation of data and applications to support data-intensive research communities. This all is there to enable Open Science, which is also the remit of the European Open Science Cloud. This is why I believe that there cannot be a distinction between EOOSC and e-infrastructures, as some people believe there is.

The EGI Federation rests on strong pillars, the NGIs. As I have stated many times before, I believe it is very important, that each of these national building blocks of the EGI federation, is well embedded in its own national e-infrastructure context. This national level is where I see that much of the consolidation of interests will take place. By the way: in the parallel session, ‘Envisioning the Future’, following this morning’s plenary, Fotis Karayannis will recap e-IRG’s work on these national nodes.

This consolidation of interests needs to be further worked out on the European level. I see that the EOOSC developments bring all interested partners together, allowing EGI to collaborate with other pan-European e-Infrastructures and research infrastructures.

Speaking of our members: this year we pay tribute to some anniversaries! In the upcoming plenary session, we will have our French colleague, Pierre Etienne, tell about 50 years of IN2P3 and our Croatian colleague, Ivan, about 50 years of SRCE. The Wednesday plenary will have Antonio Zoccoli tell about 70 years of INFN and in the closing plenary on Thursday our Czech colleague Helmut will recount on 25 years of CESNET. Of course I should note here, that my own home base Nikhef dates from 1946 and thus is now 75 years old 😊 .

We have some other good news to mention: Austria (through ACOnet) has been admitted as new participant of the EGI Federation and we will have the application of Lithuania on the agenda of the next Council meeting in November.

Having new participants, including scientific communities, really adds to our strengths. They push the boundaries of research and thereby the boundaries of the technologies needed. One of our new members, Sylvie Joussaume, Director of Research from CNRS, representing the ENES community, will give a keynote on Climate Modelling on Thursday.

I wish you all a fruitful conference! Thank you!