

SPOOR Group telecon - notes.

November 15, 2018 , 10.00 CET.

Present: Paco Colomer, Michael Garrett, Carole Jackson, Testi Leonardo, Izabela Rottmann, Tiziana Venturi, René C. Vermeulen, Michael Kramer, Jacqueline Casado Iglesias, Patrick Charlot, John Conway.

Apologies: Karl Schuster, Anton Zensus.

1) Welcome and introductions

The core group were joined by Ivar Smelds, Valdis Avotins and Juris Freimanis (Latvia).

2) EC pilot project update – AZ

EC meeting on 7 Sep - input provided on first draft. Draft not yet ready. Provided info to the EC on what RadioNet would like to see in the Call, and how the pilot might be organised. Funding agencies must be engaged but are not required to be financial beneficiaries of the award.

5 Nov. Opticon meeting - AZ joined online, IR gave a talk on Radionet and how it is structured. Opticon and Radionet are different in many ways, incl. governance. The nature of the pilot is still evolving in terms of what might be funded. Focus is still on TNA and how this can be funded in the future. Access to archives (and improving these - possibly via JRA activities) will be an important aspect of the Pilot. INSU-CNRS wishes to be the main coordinator and administrator of the award. It's important that the RadioNet partners make their views known to national funding agencies and other contact points w.r.t. role of INSU/CNRS. It is important the Opticon and RadioNet join the pilot on equal terms.

A WG will be set up to discuss the Pilot project with Opticon - TNA partners should suggest representatives. Not all of the current RadioNet partners will be part of pilot.

3) Discussion about personal visions of the coordination/organisation of European Radio Astronomy - some thoughts/comments that were aired:

- Advent of the SKA - potential huge impact on radio astronomy national

facilities in Europe.

- ELT made a huge impact on European optical astronomy.
- Observatories need to develop their own vision.
- Lots of entities running EU astronomy.
- Combine obs facilities cm/m into a single European service.
- mm=IRAM/ESO works fairly well.

JC: Nat. obs operate telescopes and nurture/develop expertise. We want to keep Nat. Obs. strong and productive. A layer of coordination on the European scale is required - common access point for users, a central office combining JIVE, EVN (VLBI), SKA European Regional Centre (ERC), LOFAR - funded by Nat. research councils. EU body needs to be a legal entity to engage funding agencies and secure finances - some kind of ERIC structure with a governing Council - we already have an ERIC JIVE - could be expanded in role (more than one ERIC - unlikely). Combining EVN=>JIVE (also not easy but an obvious first step)... still not realising the full potential of the EVN (e.g. broadbanding) - but with a better organisation, we can do a better job. LOFAR included as a next/further step? SKA (RC) support bundled with EVN++ support. This could be a body like ESO - some countries don't participate in all projects - sub-committees running different instruments/facilities/projects.

CJ: single centralised thing - is this an agile org?

MPIfR - MPI would not sign up to a strongly organised legal entity that would organise all of RA. Regional centres - universities - need flexibility - stronger collaboration in EU needed - yes, risk of creating a large unwieldy entity - having decoupled activities can sometimes actually help - SKA, VLBI, LOFAR - huge diversity of RA in Europe.

JC: didn't rule out bottom up activities - just a subset of RA where coordination needs to be very high.

JIVE is well set up to take on more responsibilities - not all of RA but certainly for EVN. Closer relation with EVN and JIVE - EVN board meeting 28/29th Nov - these ideas are on the agenda of both meetings. Seed of jive evolves.

ILT: RCV - ILT - priorities - consolidate operations, 2.0 upgrade, at that level we already need funding agencies engagement - ERIC is one possible instrument. But ILT has one major partner. LOFAR2.0 next step - a discussion similar to JIVE/EVN is perhaps a decade away from now.

Balance between coordination, strong impact RA and national facility interests.

INAF (TV): similar to JC views. energy going into SKA large - threat to EVN. Stronger role for JIVE would secure activities in Italy. Delicate decision, good recipe and balance is an issue. JIVE model is a good one - cooperation,

decision making by partners. Each partner has their say.

JBCA (MAG): similar to JC and TV views. We are currently resolving issues with e-MERLIN - this includes e-MERLIN operating with the EVN. So far a lot of progress has been made, and joint EVN/e-MERLIN observations will become increasingly important. Also see JIVE as the vehicle to resolve issues within the EVN (EVN being absorbed by JIVE-ERIC) and would like to see more of the operational aspects of the national observatories and strategic issues finding a home there. Also would like to see JIVE take on tasks that are best done centrally - YERAC, Schools, CRAF FM as a start, in addition to EVN/e-MERLIN correlation and VLBI user support. With real engagement by the national funding agencies via the JIVE Council, we can ensure real buy-in to the future of radio astronomy at national level.

ASTRON (CJ): agreeing with a lot of the statements that have been made on all sides. Decisions are in the members hands (JIVE). Strategy seems weak in JIVE council? Important to have broad strategic view. More efficient and effective if we establish central body. Could host training of young astronomers, YERAC etc., but how does it deal with strategy, how does it makes tough choices, etc.

Latvia - relatively new to EVN and JIVE, also building LOFAR station. Important we integrate things but not too fast.

CJ - try something with a very clear new brand - need to be careful how to port other names e.g. JIVE into something new. Convenient to use existing structure - in favour of trying something new and purposeful - starting small and building up.

4) AOB

RadioNet f2f meeting in February - proposal by RadioNet MT to schedule SPOOR f2f on 7th Feb Thursday afternoon and Friday 8th.

Excellent discussion - on the basis of what we have all heard we should revise personal views.

Cost and sizes - sketch an outline of costs for the JIVE-ERIC absorbing EVN and taking on other central roles. Costs of new central office?

