

## Working Group on Structures | Meeting Minutes

Members of the WG: Roy Someshwar, Marilyn Panayi, Umar Shoaib, Ron Chrisley, Etienne Roesch, Fabio

Chair of the WG: N/A

Date and Venue of the Meeting: **Nov 29-30** at Rapperswil, Switzerland

### 1) ***Needs and Requirement:***

Establish EUCog as a legal body (entity/association/company) -

- will need legal address
- will need legal name
- will need official representatives

### 2) ***Challenges:***

- legal, financial and public liability
- costs of setup
- language; preference: English
- balance of members representation (disciplines, gender, etc)
- flexibility (bid for EU projects, pay people, get paid, etc)

### 3) ***Timeline:***

- Dec 31st end of funding/structure -> retain and involve members by constantly updating them of the on-going developments during this transition period.
- Send an email to EUCog members updating them about the plans for future (by Jan)
- Choose at least 3 members who are ready to volunteer for the top three position as required to constitute a Private Limited Company. (by the end of Rapperswil meeting)
- Check with EU Project officer and find if EC can pay for some of the costs of establishing the company and other associated costs.

#### 4) ***The Legal Establishment of the Association:***

Two non-exclusive options exist: AISBL and Ltd. non-profit company. There are other types (Foundations, Cooperatives, etc) but they may not be suitable for EUCog Network (e.g. not enough cash, tax reasons...)

##### AISBL Status (Belgium law):

- Paperwork has to be in French
- €1000 setup fee
- favoured/recognised by EC
- Partners in EC projects
- Might take longer to setup? (min 3 months)

##### Ltd non profit with charity status (UK):

- Setup shorter
- Company (acts as a shield for liability issues) + Association (handles the association)

#### 4) ***Key Recommendations of the Structures Working Group:***

- Apply a Cascade model approach to tackle the above mentioned challenges. That is, the first step would be to establish EUCog as a Limited Company (and apply for Charity status) at the latest by January 2015. This will help retain the members of EUCog and implement any plans for 2015 (e.g. organizing conference) without any delay.

Meanwhile, evaluate the key advantages of having an AISBL status that an association may miss out as a Pvt. Ltd. company (e.g. check if it is easier to bid for Horizon 2020 projects with an AISBL status) and if deemed necessary, start the legal process of securing the AISBL status at the latest by end of April 2015.

- Keep the name EUCognition (European Society for the Study of Cognitive Systems) because its already a Brand name that is well recognized in the EU reserach arena.
- The EUCog III Network should start working on the following:
  - Prepare a list of members who are prepared to work voluntarily
  - Transform the web presence not to mention keep updating it regularly

- Execute a systematic transition of existing members and existing databases.
- Pay the web hosting company and reserve the domain name [eucognition.eu](http://eucognition.eu) for the next 5 years.

#### 9) ***Structure of the Board:***

- Board will consist of odd numbers to ease decision making.
- Members will elect them once a year at the General Assembly and through online voting.
- The Board will consist of the following positions: Chair (Director of the Company), Vice-Chair (Secretary + Director of the Company), Treasurer (Director of the Company) and 4 Ordinary Board Members.
- The 4 ordinary board members will be in charge of the different tasks/responsibilities of the association, namely, EC Interface (EU-policy coordinators), Communication Coordinator, Events Coordinator etc. Four is just a tentative number recommended by this Working Group, which if needed can be increased depending upon the work-load.

#### 5) ***Key Purpose of the new association:***

- Leverage the inheritance and assets of EUCognition (keep the brand name!)
- Representation of members interest to funding bodies (lobbying)
- Interdisciplinary networking for members
- Keep the community alive to foster interest
- Should not focus its energy in initiating yet another conference/journal

#### 6) ***Associated costs of the new association:***

- accounts management / auditing
- initial setup costs
- web hosting/ IT Tools/survey tools / online voting tools/ newsletters
- outreach/ marketing
- membership management (maintain members database, send notices, organise votes)
- events

#### 8) ***Possible Membership Options:***

- Individual
- Institution and maybe Industry?