



E-Science and the EU – University of Malta hosts first EUMEDGRID Project Meeting

EUMEDGRID with the aid of European Commission funds, is to gather a group of highly motivated experts in a collaborative bid to create a distinctive infrastructure bridging the digital divide between Europe and neighbouring Mediterranean countries.

The EUMEDGRID project is kicking off with a meeting held in Malta, which is both symbolically and geographically considered at the crossroads of the Mediterranean. The event which is being organised by the University of Malta and held at the Radisson SAS Bay Point Resort, St. Julians on the 6th February 2006, will start off with an information session targeted at Maltese researchers, both from academia and private industry. Representatives from countries all over Europe and the Mediterranean will also be having comprehensive project discussions throughout the day on 7th February 2006.

EUMEDGRID, an initiative funded through the European Commission's 6th Framework programme, aims to build the first high performance computing grid, extending across southern European states and northern Africa. This cutting edge technology will provide researchers in the Mediterranean region with access to large scale computing and storage facilities, specialised equipment and experimental data, and the capacity to collaborate with researchers in Europe and other regions in ways never before possible.

Grid computing is one emerging technology which has generated significant global attention due to a widespread belief in its ability to usher in a new era in computing; the provision of computing as a service on demand, akin to a utility such as the electricity grid. Grid computing aims to provide transparent access to computing and storage facilities distributed over a wide area thus becoming an enabler for virtual supercomputing.

From a researcher's viewpoint, grid computing enables remote interactive access to specialised and exclusive scientific equipment, large scale computing facilities and repositories of experimental data, as well as collaboration with geographically dispersed research groups. This has the capacity to revolutionise the way research is conducted, while empowering researchers based in remote areas with limited facilities. Thus EUMEDGRID is a concrete initiative aiming at bridging the digital divide and fostering collaboration between Europe and its Mediterranean neighbours, through infrastructure building as well as through training and dissemination activities.

The European Commission sees grid computing as a crucial

component in improving collaboration across the European research area. It is branded a key technology in the European Information Society 2010 Initiative. Viviane Reding, the EC Commissioner for Information Society has defined the aim of this initiative as being the maximisation of economic growth and social inclusion, marking the EU as being the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world by the year 2010.

Over the past years the European Commission has funded initiatives such as GÉANT, GÉANT2 (Gigabit Pan-European Research and Education Network) and EUMEDCONNECT, which enable the provision of high speed network connectivity for research across Europe and the Mediterranean respectively. The University of Malta, through its Computing Services Centre, is also an active participant in these important projects. This basic infrastructure has paved the way for initiatives such as EGEE in Europe, SEEGRID in the Balkans and now EUMEDGRID to deploy grid services for research use on a large scale.

The University of Malta's Computing Services Centre and Department of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence have been heavily involved in the EUMEDGRID project since its inception, and are leading one of the project's work packages. The project is coordinated by INFN (Italian National Institute for Nuclear Physics), and project partners besides Malta, include GRNET (Greek Research and Technology Network), CERN (the European Particle Physics Laboratory), DANTE (Delivery of Advanced Network Technology to Europe, UK), and partners and third parties from Spain, Cyprus, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories, Algeria and Israel.

For further information about EUMEDGRID please visit: <http://www.eumedgrid.org> .

For further information about the EGEE - Enabling Grids for E-science project, please visit: <http://www.eu-egee.org>

For further information about the GÉANT2 Pan-European Backbone please visit: <http://www.geant2.net/>

For further information about the EUMEDCONNECT project and network, please visit: <http://www.eumedconnect.net>

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