

## European Research Networks – Development with Question-Marks

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### Abstract

The development of the European Research Networks – both the international connections and the national segments – has been characterised by continuous development for some 20 years. This is a pleasing situation especially because the NRENs have never used any kind of a unified, commonly defined approach, and also the development of the pan-European network has never missed debates and conflicting ideas. No considerable break in the developments and in the operation of the infrastructure has happened, and a consensus about the ways of how to develop the European network and about how to match the sometimes rather different national plans could always be found. However, from the turn of the millennium, numerous questions, related not only to network technologies and architectures but also to organisational and financial issues, have been emerged among the European NRENs by causing dilemmas and sometimes also dissonant voices. On top of these, the effect of the European role and undertakings in global research networking, as well as the influence of the many contradictions characterising global co-operation, competition, and EU missions, are continuously strengthening. Among these circumstances an extremely important question is if the starting 7th Research and Technological Development Programme (FP7) of the EU will be able not only fund but also positively motivate the integrated, uniform development of the next generation in pan-European research networking. The presentation intends to cover the most important ones from among the related questions, in view of both the discrepancies between the national development strategies and the “message” of the information available about FP7. Finally, the contribution will also deal with how the just starting 2nd National Development Plan of Hungary will hopefully help in maintaining the leading edge role of the Hungarian research network, as well as in joining the best European development strategies in the area of research networking in Hungary.