

## INFORMATION SOCIETY

## ITEA 2 refocuses its projects on major societal challenges

By Nathalie Vandystadt in Berlin

This year, there is no question of confusing the ITEA 2 symposium, a European, but non-Community, programme specialised in embedded technology, with the programme currently debated at EU level, ARTEMIS, dedicated to the same innovations. In October 2006 in Paris, the ITEA 2 partners – large industrial manufacturers, SMEs, universities and research institutes – had heard about the new Joint Technology Initiative proposed by the European Commission (see *Europolitics* 3166 and 3383). On 18 and 19 October in Berlin, the ITEA 2 platform, many of whose members also participate in ARTEMIS, want to refocus on its own projects. “We are complementary but, at the same time, we are ITEA 2, we want to concentrate on our own process, do our own work,” its president, Rudolf Hagenmüller, told *Europolitics*.

ITEA 2 (ITEA dates from 1999) now favours “very concrete” research projects in line with today’s great economic and societal challenges: the ageing society, the digital divide, climate change, security and health care. Its preferred sectors remain aerospace, automotive, consumer electronics, medical systems and telecom.

“If we think of ITEA 2, we have to think of projects,” stressed Hagenmüller. Amongst the 45 projects presented at the Berliner Congress Center, the ITEA

2 president particularly emphasised a project on technologies for the assistance of the elderly (NUADU), another based on intelligent technologies for the home (AMEC), and a third aiming to improve software development (AGILE), and finally one on high definition television in Europe (HD4U).

Though he believes that the “competition” between ITEA 2 and ARTEMIS is “fruitful,” Hagenmüller does not mince his words to relay the concerns of manufacturers regarding the overly bureaucratic aspect of Community ITC. The selection process for projects subjected to the future ITC risks taking more than a year. He believes that “it must be shorter”. This does not stop ITEA 2 from believing in ARTEMIS, from sharing offices, or from coordinating its yearly agenda with the ITC.

#### START WITH THE IDEA

However, the platform broadly puts forward its regional and national partners through clusters and ‘Pôles de Compétitivité’ for research and development, such as Safetrans, the Dutch Point-One and the French System@tic. “The ‘Pôles de Compétitivité’ are our natural extension,” insisted Gérard Roucairol, vice-president of the ITEA 2.

The difference from ARTEMIS? ITEA 2 starts with the “idea,” explains Hagenmüller. In concrete terms, the organisa-

tion grants a label to the best projects that it considers to be in line with its criteria (clearly described projects, including on the technological level, a pertinent applicability on the marketplace, innovation and well-set goals, projects developed by a consortium, contact with national authorities, etc).

The president of ITEA 2 nevertheless acknowledges that his organisation encounters problems after giving labels, at the moment that it has to obtain funds from the European countries who fund the platform, because of “a lack of synchronisation between the countries in the decision-making process”.

In 2007, ITEA 2 received 21 projects (against 46 the previous year). Seventeen candidates were invited to lodge a full proposal. ITEA 2 is also happy with the collaboration with SMEs, who are foremost amongst the participants, before large companies and universities/research institutes.

This trans-European programme came out of the European Eureka network, an intergovernmental initiative born in 1985 to energise the competitiveness of its members through technological innovation (currently it gathers together 38 countries). In October 2008, ITEA 2 will present its road map, which will sketch the development scenarios for embedded systems and software for the next three of four years. ■