

European Grid Infrastructure launches an academic cloud for the European Research Area

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Helsinki, Finland

The European Grid Infrastructure (EGI) today launched the Federated Cloud - a cloud service tailored for European researchers. The announcement was made at the annual EGI Community Forum, in Helsinki and the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering (UKIM), which is one of the 16 resource providers involved in the launch.

Built on the experience of supporting scientists' IT needs for over ten years, EGI's Federated Cloud provides researchers with a flexible, scalable, standards-based cloud infrastructure. The service includes support and expertise provided by EGI and its partners to ensure researchers benefit fully from the infrastructure.

The Federated Cloud pools resources and services provided by various partners, both public and private, and offers them through a single point of contact. This unique set up has allowed EGI to create a cloud that offers researchers:

- Access to advanced compute capabilities for their research
- Virtualised resources to run any environment they choose
- Support services to ensure applications run as efficiently as possible

The Federated Cloud has been built to support development and innovation within the European Research Area. The infrastructure has been designed in collaboration with communities across Europe and supports all fields of research. All researchers working within the EU may use the Federated Cloud to manage, disseminate and process their data flexibly, quickly and efficiently.

Work on the Federated Cloud started back in 2011 to address the need to provide community-specific cloud services through open standards. This quickly grew into creating a federation of resource providers/cloud services that would provide the scalability and flexibility that modern research needs.

This interpretation of the cloud paradigm and its application to the European academic sector introduces unprecedented versatility in delivering an e-Infrastructure tailored to the European Research Area.

Over the last three years EGI has worked with many research communities to provide requirements for, advise on and test many aspects of the infrastructure. The communities involved are the WeNMR project (structural biology), the European Space Agency (satellite image processing), Peachnote (musicology), BioVeL (biodiversity), CHAIN-REDS (promoting international collaborations) and EISCAT-3D (geospace).

At its launch, the Federated Cloud pools resources and the expertise of 19 countries around Europe: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, the Republic of Macedonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. There are many countries outside Europe also involved helping make this a truly global activity.

Any European researcher can start using the Federated Cloud today by contacting EGI (support@egi.eu), or consulting the instructions at http://www.egi.eu/how-to/use_the_federated_Cloud.html.

Quotes

David Wallom, Chair of the Federated Clouds Task Force – I am delighted to be able to announce that after so much hard work from everyone involved we now have a research orientated cloud platform based on open standards that is ready to support every researcher in Europe. This is an important milestone for all areas of research in Europe.

Yannick Legré, EGI.eu Managing Director – The Federated Cloud is the next step in evolution for EGI. We have to support the researchers and understand their needs so we can engage, grow and innovate together.

Michel Drescher, EGI.eu's Technical Manager – It has been amazing watching the Federated Cloud grow from a simple idea just a few short years ago to a fully-fledged service. I am proud to have been involved and look forward to where our users take us in the future.

Alexandre Bonvin, WeNMR project coordinator – It has been great to be involved from the start, we have helped shape the Federated Cloud and hope to make good use of it in the future to better serve our users.

Federico Ruggieri, Project Director for CHAIN-REDS – Our collaboration with EGI has been very successful. Their use of open standards is key and the interoperability between the Federated Cloud and our cloud testbed has opened up many new possibilities for collaborations between researchers from all over the world.

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Notes to Editor:

About EGI

The European Grid Infrastructure (EGI) is a pan-European federation of publicly funded computing, storage and data resources to support excellent science, research and innovation in Europe. Building on over a decade of investment by national governments and the European Commission, EGI pools together resources from more than 40 countries and supports more than 22,000 researchers across many scientific fields with solutions such as high-throughput data analysis, federated cloud, federated operations and community-driven innovation and support. EGI is coordinated by EGI.eu, a not-for-profit foundation, supported by the EGI-InSPIRE project and governed by the National Grid Initiatives (NGIs) and international research communities. For further information, please contact press@egi.eu or visit www.egi.eu

About the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering (UKIM)

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (UKIM) is the oldest and largest University in Macedonia. The Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering (FCSE) within the UKIM, is the largest and most prestigious faculty in the field of computer science and technologies in Macedonia, and among the largest faculties in that field in the region. FCSE teaching staff consists of 38 professors and 40 associates. These include many “best in field” personal, such as the most referenced scientist in Macedonia, the most influential professor in ICT industry in Macedonia, etc. The Faculty Computer Centre is the National Grid Initiative and HPC operation centre in Macedonia, operating the biggest HPC and Grid clusters, and the first Cloud infrastructure for the researchers in Macedonia.

List of resource providers

The EGI Federated Cloud pools resources from a many providers both public and private. The current providers are:

- 100 Percent IT Ltd in the UK - <http://www.100percentit.com/>
- The University of Zaragoza's Institute for Biocomputation and Physics of Complex Systems (BIFI) in Spain - <http://bifi.es/>
- Academic Computer Centre CYFRONET AGH (Cyfronet) in Poland - <http://www.cyfronet.pl/en>
- The Supercomputing Centre of Galicia (CESGA) in Spain - <http://www.cesga.es/>
- The Czech Education and Scientific NETwork (CESNET) in the Czech Republic - <http://www.cesnet.cz>
- Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Datenverarbeitung mbH Göttingen (GWDG) in Germany - <http://www.gwdg.de>
- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) / Instituto de Física de Cantabria (IFCA) in Spain - <http://www.ifca.unican.es/>
- ~Okeanos by the Greek Research and Technology Network (GRNET) in Greece - <http://okeanos.grnet.gr>
- Institute of Informatics, Slovak Academy of Sciences (II SAS) in Slovakia - <http://ui.sav.sk>

- Italian National Institute of Nuclear Physics, Division of Catania in Italy - <http://www.ct.infn.it/>
- The Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden (KTH) in Sweden - www.kth.se/
- Italian National Institute of Nuclear Physics, Division of Bari in Italy - <http://www.ba.infn.it/>
- The Hungarian Academy of Sciences Institute for Computer Science and Control (MTA SZTAKI) in Hungary - <http://www.sztaki.hu/>
- Turkish Academic Network and Information Centre (ULAKBIM) in Turkey - <http://www.ulakbim.gov.tr>
- Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering - (UKIM) in the Republic of Macedonia – <http://www.finki.ukim.edu.mk/>