



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL 86th PLENARY MEETING 8-9 June 2022, Helsinki, FI MINUTES

Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order): Maria LEPTIN (ERC President), Genevieve ALMOUZNI, Paola BOVOLENTA, Eveline CRONE, Ben FERINGA, Gerd GIGERENZER, Liselotte HØJGAARD, Dirk INZE, Andrzej JAJSZCZYK, Eystein JANSEN, Chryssa KOUVELIOTOU, Laszlo LOVÁSZ, Kurt MEHLHORN, Giovanni SARTOR, Nicola SPALDIN (online), Jesper SVEJSTRUP, Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS, Alice VALKÁROVÁ and Milena ŽIC FUCHS.

Scientific Council members excused (in alphabetical order): Mercedes GARCIAL ARENAL.

ERC Executive Agency staff present: Laurence MOREAU, Jose LABASTIDA, Anthony LOCKETT, Mila BAS-SANCHEZ, Angela LIBERATORE, Eleni ZIKA, Josefina ENFEDAQUE, Philippe CUPERS, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Lino PAULA, Ben TURNER, Elena TOMA, Madeleine DRIELSMA, Sabine SIMMROSS, Severina SHOPOVA and Brigitte ETIENNE.

ERC Executive Agency staff participating online: Niki ATZOULATOU, Gwennael JOLIFF-BOTREL, Anita KUCHARSKA, Victor LOSADA, Anisoara ULCELUSE-PIRVAN, Philippe VIJGHEN, Alice RAJEWSKI, Dagmar MEYER, Laura PONTIGGIA, Anna PELAGOTTI, Diego CHALVA, Eleni CHATZICHRISTOU, Elena VOLPI, David KRASA, Carmen GARCIA FERNANDEZ, Annkathrin JAEGER, Wieland STAESSENS, Mariam BENJDIA, Srdjan PERKO, David KURZ, Miguel PESQUERA, Katja MEINKE, Soudaina WALA, Carlos GALVEZ, Domenico USAI, Fiona KERNAN, Konstantia VIGLI PAPADAKI, Helena GONZALES SANCHO, Christian OSWALD, Giuseppe BAMBARA, Alejandro RODRIGUEZ RAMOS, Ilse ZANDERS, Line VOLKERS, Rumen TINKOV, Marco BARITAUD and Andrea POLYAK.

Chairs of the meeting: Maria LEPTIN (ERC President)

Rapporteur: Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency.

Thursday 9 June 2022

1. Welcome by the President of the Academy of Finland, Professor Paula Eerola

The President of the Academy of Finland, Paula EEROLA, welcomed the Scientific Council members and gave an overview of the activities of the Academy of Finland and the Finnish Research Council, as well as an overview of Finnish Research and Development.

2. Welcome of Scientific Council Members, Plans and Goals of Meeting

Maria LEPTIN welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the main points to be discussed during the plenary meeting. She also welcomed László LOVÁSZ who recently joined the Scientific Council and excused Mercedes GARCIA ARENAL who could not attend the plenary meeting as she was receiving an honorary degree from the University of Chicago. Maria LEPTIN welcomed Laurence MOREAU as the newly appointed ERCEA (ERC Executive Agency) Director and noted that Nicola SPALDIN would join the meeting remotely.

3. Adoption of the Agenda of the 86th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The Draft Agenda of the meeting was approved by the Scientific Council.

4. Adoption of the Minutes of the 85th Plenary Meeting

The Scientific Council approved the Draft Minutes of the previous plenary meeting.

5. Action Points Summary of the 85th Plenary Meeting

The ERCEA informed the Scientific Council on the state of play of the various action points from the previous Scientific Council plenary meeting in April.

6. Update on Recent Meetings and Activities

Eveline CRONE reported from her recent activities as follows:

- 16 May - Chaired the jury for the Public Engagement with Research Award in Brussels and gave an online presentation on ERC for the Royal Academy of Science in the Netherlands;
- 19-20 May- Attended a LERU event at Leiden;
- 2 June - Attended an event online on writing a frontier ERC research grant (VU University Amsterdam).

Andrzej JAJSZCZYK reported from his recent activities as follows:

- 11 May - Gave introductory and concluding remarks at the ERC Information Day on Romania where 223 participants took part and the discussions generated a lot of interest and questions;
- Published a paper on ERC and limited success of Polish researchers in Polish monthly for researchers and the academic world in Poland;
- 25 May - Gave a presentation on ERC grants for a conference of mechanical faculties of Polish Universities;
- 3 June - Gave a keynote address on ERC and widening participation during a dedicated session on ERC and widening participation at the European Physical Society meeting in Paris.

Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS reported from his recent activities as follows:

- 10 May - EIC-ERC Working Group online meeting;
- 20 May - Attended the ERC Initial Panel Chairs Meeting (IPCM) AdG 2022 organised online with interesting exchanges and a lot of questions from the panel chairs;
- 11-14 May - Attended the "Autophagy in Brain Health and Disease EMBO" Workshop in Sant Feliu de Guixols, Spain where an ERC session had been organized as well;
- 22-23 June - Forthcoming event organized by Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Annual Meeting in Berlin, Germany where he would represent ERC by giving a talk on "International Scientific Cooperation".

Maria LEPTIN reported from her recent activities as follows:

- Meetings with university representatives, representatives of the Guild Higher Education Group, ALLEA, Human Frontier Science Programme, as well as UKRI and Wellcome Trust talks on research assessment;
- Meeting with the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science;
- Visit to Oxford University and meetings with the Vice-Chancellor and various academics;
- Launch event for the Institute for Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and Technology (INSAIT) in Sofia, Bulgaria;
- Global Research Council meeting gathering research funders from across the world;
- Meetings with politicians and Member of European Parliament Christian EHLER;
- Meetings with ERA correspondents at Austrian Embassy and a meeting with the German Ambassador to the EU;
- An online event in Slovenia attended by several politicians.

7. Update on measures related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine

The ERCEA reported on the “ERC for Refugees” Initiative. The Scientific Council was reminded that the Initiative had been launched on 17 March. The initiative resulted in 550 job offers from ERC Principal investigators and more than 70 applications from refugees.

8. Communication Activities update

The ERCEA reported on recent communication activities as detailed in presentation number P8.

9. State of play of Horizon Europe implementation

– Update on the association of third countries

The ERCEA reminded the Scientific Council members of the principles of association of third countries to the Framework Programme and reported that Canada and New Zealand had been negotiating association for the first time. Regarding the UK, it was noted that there were difficulties in the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement and parts of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between EU and UK. The EU was hoping for a prompt resolution. For the time being, Switzerland was not considered by the EU as a candidate for association.

– Update on reporting templates

The ERCEA reported on recent discussions between the ERC and DG RTD (Directorate General Research and Innovation) on the reporting templates.

10. Panel reorganisation

Maria LEPTIN introduced the agenda item noting that it was related to recent discussions about uneven distribution of applications in panels (some very small ERC panels, some very large ones having to be split). The Scientific Council had a discussion, which was to be continued.

11. Lump sums

The ERCEA Continuous Improvement (CI) project team brought to the attention of the Scientific Council the key elements on lump sums, including the scope, challenges and concerns, the legal basis and operational implications.

12. Update on Task Force on Research assessment

Maria LEPTIN and the ERCEA reported on the work by the task force on Research Assessment so far. The task force had established a list of criteria used by other research funding and research performing organisations, European Commission and researchers’ associations and the ERC itself that could be used to judge researchers and research proposals. The task force had been analysing and discussing extensively the list of criteria.

On 14-15 June, the task force would be organizing an ERC Workshop on Research Assessment with participant from researcher organisations, funding organisations and independent experts.

Friday 10 June 2022

13. Update from the Scientific Council Standing Committees and Working Groups

The various standing committees and WGs that met recently reported on their activities.

– Standing Committee on Panels

Maria LEPTIN reported from the last meeting of CoP which had taken place immediately before the plenary meeting. The Committee had discussed the annual information exercise for the AdG 2021 call and preparations for the 2023 calls, including selecting panel chairs.

– Standing Committee COIME

Eveline CRONE reported from activities of CoIME.

– ***Standing Committee PRIME***

Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS reported from recent activities of the PRIME Committee, including the discussions at the meeting right before the plenary.

– ***WG Gender and Diversity Issues***

Geneviève ALMOUZNI reported from recent activities of the GDIWG.

– ***WG on Open Science***

Paola BOVOLenta noted that the activities of the Open Science WG had been reported at the last plenary meeting in April. There were no new developments to be reported currently.

– ***WG Science Behind the Projects (SBP)***

Dirk INZE reported from recent activities of the SBP WG and reminded the Scientific Council members of the overall calendar of activities of the WG.

– ***WG on Innovation***

Kurt MEHLHORN reported on recent activities of the Innovation WG.

– ***WG on Widening European Participation***

Andrzej JAJCZYK reported from recent activities of the Widening European Participation WG.

14. Format of Scientific Council plenary meetings

Maria LEPTIN introduced the point and noted that the Scientific Council could change the frequency, format, duration and content of the Scientific Council plenary meeting according to their liking.

15. Revision of payment rates for PoC evaluators

The Scientific Council discussed a possible revision of the remuneration for PoC remote evaluators.

16. Operational Issues Reporting

– ***Update on AdG 2022 applications***

The ERCEA gave an update on the AdG applications 2022 and the status of UK proposals for the 2021 and 2022 calls.

– ***Security screening process***

The ERCEA gave an update on the Security Review Process.

17. Any Other Business

No items were discussed under this agenda item.