



European Research Council  
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

## EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL 88<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING 15-16 December 2022, Brussels, BE

### MINUTES

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

**Scientific Council members excused:** Liselotte HØJGAARD

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

**ERC Executive Agency staff participating online:** Pascale CID, Raluca IONESCU, Gwennael JOLIFF-BOTREL, Philippe VIJGHEN, Nikola CAR, Alice RAJEWSKI, Eleni ZIKA, Dace RAMBAKA, Dagmar MEYER, Elena TOMA, Laura PONTIGGIA, Anna PELAGOTTI, Eleni CHATZICHRISTOU, Elena VOLPI, Jasmin SADAT, David KRASA, Carmen GARCIA FERNANDEZ, Simona ROMAGNOLI, Samantha CHRISTEY, Marcin MONKO, Rosaria CARBONE, Telma CARVALHO, Frank KUHN, Monique SMAIHI, Jhansi KOTA, Isabelle ORTMANS, Ulrike KAINZ, David KURZ, Fiona KERNAN, Agnes KULCSAR, Pascal DISSARD, Marilena PLESU, Anne NIELSEN, Susana NASCIMENTO, Wieland STAESSENS, Daniela TEIXEIRA, Miguel PESQUERA, Ilze ZANDERE, Srdjan PERKO, Katja MEINKE and Soudaina WALA.

**Chairs of the meeting:** Maria LEPTIN (ERC President).

**Rapporteur:** Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency.

### Thursday 15 December 2022

#### 1. 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. She noted that Liselotte HØJGAARD could not attend the meeting for personal reasons and Paola BOVOLENTA, László LOVÁSZ and Dirk INZÉ would attend remotely.

#### 2. Adoption of the Agenda of the 88th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

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

#### 3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 87th Plenary Meeting

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

#### 4. Action Points Summary of the 87th Plenary Meeting

The ERCEA informed the Scientific Council on the various action points from the previous Scientific Council plenary meeting in October.

## **5. Update on Recent Meetings and Activities**

Maria LEPTIN informed the Scientific Council of her recent letter to all ERC grantees on the occasion of her one-year anniversary as ERC President.

Maria LEPTIN reported from her recent meetings with ERC Agency staff across departments and her meeting with Commissioner Mariya GABRIEL. Maria LEPTIN also visited the Royal Irish Academy and gave a speech at the European Parliament.

Andrzej JAJSZCZYK reported from his recent activities, including a meeting on 9 November with Martin ANDLER, President of the Initiative for Science in Europe to talk about ERC and a VIP dinner debate on widening. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK took part in a Science Business widening conference in Prague on 10 November and a panel discussion on capacity building. Other activities that he took part in included a talk on how to get an ERC grant at Jagiellonian University, publishing a paper on research changing the world, attending an event in Edinburgh on 27 November on EU exchange programmes and the impact of Brexit and ERC, and a meeting of the Springer Advisory Council on 30 November.

Eveline CRONE reported on her participation at the Citizens Science conference organised by the ERC where very interesting discussions took place. Also, high school children from Spain and Ukraine participated, which was a wonderful initiative.

Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS reported from his recent activities including his participation at the Global Biodata Coalition (GBC) that was attended by various funders looking into long-term sustainability of research data. The ERC has had an observer status so far, together with the Commission

Eystein JANSEN reported from his participation at the first conference on conservation of biodiversity with 400 participants on 9 November where he represented the ERC.

Jesper SVEJSTRUP noted that ERC NCPs have requested to have physical meetings at the ERC again. The ERCEA informed the Scientific Council that such a meeting was being planned for summer 2023.

Alice VALKÁROVÁ reported from her participation at the ERC Info Day in Prague on 15 November, organised by the Academy of Sciences and with the participation of successful ERC grantees. She also attended a meeting in Slovenia on 1 December and took part in a panel discussion.

Geneviève ALMOUZNI reported from her participation at the Gender Summit and discussions with Elsevier. Geneviève ALMOUZNI also participated in a Gender net plus meeting of a consortium at EU level with 13 groups working on different aspects, including gender. They very much appreciated what ERC has been doing so far.

Paola BOVOLENTA reported on giving a talk about ERC and gender at the EU-Korea Women and Science Technology Forum online.

Giovanni SARTOR reported from a meeting in Italy, organised by an entity collecting a large part of the ERC grantees in the country. The Head of the National Council for Research had also taken part in the meeting and the discussions on how to support Italian researchers who would like to apply for an ERC grant. Also, initiatives to give a fast track for ERC grantees in various Italian universities had been discussed.

László LOVÁSZ reported from his participation at the World Science Forum in Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting had over 2000 participants from 108 countries. He took part in the curiosity driven science applications panel with former Scientific Council members and had very good discussions.

## **6. State of play of Horizon Europe implementation**

### **– Update on the association of third countries**

The ERCEA reminded the Scientific Council members of the state of play with the association of third countries to the EU Framework Programme. It was noted that negotiations with UK and Switzerland were still blocked at the political level. However, it had been reported that the British had promised to resolve the issue with the Northern Ireland Protocol by the anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in April 2023. If that would happen, it would pave the way for association. Regarding other countries, the Commission had been negotiating association to Pillar II with Canada, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea.

– **Update on reporting templates**

The ERCEA reported on recent discussions regarding the reporting templates.

**7. Panel re-organization**

The ERCEA gave an update on the work of the Task Force on Panel Re-organisation.

**8. Lump sums implementation**

The ERCEA gave an update on the work of the internal Task Force on Lump Sums, which had been working on options for the financial analysis of proposals. #

**9. ERC external communication strategy**

The ERCEA reported on recent communication activities, including call results' publications, the ERC President's speech at the European Parliament and other press and media activities. The Scientific Council discussed and agreed on the ERC External Communication Strategy for 2023 including objectives and target audiences.

The Scientific Council member Eystein JANSEN would replace Andrzej JAJSZCZYK on the Editorial Board of the ERC Magazine.

**10. Research assessment**

Maria LEPTIN and the ERCEA presented several recommendations related to research assessment. The Scientific Council touched upon possibly joining the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (COARA) and agreed that the ERC should not become a member. The Scientific Council is an independent body, and it should remain as such, therefore it should abstain from joining any coalitions. The Scientific Council decided to sign the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment and published a statement after the plenary meeting (link: <https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/erc-scientific-council-decides-changes-evaluation-forms-and-processes-2024-calls>).

**11. Impact of ERC-funded research on Innovation**

The Chair of the Working Group on Innovation, Kurt MEHLHORN, presented an overview of the activities carried out by the group under his chairmanship (January 2020 - December 2022). He also talked about the cooperation between the ERC and EIC and mentioned the joint workshops between the two organisations. Kurt MEHLHORN invited the Scientific Council members to join the Working Group as the membership would decrease significantly, following the departure of three members at the end of 2022, including himself.

The ERCEA informed the Scientific Council on work done to monitor and evaluate the "impact beyond science" (societal and economic) of ERC-funded research. A report on the analysis conducted by external experts would be produced and published by the ERC when available.

**12. Feedback to Policy (F2P) – framework and draft plan for 2023**

The ERCEA gave an update to the Scientific Council on the feedback to policy work, a task delegated to the Agency, as an opportunity to put the spotlight on frontier science.

**13. Closed session**

The Scientific Council held a closed session.

## Friday 16 December 2022

### 14. Update from the ScC 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 that CoP met on 18 November and 14 December and discussed changes to the panel descriptors and names. The Scientific Council approved the panel structure for the 2024 calls.

– **Standing Committee COIME**

Eveline Crone reported that ColME met on 14 December.

– **Standing Committee PRIME**

Elena TOMA reported on behalf of Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS that the PRIME Committee met on 14 December to discuss and approve new monitoring and evaluation actions for 2023-2024.

– **WG on Gender and Diversity Issues (GDIWG)**

Geneviève ALMOUZNI reported from recent activities of the WG, including the meeting on 9 December. At the meeting updates from communication activities were given and the WG discussed ERC extension rules and how to make them more visible on the ERC website. Maria LEPTIN noted that the WG had been having important discussions on several topics and those should be brought to the attention of the Scientific Council.

– **WG on Open Science**

Paola BOVOLENTA reported on recent activities of the Open Science WG. Maria LEPTIN thanked her for all her hard work and dedication as WG Chair.

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

Dirk INZE reported from recent activities of the SBP WG, including the recent meeting on 6 December. The WG had been called SBP for a long time, but a better name had been proposed and agreed by the WG, namely Mapping Frontier Research. The Scientific Council approved the change of name of the WG.

– **WG on Widening European Participation**

Andrzej JAJSZCZYK reported from recent activities of the Widening European Participation WG, including the recent meeting on 14 December.

Maria LEPTIN thanked Andrzej JAJSZCZYK for all his dedication and work as chair of the WG.

– **WG on Innovation**

Kurt MEHLHORN informed the Scientific Council that the new chair of the WG on Innovation would be Sylvie LORENTE.

Maria LEPTIN noted that the Scientific Council would discuss the remits of all WGs at a future plenary meeting.

### 15. Work Programme 2024 (WP2024)

The ERCEA presented several points relevant to the Work Programme 2024 for discussion by the Scientific Council.

### 16. Operational issues reporting

The ERCEA reported on granting activities, results for 2022 and the forecast for 2023.

The ERCEA reported on the CoG2021 and the CoG2022 Step 2 results.