



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL 95th PLENARY MEETING 26-28 June 2024, Bergen, NO MINUTES

Scientific Council members present at the meeting (in alphabetical order): Geneviève ALMOUZNI, Harriet BULKELEY, Ben FERINGA, Mercedes GARCÍA-ARENAL, Gerd GIGERENZER, Tom HENZINGER, Liselotte HØJGAARD, Dirk INZÉ, Eystein JANSEN, Leszek KACZMAREK, Chryssa KOUVELIOTOU, Maria LEPTIN (ERC President), Sylvie LORENTE, Laszlo LOVÁSZ, Luke O'NEILL, Björn OTTERSTEN, Torsten PERSSON, Giovanni SARTOR, Nicola SPALDIN, Jesper SVEJSTRUP, Alice VALKÁROVÁ and Milena ŽIC FUCHS.

ERC Executive Agency staff on site: Laurence MOREAU, Jose LABASTIDA, Angela LIBERATORE, Madeleine DRIELSMA, Alexis-Michel MUGABUSHAKA, Sabine SIMMROSS, Wieland STAESSENS, Elena TOMA

ERC Executive Agency staff videoconference: Niki ATZOULATOU, Mila BAS SANCHEZ, Josefina ENFEDAQUE, Raluca IONESCU, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Katja MEINKE, Lino PAULA, Martin PENNY, Miguel PESQUERA, Laura PONTIGGIA, Severina SHOPOVA, Sejla SEDIC, Ben TURNER, Anna PELAGOTTI, David KRASA, David KURZ, Isabelle ORTMANS, Line VOLKERS, Angela WITTELSBERGER, Catherine MEROLLA, Alejandro RODRÍGUEZ RAMOS, Adela RUIZ CAABEIRO, Lawrence THIRIAR, Rumen TINKOV, Fabrizio FEDERICI

Chair of the meeting: Maria LEPTIN, ERC President.

Rapporteur: Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency.

Wednesday 26 June 2024

1. Welcome, Plans and Goals of the 95th Plenary Meeting

Maria LEPTIN welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the main points to be discussed during the plenary.

2. Adoption of the Agenda of the 95th Plenary Meeting

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

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 94th Plenary Meeting

The ScC approved the Draft Minutes of the previous plenary meeting.

4. Action Points of the 94th Plenary Meeting

Unit A1 briefed the ScC on the developments related to the various action points from the February plenary meeting of the ScC.

5. Update on Recent Meetings and Activities

Maria LEPTIN gave the following update on her recent activities:

- She participated in a science and innovation event at the University of Luxembourg, the SnT (Interdisciplinary Centre for Security, Reliability and Trust) Partnership Day, in the presence

of the Minister for Digitization, Higher Education and Research, Stéphanie OBERTIN. Maria LEPTIN's participation in the event had been arranged by Björn OTTERSTEN and she gave a speech focusing on FP10.

- On 12-13 June she travelled to Prague and Brno in the Czech Republic, where she met with the Deputy Minister for Education Jaroslav MILLER and the Deputy Minister for Science Research and Innovation Pavel DOLECEK. During the meetings good results were reported regarding the coaching and pre-selection of potential ERC applicants based in the Czech Republic. The latest figures from the ERC CoG show that 7 out of 9 Czech-based applicants had made it to Step 2. Maria LEPTIN reported that the ERC FP10 message had been very well received.
- She attended the Global Research Council (GRC) meeting in Switzerland.

Ben FERINGA informed the ScC that during his recent visit to Hungary, where he had met with representatives of Universities and the Academy of Sciences, he had been asked to draw the attention of the ScC to the continuing ban on foundation-funded Hungarian universities signing EU grant agreements. Maria LEPTIN explained that the ScC was aware of this, but that this was a high-level EU decision because of concerns about the autonomy of universities and the rule of law in the country.

Gerd GIGERENZER reported on his recent activities as follows:

- On 15 May, he gave a talk at the Paris Brain Institute, which was attended by 15 Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Paris universities. Questions were asked about lump sums, simplification, and the funding gap between the widening countries and the other EU member states. Most participants were strongly in favour of an increased budget for the ERC. The event took place shortly after a speech by the French President Emmanuel MACRON who specifically mentioned the need to strengthen the ERC.

Eystein JANSEN reported on his recent activities as follows:

- On 7-8 May he attended the Arctic Circle Forum where he represented the ERC in a panel on Science to Progress and met several representatives of German funding organisations.
- On 15 May, he gave a presentation on the ERC and excellence at the Norwegian Leadership Conference. In the margins of the event, Eystein JANSEN and Mark FERGUSON discussed FP10.
- He attended the Abel Prize ceremony, where he also met the Norwegian Minister of Education and Research and discussed with various university leaders. Eystein JANSEN also discussed FP10 with the Rector of the University of Oslo, which plays a leading role in the Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities.

Leszek KACZMAREK reported on his recent activities as follows:

- He gave a presentation on the ERC at an event in Poland, which was also attended by former ScC member Andrzej JAJSZCEK.
- He represented the ERC at ESOF in Katowice, Poland, where he participated in three different panels on scientific excellence, open science and scientific writing. ERC grantees also took part in the discussion panels.

6. 10th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

The Scientific Council discussed recent developments around the FP10 negotiations.

7. Lump sum pilot in Advanced Grant call 2024 (AdG2024)

Maria LEPIN introduced the item, noting that the Scientific Council had recently received positive feedback from the scientific community on the upcoming lump sum model. The Scientific Council discussed outstanding issues related to lump sums.

8. Carbon neutrality

Harriet BULKELEY gave an update on the work of the strategic team on carbon neutrality.

Thursday 27 June 2024

9. Interdisciplinarity (Open seminar)

Milena ŽIC FUCHS, chair of the project group, gave an introductory presentation on interdisciplinarity in research.

9. Interdisciplinarity (Introductory presentation and discussion)

Following the presentation by Milena ŽIC FUCHS, the Scientific Council had a discussion on selection mechanisms for interdisciplinary proposals.

10. Funding schemes (Introduction of topics and discussion)

The ScC discussed strategic issues prepared by the ‘ERC funding schemes’ team. For some topics the team made concrete proposals, for others, open discussions were held, and for some, only a brief status report was given. The topics discussed included: eligibility windows for applicants for Starting and Consolidator Grants, call budgets, number of successive grants per PI, support for widening countries, maximum grant size and co-PI option, the portfolio of ERC funding schemes.

11. Any other business

Four items were discussed under this agenda item:

- The final program of the ERC Annual Conference was circulated among the ScC members. Department B asked the ScC members for volunteers to chair sessions.
- Nicola SPALDIN reported on a case involving the use of AI tools.
- Nicola SPALDIN updated the ScC members on recent developments in Open Research Europe (ORE).
- Nicola SPALDIN described a pilot involving ERC grantees within the framework of the EU Digital Services Act (DSA).

Friday 28 June 2024

12. Closed session

The ScC held a closed session.