



European Research Council  
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

**ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL  
65<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING, BRUSSELS (BE)  
19-20 April 2018**

**MINUTES**

**Thursday 19 April 2018**

**Session 1 – Morning 9-12:30**

**1. Welcome of ScC Members, Plans and Goals of Meeting**

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON welcomed everyone and outlined the goals of the meeting. He excused Prof. Nils STENSETH and Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA for the meeting, as well as Prof. Kurt MEHLHORN who could not attend the first day of the plenary meeting due to another engagement.

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

The draft agenda of the 65<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting was adopted with a small change. Agenda item 8 became 7 and agenda item 7 became 8.

**3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 64<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council in Heidelberg (DE) in March 2018**

The Minutes of the 64<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council (ScC) were adopted without any changes.

**4. Action Points Summary of the 64<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council**

ERCEA/A1 provided an overview of the follow-up given to the action points from the previous meeting, including those which have been finalised and those for which further action was required.

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

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON reported from his recent meetings, including the last Board meeting. He mentioned his recent trip to Austria where he met Minister Hans FASSMANN, visited the Institute for Science and Technology (IST) near Vienna and met with a number of scientists. He also took part in the Next Einstein Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, during which discussions on the creation of an African Research Council modelled after the ERC took place. In addition, he attended the Research Summit in Berlin (Forschungsgipfel 2018) on 17 April where the new German Research Minister delivered her first official speech on research. Also, during the event, the French representative expressed France's commitment to support a higher budget for research, as well as the fact that Germany and France are committed to issue a joint position paper on the next European framework programme. Finally, Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON and Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA met with representatives from Siemens just before the plenary meeting.

Prof. Eva KONDOROSI reported from the COST Info Days that the ERC has joined and which allows ERC to reach out to more widening countries. The events included one in Ljubljana, another one in Serbia and an event attended by Prof. Nils STENSETH in Warsaw. As regards the meeting in Serbia, Prof. Eva KONDOROSI met with Mladen Šarčević, the Minister of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia, with the Rector of the University of Belgrade and the Serbian Finance Minister, among others. A visit of Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON in September 2018 will be organised.

Prof. Klaus BOCK reported from a meeting with the European Association of Managers and Administrators during which the quality of the ERC evaluators and the unique way of conducting the evaluations were discussed.

## **6. Follow up of the Preparation of Framework Programme 9**

The ERCEA Scientific Council Support Unit recapped the state of play of the preparations of the next Framework Programme by the European Commission. The proposal for the EU's long term budget will be released on 2 May and the Commission proposal for the next Framework Programme is expected to be adopted on 7 June.

## **7. Strategic Discussion on Panels' Structure**

Following a request at the last Board meeting, the ScC discussed the evaluation panels' structure. The size of the panels, their coverage and their capacity to accommodate a certain number of interviews per day were some of the issues considered. Moreover, the ScC discussed some particularities of the various domains as well as the important role and input of the panel chairs regarding panels' structure.

## **8. Preparation of the Visit of Jean-Éric PAQUET, Appointed DG of DG-RTD**

The ScC discussed possible items to raise with the new Director General during his visit to the ScC. Those included the importance of ERC funding to young scientists and the structural impact that it has made and continues to make in EU member states, as well as the recognition of the ERC as a brand, providing more visibility for the Framework Programme and the EU.

## **Session 2 – Afternoon 14:00-18:00**

## **9. Reporting from Standing Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces**

### **Standing Committees Reporting**

Prof. Klaus BOCK reported that CoIME deals with cases as they come and not only during meetings, and ScC members are informed as well when needed.

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON noted the last meeting of CoP. Some of the discussions were already covered under the panels' structure point.

### **Report from the ScC Task Forces**

#### ***Task Force on Ethics***

Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA noted that the ScC members will be asked to contribute with ethics experts names to the call for ethics experts, which will be launched.

#### ***Task Force on Interdisciplinarity***

Prof. Martin STOKHOF reported that, following discussions in Heidelberg, there is interest in pursuing further the topic, and the TF will work on that.

#### ***Task Force on Facts and Principles to Guide ERC Budget Allocation by the ERC ScC***

Prof. Janet THORNTON reported from the first meeting of the TF, noting that the TF is gathering historical evidence and looking into data that is needed.

### **Report from the Working Groups**

Some WG Chairs raised a few key points from the previous WG meetings.

Prof. Klaus BOCK, Chair of the Innovation and Relations with Industry WG, reported that on 21 March the PoC assessment report and accompanying documents were put on the ERC website.

Prof. Reinhilde VEUGELERS reported that the Key Performance Indicators WG discussed an important point with a big impact at their last meeting, namely the updating of the ERC Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and the potential role of WG KPI in the governance of the Strategy.

Prof. Isabelle VERNOS reported from the last Gender Balance WG meeting where the group discussed the briefing to the panels on unconscious bias and latest gender statistics among other things.

Prof. Martin STOKHOF, Chair of the Open Access WG, reported that the document "*Open Research Data and Data Management Plans - Information for ERC grantees by the ERC Scientific Council*" that had been approved by the Council earlier was already online, covering the LS and SH domains. He added that an update including the PE domain would be uploaded very soon<sup>1</sup>.

## **10. Visit by Jean-Éric PAQUET, Director General of DG-RTD**

The Director General of DG RTD visited the ScC for a two hour exchange of views. Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON welcomed the Director General and expressed the ScC's gratitude for accepting his invitation to the meeting. This was followed by individual introductions by all ScC members during which they gave short overview of their area of work. Some of the ScC members spoke of the impact the ERC had on them as ERC grantees as well.

The ERC President invited the Director General to share his views. He also introduced a few key elements of the ScC's position paper about the ERC in the next Framework Programme, namely continuity, agility and scaling up.

The Director General, Jean-Éric PAQUET, started by noting how impressed he was with the CVs and personal stories of the ScC members. In addition, he confirmed that the ERC is a success story one needs to build on and the Research Commissioner has been doing so in preparing the next Framework Programme.

Some additional comments from the ScC in the discussion with the Director General included stressing the importance of the ERC governance and the way the evaluation and reporting are organised.

The ERC President thanked him for the fruitful discussions and noted that the ScC is looking forward to working closely with him.

## **11. Presentation from the Science Behind the Projects Working Group**

The ERCEA Scientific Department gave an update on the Science Behind the Projects (SBP) Horizon 2020 data collection exercise that took place between July and November 2017 and included over 2750 projects from StG, CoG and AdG grants between 2014 and 2016.

# **Friday 20 April 2018**

## **Session 3 – Morning 9:00 – 12:30**

### **12. Communication Activity Update**

ERCEA Communications unit provided an update on communication activities. The media coverage reported for the first quarter of 2018 included 4000 items in print plus online media. Moreover, the AdG 2017's announcement was covered in ca. 230 articles, following the ERC press release published on 6 April, and this is overall a positive coverage. Also, media in 16 EU countries and in Switzerland relayed the ERC's press release or focused on the national or local angle.

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<sup>1</sup> The update went online on 24.4.2018: [https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC\\_info\\_document-Open\\_Research\\_Data\\_and\\_Data\\_Management\\_Plans.pdf](https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_info_document-Open_Research_Data_and_Data_Management_Plans.pdf)

Furthermore, the independent review on the ERC PoC scheme was covered by Science Magazine (US), Science Business and Research Professional (UK). The report was well received on Twitter as well. ERC posted 5 tweets on 21 March.

As regards the *ERC=Science<sup>2</sup>* project, the theme "music" is being covered between April and October 2018. It is the fifth out of six themes.

In terms of upcoming events, the ERC-STOA event entitled "*Investing in Young Researchers, Shaping Europe's Future*" to be held at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 31 May was mentioned. Other forthcoming events with ERC participation included ESOF 2018 in Toulouse on 9-14 July, where 7 scientific sessions proposed by the ERC has been retained, as well as a joint career session with MSCA and Erasmus. Also, the ERCEA will participate in the Commission's booth.

### **13. Operational Issues Reporting: Evaluation Analysis and Granting Processes**

#### **Update on the Qualitative Evaluation of ERC Completed Projects**

The ERCEA Scientific Department gave an update on the results of the 2017 Qualitative Evaluation of ERC Completed Projects. The ERC monitors and evaluates the scientific outputs and impacts of ERC funding in various ways (e.g. in-house bibliometric analysis, studies, etc.). In 2015 the ERC ScC launched a pilot ex-post evaluation exercise, namely the Qualitative Evaluation of ERC Completed Projects, evaluating a sample of ERC completed projects, randomly selected and aiming at programme evaluation. The outcome of the 2016 exercise was presented to the ScC in the first quarter of 2017.

#### **Update on the Calls**

The ERCEA Scientific Department gave an update on the ERC calls and in particular the StG 2018 Step 1 results.

#### **Ethics Review**

The ERCEA Scientific Department reported on the state of play of the ethics review, including the ethics clearance on ERC grants and the forthcoming recruitment of ethics experts exercise.

#### **Granting Activities**

ERCEA Granting Department did not provide an update on the granting activities as there were no important developments to report since the last ScC plenary meeting.

### **14. Commission List of Grant Reductions**

The ERCEA Legal Unit presented the guidelines on grant reductions which have been adopted by the European Commission.

### **15. Any Other Business**

#### **– ScC 2019 Plenary Meetings**

The ScC agreed the proposed dates for the ScC 2019 plenary meetings, as follows: 25-26-27 February 2019, 3-4-5 April 2019, 19-20-21 June 2019, 21-22-23 October, 4-5-6 December 2019.

The two locations outside Brussels will be confirmed later.

#### **– ScC July 2018 Plenary Meeting in Leuven**

Prof. Rheinilde VEUGELERS presented the draft programme for the coming ScC plenary in Leuven with all activities being planned by the hosts.

**– *Dedication to the Late Professor Fotis KAFATOS of the New Evaluation Facilities***

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON informed the ScC that the new evaluation facilities should be available as of September 2018 so that the dedication ceremony in memory of Prof. Fotis KAFATOS could be organised around the ScC December plenary meeting in Brussels.

**– *ScC Annual Report 2017***

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON drew the attention of the ScC to the ScC Annual Report which had been distributed earlier during the meeting. More copies of it are available, if needed, and/or it can be downloaded from the ERC website as well.