



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

53rd PLENARY MEETING, BRUSSELS

3-4 December 2015

MINUTES

Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order): Prof. Klaus BOCK, Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM, Prof. Nicholas CANNY, Prof. Sierd A.P.L. CLOETINGH, Dr. Barbara ENSOLI, Prof. Thomas JUNGWIRTH, Prof. Mattias KLEINER, Prof. Eva KONDOROSI, Prof. Mart SAARMA, Prof. Nuria SEBASTIAN GALLES, Prof. Nils Christian STENSETH, Prof. Martin STOKHOF, Prof. Janet THORNTON, Prof. Isabelle VERNOS, Prof. Reinhilde VEUGELERS, Prof. Michel WIEVIORKA, Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER

Scientific Council members excused (in alphabetical order): Prof. Athene DONALD, Prof. Michael KRAMER

ERC Executive Agency staff present: Pablo AMOR, Theodore PAPAZOGLU, Massimo GAUDINA, Jose LABASTIDA, Georges Eric TE KOLSTE, Mechtild MAY, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Anna LONNROTH, Martin PENNY, Thierry PROST, Angela LIBERATORE, Maria OLIVAN AVILES, Niki ATZOULATOU, Severina SHOPOVA, Marie ROBERTI

Chair of the meeting: Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON, ERC President

Rapporteur: Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency

THURSDAY 3 December 2015

Session 1

1. Welcome of ScC members, plans and goals of meeting

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the participants that Prof. Athene Donald and Prof. Michael Kramer had to be excused from the meeting. He also outlined the goals of the meeting.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda of the 53rd plenary meeting was adopted with a few points added by Prof. Bourguignon. Those included an update from the Increasing International Participation WG and a short closed session of the ScC in the early morning of December 4.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 52nd plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council in Strasbourg on 8-9 October 2015

The Minutes of the 52nd plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council (ScC) were adopted without any changes.

4. Action points summary of the 52nd plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon checked the state of play of the action points from the last ScC meeting.

5. Update on recent meetings and activities

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon distributed a list of his latest ERC related trips and meetings.

5.1 ERC Board meetings on 26 October and 12 November 2015

A short report of the recent Board meetings was given.

6. Results of the election of a ScC Vice-President and PE domain coordinator, and ScC member as representative to the Steering Committee as of January 2016

The ScC confirmed the election of Prof. Klaus Bock as ScC Vice-President and PE domain coordinator and the election of Prof. Tomas Jungwirth as ScC representative to the ERCEA Steering Committee as of 1 January 2016.

7. ScC Standing Committees reporting and update

Committee on Panels (CoP)

The Chair of the CoP, Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, reported from the extraordinary meeting of CoP in November 2015 and the discussions on panel members' recruitment. In addition, the Vice-Presidents gave an update on the panel members' recruitment in their respective domains. Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon stressed again how important it is for ScC members to visit evaluation panels as observers and report back. Moreover, the revised LS panels' structure for 2017 was approved by the ScC.

Committee on Conflicts of Interest, Scientific Misconduct and Ethical Issues (CoIME)

The Chair of the CoIME, Prof. Nuria Sebastian Galles, reported from the last CoIME meeting and a few ongoing cases that the Committee is considering.

8. Working groups reporting and update

The Chairs of the various Working groups (WG) reported on their activities.

8.1. Inaccurate description of status of monographs in the Commission's Open Access Guidelines

The Open access WG Chair, Prof. Nicholas Canny, brought to the attention of the ScC the H2020 Open Access Guidelines text, which provides an inaccurate description of monographs. The Commission services had therefore proposed a reformulation, which was positively assessed by the WG. The ScC agreed to the formulation as well.

8.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPI) WG reporting from the Expert group on programme monitoring and evaluation

The Chair of the KPI WG, Prof. Reinhilde Veugelers, presented the final reports of the ERC Experts Group on programme monitoring and evaluation to the ScC.

The KPI WG also discussed which indicators to monitor. Finally, some output analyses of the publications reported by the first 643 finished projects were also considered.

8.3 Report from the Task Force on Interdisciplinarity

The Task Force on *Interdisciplinarity*, chaired by Prof. Martin Stokhof, reported from their recent meetings and discussions. The remit of the group was to ensure that interdisciplinary proposals are treated more fairly in the ERC evaluation system and to further foster

interdisciplinarity in ERC funding. Also, the Task Force made a number of recommendations for the ScC's consideration.

8.4 Report from the Synergy grant (SyG) assessment exercise

The Chair of the SyG WG, Prof. Sierd Cloetingh, reported on the outcome of the SyG assessment exercise. Overall, he noted that the SyG scheme would be a valuable addition to the current ERC frontier schemes because of its high international recognition and putting European research on the global map, often in a leading position. As a result, the SyG WG proposed to the ScC to aim for another SyG call in the future.

Prof. Sierd Cloetingh also informed the ScC that with the final assessment report of the SyG scheme, the work of the SyG WG has come to an end. Therefore, it was proposed to establish a Task Force to consider the possible future implementation of the SyG scheme. The Task Force membership would include, Prof. Klaus Bock (Chair), Prof. Martin Stokhof, Prof. Eva Kondorosi, Prof. Tomas Jungwirth, Prof. Reinhilde Veugelers, Prof. Barbara Ensoli and Prof. Mart Saarma.

8.5 Reports on other recent activities of WGs (Gender Summit, Widening Participation meetings in Tallinn and Budapest, ESA/ERC Meeting, EBAN Event in Copenhagen, ...)

Prof. Sierd Cloetingh reported from the ESA (European Space Agency)-ERC scientific networking event, which took place in November in The Netherlands, involving ERC grantees and ESA scientists. ESA scientists were very interested in the Proof of Concept (PoC) scheme. Prof. Sierd Cloetingh also reported from the EBAN (European Business Angels Network) event in Copenhagen in November 2015 where 9 ERC PoC grantees took part and two of them were awarded prizes. The ERC also received the "Innovation in Science Venture Finance Prize" for the ERC Proof of Concept funding scheme.

Working Group on Increasing International Participation

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, noted that, even though the WG has not met recently, things are advancing. He mentioned in particular a number of ERC implementing arrangements, which were recently signed. Those included arrangements with Mexico and South Africa.

Working Group on Widening European Participation

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Eva Kondorosi, reported on the two recent ERC regional widening European participation event organised by the WG which took place in October in Tallinn and November in Budapest. These events aimed at bringing together local ERC stakeholders (researchers, heads of national research councils, directors of research institutes) with national decision makers (high-level national officials responsible for research) and ScC members to share ideas and best practices of supporting ERC candidates from weak participating regions, as well as to discuss their role in promoting and supporting research excellence. Overall, both events were very successful and one key element in both events was the intention of some of the Member States to establish a "visiting fellowship" scheme for researchers from weak participating regions to visit ERC teams for a short period of time. This may help them strengthen their research ideas before applying to ERC. Five out of ten countries that participated in the two recent widening events (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovakia) have already committed to the implementation of such a scheme.

Moreover, Prof. Eva Kondorosi also reported from the recent WG meeting.

Working Group on Gender Balance

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Isabelle Vernos reported from the last WG meeting. She noted the very positive feedback from the ERC's participation at the Gender Summit, which took place in November 2015 and was attended by her and Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon spoke at a plenary session and Prof. Isabelle Vernos chaired an ERC session. The ERC was perceived as facing openly low female participation and success rates and some initiatives were appreciated, such as briefings on possible bias, the caretaking of unconventional career paths and the extension of eligibility for maternity.

Working Group on Science behind the projects

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Nils Stenseth reported that the WG will meet on 4 December 2015, after the end of the ScC plenary meeting.

9. ERC Guidelines for National Visiting Fellowship Programmes for Potential ERC Candidates

The Chair of the Widening European Participation WG, Prof. Kondorosi brought to the attention of the ScC the ERC Guidelines for National Visiting Fellowship Programmes for Potential ERC Candidates. The ScC had a discussion on a number of points, following which a draft document was agreed by the ScC for publication on the ERC website.

Session 2

10. Update by DG RTD/Directorate A on the work of the Identification Committee

Jack Metthey, Director, Directorate A/DG RTD, gave an update on the ScC renewal, including the renewal for those ScC members whose mandates end in December 2015 and December 2016. In addition, the ScC had a discussion on the demanding task of a member of the ScC and the time dedicated to plenary and other meetings.

11. Presentation on the outcome of the Scientometric CSA

Dr. Vincent Larivière from the Observatoire des sciences et des technologies (OST Canada) presented (via videoconference) the results of the study "*Comparative scientometric assessment of the results of ERC funded projects*" commissioned by the ERCEA (under the Work Programme 2014) in view of the FP7 ex-post evaluation. The study used a series of bibliometric, technometric and altmetric indicators, as well as a peer review assessment of ERC researchers' highly cited papers, in order to provide some recommendations to the ERC.

12. Operational issues reporting: Evaluation and granting processes

Update on evaluation

The ERCEA gave an overview of the state of play of the ongoing calls, namely AdG2015, CoG2015 and StG2016.

FRIDAY 4 December 2015

Session 3

ScC closed session

The ScC held a closed session.

13. Initial orientation debate on the Work Programme 2017

The ERCEA presented the Work Programme 2017 timetable and proposed issues for the consideration of the ScC. In addition, the ScC was reminded of the evolution of the ERC calls' budget and restrictions on submissions. The ScC will further discuss the draft Work Programme 2017 at its plenary meeting in February 2016.

14. Communication activities update and Communication strategy 2016

The ERCEA gave an update on recent communication activities, including promoting the ERC 2016 calls and upcoming events with ERC participation. The ERC was recently present at Destination Europe events in Brazil, which were also attended by Research Commissioner Carlos Moedas. A few information sessions took place. Moreover, the National Contact Points (NCP) Coordination and Support Action (CSA) on strengthening competitiveness in ERC calls was mentioned. Its objective is to strengthen national/local support to potential ERC applicants. The deadline for applications is 7 January 2016. In addition, two other CSA projects have started, with the aim of highlighting the results of ERC-supported projects. Finally, ERC was featured in the *Commission En Direct* magazine and the PoC 2015 results have been published.

In terms of media monitoring, between January and November 2015 around 5000 media items have been covered. Their geographical spread was also shared with the ScC members. In terms of communication achievements for 2015, the following were noted:

- Over 10,000 likes on Facebook;
- Nearly 20,000 followers on Twitter;
- Over 520,000 ERC website visitors;
- Over 7,250 articles mentioning ERC;
- 20 events attended; and
- 32 stories and features on ERC projects.

Finally, the ERC Communication strategy for 2016 was presented to the ScC for approval. Its main focus will be on communicating the calls outcome, communicating the projects and researchers involved, and increasing the ERC's visibility and impact. The ScC agreed to the proposed Communication strategy.

The Communication team also thanked the departing ScC members for their commitment and contributions throughout the years.

15. Preparation of the Scientific Council position on the midterm review (MFF)

The ScC discussed the FP7 ex-post High Level Expert Group Report and the references to the ERC included in the report.

16. Any other business

Panel chairs meeting on 3 February 2016

The ERCEA reminded the ScC members of the forthcoming panel chairs meeting on 3 February 2016 and encouraged them to attend.