



European Research Council  
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

## ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL 59<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING, BRUSSELS 9-10 February 2017

### MINUTES

**Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order):** Prof. Klaus BOCK, Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM, Prof. Christopher CLARK, Prof. Athene DONALD, Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK, Prof. Tomas JUNGWIRTH, Prof. Eva KONDOROSI, Prof. Michael KRAMER, Prof. Kurt MEHLHORN, Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ, Prof. Nils Christian STENSETH, Prof. Martin STOKHOF, Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA, Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS, Prof. Janet THORNTON, Prof. Isabelle VERNOS, Prof. Reinhilde VEUGELERS, Prof. Michel WIEVIORKA, Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER

**Scientific Council members excused (in alphabetical order):** Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA

**ERC Executive Agency staff present:** Pablo AMOR, Theodore PAPAZOGLU, Massimo GAUDINA, Jose LABASTIDA, Mechtild MAY, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Anna LONNROTH, Martin PENNY, Angela LIBERATORE, Laurence MOREAU, Ben TURNER, Francesca SGRITTA, Sabine SIMMROSS, Severina SHOPOVA, Marie ROBERTI

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

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

### Thursday 9 February 2017

#### Session 1 – Morning 8:45 – 12:30

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

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON welcomed everyone and in particular the new members of the Scientific Council (ScC), Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK and Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA, and outlined the goals of the meeting. He also excused Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA who could not attend for health reasons. Finally, he informed the ScC that Prof. Eveline CRONE will start her mandate on the 1<sup>st</sup> April.

##### 2. Adoption of Agenda

The draft agenda and annotated agenda of the 58<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting were adopted.

##### 9.00 – 10.00

##### 3. Visit by Commissioner Carlos MOEDAS in charge of Research, Science and Innovation

Commissioner Carlos MOEDAS in charge of Research, Science and Innovation, visited the ERC Scientific Council and welcomed the new ScC members and the two new Vice-Presidents. He praised the great work done by the ERC and its capacity to think out of the box, creating in ten years a specific brand. The Commissioner noted that he is particularly pleased that the Commission President Jean-Claude JUNCKER is aware of the great message ERC passes to the general public. In addition, the Commissioner presented the state of play of the Horizon 2020 Interim evaluation and the role of the High Level Group (HLG), which has been set up for that purpose.

Finally, the Commissioner concluded by giving his full support to the ERC, stating that after 10 years it has become a great success, bigger than expected and suggested to consolidate the

ERC brand similarly to the one of the Nobel Prize. He congratulated all the ScC members for their commitment, in particular the ERC President and all the Agency staff for the great job done so far and stressed the high expectations for the future.

#### **4. Adoption of the Minutes of the 58th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council in Brussels on 6-7 December 2016**

The "annotated minutes" and "minutes for publication on the ERC website" of the 58<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council (ScC) were adopted without any changes.

#### **5. Action Points Summary of the 58th 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.

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

##### ***6.1 ERC Board meeting on 15 December 2016 and 23 January 2017***

A short report was given from recent meetings, including the last Board meetings.

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON also circulated a list of his recent trips and meetings, which included, among others the very positive presence of the ERC at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos from 16 to 20 January. He highlighted especially the lunch organised in partnership with the WEF "Breaking through the Unknown", where Commissioner Carlos MOEDAS, as well as 3 industry leaders and 4 ERC grantees contributed. The lunch attracted about 70 high-level people, including NIH Director Francis COLLINS, NSF Director France CORDOVA and CERN Director Fabiola GIANOTTI.

##### ***6.2 ERC-EMBO Workshop***

The agenda point was covered under the reporting from the Working Group on Open access.

#### **7. Format of Plenary Meetings**

The ScC discussed the format of the future plenary meetings. The ScC discussed various suggestions and possible improvements to make the meetings more effective and to allow more discussion and brainstorming.

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

**14:00**

#### **8. Work Programme 2018**

The ERCEA/A1 introduced the discussion on the Work Programme giving an overview of the legal framework and the power of the Scientific Council to establish it, as well as the timetable for approval. The main novelty of the Work Programme 2018 is the re-introduction of the Synergy Grant scheme as decided at the Dublin plenary meeting in October 2016. The contributions of the SyG Task Force have been included in the current version of the draft Work Programme 2018. It was explained that the text was carefully designed to take into account the fact that ERC applies the "sole criterion of excellence" but also allows an adequate evaluation of the Synergy-specific features.

#### **9. ERC Research and Information System (ERIS) Presentation**

The ERCEA/A1 Unit gave a presentation on the new version of ERIS (ERC Research and Information System) and a quick live demonstration of the possibilities of the system, including

some examples. In particular, the ERC projects and related results were linked with the project outputs, such as publications, patents and discoveries/breakthroughs or notable research advances, as reported in the more general press, Prizes and Awards.

#### **10. Qualitative Assessment of Completed Projects – 2016 (SAP)**

The ERCEA/Department B presented the outcome of the 2016 exercise on the qualitative evaluation of completed ERC projects, providing a short initial background explanation, methodology, results and conclusions, and novelties for the 2017 exercise. Besides the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the scientific outputs and impacts of ERC through in-house bibliometric analysis and studies, in 2015 the ERC launched a new type of ex-post evaluation, the Qualitative Evaluation of ERC Completed Projects. The pilot exercise on the first 199 completed projects was very successful, and it was decided to carry out a yearly exercise evaluating a sample of ERC completed projects randomly selected. The overall result of the 2016 exercise is similar to the one of the previous year.

#### **18:00 Close of the Meeting**

### **Friday 10 February 2017**

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

#### **11. Follow up of the Participatory Workshop on the Future of the ERC on 8 February 2017**

The ScC discussed the main conclusions and outcomes of the ERC participatory workshop entitled "*What will be the role of the European Research Council in the European scientific landscape in 2030?*" which took place on February 8<sup>th</sup>. The workshop aimed at stimulating a series of exchanges to collect key ideas and important elements for a healthy evolution of the ERC and its support structure, the Executive Agency, in the future European scientific landscape. The nature of the workshop was participatory and 145 people took part, including 34 former and current ERC Scientific Council members and Secretary Generals, 26 members of the scientific community, 70 ERC Executive Agency staff people, and 7 key players from the European Commission.

The ScC congratulated the ERCEA for the good organisation and for the great opportunity to exchange views with different people, to learn more about the ERC environment and to think about new ideas for the future.

#### **12. Communication Activities Update**

The ERCEA/A2 gave an update on recent communication activities and on the preparations for the ERC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in Brussels on March 21<sup>st</sup>, as well as the series of events to be organised across Europe and in the rest of the world. As regards the ERC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event on 21 March, a draft programme was distributed to the ScC with details on participants, ERC grantees selection and the organisation of the various sessions. The first draft of the new ERC website was also presented.

#### **13. Adoption of Minutes of ScC Standing Committees' and Working Groups and update on membership**

The Minutes from the various Standing Committees and Working Groups, which recently met, were included under this agenda item. Also, the Membership of the ScC members to the various StCs, Task Force and WGs was discussed. To that end, a document with the current membership was distributed to the ScC members and it will be updated following the various

expressions of interest of the ScC members to join some groups. The Chair of CoIME and the WG on Innovation and Relation with Industry reported on 9<sup>th</sup> February.

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

The Chair of the CoIME, Prof. Klaus BOCK, briefly reported on the last meeting of the Standing Committee and on some cases of conflict of interest. He also mentioned that the ERC Annual Report has a section dedicated to cases of scientific misconduct and conflict of interest where the confidential data are omitted but details on the cases are provided.

### ***Working Group on Innovation and Relations with Industry***

The Chair of the Innovation and Relations with Industry Working Group, Prof. Klaus BOCK, briefly reported on the last meeting and recent activities of the WG and the advancement of the PoC assessment exercise. In particular, he mentioned that the survey sent to all FP7 ERC grantees was very well received and after just 10 days it already had a very high response rate.

### ***Committee on Panels (CoP)***

The Chair of the CoP, Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON reported that the selection of the next group of panel members for the three domains is nearly concluded.

### ***Working Group on Widening European Participation***

The Chair of the Working Group, Prof. Eva KONDOROSI, gave an update on the recent activities of the WG and on the next widening events planned for 2017. In particular, she mentioned the strategic importance for the region of the joint widening and 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in Georgia on 20-21 April. She also announced a Conference in Estonia on October 11<sup>th</sup> in the context of the Estonian Presidency and another one in Budapest organized in collaboration with the AE/ALLEA planned for the week of 3-7 Sept

### ***Working Group on Open Access***

The Chair of the Working Group, Prof. Martin STOKHOF, reported about the last meeting and asked Prof. Janet THORNTON to provide additional details on the proposed ERC-EMBO workshop. The ScC shortly discussed the issue and finally decided that the proposed workshop should be co-organized during the second half of the year. Prof. Martin STOKHOF also explained that the WG was discussing the unclear definition of peer review for monographs, in particular taking into account the differences between the various disciplines.

### ***Working Group on Enhancing International Participation***

The Chair, Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON gave an update on the implementing arrangements in the pipeline. He noted that he is still discussing a possible implementing arrangement with India, as well as exploring a similar possibility with Australia.

#### ***13.1 Croatian Proposal for an ERC Visiting Fellowship***

The ScC received a proposal from Croatia for the Visiting Fellowships scheme to ERC teams. The proposal was sent for review to the Widening European Participation Working Group whose members had no comments on the proposal. Following a brief discussion, the ScC considered that the Croatian scheme is in line with the ERC Guidelines for similar schemes and agreed that it can be included in the next ERC call for expression of interest to host visiting researchers under ERC Fellowship to visit ERC grantee initiative.

#### ***13.2 Participation of Scientists from Big Organisations in the Evaluation Panels***

The ScC did not discuss this point of the agenda.

#### **14. Operational Issues Reporting: Evaluation Processes**

The ERCEA/Department B gave an overview of the PoC 2016 results and the submissions' state of play for PoC 2017.

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

- **Additional budget for ERC calls.**

The ERCEA Director informed the members of the ScC that the 2017 EU budget was adopted and the ScC decided to allocate some additional budget to the PoC and AdG calls.

- **ERC vs EIC**

Following the ERC Workshop conclusions and discussion with Commissioner MOEDAS, Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA suggested that the ScC could contribute to the discussion that Commissioner MOEDAS has launched regarding a future European Innovation Council.

#### **12:30 Close of the Meeting**