



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
56th PLENARY MEETING, BRUSSELS
28-30 June 2016
MINUTES

Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order): Prof. Klaus BOCK, Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM, Prof. Christopher CLARK, Prof. Athene DONALD, Dr. Barbara ENSOLI, Prof. Tomas JUNGWIRTH, Prof. Mattias KLEINER, Prof. Eva KONDOROSI, Prof. Michael KRAMER, 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. Barbara ROMANOVICZ

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

Chair of the meeting: Prof. Nuria SEBASTIAN GALLES, ERC Vice-President and Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON, ERC President

Rapporteur: Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency

TUESDAY 28 June 2016

Session 1

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

In the absence of Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON, who could not attend this first session due to a delayed flight back from China, Prof. Nuria SEBASTIAN GALLES chaired the first session of the meeting on 28 June and welcomed everyone, as well as outlined the goals of the meeting. Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON chaired the rest of the ScC plenary meeting on 29 and 30 June.

Prof. Christopher CLARK, one of the new members of the Scientific Council, introduced himself as he attended a plenary meeting for the first time.

Pablo AMOR introduced two new Heads of Unit at the ERC Executive Agency, namely Ms Laurence MOREAU (Legal affairs and Internal control Unit) and Mr Dirk COSTENS (IT and Support services Unit) who recently joined the Agency.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The draft agenda of the 56th plenary meeting was adopted.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 55th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council in Copenhagen on 14-15 April 2016

The Minutes of the 55th plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council (ScC) were adopted without any changes.

4. Action Points Summary of the 55th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

Prof. Nuria SEBASTIAN GALLES checked the state of play of the action points from the last ScC meeting.

5. Update on Recent Meetings and Activities

5.1 ERC Board meetings on 19 May and 13 June 2016

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

Several ScC members expressed their concern with respect to the results of the UK referendum and stressed that the continued participation of UK scientists in the ERC supported actions is very important.

6. ScC Satisfaction Survey Results

The ERCEA presented the results of the survey conducted in December 2015, measuring the satisfaction of the ScC members vis-a-vis the support provided by the ERCEA/A1 Unit: Support to the ERC Scientific Council. The recorded scores from the survey reflected the high appreciation of the support provided by the Unit A1.

7. ScC Standing Committees Reporting and Update

Standing Committee on Panels (CoP)

The Chair of the CoP, Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON (the Chair reported on 29 June, upon his return), reported on recent activities of the Committee, including a few cases of evaluation panel members' resignations. Furthermore, the ScC noted that there is a need for organizing a dedicated session during the plenary meetings to discuss observations of ScC members during their visits to the evaluation panel meetings.

Moreover, the ScC discussed proposed revisions of the panels structure 2018.

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

The Chair of the CoIME, Prof. Nuria SEBASTIAN GALLES, noted that the CoIME will be meeting after the plenary meeting.

8. Working Groups Reporting and Update

The Chairs of the various Working groups reported on their respective activities:

Working Group on Gender Balance

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Isabelle VERNOS reported that the WG is discussing the possibility to organise a gender workshop early next year and, to that end, the next meeting of the WG will be in October 2016, on the occasion of the ScC Dublin plenary meeting.

Working group on Open Access

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Martin STOKHOF, reported on recent activities of the WG, including preparing several review papers (one for each domain), concerning the different communities' policies and practices related to research data management.

Working group on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Chair of the KPIs WG, Prof. Reinhilde VEUGELERS, noted that the WG will meet after the plenary meeting.

Working group on Innovation and relations with industry

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Klaus BOCK, reported from the last WG meeting and noted that the WG has approved the Terms of Reference for the Expert group for the forthcoming evaluation of the PoC scheme and has agreed on the launch of the exercise.

Working Group on Science behind the projects

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Nils C. STENSETH, noted that the half day workshop, which took place in the morning, with the full ScC and scientific officers was very productive and a vocabulary of disciplines and topics is now being developed. Moreover, another meeting of the group will be needed in October 2016 to consolidate all the work done.

Task Force for Synergy preparation and follow up of the Interdisciplinary taskforce

The Chair of the Task Force, Prof. Klaus BOCK, presented the proposal of the Task Force under the agenda item "9. Synergy Grants: next steps".

WEDNESDAY 29 June 2016

Session 2

9. Synergy Grant: Next Steps

Prof. Klaus BOCK reminded the ScC of previous discussions on the SyG and the evaluation of the scheme, which was performed in the past. Following an in-depth analysis and discussions at the SyG Task Force, the Task Force recommended to the ScC to reintroduce the SyG as soon as it will be operationally possible. Following a discussion, the ScC decided to further discuss the introduction of the SyG scheme at its October plenary meeting when it will also receive some additional operational feedback from the ERCEA.

10. Visit of Research Commissioner Carlos MOEDAS

Commissioner Carlos MOEDAS in charge of Research, Science and Innovation visited the ScC and had an exchange of views with the ScC members on a number of issues, including the UK referendum results and his three "Os" (Open innovation, Open science, Open to the world) strategy. Both Commissioner MOEDAS and the ScC members shared their thoughts regarding the UK referendum results.

Regarding the three "Os" strategy, Commissioner MOEDAS stressed the need to deliver on open access to publications, open data and research integrity. The ScC noted that it has actively supported the open access to publications for a long time and has since recently moved to review the situation on the use of open data as well. Furthermore, the ScC underlined that it is important to make usable and reusable data open. In addition, Commissioner MOEDAS spoke of the European Science Cloud project. As regards research

integrity, the ScC noted that this topic has been of major concern to the ERC but the ScC has no investigating power when it comes to addressing a few cases that have been brought to its attention.

Also, Commissioner MOEDAS shared with the ScC that the ERC has been an inspiration to him for the creation of a European Innovation Council (EIC), which will aim to capture the disruptive side of innovation.

Finally, Commissioner MOEDAS and the ScC discussed the forthcoming mid-term evaluation of Horizon 2020.

At the end of the exchanges, the Commissioner emphasised that he remains a big fan of the ERC and its ScC and always enjoys the discussions with the latter. The ERC President noted on behalf of all the ScC members that this direct, good and efficient relationship with the Commissioner is always very much appreciated.

11. Exploratory Awards: Follow-up of the Discussion in Copenhagen

Following up on the discussions in Copenhagen, Prof. Martin STOKHOF presented to the ScC the conceptual development of the Exploratory Awards, aiming to support interdisciplinary projects of a very exploratory nature.

Following a discussion, the ScC concluded that it is interested in continuing to discuss the Exploratory Awards.

Session 3

8 bis. Working Groups Reporting and Update (continued)

Working Group on Widening European Participation

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Eva KONDOROSI, reported that the ERCEA has received a few concrete schemes proposals on the fellowships to visit ERC teams. Those come from FWO (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen) in Belgium, the National Science Foundation of the Czech Republic, the Estonian Research Council and the Hungarian National Research, Development and Innovation Office. The ScC noted that the proposed schemes seem to respond to the Guidelines published by the ScC earlier this year and gave the green light to the ERCEA to proceed with further exchanges with the respective agencies (including clarifying last details before the call for expression of interest to ERC Principal Investigators is launched by the ERCEA).

Moreover, Prof. Nils C. STENSETH has been discussing with representatives of the Research Council of Norway regarding the Excellence scheme that they are developing in relation to the results of the ERC calls as part of their EEA and Norway Grants funding programme, for which eligible countries for funding countries are EU13, Portugal and Greece. Reference to the ERC is included in the draft proposal. Following a discussion, the ScC noted that it welcomed the initiative of the Norwegian authorities to promote research excellence through EEA/Norway grants in the eligible countries, to be based on the ERC Evaluation outcome.

Finally, Prof. Eva KONDOROSI gave an update regarding future possible ERC widening events.

Working Group on Increasing International Participation

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON, gave an update on the implementing arrangements that the ERC has signed so far and those in the pipeline. Moreover, he noted that he has been looking into a possible implementing arrangement with

India. In addition, Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon is still exploring the possibility for implementing arrangements with Canada and Australia. Finally, the ERCEA informed the ScC that an ERC conference on science diplomacy is being organised on 27-28 October 2016 in Brussels.

12. Election of Two ScC Vice-Presidents: Timeline, Candidatures

The ScC discussed the election of future Vice-Presidents and domain coordinators of the LS and SH domains, which will take place through electronic vote and will be finalised by 15 July 2016.

THURSDAY 30 June 2016

Session 4

13. Communication Activities Update

The ERCEA gave an update on recent communication activities and events. Among the past events listed were the Global Research Council (GRC) on 25-27 May, the 500th grantee event in Maastricht on 16 June and the Annual meeting of New Champions (WEF) in Tianjin, China on 26-28 June. At the Annual meeting of New Champions the ERC was represented by the ERC President, Prof. Mart Saarma and 12 ERC grantees. Six ERC grantees were part of the Young Scientists Programme and an ERC Ideas Lab session on Fighting Superbugs took place as well. In addition, several media interviews were given. As regards future events, the following were noted: the PI-centric event in Lisbon on 4 July, ESOF in Manchester on 23-27 July and the Cell Biology Annual meeting in San Francisco on 3-7 December, among others. Moreover, the press coverage at the ERC info day in Slovakia was mentioned, including the partnership with EurActiv that has published a special report on the occasion of the event. The event was organised on the occasion of the ERC President's visit to Slovakia. The ERC President was accompanied by Prof. Tomas JUNGWIRTH. Various press activities were also reported on the occasion of the ERC President's recent visit to India.

In addition, an update was given on the campaigns highlighting ERC results and in particular the two CSA (common support action) projects, ERCcOMICS (Visual storytelling) and ERC=Science² (The power of tomorrow's science), which are progressing. Also, examples of ERC projects in the press were shown, as well as ERC projects linked to current political affairs. Finally, an update was given on media monitoring and the second issue of the ERC Newsletter, as well as on the results of the evaluation of the ERCEA and the beneficiaries' awareness/knowledge of ERC grants/funding.

The ScC was informed that a number of events are being planned for the ERC 10th Anniversary in March 2017.

14. Operational Issues Reporting: Evaluation Processes

Update on Evaluation

The ERCEA gave an overview of the state of play of the ongoing evaluations for CoG 2016, PoC 2016, StG 2016, as well as the AdG 2016 call opening and the StG 2017 call preparations.

Update on granting

The ERCEA did not give an update on the state of play of the granting processes as there were no novelties to be reported.

15. Any Other Business

No items were discussed under this point.