



## ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

### 24<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

11– 12 MARCH 2010

#### Minutes of the Meeting

**Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order):** Dr. Claudio BORDIGNON, Prof. Sierd CLOETINGH, Prof. Carlos DUARTE, Dr. Daniel ESTEVE, Prof. Pavel EXNER, Prof. Hans-Joachim FREUND, Prof. Wendy HALL, Prof. Fotis C. KAFATOS, Prof. Michal KLEIBER, Prof. Norbert KROÓ, Dr. Oscar MARÍN PARRA, Prof. Henrietta MOORE, Prof. Andreu MAS-COLELL, Prof. Helga NOWOTNY, Prof. Christiane NÜSSEIN-VOLHARD, Prof. Alain PEYRAUBE, Dr. Jens ROSTRUP-NIELSEN, Prof. Salvatore SETTIS, Prof. Rolf ZINKERNAGEL

**Scientific Council members excused (in alphabetical order):** Prof. Mathias DEWATRIPONT, Prof. Carl-Henrik HELDIN, Prof. Maria Teresa LAGO, Dr. Leena PELTONEN-PALOTIE

**ERC Executive Agency staff present:** Jack METTHEY, Pablo AMOR, Bernardus TUBBING, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Massimo GAUDINA, Nathalie LEGROS, Theodore PAPAZOGLOU, Benjamin TURNER, Elisabeth SJOSTEDT, Laura PONTIGGIA, Madeleine DRIELSMA, Severina SHOPOVA, Marie ROBERTI

**Chair of the meeting:** Prof. Helga NOWOTNY, ERC Scientific Council

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

### THURSDAY 11 March 2010

#### Session 1

1. **Welcome, plans and goals of meeting**
2. **Adoption of agenda and point summary of the 23<sup>rd</sup> plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council of 15-16 December 2009**

The draft agenda of the 24<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting and Minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> plenary session of the ERC Scientific Council (ScC) were adopted without any changes.

3. **Scientific Council organisation**

The ERC Secretary General informed the Scientific Council on the developments that followed the announcement of the resignation of Prof. Kafatos as President of the ERC Scientific Council. The Scientific Council revised by vote its Rules of Procedure. Following that, an election had been organised by the Secretary General and Prof. Nowotny was unanimously elected as the new Scientific Council chairperson and President of the ERC. Moreover, Prof. Kafatos has been unanimously awarded the title Honorary President of the ERC.

The Scientific Council decided to postpone the election of a second Scientific Council Vice-chair.

The Scientific Council decided that Prof. Duarte will temporarily assume the duties of domain coordinator of Prof. Heldin for the LS domain.

With respect to the selection process of the ERC Executive Agency Director, the Scientific Council will be represented in the selection panel by four of its members, namely Prof. Nowotny, Dr. Esteve, Prof. Dewatripont and Dr. Marin Parra and by the Secretary General, Prof. Mas-Colell.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Part of the Scientific Council organisation agenda item was held in a closed session.

### **4. Preparation of the Work Programme 2011**

A discussion took place in order to finalise the Work Programme 2011 for subsequent adoption by the Commission. The following main changes were agreed:

- Clarification of the treatment of cross panel proposals and the use of the "fourth domain";
- Further emphasis on supporting high-risk/ high-gain proposals;
- The removal of the research environment criterion;
- Simplified evaluation criteria overall;
- Progressive removal of resubmission restrictions;
- Extension of the StG to 2-12 years to support mid-career researchers;
- Overall simplification of the text.

Prof. Nowotny indicated that she would like to start the discussions on Work Programme 2012 in good time, and in particular on the possibility of introducing new schemes such as: support for access to Institutes of Advanced studies (IAS); doctoral schools; and other possible schemes that could establish and support "creative environments".

#### **Professor Leena Peltonen-Palotie**

It was with immense grief that the Scientific Council learned during its session on 11 March 2010 of the untimely passing away of its member, Professor Leena Peltonen-Palotie. Condolences will be expressed to Professor Peltonen-Palotie's family and a short obituary was placed on the ERC website.

## **Session 2**

### **5. ERC Review follow-up**

The ERC Executive Agency informed the Scientific Council on the preparatory work for the revision of the Union's financial regulation with the key message coming from the new Research and Innovation Commissioner being further simplification, especially in view of the preparations of FP8.

Furthermore, Prof. Nowotny suggested that the governance issue of the ERC should be raised with the new Research and Innovation Commissioner at the first possible occasion when the Scientific Council meets her, possibly during its plenary meeting in April 2010.

## **FRIDAY 12 March 2010**

### **Session 3**

#### **6. Scientific follow up of projects**

Following discussions on the issue, the Scientific Council emphasised the importance of light reporting as well as having periodic and final scientific activity reports available in order to see what has been achieved by the grantees. Moreover, the Scientific Council agreed with the procedures to be followed, namely:

- The mid-term scientific activity report informs the ERC about the progress of the work towards the objectives and about achievements and outputs (publications, patents etc.) resulting from the project. The report also declares any major changes of scientific direction, strategy or use of funds;
- The final scientific activity report presents the final results and achievements of the project and describes their use and dissemination such as publications;
- Monitoring will be mainly performed based on the short scientific activity reports and on published work, and assessed against the objectives as described in the Description of Work. The model combines monitoring by the ERC Scientific Officers, plus assessments by the ERC review panels and peer-reviewers in cases this is deemed appropriate. The Scientific Council emphasised that when there are concerns on the progress of a specific project those should be forwarded to the chair of the panel, which has evaluated the project, and if necessary, involve other panel members in the assessment. It was noted that panels are extremely interested to learn about the progress and results of projects they decided to fund. All scientific activity reports should therefore be also communicated to them.

#### **7. Update on recent meetings**

##### **7.1 ERC Board meetings on 28 January 2010 and 9 February 2010**

An update on the previous Board meetings was given to the Scientific Council members.

##### **7.2 Steering Committee meeting**

The Secretary General and the ERC Executive Agency Director (*ad Interim*) reported on the last meeting of the Steering Committee on 16 February 2010. The overall operation of the ERC Executive Agency was regarded as satisfactory.

##### **7.3 Standing Committee on Panels**

A report was given by Prof. Nowotny on the meeting of the Committee which took place on 10 March 2010. The Committee on Panels made recommendations for the Work Programme 2011, which will be reflected in the text. Additional conclusions were transmitted following the plenary meeting and were subsequently adopted by the Scientific Council.

The Committee on Panels will be in regular contact with the Operational committee within the ERC Executive Agency which has been established to support the work of the Committee on Panels.

#### **7.4 Working group on Relations with Industry**

Dr. Jens Rostrup-Niesen recalled that the ERC relations with industry should focus both on industry participation in ERC calls and on developing a common understanding that the ERC, just by pursuing its primary goal of funding high-quality, investigator-driven frontier research, on the basis of scientific excellence, does contribute to the European innovation performance. Moreover, he reported on the meeting of the Working group which took place on 8 February 2010 as well as on the meeting that the Working group had with industry representatives (EIRMA). The feedback of the meeting was very positive and the Scientific Council encouraged the Working group to continue the dialogue with industry and closely follow the discussion on innovation.

Finally, Dr. Jens Rostrup-Niesen said that the Working group should now open a discussion on how the ERC could play a role in the ongoing debate on innovation for Europe.

The next meeting of the Working group will take place before the Scientific Council plenary meeting in Brussels in April 2010.

#### **7.5 Working group on Open Access**

In the absence of the Chair of the Working group, the ERC Executive Agency reported on the Workshop on Open Access organised on 29 January 2010 in Brussels. Good participation was noted, including two research councils from the UK, the Austrian research fund and representations on behalf of EUROHORCs, CSIC, Max Planck Society, DFG, Wellcome Trust, the Swedish Research Council, as well as NIH and NSF (via teleconference). Discussion on the thematic and institutional repositories, the current publication business models and the implementation of the open access policy of the various research funding organisations took place. EUROHORCs has also sent an invitation for the participation of the ERC as observer at their open access meetings. The Scientific Council accepted the invitation.

### **8. Operational issues**

#### **8.1 ERC Executive Agency: state of play**

The ERC Executive Agency Director (*ad interim*) informed the Scientific Council on the state of play with respect to the ERC Executive agency' recruitment, particularly for the Director's post and the two management positions left vacant (Head of Unit A1 and Head of Department B), as well as the logistics arrangements and the training and scientific opportunities offered to the staff.

#### **8.2 State of play: ERC-2010-AdG call/ ERC-2010-StG call**

##### **Update on the ERC-2010-StG call**

An update was made by the ERC Executive agency on the ERC-2010-StG call. It was reported that the "streaming approach" ("starters" vs. "consolidators") is working well. About 800 people will be interviewed in Brussels. An overview of the three StG was also presented to compare. Amongst the issues identified and in the meantime treated by the ScC Standing Committee on Panels were the PhD-equivalence, the extension to 12 years and the renewal of panels.

### **Update on the ERC-2010-AdG call**

The ERC Executive agency gave an update on the ERC-2010-AdG call, including recap on the deadlines (PE domain already closed) and the forthcoming panel meetings in June-July for Step 1 and September-October for Step 2.

### **8.3 State of play: Granting**

An update was given by the ERC Executive Agency on the granting process for the StG 2009 and AdG 2009. The budgetary and financial reporting key indicators for the ERC grants were also discussed.

### **8.4 Communication activities**

An update was given by the ERC Executive Agency on communication activities and in particular on the participation of the ERC at AAAS in February 2010 in San Diego, USA and on the forthcoming Shanghai EXPO in June 2010, where the ERC will also participate. Moreover, an event is being planned for the ERC 1000<sup>th</sup> grantee expected to take place in May/June 2010 and planned to be hosted by the host institution of the 1000<sup>th</sup> grantee. Media activities and dissemination of results were also mentioned. In the discussion, the importance to use ERC grantees as "ambassadors" at public and scientific events was stressed.

## **9. Any other business**

- Possibility to state other affiliation by the PIs

The Secretary General and Prof. Kafatos have worked on a proposal to allow PIs to declare a second academic affiliation (if applicable) during the granting procedure. The organisation of the second affiliation will not appear in the grant agreement but it will be used only for information purposes. The second affiliation would need to be in Europe and should be substantial.

- Scientific Council meetings away from Brussels

A discussion took place on the number of meetings per year, their location and their format.