



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

52nd PLENARY MEETING, TALLINN

8-9 October 2015

MINUTES

Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order): Prof. Klaus BOCK, Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM, Prof. Nicholas CANNY, Prof. Sierd A.P.L. CLOETINGH, Prof. Athene DONALD, Dr. Barbara ENSOLI, Prof. Thomas 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

ERC Executive Agency staff present: Pablo AMOR, Theodore PAPAZOGLU, Massimo GAUDINA, Jose LABASTIDA, Mechtild MAY, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Anna LONNROTH, Martin PENNY, 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 8 October 2015

Session 1

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

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular Prof. Margaret Buckingham, Prof. Michael Kramer and Prof. Isabelle Vernos as members of the ScC, following their appointment by the Commission in July 2015.

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon outlined the goals of the meeting.

2. Adoption of agenda

- The draft agenda of the 52nd plenary meeting was adopted.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 51st plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council in Strasbourg on 2-3 June 2015

- The Minutes of the 51st plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council (ScC) were adopted without any changes.

4. Action points summary of the 51st 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.

4.1 Update on "PoC Prize"

The Chair of the Innovation and relations with industry working group (WG), Prof. Sierd Cloetingh, informed the ScC that the WG discussed the possibility to come up with a hybrid prize for the PoC action. Following a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages associated with such a change, the WG decided to dismiss the proposed change. The ScC endorsed the proposal of the WG.

4.2 ERC Visiting Research Fellows

The ERCEA reported on some exchanges with Poland and Hungary regarding their plans for a Visiting Fellowship scheme for potential ERC applicants. The ERCEA will further discuss with representatives from those countries. Following a discussion, the ScC decided to come forward with a simple but explicit document outlining the principles of such a scheme. The ScC members thanked Prof. Eva Kondorosi for her great efforts to get this scheme off the ground in such a short time.

5. Update on recent meetings and activities

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon reported on his latest travels and meetings. He took part in the visit of Commissioner Moedas in Beijing in September and took part in the "Annual Meeting of the New Champions, the "Summer Davos", together with Prof. Nuria Sebastian Galles, where he had very interesting interactions. Prof. Nuria Sebastian Galles noted in particular a meeting in China organised by EURAXESS during which she gave a presentation on the ERC. At the STS Forum in Kyoto early October he also met a number of Ministers and Mr. Paul Rubig (Member of European Parliament). He discussed with him the forthcoming mid-term review of the EU budget.

Prof. Sierd Cloetingh mentioned a few recent meetings and visits, which included the Young Academy of Europe meeting on research evaluation, which took place at the Annual meeting of Academia Europaea in Darmstadt in September 2015. Moreover, Prof. Sierd Cloetingh also attended a conference in Ukraine, where he presented the ERC together with Prof. Eva Kondorosi.

Prof. Michel Wieviorka reported about his participation at the World Social Science Forum in September 2015 in Durban, South Africa. He chaired a session and presented the ERC.

5.1 ERC Board meeting on 22 June, 9 July and 17 September 2015

A report was given from past Board meetings.

6. Closed session of the Scientific Council

The ScC held a closed session.

7. Discussion/preparation of the election of a ScC Vice-President and PE domain coordinator as of January 2016

The ScC asked the ERCEA to organise an electronic vote starting on Monday 12 October 2015. The electronic vote would close on Wednesday 14 October 2015.

Session 2

8. Discussion/preparation of the election of a ScC member as representative to the Steering Committee

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon asked those ScC members who are interested to represent the ScC in the Steering Committee to inform him. Shortly after he collects the names, an electronic election will also be organised.

9. ScC Standing Committees' reporting and update

9.1 *Committee on Panels (CoP)*

The Chair of the CoP, Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, reported that work is ongoing on the transformation of the panels, as well as the recruitment for 2016. Prof. Nuria Sebastian Galles noted that she very much appreciated the efforts of the scientific officers from the SH (social sciences and humanities) domain who have been responding to all her requests while running panel meetings at the same time. Prof. Mart Saarma reported that the ScC members representing the LS (life sciences) domain met and discussed the panel descriptors, as well as other future possible changes. Prof. Sierd Cloetingh reported that the ScC members representing the PE (physical sciences and engineering) domain also met and had a discussion on the panels.

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

The Chair of the CoIME, Prof. Nuria Sebastian Galles, noted that there are no new developments to be reported. Regarding membership of the CoIME, the Committee is short of two members. Prof. Fabio Zwirner has just agreed to join and now one more ScC member is needed.

10. Working Groups reporting and update

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon stressed that it is important for the ScC members to join the WGs and actively participate. He also noted that some topics need to be dealt with on a permanent basis and such examples are the WGs on relations with industry and gender balance. At the same time, for other WGs the ScC could set some deadlines to deliver on particular tasks.

10.1 *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 the forthcoming implementing arrangement to be signed soon with South Africa. Other countries, which have expressed their interest and are working towards an implementing arrangement include Mexico and Brazil. Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon is exploring the possibility to sign similar arrangements with Australia and Canada. Moreover, he has been looking into matching the NSF arrangement with one with the NIH too.

10.2 *Working Group on Innovation and Relations with Industry*

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Sierd Cloetingh, reported from the last meeting of the WG, which took place on 7 October 2015. The WG is discussing the cooperation with the European Business Angels Network (EBAN). One concrete action in this cooperation is the participation of 10 PoC grantees in the EBAN Winter University event on 16-18 November in Copenhagen, where they will pitch their projects in front of investors. Prof. Sierd Cloetingh, Prof. Klaus Bock and Prof. Jens Rostrup-Nielsen will also be speakers at the Conference.

Other opportunities of cooperation are being explored and developed as well.

10.3 Working Group on Open Access

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Nicholas Canny, reported from the last meeting of the WG, which had taken place on 7 October 2015. He noted that the meeting started with an information session by the Research Data Alliance. The ERCEA provided an update on operational issues related to Open Access to publications and informed the WG that a leaflet for beneficiaries with information on the implementation of the Open Research Data pilot had been prepared. The ERCEA also provided an update on the proposed open access provisions in the Annotated ERC Grant Agreement to the WG (and then to the whole ScC in plenary).

In view of the forthcoming end of the term of office of Prof. Nicholas Canny on 31 December 2015, Prof. Martin Stokhof was elected by the WG and endorsed by the ScC as the new Chair of the WG.

10.4 Working Group on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Reinhilde Veugelers, reported on the WG's recent activities, including a report from the last meeting, which took place on 28 September 2015. The WG discussed the monitoring and evaluation activities and the building up of a database by the ERCEA. Moreover, an analysis was presented on publications reported by completed projects (20 000 publications from about 600 projects) with an ERC project reporting on average 33 publications. In addition, the publications of projects supported by the ERC get cited three times more than the world's average. Finally, the WG has been looking into improving the template for the final scientific reporting.

10.5 Working Group on Widening European Participation

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Eva Kondorosi, reminded the ScC members of the forthcoming widening participation event organised by the WG in Tallinn, on 9 October 2015. Another such event is being prepared in the context of the World Science Forum in Budapest in November 2015, with the purpose of bringing together national and local stakeholders (researchers, representatives of research councils, host institutions and policy makers) to discuss their role in promoting and supporting research excellence. Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, Prof. Sierd Cloetingh, Prof. Mart Saarma and Prof. Nils Stenseth noted that they will attend the event in Budapest as well.

10.6 Working Group on Gender Balance

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Isabelle Vernos reported from the last WG meeting on 7 October 2015. The membership of the WG has been reinforced and Prof. Janet Thornton, Prof. Michael Kramer, Prof. Tomas Jungwirth and Prof. Michel Wieviorka have joined the WG. During the last meeting, the WG was given an update on ongoing gender studies. Moreover, preparations are on-going for a major forthcoming event with ERC participation, the Gender Summit to take place in Berlin on 6 and 7 November 2015. The ERC will be represented by Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon who will give a keynote speech and Prof. Isabelle Vernos who will chair an ERC session, including an ERC grantee and ERC panel members. Both the keynote speech and the ERC session will take place on 6 November 2015.

10.7 Working Group on Science behind the projects

The Chair of the WG, Prof. Nils Stenseth reported that the WG will meet on 2 December 2015 and invited more ScC members to join the group. The ERCEA introduced the goals and scope, as well as the methodology, to be used for the science behind the projects exercise. The timeline of the exercise was also discussed.

10.8 Task Force on Interdisciplinarity

Prof. Martin Stokhof reported from the first meeting of the Task Force on interdisciplinarity, which took place on 7 October 2015.

The Task Force discussed some analysis on interdisciplinarity. A second meeting of the Task Force is planned for November 2015.

10.9 Life Sciences domain meeting

Prof. Mart Saarma reported from the third Life Sciences domain meeting on changes to panel titles and descriptors that had been agreed.

11. The current evaluation cycle of the Framework Programmes, the involvement and possible implications for the ERC

The ERCEA gave an update on the processes establishing the EU budget and the Framework Programmes between the years 2007-2020 and their possible implications for the ERC. It was noted that the FP7 ex-post evaluation will be the main evidence base for the review of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in 2016. The MFF review will cover the final years of the current MFF, namely 2017–2020 and not 2021–2027, but will explicitly decide on the length of the next MFF. Finally, the formal process of preparing the next MFF and Horizon 2027 will start already in 2017.

In terms of the FP7 ex-post evaluation, an independent high level expert group (HLEG) delivered a report to the Commission on 31 September 2015. A Staff Working Document (SWD) of the Commission Services was drafted and a Commission Communication is also being drafted. The adoption of the Commission Communication, the SWD and the publication of the external evaluation report are scheduled for 20 January 2016.

12. Proposed amendments related to Open Access in the Annotated ERC Model Grant Agreement

This agenda item was already covered under the Open Access WG reporting.

FRIDAY 9 October 2015

Session 3

13. Operational issues reporting: Evaluation and granting processes

Update on granting

The ERCEA gave an update on the granting processes, including a reminder of the responsibilities and structure of the granting department. The budget commitments for FP7 and Horizon 2020 were shown, together with the running portfolio by type of grant. Information was shared with the ScC on the communication activities of the granting department and in particular the PI helpdesk, which offers advice in real time on individual grants and clarifies rules and procedures. Training events are also organised for PIs (principal investigators) and HIs (host institutions) and they are much appreciated. 19 PI workshops have taken place to date in various countries.

Update on evaluation

The ERCEA gave an overview of the ongoing evaluations.

Update ERC calls

The ERCEA reported on the StG2015 Step 2, CoG2015 and AdG2015 evaluation results.

13.1 Scientific reporting templates update

The ERCEA gave an update on the scientific reporting templates origin and context, as well as on the various elements of the reports in Horizon 2020 (mid-term and final scientific reports as well as continuous reporting). The templates were discussed and approved on 22 June 2015 by the ERC Board.

13.2 PI versus Project, Co-Investigators in AdG, Interdisciplinarity

The ERCEA gave a presentation following some questions raised at the ScC plenary meeting in Strasbourg, related to the "PI versus project weight", "Co-Investigators in AdG" and "Interdisciplinarity".

13.3 Preliminary findings from the SyG (Synergy grant)

The ERCEA gave an update on the Synergy grant assessment exercise, which included site visits to all 24 Synergy projects. A meeting of the SyG working group of the ScC will take place on 2 December 2015 to discuss the Synergy programme evaluation and will then report to the ScC in plenary.

14. Communication activities update

The ERCEA gave an update on recent communication activities.

The 2016 calls announcements were mentioned. Also, the call for proposals for an NCP (national contact points) project on strengthening competitiveness in ERC calls was noted. The call opened on 6 October 2015 and the deadline is 7 January 2016.

Furthermore, there was an NCP meeting on 17 June 2015 and 37 participants took part.

An overview was given of past international events with ERC participation. Those included, among others, an ERC PI-centric event in Barcelona, the World Economic Forum (Summer Davos) in Dalian, the International Congress on Industrial and Applied Mathematics in Beijing, as well as the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Jinan. At the Summer Davos, 18 ERC grantees took part together with Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon and Prof. Nuria Sebastian Galles. A special ERC press briefing and other actions were noted as well, such as press releases, interviews and social media coverage.

Moreover, an update was given on the CSA (coordination and support action) to support a multiannual communication campaign to highlight, in novel ways, projects and researchers funded by the ERC across Europe.

Finally, overall numbers, as well as the geographical spread, were presented on recent media coverage. In addition, the September issue of the ERC Newsletter was mentioned, with the theme being *Citizen science in ERC projects*. A list of upcoming events was also shared with the ScC.

15. Any other business

15.1 ScC members as observers in evaluation panel meetings

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon reminded the ScC members that it is important to attend the evaluation panel meetings as observers and share their feedback also with the ERCEA in order to keep record to be reported and discussed at the plenary meetings.

15.2 ScC plenary meetings invitations

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon confirmed the two formal invitations he received for the ScC plenary meetings in 2016. The ScC endorsed the ERC President's proposal to hold the ScC April meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the October meeting in Dublin, Ireland. Furthermore, Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon received two invitations for ScC plenary meetings in 2017: one from Turkey and one from Slovenia. He intends to acknowledge receipt of those invitations in an open way. The ScC agreed to consider these countries.