

**ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL  
63<sup>rd</sup> PLENARY MEETING, BRUSSELS (BE)  
14-15 December 2017**

**MINUTES**

**Thursday 14 December 2017**

**Session 1 – Morning 9:00-11:00**

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

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON welcomed everyone and outlined the goals of the meeting. The ScC then had one minute of silence to honour the first ERC President and founding father of the ERC Prof. Fotis KAFATOS who recently passed away. Moreover, there is an idea to name the new evaluation facilities, on which work is ongoing, after him. Discussions on that will also take place with the Commission. The ScC agreed with the suggestion. Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON also excused Prof. Nils Ch. STENSETH and Prof. Kurt MEHLHORN who could not attend the meeting.

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda of the 63<sup>rd</sup> plenary meeting was adopted with a small change. Agenda items 10 and 11 were swapped.

**3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council in Kalkara (MT) on 18-20 October 2017**

The Minutes of the 62<sup>nd</sup> plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council (ScC) were adopted without any changes.

**4. Action Points Summary of the 62<sup>nd</sup> 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**

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

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON reported from his various recent visits and mentioned some forthcoming meetings. He also gave an update to the ScC on the state of play of the FP9 discussions.

Prof. Eva KONDOROSI reported on her participation at the World Science Forum in Jordan in November 2017.

Prof. Klaus BOCK reported from the ERC event in South Africa he took part in.

Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA, Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM and Prof. Eveline CRONE reported from their recent attendance and observation of the ethical review panels.

## **6. Working Groups Reporting**

The WGs reporting started with the Innovation and Relations with Industry WG which included a presentation on the Proof-of-Concept Assessment ahead of the presentation by two of the external evaluators who led the evaluation process.

### **Session 2 – Morning 11:00-12:30**

#### **7. Presentation of the Proof of Concept (PoC) Funding Scheme Assessment by the External Evaluators**

A presentation on the PoC Assessment was given by two of the external evaluations, Dr. Charles WESSNER and Dr. Federico MUNARI.

During 2017, a study was conducted by a group of nine independent external experts to assess the ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) funding mechanism with the aim to provide qualitative and quantitative information and analysis on the current and expected performance of the PoC awards.

The goal of the study was to better understand how well the PoC scheme maximises the value of ERC-funded research by facilitating, when opportune, the development of its commercial and social potential. It focused therefore on a series of interrelated dimensions: awareness and knowledge of the PoC existence by ERC grantees, participation and activity in the programme, impact of the PoC scheme and its benefits on PoC projects.

The ScC thanked the evaluation panel for the good work. It was decided that the Innovation and Relations with Industry WG will discuss the recommendations and will come forth with some suggestions for the ScC's approval at the February 2018 plenary meeting.

### **Session 3 – Afternoon 14:00-18:00**

#### **6. Working Groups Reporting (continued)**

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

Prof. Klaus BOCK reported that an account of the CoIME activities for 2017 will be included in the ScC Annual Report 2017.

*Standing Committee on Panels (CoP)*

With respect to the recent activities of the CoP, the three Vice-Presidents reported respectively on the Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering and Social Sciences and Humanities domains panels' recruitment.

*Open Access WG*

Prof. Martin STOKHOF reported from the meeting of the Open Access WG in Kalkara and presented ongoing open science related work by the group.

He recalled that ERC grantees who take part in the Horizon 2020 Open Research Data pilot have to draw up a data management plan (DMP). Research data underlying publications as well as other research data specified in the DMP have to be deposited in a suitable data depository, unless justification for not doing so has been provided in the DMP.

He also proposed to the Council to accept the proposal to publish the (redacted) version of the information on open data, and the Council agreed.

*Gender balance WG*

Prof. Isabelle VERNOS reported from the last meeting of the Gender balance WG, which took place in Kalkara. She also identified one issue currently high on the DG RTD agenda related to gender bias in evaluation and the difficulties with fighting it. Also, Prof. Isabelle VERNOS noted

that there are some positive trends for the ERC since the beginning of Horizon 2020 as regards gender statistics and it is important to highlight those.

#### *KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) WG*

Prof. Reinhilde VEUGELERS reported from the last KPIs WG meeting. Some ongoing analyses include bibliometrics, performance of funded and unfunded Principal Investigators and interdisciplinary analysis, of projects and publications.

### **8. ERC Agility in FP9: Discussion of a Future ScC Position Paper**

ERCEA/A1 recalled that this point in the agenda was a follow-up to the Scientific Council discussions on FP9 in Copenhagen, Padua, Geneva and Kalkara. The Kalkara plenary resulted in the ScC raising a set of issues on ERC operations. The discussions on 'agility' were deemed to be the most urgent because the FP9 draft legislation was due to be finalised before the holidays, in view of Commission adoption in May.

Following a substantive discussion on the question of visibility of results achieved by ERC grantees, the ScC decided to proceed with the creation of a Working Group on Dissemination. Prof. Christopher CLARK volunteered as Chair. Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON, Prof. Athene DONALD, Prof. Michael KRAMER and Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER accepted to become members. Also, some key points resulting from the discussion have been recorded under agenda item 10.

## **Friday 15 December 2017**

### **Session 4 – Morning 9:00 – 12:30**

#### **9. Operational Issues Reporting: Evaluation and Granting Processes**

##### **Operational Issues Reporting: Granting Processes**

The ERCEA/Department C reported on the state of play of the grant management processes including information on the ERC portfolio developments, budget execution, transaction volume and payments, and results of ex-post controls.

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

The ERCEA/Department B reported on ongoing evaluations, including CoG2017 and SyG2018.

#### **10. ERC Agility in FP9 (seq.): Recommendations for the ScC Position Paper**

The ScC continued the discussion of the previous day, including input from the ERCEA.

The ScC members stressed that the ERC model has been successful up to now because of its current structure. The legislation does give a lot of rights and responsibilities to the ScC and these should perhaps be further exploited. In addition, it was noted that the ERC supports a fantastic group of scientists who are transforming the EU research landscape and the ERC should try to showcase more the great impact of the research it funded.

Finally, the ScC concluded that while it would aim for continuity when it comes to the legislation for the ERC, it would look for ways to ensure the ERC's specificities and room for manoeuvre were reaffirmed and clarified in the new legislation.

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON took upon the task to draft a short paper along the lines of the topics mentioned above and circulate it to the ScC for agreement.

#### **11. Communication Strategy 2018 and Communication Activities Update**

The ERCEA's Communication Unit presented the Draft External Communication Strategy 2018. It outlined the main communication objectives and activities for the ERC in 2018, including tools,

partners and resources. The Draft External Communication Strategy 2018 also included some key communication messages and an indicative list of key events in 2018. The ScC approved the proposed Strategy.

In addition, an overview of the media impact for 2017 was presented.

The ScC was furthermore informed of a number of forthcoming events around the world where ERC will be present. Finally, an update was also given on the ERC event to be organised at the European Parliament in Strasbourg in cooperation with the STOA group. The agreed date is 31 May 2018 with the event already starting in the afternoon of 30 May 2018 with a reception and a high level dinner.

## **12. Any Other Business**

### **– ScC Plenaries in 2018**

The ERC President explained the reason behind the need to slightly shift the April plenary meeting from 17-19 April to 18-20 April. Moreover, he reminded the ScC members of the other important meeting dates where the presence of as many members of the ScC as possible was important.