



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL 75th PLENARY MEETING, Videoconference 23 April 2020

MINUTES

Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order): Prof. Genevieve ALMOUZNI, Prof. Manuel ARELLANO, Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA, Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM, Prof. Eveline CRONE, Prof. Ben FERINGA, Prof. Mercedes GARCIAL ARENAL, Prof. Gerd GIGERENZER, Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK, Prof. Eystein JANSEN, Prof. Tomas JUNGWIRTH, Prof. Michael KRAMER, Prof. Kurt MEHLHORN, Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ, Prof. Jesper SVEJSTRUP, Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS, Prof. Janet THORNTON, Prof. Milena ŽIC FUCHS and Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER

Scientific Council members excused (in alphabetical order): Prof. Lene VESTERGAARD HAU

ERC Executive Agency staff present: Waldemar KUTT, Jose LABASTIDA, Niki ATZOULATOU, Dirk COSTENS, Angela LIBERATORE, Laurence MOREAU, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Thierry PROST, Martin PENNY, Michel VANBIERVLIE, Philippe CUPERS, Anthony LOCKETT, Francesca SGRITTA, Matteo RAZZANELLI, Ben TURNER, Laura PONTIGGIA, Katja MEINKE, Madeleine DRIELSMA, Dagmar MEYER, Elena TOMA Elena VOLPI, Monique SMAIHI, Pascal DISSARD, Fiona KERNAN, Carmen GARCIA-FERNANDEZ, David KRASA, Isabelle ORTMANS, Lino PAULA, Alice RAJEWSKY, Filipa FERRAZ DE OLIVEIRA, Sabine SIMMROSS, Eleni ZIKA, Severina SHOPOVA

European Commission: Mariya GABRIEL (Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth), Adrienn KIRÁLY (Head of Cabinet), Chiara SALVELLI (Deputy Head of Cabinet)

DG RTD: Renzo TOMELLINI (Head of Unit)

Chairs of the meeting: Prof. Eveline CRONE (ERC Vice-President), Prof. Janet THORNTON (ERC Vice-President), Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER (ERC Vice-President)

Rapporteur: Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency.

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

The meeting took place via videoconferencing for all participants. The first part of the meeting was chaired by Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER and started with a tribute to Theodore PAPAZOGLU who recently passed away, losing the fight to COVID-19. ERCEA/A1 colleagues read a text to commemorate Theodore PAPAZOGLU, which was followed by a minute of silence. Then Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER welcomed everyone and outlined the goals of the meeting. Prof. Lene VESTERGAARD-HAU did not attend the plenary meeting. Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ joined the meeting in the afternoon due to the significant time difference between Europe and the USA.

2. Adoption of the Agenda of the 75th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The Draft Agenda and the Draft Annotated Agenda of the meeting were approved by the Scientific Council (ScC). The ScC was informed by the ERCEA Director that following the tragic loss of the ERCEA/A1 Head of Unit, he has appointed Jose LABASTIDA as Acting Head of Unit A1.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 74th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The Scientific Council approved the Draft Minutes of the previous plenary meeting. Also, the Draft Minutes of the written online consultation on the StG2020 Step 2 were approved and the ScC decided to publish them on the ERC website.

4. Action Points Summary of the 74th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The ERCEA informed the ScC of the state of play of the various action points from the previous Scientific Council plenary meeting.

5. Communication

The ERCEA reported on recent communication activities.

6. State of play in the Preparation of Horizon Europe

Work Programme 2021

The ERCEA gave an update on the state of play of the Work Programme 2021 and the adoption process.

Draft of the ERC Rules for Submission

The ERCEA gave an update on the state of play of the revision of the Rules for Submission for Horizon Europe. As regards the timeframe and the next steps, it was noted that a consultation of DG RTD will take place in May 2020, followed by an Inter-services consultation, Scientific Council final approval and an adoption of the document before launching of the first ERC 2021 call.

Corporate Model Grant Agreement

The ERCEA informed the ScC on the state of play of the discussions as regards the Corporate Grant Agreement.

7. Points from the Vice-Presidents

The session was chaired by Prof. Eveline CRONE who started by going through the chronology of recent events, including the passing away of the ERCEA/A1 Head of Unit and the resignation of the ERC President.

The ScC then held a closed session.

8. COVID-19 crisis impact on programme implementation

The ScC members were updated on what is being implemented within the Agency to face the COVID-19 crisis.

- Impact of COVID-19 on the Grant Management Department

The ERCEA gave an update on the state of play of the granting processes and the impact of COVID-19 on the granting operations.

9. Visit of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel

Commissioner Mariya GABRIEL joined the ScC for an exchange of views. Two members of her Cabinet, Ms Adrienn KIRÁLY and Ms Chiara SALVELLI also joined the meeting, together with Mr. Renzo TOMELLINI, Head of Unit DG RTD/03. Prof. Janet THORNTON welcomed the Commissioner to the meeting and reminded her of the ERC's role and tasks. She also noted that the ERCEA has done a tremendous job and has supported the ScC through a very challenging period, which has been even worse following the loss of a dear colleague, Theodore PAPAZOGLU, and an integral figure in the history of the ERC. The Commissioner started her intervention with a request for a minute of silence for Theodore PAPAZOGLU and noting that he was indeed an important pillar for ERC. The Commission has been deeply saddened by his loss. Moreover, the Commissioner stated that the ERC has her full support and underlined that fundamental research is vital. Therefore, it is very important to continue to give researchers the freedom to explore the frontiers of science. Commissioner Mariya GABRIEL then noted the efforts done at European level to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. She also referred to the ERC's contribution to this. In addition, she noted that she will continue to passionately argue to strengthen frontier research even though the recovery strategy and the budgetary negotiations will not be easy. Also, research and innovation will have a major role in the recovery strategy. The Commissioner reassured the ScC that the ScC can count on her energy and capacity to convince people of the importance of research. Moreover, she mentioned that ERC has become a world reference in a very short time and this is a great achievement. When asked by the ScC members how can the ScC, as a representative of the scientific community, help the Commission, the Commissioner noted that keeping young researchers in Europe and attracting others to Europe will be a major focus. ERC can be very helpful not only with that but also with the Missions that are being included under the second pillar of Horizon Europe. Also, she pointed out that there are a lot of disparities across Europe and those need to be addressed, together with building synergies. Prof. Janet THORNTON, on behalf of the ScC, stressed that the ScC is very much looking forward to working with the Commissioner and appreciates the openness and the possibility to have this exchange with the Commissioner. The ScC also expressed its hope to meet personally the Commissioner at a future occasion in Brussels. The Commissioner thanked the ScC for its work, support and vision and also expressed her hope that a physical meeting could take place in future.

10. Operational Issues Reporting: Evaluation Analysis and Grant Management activities

The ERCEA reported on the impact of COVID-19 on the evaluations, as well as provided an updated to the ScC on the ongoing evaluations.

11. Use of the ERC name and logo by external actors

Prof. Eveline CRONE noted that the ScC is currently receiving a lot of support from the scientific community, which is wonderful news. At the same time, there are some organisations that use the ERC in their name or logo and have contacted the ERC about it so the ScC will have to further discuss with the relevant organisations and then see how to go about it.

12. Any Other Business

No items were discussed under this agenda point.