



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

**ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
EXTRAORDINARY PLENARY MEETING,
By Videoconference
26 August 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, Martin PENNY, Philippe CUPERS, Angela LIBERATORE, Anisoara ULCELUSE – PIRVAN, Ben TURNER, Laura PONTIGGIA, Katja MEINKE, Madeleine DRIELSMA, Dagmar MEYER, Sabine SIMMROSS, Severina SHOPOVA, Anne BERGER.

Chairs of the meeting: Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON (President ad Interim)

Rapporteur: Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency.

Wednesday 26 August 2020

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

The meeting took place via videoconferencing for all participants. Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON welcomed everyone and outlined the goals of the meeting. Prof. Lene VESTERGAARD-HAU did not attend the plenary meeting. The ScC adopted the agenda of the meeting.

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON reminded the ScC members of the various steps taken so far in the process of agreeing on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the EU, including the creation of a Recovery and Resilience Fund. The final compromise includes several reductions in the MFF in particular for Horizon Europe. As a result, he noted that the ScC has to take appropriate steps to defend the ERC budget as soon as possible as the timeframe for contacting key actors, such as MEPs (Members of the European Parliament), Ministers and other key stakeholders, is rather limited. Finally, he informed the ScC that a new EU Summit has been scheduled to take place on 24 and 25 September. It is not yet clear whether a further discussion on the financial compromise will take place.

2. Update on the Line to Take Concerning the ERC Scientific Council Position on Open Access

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON noted that the recently expressed position of the ScC regarding its relation with cOAlition S had prompted a number of reactions, of which the ScC members have been kept fully informed. Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA, as Chair of the Working Group on Open Access, informed the ScC of a recent meeting with representatives of Early Career Researchers (ECR) organisations, which overall had been very positive. Her impression was that following the explanations provided to them they had understood the position of the ScC and the reasons why the

ScC had taken the decision to withdraw its participation in cOAlition S as observer. Finally, Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA informed the ScC that many different activities related to Open Access and Open Science more generally had been going on over the previous weeks.

3. Update on the Recent Developments Concerning ERC Calls

The ERCEA gave an overview of the recent developments as regards the ERC calls. It was noted that the interviews will soon be starting for the SyG2020 call. Moreover, the CoG2020 Step 2 evaluations will start in September and currently Scientific Officers are heavily involved in performing test calls with the applicants.

Moreover, Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON informed the ScC that the Board decided to hold the AdG2020 Step 1 evaluations remotely as physical presence in Brussels is not likely to be possible given the current situation with the pandemic. The ScC endorsed the decision of the Board.

4. Horizon Europe Budget

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON reminded the ScC that a compromise budget proposal was agreed in July, according to which Horizon Europe represents €75.9 billion out of the MFF. In addition, the extra part for Horizon Europe coming from the Recovery Fund has been cut down to €5 billion.

It is not very easy to establish at this stage exactly how much money will be allocated to ERC. However, there appears to be a tendency of continuous dropping of the ERC share in the discussions, which is worrying, even though nothing has been decided as yet. To that end, Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON noted that he has already approached people in various countries to talk about the concerns about the ERC budget, as well as other important relevant stakeholders.

Prof. Eveline CRONE mentioned that she has been in touch with Dutch Universities and Academies.

The ERCEA reminded the ScC of the process in terms of establishing the next MFF. It was noted that since the Heads of government have taken their position on the MFF in July, after a very difficult negotiation, the discussions are now at the level of the European Parliament.

Finally, the ScC members stressed the importance of continuing to make the case for the ERC to have an increased share of the final budget to be agreed for Horizon Europe.

5. Closed Session decided by the Scientific Council

a. Horizon Europe Budget

b. Defining the line of the Scientific Council in the on-going budget discussions of Horizon Europe and actions to be taken

c. Selection Process for the Next ERC President: *Exchange of information on and orientation discussions on Scientific Council expectations and role concerning the soon to be launched selection process.*

6. Any Other Business

No items were discussed under this agenda point.