



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL 66th PLENARY MEETING, Leuven 5-6 July 2018 MINUTES

Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order): Prof. Klaus BOCK, Paola BOVOLENTA, Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM, Prof. Christopher CLARK, Prof. Eveline CRONE, Prof. Athene DONALD, Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK, Prof. Tomas JUNGWIRTH, Prof. Eva KONDOROSI, Prof. Michael KRAMER, Prof. Kurt MEHLHORN, Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ, Prof. Nils STENSETH, Prof. Martin STOKHOF, Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA, Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS, Prof. Janet THORNTON, Prof. Reinhilde VEUGELERS, Prof. Michel WIEVIORKA, Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER

Scientific Council members excused (in alphabetical order): Prof. Isabelle VERNOS

ERC Executive Agency staff present: Pablo AMOR, Jose LABASTIDA, Mechtild MAY, Georges-Eric te KOLSTE, Theodore PAPAZOGLU, Anthony LOCKETT, Niki ATZOULATOU, Angela LIBERATORE, Anna LONNROTH, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Martin PENNY, Laurence MOREAU, Michel VANBIERVLIET, Madeleine DRIELSMA, Benjamin TURNER, Matteo RAZZANELLI, Christine SCHIEL, Diane BASTIANELLI

Chair of the meeting: Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON, ERC President

Rapporteur: Matteo RAZZANELLI, ERC Executive Agency

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

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON welcomed everyone and outlined the goals of the meeting. He excused Prof. Isabelle VERNOS who could not attend the plenary meeting.

Prof. Niels STENSETH announced his resignation from the Scientific Council, due to his appointment as Professor of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science at the University of Oslo, with the responsibility to coordinate the creation of a new Centre for Advanced Studies. The new task will be time intensive and would not be compatible with the duties of a Scientific Council Member.

Anna LÖNNROTH, Life Sciences Head of Unit at the ERCEA, also announced her imminent departure from the agency, due to a re-assignment as Head of Unit within DG RTD.

The Scientific Council thanked both for their service.

2. Adoption of Agenda the 66th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The President informed the Scientific Council that during the meeting members would need to vote for the successors to Prof. Klaus BOCK and Prof. Eva KONDOROSI as Vice-Presidents.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 65th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council in Brussels in April 2018

The Scientific Council approved the Minutes of the ScC April plenary meeting.

4. Action Points Summary of the 65th Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The ERCEA informed the Scientific Council that all pending action points raised in the previous Scientific Council meeting had been followed up and closed.

The President recalled that the discussion at the previous Plenary meeting under any other business had left open the decision on the location of the two 2019 plenary meetings to take place outside of Brussels, with Poland and Portugal as possible locations to be confirmed. The Scientific Council was informed that Lisbon, Portugal was confirmed as host for the spring plenary meeting (3-4-5 April), and Krakow, Poland, was confirmed for the fall plenary meeting (21-22-23 October).

5. Update on Recent Meetings and Activities

The ERCEA Director informed the Scientific Council of the state of play of the preparation of the new evaluation facilities for ERC Calls, whereas Prof. Eva KONDOROSI informed the Scientific Council of recent developments of the research landscape in Hungary.

The list of visits by the ERC President had also been circulated.

6. Update on the Horizon Europe Proposal by the Commission

The ERC President informed the Scientific Council of the choice of conducting the negotiations on Horizon Europe through the “fast track” procedure: the Research Working Party of the Council of the European Union was meeting twice per week and a draft report by the European Parliament Rapporteurs was expected soon.

ERCEA provided an update on how the Scientific Council's position had been reflected in the next Framework Programme.

7. Reporting from Standing Committees and Working Groups

The various Standing Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces reported from their recent meetings and activities.

8. Discussion of the SH Domain Proposal for the Panel Structure

Following a discussion at the previous SCoP meeting, it had been agreed to discuss and decide on the proposal by the SH domain for changes in the panels' structure.

For these reasons the SH Domain was requesting the addition of a new panel as a matter of urgency in order to preserve the quality of the evaluation. This proposal was discussed but not accepted.

The ERC President asked the ScC to decide on measures to address the urgent matter of ensuring the quality of the evaluation in large panels, such as an increase in the number of panel members to 19 for some panels in the coming year, or whatever feasible number would be made necessary to match the number of proposals to be evaluated, such as having enough members to make it possible for the panel to hold two parallel meetings.

9. Task Force on ERC Budget Allocation

The ScC Task Force on Budget Allocation had met on the previous day. The Task Force Chair, Prof. Janet THORNTON summarised the state of play of discussions as well as the terms of reference of the Task Force.

10. Task Force on Ethics Review

The ERCEA reported on the state of play of the implementation of the recommendations given by the ScC's Ethics Task Force. The Unit explained that the overall approach had changed and the agency is accepting to take some risk by asking most projects fewer documents than before.

11. Task Force on Interdisciplinarity

The Chair of the ScC Task Force on Interdisciplinarity, Prof. Martin STOKHOF, noted that the Task Force reminded the ScC of previous discussions on the matter, as well as the idea of doing more to cover interdisciplinary research. Therefore, the ScC decided to think along those lines and come forth with a proposal of a new scheme in support of interdisciplinary research.

12. AdG Interviews Survey

The ERCEA gave an update to the ScC on the results of a survey ran on the introduction of interviews as part of the evaluation process for AdG.

13. ERC H2020 Participants Survey: Analysis of results

The ERCEA presented the results of the ERC H2020 Participants Survey, a survey that had been requested by the ScC as part of preparations for the transition to a new Framework Programme.

14. Operational Issues Reporting: Granting Process

The ERCEA gave an update on the state of play of the granting processes.

15. Preparation of the Visit of Jean-Éric PAQUET, Director General of DG-RTD

The ScC discussed its expectations regarding the meeting with Jean-Eric PAQUET (DG).

16. Operational Issues Reporting: Additional Budget Distribution

The ScC was reminded that every year the ERC receives a budget top-up of about 8% in the course of the year coming from the contribution to the Framework Programme paid by associated third countries. Therefore, the ScC was asked to decide on the allocation of the additional funds, which had become available.

17. Communication Activities Update

Due to the limited time left, the ERCEA Communications Unit reported very briefly on recent communication activities and events.

18. "Friends of the ERC" Association

Prof. Axel CLEEREMANS, an ERC AdG grantee leading a nearly completed project, presented to the ScC with his initiative to create an association that could be called "Friends of the ERC".

19. Operational Issues Reporting: Evaluation Analysis

The point was devoted to reporting by the ERCEA on ongoing evaluations, as well as by the ScC members who had attended panel meetings.

20. Visit of Jean-Éric PAQUET, Director General of DG RTD

The DG RTD Director General attended a ScC plenary meeting for the second time, following his first visit in April.

The DG expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the consultations within the European Commission leading up to the proposal for the successor programme to Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe. The continuity of the ERC, MSCA and Research Infrastructures had been safeguarded. Responding to questions from ScC Members, the DG stated he was aware of the frustration in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) community regarding programme participation. He explained the missions approach and the role for social sciences into it as part of both the analysis on the missions and the research conducted on their basis, as well as the role for SSH in Pillar 2.

The DG informed the ScC about the steps that the Commission was taking to find the successor of the ERC President, Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON. The ScC had been informed in April about

the dedicated Search Committee., The Search Committee decided to advertise the position and to only accept applications from individual candidates.

21. Any Other Business

No items were discussed under this agenda point.