



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL 72nd PLENARY MEETING, Krakow (PL) 22-23 October 2019

MINUTES

Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order): Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON (ERC President), Prof. Genevieve ALMOUZNI, Prof. Manuel ARELLANO, Prof., Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA, Prof BUCKINGHAM, Prof. Eveline CRONE, Prof Mercedes GARCIAL ARENAL, Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK, Prof Eystein JANSEN, Prof. Tomas JUNGWIRTH, Prof. Michael KRAMER, Prof. Kurt MEHLHORN, Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ, Prof. Martin STOKHOF, Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA, Prof. Jesper QUALMANN SVEJSTRUP, Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS, Prof. Janet THORNTON, Prof Michel WIEVIORKA and Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER.

Prof. Mauro FERRARI (ERC president-elect)

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

ERC Executive Agency staff present: Waldemar KUTT, Jose LABASTIDA, Theodore PAPAZOGLU, Angela LIBERATORE, Niki ATZOULATOU, Laurence MOREAU, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Thierry PROST, Martin PENNY, Michel VANBIERVLIET, Philippe CUPPERS, Anthony LOCKETT, Francesca SGRITTA, Madeleine DRIELSMA, Dagmar MEYER, Matteo RAZZANELLI, Laura PONTIGGIA, David KURZ, Sabine SIMMROSS, Severina SHOPOVA, Christine SCHIEL, Diane BASTIANELLI.

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

Rapporteur: Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency.

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

The meeting started with two speeches from the Polish hosts welcoming the ScC: the first was delivered by the Polish Undersecretary of State, Mr Sebastian SKUZA, and the second by the Rector of Jagiellonian University, Prof. Wojciech NOWAK.

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON welcomed everyone and outlined the goals of the meeting. He excused Prof. Ben FERINGA and Prof. Lene VESTERGAARD-HAU who could not attend the plenary meeting. Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON also welcomed four new ScC members, Prof. Geneviève ALMOUZNI, Prof. Mercedes GARCIA-ARENAL, Prof. Eystein JANSEN, and Prof. Jesper Qualmann SVEJSTRUP. When the new Interim Director of the ERCEA, Mr. Waldemar KÜTT, joined the plenary meeting, he was also welcomed by the ERC President and introduced himself.

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON thanked our Polish hosts and Prof. JAJ for having made it for the ERC Scientific Council to meet in Krakow. He highlighted the main points of the agenda.

2. Adoption of Agenda of the 72nd Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The Draft Agenda of the meeting was approved by the Scientific Council (ScC). Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON proposed to interchange two points on the agenda, namely Point 8 with Point 9.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 71st Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The Scientific Council approved the Draft Minutes of the previous plenary meeting.

4. Action Points Summary of the 71st Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council

The ERCEA informed the Scientific Council of the state of play of the action points from the previous Scientific Council plenary meeting. They all moved forward appropriately.

5. Update on Recent Meetings and Activities

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON reported to the ScC members on recent developments, including the gradual establishment of the new Collège of the European Commission. He noted that he could have a contact with the future Commissioner in charge of Research whose portfolio bears the name of 'Innovation and Youth', Mariya GABRIEL. Her hearing by the European Parliament went well. The Commissioner designate referred to ERC in her introductory speech. Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON also mentioned that the ITRE Committee asked him to an exchange of views on 12 November. For the occasion he will be accompanied by an ERC grantee, Prof. Antje BOETIUS.

As regards his other recent trips, he mentioned in particular his visit to Singapore, just before the signing of an implementing arrangement with the National Research Foundation, that occurred at the Science and Technology in Society Forum in Japan he attended and where he met several Ministers and high level representatives of several research organisations. He also visited Bulgaria on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and gave a presentation of the ERC in front of scientists.

6. Communication Activities Update

ERCEA reported on recent and future communication activities and events, in particular the ERC's contributions to the R&I Days in September and the organisation of the ERC Policy event on 3 December.

It was reported that the ERC coordinated the session with Nobel and Kavli Prize winners, chaired by former ERC President Helga NOWOTNY and organised a session entitled "Empowering scientists to dream the future" with three ERC grantees. Furthermore, the ERC organised a session entitled "Let's Talk about Europe's Scientific Excellence" on Pillar 1 of the Framework Programme and participated in the WOW Exhibition. Finally, during the event the ERC Public Engagement with Research Award was launched by Commissioner Carlos MOEDAS and the ERC President.

The ERCEA reported on the state of play of its annual conference entitled "Creating Pathways to Sustainability", which will take place on 2 and 3 December at Covent Garden. It will be followed by an ERC Policy event entitled "A Sustainable Future for Europe – the Contribution of Frontier Research" starting at 17:00 on 3 December at the Académie Royale de Belgique.

Furthermore, the Communications unit presented a first state of play of ERC communication activities in 2019.

In terms of perspectives for 2020, it was noted that there are a number of challenges and opportunities ahead. The main objective will be to ensure continuity taking into account the arrival of several new members of the Scientific Council and to continue to attract the brightest minds with the best ideas, as well as to position the ERC as a success story for Europe.

Finally, some key communication moments for 2020 were presented to the ScC, namely the World Economic Forum (in Davos in January and in Tianjin in July), the AAAS Annual meeting (in Seattle in February), the ScC plenary meetings in Finland (April) and Germany (October), ESOF 2020 (in Trieste in July) and the R&I Days (in Brussels in September).

It was also noted that, as regards the ERC Public Engagement with Research Award, the deadline for applications is 10 January 2020 and the Prize ceremony will take place at ESOF 2020 in July. Three categories have been defined (Public outreach, Press and media relations, Online and social media), and the jury is being formed.

7. Association of ERC Grantees

The ERC President reminded the ScC of how the idea to create an ERC Association had started. He noted that, when he started his term of office, following discussions with the Research Commissioner, he explored the idea to have a Foundation linked to ERC with various stakeholders (governments, foundations).

Another possible route was to think of a grassroots organisation. A group of ERC grantees launched such an initiative and developed the statutes for an organisation of this nature, that were presented to the ERC Board and also to a ScC plenary. Several comments made by the ScC were taken into consideration by the core group of the Association whose members will be present and past ERC Grantees. The ScC was presented with the present state of preparation of the Association.

Following a discussion, the ScC decided to support the initiative, provided that the association will commit to respect the fundamental principles of the ERC and will inform the Scientific Council of any changes in its statutes.

8. Panels Restructuring Interim Solution for 2021 and 2022 Calls

The ERCEA together with the ScC Vice-Presidents and domain coordinators presented the positions taken by domain as regards the interim solution in terms of panels restructuring for the 2021 and 2022 calls. It was noted that two domains have found a solution by adding an extra panel. The third domain is renaming several of the panels' titles/subtitles and descriptors in order to achieve a better ventilation of proposals between panels. Following an extensive discussion, the Scientific Council adopted all proposed changes (some to be finalised during the plenary meeting of December 2019), which will be implemented starting with the 2021 calls.

Election of the next ERC Vice-President for the SH domain

The ScC voted on the next ERC Vice-President coordinating the SH domain. Prof. Eveline CRONE was elected to this function, starting on 1st January 2020.

9. Next Steps in the Preparation of Horizon Europe

Preparations of the ScC with respect to the implementation of the ERC actions under the next Framework Programme and First review of important documents

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON recalled that a partial agreement draft has been reached on the Horizon Europe legislation by the Member States and the European Parliament. A few questions have been left for further discussions: the precise formulation of association and the budget that depends on an agreement on the next Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF).

ERCEA gave an overview of the next steps of the preparation for the next Framework programme, referring to the necessary documents to be developed on the basis of which the ERCEA will be delegated the implementation of the ERC actions.

Draft ERC Rules for Submission under Horizon Europe (RfS)

The ERCEA Legal Unit informed the ScC as regards the ERC Rules for Submission. It was noted that the change in the legal framework generated by the new framework programme implies a revision of the ERC Rules for Submission and Evaluation. Some of the changes are also based on recommendations, experience/practice and aim to provide improved clarity, as well as allow for some editorial changes.

10. Results of the Study on Open Access to Publications and Research Data Management and Sharing in ERC Projects

ERCEA/A1 presented the results of the Study on Open Access to Publications and Research Data Management and Sharing within ERC Projects. The ScC was reminded of the aims and objectives of the study and informed of some recommendations/conclusions of the study.

11. Outcome of the Open Access Compliance Screening Exercise, Analysing Compliance by ERC Grantees with the Requirements of their Grant Agreement and the Reliability of their Self-Reporting

The ERCEA reported on the outcome of a pilot study which attempted to verify the level of compliance to the Open Access related provisions of the ERC grants. The overall compliance is high (close to 90%).

12. ERC Position on Plan S/cOAlisationS

Council members had an exchange of views on the current state of Plan S and recent developments in cOAlitionS. The ERC position is now properly recorded in the cOAlition S website.

13. Reporting from Standing Committees and Working Groups

The Standing Committees on Panels and PrIME, which recently met, reported on their activities, followed by the Open access Working Group.

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON reported on the main points covered in the last meeting of the Standing Committee on Panels (CoP).

Prof. Fabio ZWIRNER reported from the last meeting of Standing Committee on Conflicts of Interest, Misconduct and Ethics (CoIME) and noted that the Committee has been discussing the questions posed by panel chairs during the ERC Workshop in February 2019.

Prof. Janet THORNTON reported from the last meeting of the Standing Committee on Programme Impact Monitoring and Evaluation (PrIME). As it was the first meeting under the configuration of a Standing Committee, the remit of the Committee was discussed. Also, the Committee looked into a proposal for the Draft Work Programme 2021 and how the Committee can contribute to it.

Prof. Giulio SUPERTI-FURGA noted that the Innovation and Relations with Industry WG recently met and discussed its remit and scope, which could and should be redefined. The group has in fact adopted a revision of its Terms of Reference with the aim to broaden the focus of activity of the group.

14. Working Groups Achievements and Plans

Reports from the Working Groups on their objectives and the recommendations to the ScC they have issued to-date

Prof. Eveline CRONE and Prof. Kurt MELHORN presented an overview of the activities of the various Working Groups prepared with the support of ERCEA/A1, as well as a proposed plan for the future in terms of their functioning and membership.

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON concluded that the ScC will finalise the discussion on the overall organisation of the WGs at the ScC December plenary meeting.

15. Operational Issues Reporting: Evaluation Analysis

The ERCEA gave an update on the StG 2019 call final outcome, the StG 2020 submissions, the CoG 2019 provisional results, the AdG 2019 submissions, the results of the SyG2019 call and an update on the state of play of the ethics reviews.

16. Operational Issues Reporting: Grant Management Activities

The ERCEA gave an overview and update on the state of play of the grant management activities, including a report on the running grants portfolio for FP7 and Horizon 2020.

Successive PoCs

Due to the delay in dealing with the agenda, it was decided to postpone a decision on this item to the ScC December plenary meeting.

17. Any Other Business

ScC plenary meeting in Berlin in October 2020

Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON informed the ScC that there is a logistical issue regarding where the ScC plenary meeting can be held in Berlin in October 2020. To have access to an excellent facility, he proposed that the meeting dates be changed from 21-22-23 October to 14-15-16 October.