



European Research Council  
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

**ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL  
82<sup>nd</sup> PLENARY MEETING  
21-22 October 2021, Videoconference**

**MINUTES**

**Scientific Council members present (in alphabetical order):** Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA, Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM, Prof. Eveline CRONE, Prof. Ben FERINGA, Prof. Mercedes GARCIAL ARENAL, Prof. Gerd GIGERENZER, Prof. Liselotte HØJGAARD, Prof. Dirk INZE, Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK, Prof. Eystein JANSEN, Prof. Michael KRAMER, Prof. Rodrigo MARTINS, Prof. Kurt MEHLHORN, Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ, Prof. Nicola SPALDIN, Prof. Jesper SVEJSTRUP, Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS, Prof. Alice VALKÁROVÁ and Prof. Milena ŽIC FUCHS

Prof. Maria LEPTIN (ERC President-Elect)

**Scientific Council members excused (in alphabetical order):** Prof. Genevieve ALMOUZNI.

**ERC Executive Agency staff present:** Waldemar KUTT, Jose LABASTIDA, Anthony LOCKETT, Mila BAS-SANCHEZ, Angela LIBERATORE, Laurence MOREAU, Niki ATZOULATOU, Alejandro MARTIN HOBDEY, Philippe CUPERS, Anisoara ULCELUSE-PIRVAN, Nikola CAR, Alice RAJEWSKY, Gwennael JOLIFF-BOTREL, Ben TUBBING, Anita KUCHARASKA, Monique SMAIHI, Ben TURNER, Laura PONTIGGIA, Dace RAMBAKA, Dagmar MEYER, Anna PELAGOTTI, Elena TOMA, Elena VOLPI, Eleni CHATZICHRISTOU, Madeleine DRIELSMA, Marcin MONKO, Rumen TINKOV, Gabriel KARAJIAN, Dina PAPADAKI, Miguel PESQUERA, Simona ROMAGNOLI, Ulrike KAINZ, David KRASA, Jhansi KOTA, David KURZ, Srdjan PERKO, Helena GONZALEZ-SANCHO-BODERO, Anne BERGER, Katja MEINKE, Eleni ZIKA, Severina SHOPOVA, Andrea POLYAK and Brigitte ETIENNE

**Chairs of the meeting:** Prof. Eveline CRONE (ERC Vice-President), Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK (ERC Vice-President), Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS (ERC Vice-President)

**Rapporteur:** Severina SHOPOVA, ERC Executive Agency

**Thursday 21 October 2021**

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

The meeting took place via videoconferencing for all participants. Prof. Eveline CRONE chaired the first session and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She also outlined the main points to be discussed during the plenary meeting. Prof Geneviève ALMOUZNI was excused for not attending the plenary due to health issues. Prof Maria LEPTIN attended the meeting as observer, upon invitation by the Scientific Council. The second session of the plenary meeting was chaired by Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS and the third session by Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK.

**2. Adoption of the Agenda of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Plenary Meeting of the ERC Scientific Council**

The Draft Agenda of the meeting was approved by the Scientific Council (ScC).

**3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 81<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting**

The ScC approved the Draft Minutes from the 81<sup>st</sup> ScC plenary meeting.

**4. Action Points Summary of the 81<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting**

The ERCEA informed the ScC on the state of play of the various action points from the previous ScC plenary meetings in June. It was noted that all action points have either been completed or are work in progress.

## **5. Update on Recent Meetings and Activities**

Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS reported from recent meetings and events that he attended. Those included, among others, a meeting of the Board of the Global Biodata Coalition (GBC) on 7 July. Furthermore, on 1 October, Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS took part in the meeting of the Heads of International (Biomedical) Research Organisations (HIROs). In addition, Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS reported that on 6 October he took part in the ERC European Widening Participation Information Day in Greece online. The event was organised by the Greek NCP 'PRAXI Network, Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas (FORTH) and ERC, as well as supported by the General Secretariat of Research and Innovation, which belongs to the Greek Ministry of Development. Furthermore, Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS attended the EU-LIFE ERC Masterclass Program online on 28 September, where he gave a presentation together with Prof. Geneviève ALMOUZNI on the ERC. Finally, on 8 October Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS participated in the ERC webinar for researchers in Russia where the topic of how can they apply to ERC grants was discussed and presentations were made by ERCEA staff and ERC grantees.

Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK reported from recent meetings and events that he attended. Those included a meeting in Slovenia with the Ministers responsible for Innovation and Research on 18 July, together with Prof. Jean-Pierre BOURGUIGNON, on the occasion of the Informal Competitiveness Council. On the margins of the event, a dinner meeting with the Slovenian Minister of Education, Science and Sport also took place. Furthermore, Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK reported that he attended a panel discussion that took place as part of an event organised on the occasion of the National Science Center's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In addition, he reported that he chaired the CoG2021 Step 1 PE domain panels briefing on 13 September. Finally, on 1 October Prof. Andrzej JAJSZCZYK gave a keynote speech at the academic year opening of the University of Lodz in central Poland.

Prof. Eveline CRONE reported from recent meetings and events that she attended. She noted, among others, a round table on Impact organized by Science Business in partnership with Elsevier. In addition, Prof. Eveline CRONE noted that she took part in the session *In Conversation with the ERC's Scientific Council* at the EU R&I Days in June 2021.

Prof. Margaret BUCKINGHAM reported from some recent events that she attended. Those included a talk she gave to young scientists in France who have been awarded a grant for setting up their labs. The event was organized by CNRS and INSERN.

Prof. Rodrigo MARTINS reminded the ScC members of the discussions between the ERC and EIC.

Prof. Dirk INZE informed the ScC members that he has contributed to the European Plant Biology meeting.

Prof. Liselotte HØJGAARD thanked the ERCEA Communications team for a report produced in Danish.

The ERCEA Director, Waldemar KÜTT noted the great news of the two ERC grantees getting the Nobel Prize and the reference to the ERC as a factory of Nobel Prizes.

## **6. State of play of Horizon Europe implementation**

The ERCEA B gave an update on the state of play of the Horizon Europe implementations.

### **– Update on the association of third countries**

The ERCEA reported on the state of play of the association of third countries. The ScC members were reminded that certain categories of non-EU countries can associate to the framework programme, such as candidate EU members, EU neighbourhood countries and EFTA countries. 16 countries were associated to Horizon 2020 and the idea was that the same countries would associate to Horizon Europe as well. Following the late adoption of Horizon Europe most of these countries are expected to finalise and sign their association agreements by the end of the year, except for two countries, Switzerland and the UK.

– **Update on reporting templates**

The ERCEA gave an update to the ScC on the state of play of the scientific reporting forms and templates.

**7. Association of category d countries**

The ERCEA presented the state of play of the possible association of the “category d countries”. The ScC members were reminded that the association of the “traditional countries” was already discussed earlier. However, now in Horizon Europe for the first time the possibility is offered to countries around the world to associate as well with some conditions of course, such as the state of the research systems, free market economic systems and democratic systems. The Commission has identified 6 early candidate countries for association: Canada, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea. The countries have to submit a letter of intent for association.

**8. Communication Activities Update and Forthcoming Events**

– **Update on Communication Activities**

The ERCEA reported on recent communication activities with a focus on the following topics:

- ERC in the news-4300 media mentions June-October;
- Webinars for potential applicants;
- ERC Magazine- open science edition;
- Public Engagement with Research Award.

Moreover, the ScC members were informed that there have been 10 webinars organised with 3500 participants on the following:

- Work Programme 2022;
- Global outreach (Australia-New Zealand, USA-Canada, Brazil, Latin America, China, Singapore-Japan-Korea, India-ASEAN, Russia);
- Widening (EL).

As regards future plans, the following were highlighted:

- Global outreach (Africa);
- Widening (PL, CZ, SK, RO).

The ScC members gave their agreement to proceed with the future webinars.

– **ERC External Communication Strategy 2022**

The ERCEA presented some first ideas for the Communication Strategy 2022.

**9. Lump sums for the ERC main Grants**

The ERCEA shared with the ScC some relevant information, including possible advantages and challenges on the use of lump sums payments in ERC grants.

**10. Update on ERCEA Department D (Resources and Support) Activities**

The ERCEA presented an overview and an update of the activities of the Agency’s Resources and Support Activities Department.

**11. Update from the ScC Standing Committees and Working Groups**

The various Standing Committees and WGs that met recently reported on their activities.

**-Open Science WG**

Prof. Paola BOVOLENTA noted the main points that the WG has recently been discussing.

– **Standing Committee PRIME**

Prof. Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS reported on the latest activities of the PRIME Committee.

– **WG on Innovation and Relations to Industry**

Prof. Kurt Mehlhorn reported on the latest activities of the Innovation and Relations with Industry WG.

– **WG on Widening European Participation**

Prof. Andrzej Jajszczyk reported on the latest activities of the Widening European Participation WG.

– **WG Gender Issues (Appointment of the new chairperson)**

Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ reported on the latest activities of the GIWG. Moreover, Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ noted that her mandate is coming to an end on 31 December 2021 and the GIWG will need a new Chair. Prof. Geneviève ALMOUZNI has agreed to take over the WG and the ScC members were asked to agree the change of Chair. The ScC members agreed. As regards the GIWG membership, Prof. Barbara ROMANOWICZ also stressed that with the departure of a few ScC members the GIWG is left with very few members and needs to recruit more members.

– **WG on Science Behind the Projects**

Prof. Michael KRAMER reported on the latest activities of the Science Behind the Projects WG.

## Friday 22 October 2021

### 12. Future of panel meetings

The ERCEA shared with the ScC some possible options for the future setting of the panel meetings.

### 13. Operational Issues Reporting

– **Update on calls**

The ERCEA gave an update on the AdG 2021 Submissions, the CoG 2021 Results of Step 1 and the PoC 2022-1 Submissions. Also, the overall timeline of calls 2021 was shared with the ScC members.

– **Eligibility rules: consultation on possible additions**

The ERCEA discussed with the ScC members some proposed new grounds for extension of the PhD eligibility window for StG/CoG.

– **State of play of the management of projects and the operational budget**

The ERCEA gave an update on the state of play of the management of projects and the operational budget.

### 14. Update on the Continuous Improvement Initiative

The ERCEA gave an update on the state of play of the Continuous Improvement exercise (CI).

### 15. Update on the Conference on the Future of Europe

The ERCEA gave an update on the developments related to the Conference on the Future of Europe.

### 16. Any Other Business

**-CoP new member**

Prof. Eveline CRONE reminded the ScC members that with the departure of one ScC member a slot needs to be filled on the CoP Committee, representing the SH domain. To that end, Prof. Gerd GIGERENZER has agreed to join CoP. The ScC members were asked to agree with him joining CoP. The ScC members agreed.

**-ScC December plenary meeting**

The ERCEA informed the ScC members that, on the request of the ScC leadership, the ERCEA is planning a physical plenary meeting in December in Brussels. A number of satellite events are also being planned on 8 December. Those include meetings of two ScC Standing Committees, domain meetings and some WGs. The ScC members will soon receive the General Programme and will be asked for confirmation whether or not they will be attending the December plenary meeting physically.