
EXECUTIVE BOARD (EB) MEETING

MINUTES

Date: 28th May 2020

The meeting was held remotely.

The meeting was chaired by Prof. Mario Chiesa (UNITO).

The meeting was attended by the following representatives of beneficiaries:

1. Mario Chiesa (UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO - UNITO hereinafter, Project Coordinator)
2. Valeria Enrica Vasario (UNITO, Project Manager)
3. Sabine Van Doorslaer (UNIVERSITEIT ANTWERPEN - UANTWERPEN hereinafter)
4. Inés Garcia-Rubio (UNIVERSIDAD DE ZARAGOZA - UNIZAR hereinafter)
5. Andreas Pöppel (UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG - ULEI hereinafter)
6. Damien Murphy (CARDIFF UNIVERSITY - CU hereinafter).

The meeting started at 10:00 a.m. (Rome Time).

The **main purpose** of the meeting was to discuss how the shift of activities due to COVID19 lockdown might impact the overall activity plan present in Annex I to the Grant Agreement.

Mario Chiesa and Valeria Enrica Vasario (UNITO) had prepared before the meeting several scenarios, in the form of updated Gantt Chart. These scenarios were shown during the meeting, so as to appraise the changes needed with respect to the activity plan in Annex I and to the secondment plans in particular.

After discussion, it was agreed to make a new version of the Gantt Chart, where only the secondments planned to start before September 2020 were to be shifted – some to start in September, other ones to start in November. The Coordinator undertook to shortly prepare and circulate the newly modified Gantt Chart to the EB Members.

The **different situation and progress of work in the countries involved in the project** was then reported on: while in Germany researchers had been allowed to go to the lab almost continuously all throughout the COVID19 crisis, universities in Italy, in Spain, in Belgium and in the UK had proceeded with a general lockdown.





Then, **possible contingency measures** were assessed: extension of the 36 months of recruitment could prove necessary for some ESRs to complete their experimental work. The FAQs the EC had published since the COVID19 outbreak were considered: it was noted that the maximum grant amount could not be increased.

Hence, the EB discussed how to support financially such extensions: the Executive Board charged the Project Coordinator with asking the Project Officer about the amount of salary to be paid to ESRs during extension periods made necessary by COVID.

Then, in light of the FAQs published by the EC after the COVID19 outbreak¹, Prof. Chiesa inquired if **reimbursement of costs** incurred for the Mid-Term Meeting (planned to take place in Antwerp, cancelled in person and then held remotely on 16th March 2020) had been sought as soon as possible by all beneficiary representatives and if it had been obtained. All beneficiaries confirmed they had done so and that they had been fully reimbursed by airline companies and hotels. Sabine Van Doorslaer (UANTWERPEN), which had taken care of local organisation, confirmed that reimbursement for this had been obtained, as well. Therefore, for this meeting which could not be attended in person, only one reimbursement would have to be made with PARACAT funds - that requested for the cost of the flight by Paul Georg Furtmüller (Partner Organisation BOKU) on 20th May 2020. The Coordinator confirmed that UNITO would proceed with reimbursement as soon as the Partner Organisation forwarded by e-mail proof that: 1) before asking PARACAT, Paul Georg Furtmüller had done everything possible to obtain reimbursement by the airline company; 2) the company had denied even partial reimbursement. Examples of such proof: the e-mails exchanged with the company; credit card print screen with the partial reimbursement by the company (if any).

The Coordinator reminded the EB Members that, as stated by the FAQs published by the EC: *"For personnel costs, in case of difficulties to get the timesheets counter-signed monthly by the supervisor due to the Covid-19 outbreak, an electronic version of the timesheet (scan or photo) can be sent by e-mail to the supervisor who approves it by replying by e-mail to the person. In such cases, the beneficiaries must keep the original timesheet with the signature of the person plus the acceptance e-mail of the supervisor. As regards the action implementation, beneficiaries must keep all documents necessary to support the explanations included in their scientific report. For instance, emails exchanged during teleworking period; other paper or electronic documents used instead of the laboratory notebook usually in place at the beneficiary's premises, etc."* All beneficiaries confirmed to be aware of, and to have followed, such procedures.

Therefore, the EB agreed that the conditions set by the H2020 FAQs for asking the REA to apply the clause of "force majeure" had been fully complied with.

¹ Relevant FAQs had been circulated by e-mail before this meeting (on 21st May 2020).





Afterwards, the Project Coordinator reminded beneficiaries to keep up the hard work done thus far to **finalise the co-tutelle agreements**, so that the definitive versions of the still-missing agreements² could be available by the end of the Fellows' 36 months of recruitment.

Furthermore, Prof. Chiesa reminded Inés Garcia-Rubio (UNIZAR) and Sabine Van Doorslaer (UANTWERP) to forward to the mailbox paracat@unito.it the final signed version of two co-tutelle agreements:

1. UANTWERP-UNIZAR: Ilenia Serra - ESR3;
2. UNIZAR-UANTWERP: Maruan Alberto Bracci - ESR8.

He stressed this was important for the Coordinating Institution to keep a complete archive of finalised agreements.

Finally, the EB dealt with **PARACAT Summer School planned to be held in Zaragoza (20th - 24th July 2020)**: it was highlighted that, if the situation remained unvaried, the School could not be attended in person. However, it was agreed to wait 2 weeks longer before cancelling this event. In case the School was cancelled, it would either be re-scheduled or held in remote mode.

The meeting ended at 11.30 a.m. (Rome Time).

² Here is the list of the still-missing co-tutelle agreements:

- 1) UANTWERP-CU: Andrea Guidetti - ESR10;
- 2) CU-UANTWERP: Fardokht Rezayi - ESR1;
- 3) ULEI-CU: Kavipriya Thangavel - ESR6 (at present, there is a draft, but not the definitive signed co-tutelle agreement for ESR6).

