
European Members of the International Science Council (ISC)

8th Annual Meeting

Minutes

20–21 October 2025

**Academy of Sciences of Albania
Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë
Tirana, Albania**

A link to the full recording of the event can be found at the ISC European Members website
<https://euro-isc.org/activities/annual-meetings/annual-meeting-2025/>



**International
Science Council**



PROPOSED AGENDA

DAY 1, OCTOBER 20, 2025: SCIENCE DAY

09:30 Welcome coffee and snacks

10:30–13:00 Session I: Science as public good

10:00–10:20 Opening words – Chaired by Acad. Neki Frashëri

10:20–11:45 Science in Albania – Chaired by Tarmo Soomere

Coffee break

12:10–13:00 Panel discussion „How to convert science as public good into driver of economy of small countries”

Lunch

14:00–17:30 Session II: Scientific freedom: The view from Europe

14:00–15:20 Introductory presentations – Chaired by Tarmo Soomere

- Key presentation 1: The history of science in Europe and scientific freedom.
Prof. Simone Turchetti, President of the European Society for the History of Science
- Key presentation 3: The roles of disciplines in a healthy European research base.
Prof. Anna Mauranen, Finnish Academy of Sciences
- Key presentation 3: Science as a public good: a European view.
Prof. Geoffrey Boulton, Royal Society (London) and Royal Society of Edinburgh

Coffee break

15:45–16:45 Round table discussion – Moderated by Jūras Banys

16:45–17:15 General discussion – Moderated by Geoffrey Boulton

17:15–17:30 Summary of proposed actions

18:30–21:30 Networking dinner in the city of Durres

DAY 2, OCTOBER 21, 2025: BUSINESS MEETING (ISC Members only)

09:00–12:00 Business Meeting

- Adoption of the Agenda
- Approval of the minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting
- Report from the European ISC Members Management Group and Secretariat
- Discussion of the document “Scientific freedom”
- Feedback from European ISC Member Organisations
- Presentation from ISC Secretariat.
 - *Vanessa McBride, ISC Science Director, Acting Head of the Centre for Science Futures*
- Future of the leadership of European ISC Members
 - Expansion of the Management Group
 - Determination of the location of Annual Meeting 2026
 - Elections of the new host country and the chair
 - or
 - Mandate to the Management Group to continue without host country
- Any other business

13:00–14:00 Farewell lunch and departure

MINUTES

DAY 1: Science Day

Monday, 20 October 2025

10:00–10:20 Opening words

Chaired by Acad. Neki Frashëri

- Acad. Tarmo Soomere, Chair of ISC Europe Group, Estonian Academy of Sciences
- Acad. Skender Gjinushi, President of the Academy of Sciences of Albania
- Dr. Robert Dumi, National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation, Albania
- Prof. Dr. Anila Paparisto, University of Tirana, Deputy Rector
- Prof. Dr. Ilir Kapaj, Agriculture University of Tirana, Deputy Rector
- Dr. Redion Luli, Mediterranean University, Director of Doctorate School
- Dr. Belfjore Qose, Head of Youth Academy. Presentation [PDF](#)

10:20–11:45 Session I: Science in Albania

Chaired by Tarmo Soomere

Key presentation 1: Challenges for science in the region

Ilirjan Malollari, Academy of Sciences of Albania



Academician Ilirjan Malollari (born 28.09.1956, Korca, Albania) completed university studies in the Industrial Chemistry, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Tirana (1975–1980). For the excellent results during full-time specialization in Chemical Engineering (1987–1988), he was appointed lecturer at the Department of Industrial Chemistry, Faculty of Natural Sciences (1989), where he continues to work today. He is also the head of the teaching and scientific group in Chemical Processes Engineering since the establishment of the related Master of Science study program. Professor Malollari is Associated Member

of the Albanian Academy of Sciences since 2009 and a regular member of the Assembly of this Academy since 2020.

See the presentation slides at the ISC European Members website: <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Ilirjan-Malollari-20.10.2025-.pdf>

Contributions:

- Acad. Gëzim Hoxha
- Acad. Arben Merkoçi
- Prof. Dr. Majlinda Vasjari
- Acad. Genc Sulçebe
- Acad. Ilia Mikerezi
- Acad. Mimoza Hafizi
- Prof. Dr. Fatmir Hoxha

Key presentation 2: The hidden contributions of Women in Science

İlkay Erdoğan-Orhan, Turkish Academy of Sciences



Dr. Erdoğan-Orhan is the principal member of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA) and a member of the Management Group of European ISC Members. She is the vice president of the International Scientific Evaluation Board of the Austrian Drug Screening Institute (ADSI), served as the Representative of Southeast Europe & Turkey Region for the Phytochemical Society of Europe (PSE) for 2019–2023. She is presently the Associate Editor of *Phytomedicine* (Elsevier, Q1) and *Phytochemical Reviews* (Elsevier, Q1). Professionally, Prof İlkay Erdoğan-Orhan is Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Lokman Hekim University in Ankara, Türkiye. She has been Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Eastern Mediterranean University in Northern Cyprus and Dean of the Faculty of

Pharmacy at Gazi University in Ankara, Türkiye.

See the presentation slides at the ISC European Members website: <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Ilkay-Erdogan-Orhan-20.10.2025.pdf>

Key presentation 3: Impact of science on Estonian economy

Tarmo Soomere, Estonian Academy of Sciences



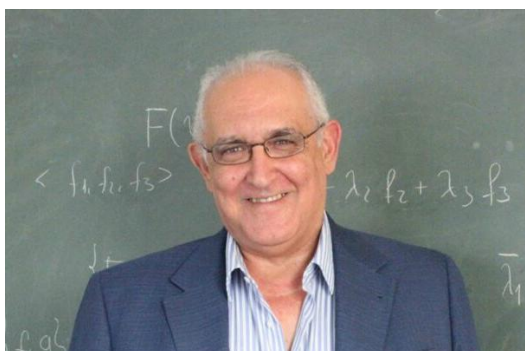
Professor Tarmo Soomere was elected to the Estonian Academy of Sciences in 2007 and served as its President 2014–2024. In this capacity, he was also a member of the Prime Minister's Research and Development Council and was de facto the country's Chief Science Advisor. Internationally, he has drawn attention to the significant contributions of small countries to global scientific collaboration, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging, listening to, and involving these nations to enhance collaboration, foster science advice, and advance science diplomacy. He graduated as a

mathematician from Moscow State University in 1980, received a PhD in Oceanology in 1984 and a Doctor of Mathematics in 1992, became the first Professor of Coastal Engineering in Estonia in 2005 and was elected into Academia Europaea in 2009.

See the presentation slides at the ISC European Members website: <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Tarmo-Soomere-20.10.2025.pdf>

Key presentation 4: Mathematics as public good.

Manuel de León Rodríguez, Royal Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences, Spain



Manuel de León is a member of the Royal Academy of Exact, Physical, and Natural Sciences of Spain (of which he is Academic Treasurer and Director of ESTALMAT), Royal Galician Academy of Sciences and Royal Canarian Academy of Sciences, and also a member of the Management Group of European ISC Members. Professionally, he is Research Professor at Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). His work has been

mainly devoted to the study of differential geometry and its applications to mechanics and mathematical physics. He has been Head of the Department of Mathematics (CSIC), Vice-Director of the Institute of Mathematics and Fundamental Physics (IMAFF-CSIC). He has been Founder and Director of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences (ICAT) which has been selected as one of the Centres of Excellence in Spain (Severo Ochoa Programme).

See the presentation slides at the ISC European Members website: <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Manuel-de-Leon-20.10.2025.pdf>

11:45 Coffee break

12:10–13:00 Panel discussion „How to convert science as public good into driver of economy of small countries”

Moderated by Tarmo Soomere

PARTICIPANTS:

Jūras Banys, President, Lithuanian Academy of Sciences

Zuzana Panczová, Vice President, Slovak Academy of Sciences

Muris Čičić, President, Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Svjetlana Terzic, Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts

Ilirjan Malollari, Academy of Sciences of Albania

13:00–14:00 Lunch

14:00–17:30 Session II: Scientific freedom: The view from Europe

14:00–15:20 Key presentations

Chaired by Tarmo Soomere

- Key presentation 1: The history of science in Europe and scientific freedom.

Prof. Simone Turchetti, President of the European Society for the History of Science

<https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Simone-Turchetti-20.10.2025.pdf>

- Key presentation 3: The roles of disciplines in a healthy European research base.

Prof. Anna Mauranen, Finnish Academy of Sciences

<https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Anna-Mauranen-20.10.2025.pdf>

- Key presentation 3: Science as a public good: a European view.

Prof. Geoffrey Boulton, Royal Society (London) and Royal Society of Edinburgh

<https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/J.-Boulton-20.10.2025.pdf>

15:20–15:45 Coffee break

15:45–16:45 Round table discussion – Moderated by Jūras Banys

Participants: Neki Frashëri, Simone Turchetti, Anna Mauranen (remotely), Geoffrey Boulton, Manuel de Leon (remotely).

16:45–17:15 General discussion – Moderated by Geoffrey Boulton

17:15–17:30 Summary of proposed actions – Moderated by Geoffrey Boulton

18:30–21:30 Networking dinner in the city of Durrës

DAY 2: Formal Business Meeting

Tuesday, 21 October 2025

09:00–12:00 Business meeting

Adoption of the agenda

The European ISC Members Chair Tarmo Soomere welcomed the participants and expressed thanks to the organisers, speakers and the host Albanian Academy of Sciences for their contribution to the success of the first (science) day of the Annual Meeting.

The decision:

The agenda was unanimously accepted.

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting

The meeting took place on 21–22 November 2024 in Stockholm and was generously hosted by the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences. The draft minutes were first checked by the Management Group and then distributed to the members for corrections and amendments. The final version is included in the full document pack of this meeting as an appendix.

The 2024 Annual Meeting had 42 participants who represented 18 European ISC Member organisations. Two member organisations were represented via online participation. Three core topics were discussed: artificial intelligence, science advice and the initiative Reclaiming Europe by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and young academics. Vanessa McBride presented an insight into actions and challenges of the ISC.

As traditional and consistent with decision of the European ISC Members to contribute into science diplomacy, the Ambassador of Estonia, H.E. Toomas Lukk presented his message to the meeting. All these aspects are described in more detail in the minutes.

The most important formal outcomes of this meeting are (i) election of the Management Group members for three years, (ii) re-election of the host country, and (iii) amendment of the Statutes. Also, the main items to be presented to the ISC General Assembly (Muscat, Oman, January 2025) were formulated.

The decision:

The minutes were unanimously approved.

The minutes are displayed on the website of European ISC Members www.euro-isc.org:

<https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Euro-ISC-2024-minutes.-Approved-21.10.2025-1.pdf>

2. Report from the European ISC Members Management Group and Secretariat

The Chair presented an overview of activities of the Management Group and Chair associated with the plans and activities of the European ISC Members. This includes inter alia preparation of detailed minutes of the Annual Meeting 2024, participation in the General Assembly of the International Science Council in Muscat, Oman, 26.–30.01.2025, publication of an opinion piece to follow-up the formulation and signing of the document “Reclaiming Europe”, preparation of the document “The “Scientific Temper” and a European Perspective” and drafting the document “Scientific Freedom” to be discussed as Item 3.

The 2024 Annual Meeting filled all regular seats of Management Group, re-elected the host country (Estonia) and amended the Statutes. The most important amendment was creation of a seat for an invited Management Group member from the ISC Board.

In spring 2025 Jürg Pfister stepped down from the Past Chair position. The Management Group continued without Past Chair.

Several Management Group members participated at the ISC General Assembly, Muscat, Oman, 26.–30.01.2025. The Chair presented a short message to this Assembly based on the views agreed in Stockholm in 2024, was a facilitator in one working group in panel “Leveraging the ISC Membership to strengthen science advice to policy” and recorded an interview about strengths of the ISC.

The Chair further contributed into science diplomacy by participating in the organisation and running the conference of academies of sciences of Hamburg and the Baltic States „Current and future security architecture for the Baltic States and Europe” (Berlin, 20.–21.03.2025) together with Juras Banys, President of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, and Ivars Kalnins, President of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. The Chair presented a note “Addressing East-West gradient in the future security architecture of Europe (21.03), chaired the key lecture by Member of the European Parliament Mrs Marina Kaljurand and the subsequent discussion, and participated together with Juras Banys in panel discussion „Possible future scenarios for security and peace in Europe”

The Chair also contributed to the further development of the topic “Reclaiming Europe” by formulating opinion piece “Reclaiming Europe from the West-East Gradient”. This piece was published in the collection “Reclaiming Europe” that was distributed together with the information package [Roland A. Römhildt, ed., 2025. Reclaiming Europe. A Collection of Essays. Young Network TransEurope, Berlin, www.bbaw.de. ISBN 978-3-949455-39-1, https://www.bbaw.de/files-bbaw/publikationen/YNT/YNT_Reclaiming_Europe_2025_web.pdf]

Geoffrey Boulton created the opinion piece “The “Scientific Temper” and a European Perspective”. This one-pager was approved by the Management Group and distributed to the European ISC Members, the ISC Governing Board and ISC local focal points on different continents. The idea of such pieces is not to seek endorsement but interpret as a suggested approach that could structure the European ISC Members’ work in the coming year.

The Chair also drew attention of the participants to the document “Scientific freedom” sketched in summer by Anna Mauranen and distributed with the document pack for this meeting, and in printed form yesterday. It was discussed electronically by the Management Group and recommended for discussion at the Annual Meeting. This is also not to seek endorsement of this document. The idea is to interpret it as the basis of one of our future working directions.

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting that are approved now were finished in May 2025.

The Chair informed Management Group about the intention of stepping down in May 2025. The reason is that a major cut of the budget of the Estonian Academy of Sciences makes it impossible to contribute to the activities at the planned level.

This situation makes it necessary to decide how to proceed. Tarmo Soomere is willing to continue as Past Chair until the new Chair and host country will be agreed. The Management Group has discussed this item. A possible solution is that part of the Chair’s responsibilities will be distributed between the Management Group members while the Estonian Academy of Sciences will continue provide support to the website, organisation of Management Group meetings, the next Annual Meeting, and overall coordination of activities. The Management Group agreed to continue, if necessary, in this manner.

Finally, *the Chair stressed* that the work during the year and the organisation of this Annual Meeting was performed in tight cooperation with all Management Group members and with the local host, the Albanian Academy of Sciences, while the contribution of acad. Neki Frashëri is greatly appreciated. In general, the European ISC Members are a living working group that has

good potential to continue in the future. Several positive developments are in the agenda. However, we still have some challenges about which we must decide today.

Geoffrey Boulton expressed the opinion that the European ISC Members should thank the Chair for his work and efforts. Also, on behalf of the Royal Society, he expressed appreciation to the material that has been presented. What happened in the last years was very sensible. The question is now: what's next?

Tarmo Soomere expressed his thanks for this appreciation and stressed that the success has been very much teamwork.

The Annual Meeting was invited to comment – which has been done – and note this report. We do not have a formal procedure of its approval. However, we must know what has happened and we also must document what we are doing – not in terms of long formal reports but first of all at the level of key words and ideas.

The report was noted by the Annual Meeting.

3. Discussion of the document "Scientific freedom"

To introduce this discussion, *the Chair noted* that even though the Management Group does not put creation of different statements into the focus, still framing and formulation of what we think is important. This framing should, ideally, be short, concise, transparent, and also searchable and findable for different robots and for the use by AI. Two such one-page documents have been mentioned today. "The scientific temper" was reflected in several welcoming speeches and expanded towards "temperament" that is not much different from temper. Therefore, the ideas created positive feedback.

The question to the Annual Meeting is twofold. First, the Meeting is invited to discuss the next document of this kind, "Scientific freedom" by Anna Mauranen, including suggestions about how to make it more impactful; however, we are not going to formally approve this document – unless the Annual Meeting requests so. The understanding of the Management Group is that it is more important to distribute the ideas than to create a kind of a signed document. This position of course may change. The topic of scientific freedom is in the core of science. It is not known beforehand which direction, topic or nuance will be important for a breakthrough. Whenever freedom is restricted, we may lose something that could make our future better.

As Anna Mauranen has excellent understanding of European history, this document has a clear historical dimension. It has potential to be read by many, and it might contribute to the better course of science in the future.

The other question here is: What the Annual Meeting thinks – whether we should continue in this manner, irregularly but relatively frequently, 2–3 times/year, creating, framing and distributing such one-pagers? Or should we go some other way?

The argument for such one-pagers is that anybody from the ISC delegates/members who has ideas, concerns, or aspirations, can put together such a document. If it fits into understanding of what science is and how to make it better, it will be distributed with the goal of having these ideas widely on board, and with the hope that these ideas will do their job anyway. Good documents are read and distributed.

Anna Mauranen explained that the idea was to write down an initiative that we could shape in the ISC in Europe after we have left this room. It was distributed in a draft form as the first step to start a project, a kind of action group for doing something intersessional too.

We all ought to act around this; not only to distribute, perhaps in some revised form as a statement worldwide. It would be more important to contribute to the general understanding

of scientific freedom and responsibility that would be in the ISC agenda. Not only as a talking point but something that the ISC could do, and that could be our initiative to the ISC.

It would be nice to have a small action group that could prepare this activity further before our next open meeting, or the next conference like this next year. We should start as soon as possible, suggesting to the ISC the possible procedures that we could do in Europe where we also recognise threats to academic/scientific freedom. Let's try to get people involved in doing something about it, counteracting these threats, and also suggest the same kind of procedure to the ISC, inducing them to do something about it.

I understand that in different parts of the world you do different things, live in different situations, have different prejudices to overcome etc. We should at least set an example that we do something about it and not just speak about it. What I would like to do about this in some sort of form: we ought to have a very small group doing this, acting on this, planning this. This group would involve, importantly, representatives of young academies in Europe. This will be the obvious first step to start planning action on this, e.g., a couple of us and somebody from the young academies in Europe. The topic itself is quite obvious. Academic freedom is the starting point of successful research. We cannot do much without it. It does not help if somebody from politics tells us what is useful and what is useless because usually they don't understand what is useful or useless, or their understanding is not very sophisticated.

The Chair asked whether this document uses "king" intentionally with lowercase letters.

Anna Mauranten commented that this word is not part of a name in this document. It is a classifying term, like "incoming king". It is simply a noun unless it is part of the title.

The Chair replied humorously that there are still many kingdoms in the world and they may not like "king" without the first letter capitalised.

A delegate commented about how to think about the audience of such documents. We can write a document, but who is going to read it? We can involve young academies, but I doubt whether they will be a big audience. Maybe we should think about something like a European manifesto on a topic that we deem important, and we frame it as a kind of comment or perspective to be published, for example, in *Nature* or some other journal, or in multiple journals.

Doing so would have larger impact on the communities. In this way, it would be more than simply a document for internal sharing but a document that is really meant to go out, so we can think about scientific part of it. Doing so would also force us to frame our ideas very clearly and having in mind that many people will read it. I think especially young people – that's my perception with the people I am working with – don't know about our internal documents. Maybe this audience could be better informed by publishing this document in a high-level journal.

The Chair remarked that, in the ideal world, our documents should appear in some high-level journal at least as letters to the Editor. There are different pathways for such documents. We were thinking first about initiating a process in the ISC, with a background promise that if the ISC will pick it up, then the European ISC Members will carry on the relevant initiative. This is what we discussed yesterday: if we propose something, we shall support the process. The other side is that if there is a very good idea, we should try to formulate it as a very short message that is published in a high-level journal.

Geoffrey Boulton added that it is vital to think about who we want talk to. We don't want to particularly talk to scientists. We want talk to politicians. Why? Because this is a political issue. The reason is that it is timely now. Not because of science but because of politics. Ideally we would like to say that this is the global voice of science to articulate this. Maybe the ISC has not part these words. The challenge for the ISC is: Can you address this issue?

We are going to say to politicians: Even if you are drifting in a particular political direction, don't do it in a way that will damage the science as it matters to you irrespective to the politics you run. It is the point where the global voice of science does matter. There is a route for this. It may come from a European initiative, but it must be about Europe.

Vanessa [McBride] is a member of the ISC Committee on freedom and responsibility in science. This is exactly the body to handle this paper. Apparently this committee is meeting in December to decide on the work plan for the next periods. Ideally, we could adapt this paper, develop it a little and put it on the plate of this ISC committee, challenging to find a route for it to be heard as a great voice of science.

Just producing another paper is not a way forward. Frankly, ISC has produced many papers. It matters whether they shall have an effect and impact. Firstly, the challenge to the ISC is: this is a crucial issue. Secondly, it's got to be done in a way that has an impact. So, I suggest that – following that Anna has already said – we make ourselves available, say, try to initiate movement on the ISC committee, starting this issue, to make ourselves available next year, and to support them as appropriate.

There are two challenges. One is to write a short and appropriate paper, the right paper. Secondly, to find a way to get the impact it needed. Unless we get the second part, the paper will be just yet another paper and it not going to work.

Vanessa McBride replied that this committee would be happy to take this paper on board if this group wants to take it forward. She also reminded that about five years ago the ISC discussed the meaning of responsible science in the 21st century. It would be good to refer to that based on this new idea, and to check whether it has been explored.

Anna Mauranen added that it is important that we do this. There have been seminars by the ISC addressing scientific freedom. They are on the right track and have all the right views. They were mostly about the ways of seeing academic freedom. I don't think that this way takes us very far. It would be extremely nice to follow the path of making a European initiative to the ISC board as soon as may be on this topic. We could suggest ourselves as willing to work on this and developing a way of going about delivering it. Otherwise, we'll stay talking to other scientists. If we only have statements on websites, it may be fine, but who reads them apart from us? I think this really needs more active action. It is important to get the young academics involved as well. It's a question of their present and their future more than that of us – who are mostly on senior positions in our academic careers, close towards the exit rather than the entry. It would be excellent to take it forward, possibly in a modified form, frame it as an initiative, something that we are willing to work on in cooperation with the ISC, recognising that the ISC is where the greater power lies. It would be great to collaborate with other continents and other regional offices.

Ilirjan Malollari commented issues of scientific freedom and responsibility from the viewpoint of some crucial objectives and reality in Albania: pursuit of knowledge, ethical conduct, open communication, responsibility to science and avoiding conflict of interest. The state of the art of scientific freedom in Albania is depicted in an internal document of the Albanian Academy of Sciences. The presenter shortly reflect its main points.

There have been efforts towards more responsible conduct of research, such as the development of guidelines of conduct of science, improving transparency and responsibility in scientific research. There are ongoing challenges and areas of concern, such as potential for research to be influenced by political and economic interest, which is very high in a small country like Albania. It is powerful and dominates other fields, like scientific research and other expectations of society.

The directions necessary to improve and apply in the context of scientific freedom and responsibility in Albania might be promoting education and awareness, developing and enforcing ethical guidelines, ensuring diversity and inclusivity, supporting independent research, strengthening collaboration and communication. Understanding the importance of research and promoting its potential are important for society and environment. The overall direction is to improve and apply scientific freedom and responsibility, promoting education, awareness, developing and enforcing ethical guidelines, ensuring diversity and inclusivity.

There are some duties in the Albanian reality to evaluate and change the existing reality. First, policy for conducting honest assessment and engaging in open dialogue. The Academy of Sciences is a right place for this discussion with society, promoting transparency and accountability, addressing corruption, supporting innovation and creativity, investing in education and healthcare. Evaluating and changing the existing reality requires consent from all stakeholders by engaging in this kind of dialogue.

For this reason, we would like to apply support from international organisations for being involved in international-level actions and having the option to follow other countries within the subject of scientific freedom and responsibility. Many international organisations promote and support scientific freedom and responsibility, like the ICS, UNESCO, World Health Organization, or UNDP. These organizations may provide support in a variety of ways, such as providing guidance and resources for the development of policies and regulations to promote scientific freedom and responsibility, support research and capacity building activities, and promoting collaboration and information sharing among different stakeholders. Many international organisations can also provide funding opportunities for research projects and initiatives related to scientific freedom and responsibility.

We believe that countries like Albania can apply for these funding opportunities to support initiatives that promote scientific freedom and responsibility. Surely we will have actual results and recommendations for small countries like Albania. The results and recommendations may include: (1) increase awareness and understanding of the importance of scientific freedom and responsibility among policy-makers, researchers, and the public; (2) improved policies and regulations that promote ethical and responsible conduct of researchers and increase transparency and accountability, (3) increase in the investment in scientific research and development, as well as support for innovation and entrepreneurship; (4) collaboration and communication with stakeholders, including researchers, policy-makers, and the public.

The recommendations in this document are: strengthening the capacity of research institutions and organisations, promoting scientific freedom and responsibility, investing in education and training programmes that promote development of skills and knowledge related with scientific freedom and responsibility, promoting diversity and inclusivity in scientific community, strengthening international collaboration and partnership to promote and share best practices and knowledge related to scientific freedom and responsibility.

We are interested further discussions about scientific freedom and responsibility to gain further understanding of challenges associated with scientific freedom and responsibility as well as different ways in which this concept is understood and applied in different contexts. It is expected to develop greater appreciation of the ethical and social implications of scientific research and explore ways in which this can be addressed through policy and practice.

The Chair noted that this statement from Albania clarifies the current situation and stresses how strong are gradients in Europe. They seem to be as strong as between the global North and global South. Some questions could be answered via our third umbrella topic – science diplomacy. It includes organisation of cooperation in science.

The Chair summarised the discussion as follows: The European ISC Members seem to be happy with this kind of activity that could be developed further using different pathways. One pathway is the ISC, tagged with the promise that if we provide an idea or document, we are happy to support the relevant actions. The other pathway is that such documents should be made so compact and penetrative that they could land on pages on high-level journals. This outcome mainly depends on editors.

Anna Mauranen recommended to use a more distinct understanding that we should present an initiative to the ISC about academic freedom and responsibility and agree to do something about it. Just sending out different documents is too vague.

Geoffrey Boulton remarked that scientific freedom is all very well. But any other member of society might say to us: Why we should give you freedom? We – this document – must say why. And “why” is the responsibility. To provide the society with what science can do, science needs freedom. The freedom should be given if and because things that we give to the society are highly responsible and highly tuned to the needs of society. Anna’s paper is good on the freedom, but discussion of responsibility should be added. Adding this dimension to the document, the result would be picked up by the ISC quickly. He recommends that the European Members approve the document but recommend adding the dimension of responsibility to complete it.

Vanessa McBride mentioned that she cannot tell where exactly the responsibility dimension is currently in the ISC action line.

The Chair reminded that the European ISC Members are not wishing to polarise with respect to the ISC as a whole. The intention is providing a European view for the benefit of the ISC. What happens to the document depends first on whether Anna is wishing to continue working with it.

Anna Mauranen responded that she was happy to amend the document by integrating the topic of responsibility into the text.

The Chair repeated the question to the Annual Meeting: are we happy with this type of activity and should we proceed in this manner. It is not our style to formally approve or disapprove a particular document or action. Contrariwise, we should agree that the drivers of a good idea are encouraged to continue its development. This is the position for which we seek the endorsement of the Annual Meeting. We are not going to say what exactly needs to be done. This is not a tradition in the academic community. We provide ideas and suggestions and then we are happy with what happens next.

This position was unanimously accepted. The Annual Meeting expressed gratitude to Anna Mauranen for creation of this document and for the willingness to continue work with this document.

4. Feedback from European ISC Member Organisations

The Chair reminded that all European ISC Members are invited to provide a brief overview (about 4 minutes and a few slides) of the core developments in their institutions in 2024–2025. It is recommended to highlight activities related to the ISC topics and actions, provide suggestions for the scope and (concerted) actions of the European ISC Members, and identify topics that should be discussed with the ISC secretariat.

On behalf of the *Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts*, Prof. Dr Vesna Kilibarda, associate member of this Academy, who acts as a Secretary of the Division of Humanities of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts, forwards to everybody warm greetings from

Podgorica. Although Montenegro is a small country, our Academy plays a central role as the national scientific authority and as a bridge between the research, policy and society. The Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts was established by Law 54 years ago as the supreme national institution in the fields of science and arts of particular national state importance. It brings together the country's scientific and artistic potential, promotes creativity and fosters the development of science, art and culture in all their forms. The Academy is an independent institution, governed autonomously, but its members are elected in accordance with the Law and its Statute. At present, it has 39 full members and 29 foreign members, organized into four departments: natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts.

The Montenegrin Academy continuously organizes international meetings and projects that enhance scientific international presence of Montenegro and the Academy. So far, it has concluded 32 bilateral agreements on scientific cooperation with foreign, mainly national Academies of sciences and arts. Our Academy fully supports and strives to embody the notion of scientific temper in its authentic form. As a small country in the Balkans, we are particularly attentive to the issues that correspond to the realistic scope and capacities of our national and regional institutions. Our key objective is to find within the European ISC members community support and channels necessary to make science and the knowledge economy true drivers of growth and well-being, especially in the research areas that can directly enhance productivity, innovation and quality of life. This, in turn, benefits Europe as a whole and Montenegro feels itself to be an integral part of Europe.

Freedom in science, the initiative we work on, is a prerequisite of any prosperous and healthy society. At the same time, responsibly conducted science must be ensured through functional legal and ethical mechanism but never in ways that would restrict or endanger the freedom to formulate or communicate evidence-based opinions, analysis or findings.

Coming from the field of humanities and literary studies, I wish to emphasize that research in these disciplines, both theoretical and applied, must continue to be valued and supported as an indispensable counterbalance to the natural sciences and ever emerging technologies. Science, after all, should also be viewed more broadly as an aspect of culture and having a cultural role in the society.

The Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts remains deeply committed to the ISC's vision of science as a global public good. We remain convinced that by working together, even the smallest scientific community can make a meaningful contribution to Europe's shared progress.

Neki Frashëri provided overview of activities of the *Academy of Sciences of Albania* during the last years. There have been several directions. The role of the Academy is to support research collaboration. The Academy has several virtual research units composed of professors from different faculties. They collaborate with neighbouring countries. We are committed to increase collaboration in the region.

We succeeded to establish permanent research centre for biotechnology and genetics. It is now time to do the same for nanotechnology. We used to have in our Academy institutions of humanitarian sciences. These institutes have been separated from the Academy during the reform of 2007. This reform created a lot of problems for research in Albania.

We are part of several international conferences. Just last week we had a Balkan conference in informatics. It is now time for dialogue with politics. There is now a new law for research which was missing in our country.

The Chair expressed once more thanks to the Albanian Academy of Sciences on behalf of the European Members, in particular, for co-organising the Annual Meeting – that was not only physical work but also quite substantial financial contribution.

İlkay Erdoğan-Orhan presented an overview of activities of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TUBA) as a principal member and the council member of this Academy. TUBA participated in the G20 chief science advisors' roundtable in South Africa focusing on equity-based science technology and innovation for inclusive human development and global sustainability. The TUBA representative also contributed to the writing of the declaration. TUBA contributed to the science G20 meeting held by the Academy of Sciences of South Africa. In line with ISC's strategy TUBA's participation exemplifies the emphasis on fostering multilateral science diplomacy and addressing global challenges, evidence-based policy-making as well as open science.

Another activity by TUBA is to organise jointly TUBA-Turkic States summer schools. We organised the 7th ecology summer school which was held in Azerbaijan from August 10–17, 2025, in collaboration with TUBA and Karabakh University. This program backs on scientific publications, research funding and Turkey-Azerbaijan relations. Last year, we organised TUBA-Turkic States summer school, which 6th summer school of Turkish states in the city of Turkestan in Kazakhstan in August 2024 covering energy technologies and ecology. This is also in line with what we are doing in the ISC approach: summer schools create human capital, drive regional partnership and can directly feed into the ISC's proposed regional presence in Central Asia and Trans-Caucasia.

We prepared several publications and reports. One of them is on the foundation of science for a sustainable future, to which I also personally contributed. This is a comprehensive publication addressing global sustainability challenges through interdisciplinary approaches. Another publication addresses science diplomacy for global challenges, which is also aligned with the ISC strategy. Through this publication, TUBA would like to emphasise the role of science diplomacy in addressing global challenges.

Another recent activity by TUBA was establishing the Young Academy in 2025. The relevant regulations have been declared. The Young Academy is established to promote scientific thinking among early career scientists in Turkey and represent the country in international young academy events. TUBA regularly gives awards to young scientists below 40 years old. This is a very prestigious award, especially presented by the President at an official ceremony. Only very high-level young scientists can get this award. The Young Academy was initiated initially by young scientists who have received this award. This is also in line with the ISC strategy.

Miodrag Čolić provided an insight into activities of the *Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts*. The slides are available at <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Serbia-ASA-21.10.2025.pdf>. As Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Serbian Academy also incorporates arts. It serves as Serbia's highest scientific and artistic institution, develops and promotes science and the arts through fundamental and applied research, publications, and public engagement. It has 130 members in 8 departments (Mathematics, Physics & Geosciences, Chemical & Biological Sciences, Technical Sciences, Medical Sciences, Language & Literature, Social Sciences, Historical Sciences, Arts). Serbia is one of the rare countries where females dominate in science: there are about 52% females and 48% of males among scientists.

The Academy has intense international collaboration and is active in different fields. The key projects running in the Academy include demographic issues, public health, environmental protection, scientific and economic strategies, education, AI, biotechnology and nanotechnology, agriculture, and rural development. Several focused initiatives are related to

the basics of science and science policy: the significance of quality in science, scientific excellence, ethics, science-policy dialogue, open science, equality in science, or scientific publishing.

We have intense collaboration with many Academies at several levels, such as bilateral researcher exchange agreements, participation in EU and other funded programs, membership in global, European, and regional scientific associations (e.g. IAP, ISC, UNESCO, ALLEA, EMAN, DAC), or hosting and attending international scientific events. There are communication within countries related to science diplomacy and policy. There are also opportunities for further cooperation, especially in fields of pressing global challenges, such as climate change, pandemics, AI, which are the dominant topics now.

Some examples of actions 2024–2025: three workshops on sustainable agriculture, economy (Serbia's economic development and its determinants), three workshops on artificial intelligence (one international), 22nd young researchers conference, European conference on educational research (ECER 2025), the world conference on science and art for sustainability, the roma in Serbia – current state and perspectives, scientific conference 'Contemporary minorities migrations from Serbia, symposium 'Cutting-edge science through research results', and more than 100 conferences/meetings on specific topics across all disciplines.

The symposium 'Excellence in science' included topics like: what is excellence in science, quantitative indicators and ranking lists for evaluating individual research outputs, qualitative indicators of research excellence — how do we measure quality, from quality to quantity: balancing quantitative and qualitative criteria, the peer-review crisis, fraud in science — the flip side of research excellence, challenges of evaluation in the humanities, excellence in the language sciences.

This list includes topics that are linked to the recent Muscat declaration [ISC General Assembly, January 2025 - editor] that should be the main activities of the ISC members. We have not yet established a Young Academy, but the idea is on table.

Muris Čičić, President, *Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, told that this Academy was established in 1951. It represents the scientific community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to the political structure of the country and problems that appeared after the war, we had and still have problems regarding our position in society, and also in particular in budgeting and financing of the Academy. During the last five years, we managed to stabilise the Academy. We have 49 members plus other kinds of positions. Next year, we will probably have elections for new members. Some slides are available at <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Serbia-ASA-21.10.2025.pdf>

The Academy has increased its activity in scientific projects, presentations, and teaching. In particular, in the last few years, we have established a stable series of presentations on different topics that are becoming very popular and very representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We probably have about 50 to 60 very interesting topics, and they are becoming representative and very popular in our country.

The Academy has been involved recently in the project of preparing a strategy for science development in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We involved many individuals and institutions. The project is going very well. I am very pleased that we are the organisation that has been selected to prepare such a project, working with the Ministry of Science in Sarajevo and working with other institutions.

Analysing what could be done to improve the status and development of science, we realised that there is a possibility to cooperate with the large diaspora Bosnia and Herzegovina has worldwide. We do have more than a couple of hundred relatively young and middle-aged

researchers who are working in top-rated universities worldwide, in America, Europe, and Australia as well. A particular point of this cooperation is that we encounter the ability of these people to cooperate. And there is a willingness to give not only their time, but also to participate in projects with research capabilities, with a lot of enthusiasm. I expect that in the next couple of years, something will come out of that. We are now developing the projects of application of artificial intelligence in different projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hopefully, it will present a rich field of future projects.

Apart from international projects, we have local and regional projects. We are working with a few successful private companies. This is something new as it hasn't been applied before. I expect that it will be on the line of the topics that we discussed yesterday – science as the driver of development in small countries. We are following something like that.

Apart from everything that I have said, we are also actively involved in conferences like this one here, and also in other cooperation forms with other institutions. We are going to expand and continue working in this direction.

COFFEE BREAK

Juras Banys told that the 2024–2025 activities of the *Lithuanian Academy of Sciences* relevant to the ISC strategy first of all addressed freedom, responsibility and inclusivity in science. The slides are available at <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Lithuania-21.10.2025.pdf>. The Academy continues publishing of series of popular science books „Science for Everybody“. These books are given for free to schools and libraries and have become really popular. The slides present three books from this series.

An important component of inclusivity is supporting women in science. Together with the Estonian and Latvian Academies of Sciences we issue each year an award to three female scientists from each country. The award is not very large, 7000 euro. This 'Women in Science Baltic Fellowship' awards, with ceremony in Vilnius in November 2024, is organized jointly with National Commissions for UNESCO and Ministries of Education and Science of the three countries.

We contribute into international science agenda-setting. The Lithuanian Academy of Sciences participated in organizing and hosting several international conferences on food security and public health: 1st international on-line conference 'One Health: Challenges for Food Safety', June 2024, European Hepatitis C Virus Elimination Summit, September 2024, International conference 'One Health: Integral View Upon Zoonoses', December 2024, second Wildlife Malaria Network, or Conference 'Brain and Gut: Friends or Foes?', October 2024, in cooperation with the Lithuanian Society of Gastroenterology and the Lithuanian Psychiatric Association. While Serbia hosts about 100 such conferences a year, we have about 250 meetings a year in Lithuania. Evolution of science is another focus of our activities. We had several discussions and meetings on AI, such as Artificial Intelligence Applications in Medicine conference in October 2024. Publishing department of our Academy publishes several scientific journals which are reflected in the Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics) database.

In the context of development of evidence-based policymaking we participated in events in Vienna and at the ISC General Assembly in Oman. The Academy is disseminating materials provided by the unions of academies to the policy-makers: the Committees at the Parliament, the corps of scientific advisors to the Government. Translations are provided occasionally.

We push our politicians to make evidence-based decisions. It's a big problem; however, the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences according to the Statute acts as the advisory institution to the

President, government and parliament. From time to time, we get questions from the Parliament which we must answer in 10 days. This is really painful.

Science diplomacy is one of our everyday concerns. Exactly one year ago we signed a cooperation agreement with the Albanian Academy of Sciences. Bilateral agreement with the Academy of Sciences of Moldova was signed in June 2024. We have very good relations with Taiwan in laser physics and biotechnology that are now booming in both Taiwan and Lithuania. Several regional and international cooperation in science events, often involving government officials and diplomats, took place. In April 2024, a satellite conference to the Three Seas Summit in Vilnius, "The Three Seas Initiative: One Concept, Different Approaches?" was held. It started from Greece and continued to the Baltic Sea states. It's a presidents' meeting. One part of this initiative was science summit discussing cooperation in science in this region. The 19th Baltic Intellectual Cooperation Conference 'Bridging and Bonding: Migration across the Baltic Sea' was held in May 2025 at the Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters in Helsinki.

The Young Academy is part the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. It specifically contributed to the topics of freedom in science and science diplomacy, working together with the Global Young Academy and other young academies. In May 2025, a Nordic-Baltic Young Academies Meeting was held in Tallinn, after which the Swedish colleagues initiated a document "Academic freedom – a Nordic-Baltic call to action" (currently in preparation). In June 2025 the Swiss Young Academy organized the ENYA (European National Young Academies) annual meeting in Bern, where young academies discussed their role in shaping science policy.

Augusta Maria Paci provided insight into efforts of the CNR (*Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Italy*). The slides are available at <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Italy-1-CNR-overview-21.10.2025.pdf> and <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Italy-2-highlight-21.10.2025.pdf>. CNR is the largest publicly funded research institution in Italy, a research council by nature, performing scientific activities in all disciplines, under the Ministry of Research and University. Its mission is to perform basic and applied research, to promote innovation and competitiveness of the national industrial system, to promote the internationalization of the national research system, and to advice the Government and other public bodies. It has >8500 researchers in all sectors and disciplines from natural sciences to social sciences and the humanities. CNR is structured in 7 departments, 88 research institutes, 30 research units at third-party organisations, and 228 laboratories and locations across Italy. In July 2025, prof. Andrea Lenzi was appointed the new President of CNR with the mission to increase research and innovation added value in the country. The CNR is an important contributor to the ISC and before, CNR took part to the ICSU foundation. Augusta Maria Paci personally was member of the Task force for the process of merging ICSU and ISSC in 2015 that was a very relevant and great experience to open the way to the new ISC. Presently, Michele Muccini and Augusta Maria Paci are the CNR ISC Delegates till 2028 and both attended the 3rd ISC General Assembly, Muscat 26–31 January 2025.

CNR is committed to international cooperation with the Unit for International Relations, director Virginia Coda Nunziante. The CNR participates in more than 40 different international scientific Unions and ISC. The ISC annual Reports are regularly published online also in English.

The CNR website (<https://www.cnr.it/en>) is available to reach out activities, events, resources and documents.

The global activities of ISC are expected to produce benefits for our scientific community, particularly in the field of science for policy. In the last period, as an example, the ISC Delegates got interest in the ISC initiative Roster of Experts. Started about two years ago, an informal group composed by CNR experts selected by the ISC Roster of Experts was formed. This

informal group meets and shares ISC policy themes. During a session of the Oman General Assembly dedicated to Academia and Research Councils, CNR talked about the goal and value of Roster of Experts for contributing to science for policy. Regarding our European Group, CNR is glad to be part of it and to support and share with the Academies topics for the integration of a European perspective into the ISC global agenda.

About important news regarding 2026, the Italian Accademia dei Lincei will become member of the ISC in alliance with CNR. This will enhance opportunities for ISC and the global scientific community.

Geoffrey Boulton reminded that the Royal Society (of London) was created in 1660 (not quite sure exactly when but about then). It has 800 members (fellows). Fellowship extends not only to the UK but to the entire Commonwealth, so we have fellows from Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, Kenya, etc. We also have an honorary fellowship, and you have to really good be an honorary fellow. Most of us are ordinary fellows – not clever enough to be honorary fellows, about 15, and mostly Nobel prize winners. A slide is available at <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Bolton-V2-21.10.2025-1.pdf>

The Society unfortunately did not benefit from the European Enlightenment. Rather than expending over the whole relevant knowledge, the Royal Society was restricted to the natural sciences. It was only in the 20th century that new societies were developed to bring in the humanities and social sciences.

The formal budgetary statement says that, formally, we have the budget of over 600 million pounds. The reality is somewhat different. The building we inhabit was taken from the German embassy in 1939, and with the very best reasons given to us. The value of this building is part of the budget. My calculations indicate that we have something like 50 million pounds worth of unrestricted funding, which is the funds with what we can do anything we like. Our relations with the government are good but we only receive money from government to do things that they like. So, we have arranged it with them to do their work.

One of most successful in my mind is what is called Royal Society university fellows. We started that about 25 years ago. These are fellowships for clever young people with PhD, three years long. We decided progressively that three years are rather short and began to worry about their next job. So, we thought that we have to introduce fellowships that last up to 10 years. By this time most of them would already had professorships and different universities bidding for them. This would give young scientists freedom to do nothing but think for as long as they like. A well-regarded single publication in Nature is interesting but relevant to their progress, I am glad to say; we always recognize the strangle hold on science, but the commercial publishers have.

Our activities belong to three main categories (see the slide at <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Bolton-V2-21.10.2025-1.pdf>). Science meetings cover a lot of topics: Generative biology; Intercellular bacteria; Enhanced weathering and CO₂ removal; Marine biodiversity; Ultra-fast science; Vision-augmented hearing; Science as a global public good; Nematode genomes; Condensed matter; Immuno-engineering; nano-scale materials. One of them, "Science as a global public good", has been part of this meeting. It is also a vision of the ISC and a topic of a two-day meeting. Current ongoing topics obviously are AI and data; Education and skills; Innovation; Genetic technologies; Climate change and biodiversity; Health.

The reports we produced last year include topics: Workplace skills in Scotland in mathematics & data; Scientific literacy and oracy in primary schools; the shift to prevention in health; Sustainable nuclear science and technology; Science and the economy; Women in science.

Natural hydrogen. The current issues are quite exciting and provide a lot of fun. Our journals are shifting to the entirely open procedure whereby it is free to publish both to authors and readers at no cost. Global talent attraction is very important at the present day. We are trying quite hard. Most of our academies must be a safe haven for scientists who are de-funded, e.g., many American scientists. We have a summer science exhibition, a whole week, where all departments of the Royal Society are flooded by exhibitors. It is primarily for schools and very effective for creating links of small schools with very good and enthusiastic scientists. The impact they can have with their enthusiasm is enormous.

The *Slovak Academy of Sciences* provided a video that covers the main features of the Academy and the core working directions. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWQyj1ig-r8>

Tarmo Soomere presented an insight of ISC-related activities of the *Estonian Academy of Sciences*, mentioning first that most of the presented items were already reflected in the report by the Management Group and Secretariat. He represented both European ISC Members and Estonian Academy of Sciences at the General Assembly of the International Science Council in Muscat, Oman, 26.–30.01.2025, where he presented a short message to the Assembly about the aims and objectives of the European Members (Day 2, 30 January 2025, Session 09:00–12:30 Strategy and membership, Topic 15. ISC regional presence) as a comment from the audience, was facilitator in one of working groups of the panel „Leveraging the ISC Membership to strengthen science advice to policy“ (26.01.2025) and recorded an interview about strengths and possible future developments of the ISC (27.01.2025). The slides are available at <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Estonia-21.10.2025.pdf>

Together with Juras Banys and Ivars Kalninš (Latvia) he participated at the conference of academies of sciences of Hamburg and the Baltic States „Current and future security architecture for the Baltic States and Europe“ (Berlin, 20.–21.03.2025). Both Juras Banys and Ivars Kalninš made large contributions to this conference with strong presence of the European ISC Members, including two Management Group members. Tarmo Soomere chaired the key lecture by Member of the European Parliament Marina Kaljurand “Security architecture for the Baltic States and Europe: A view from Tallinn and Brussels” and subsequent discussion (20.03), presented the talk “Addressing East-West gradient in the future security architecture of Europe (21.03), and contributed together with Juras Banys as panellists to the session „Possible future scenarios for security and peace in Europe“.

A follow-up of the topic “Reclaiming Europe” from the European Members 2024 Annual Meeting was framed as an opinion piece: Soomere, T., 2025. Reclaiming Europe from the West-East Gradient. In: Roland A. Römhildt, ed., 2025. Reclaiming Europe. A Collection of Essays. Young Network TransEurope, Berlin, pp. 125–126; see the link above].

Tarmo Soomere is also invited as a speaker and panellist at the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) 2025 Triennial Conference “Bridging Science, Policy and Society in an Era of Transformation” and General Assembly Cairo, 8–11 December 2025, Session 8: Novel Discoveries and Meaning-Making: Risky and Challenging, but with a Transformative Potential”. This is another follow-up of the initiative Reclaiming Europe driven by Young Academies and discussed at the 2024 Annual Meeting, driven basically by the same people, and expands the outcome of a similar panel „Winning from greater inclusion: relation between diversity and academic culture“ in the frame of The Triennial Conference of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) and the Worldwide Meeting of the Young Academies, Oracle, Tucson, Arizona, 01.–03.11.2022. He expects to bring a strong message from the European ISC Members to this

forum, which is in a way a competitor of the ISC. However, IAP only connects academies of science, so voice of cash, voice of policy and voice of professional unions is missing there while the voice of young academies is very strong. [Note added during preparation of the minutes: A record of the session is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ5CKR0drP0&list=PLHPbqBMmFbGyCtELUgWgYfJjyKic-Go8I&index=10>].

A bad news was a major cut in the budget of Estonian Academy of Sciences, affecting all Academy activities. It was almost 20% of "active" funds (not counting inevitable expenses for the building). This forced the Academy to cut also international activities.

5. Presentation from ISC Secretariat

Vanessa McBride, ISC Science Director, Acting Head of the Centre for Science Futures

Vanessa McBride: The Actions and Challenges of the ISC



Vanessa McBride is the Science Director, and the Acting Head of the Centre for Science Futures in the International Science Council. Vanessa has a PhD in Astronomy from the University of Southampton. She has over fifteen years of experience, including various leadership roles, across university, research infrastructure and science-for-development settings in an international arena. She joins the ISC from the International Astronomical Union's Office for Astronomy for Development, where she bridged the gap between the academic astronomy and development communities. Vanessa brings a passion for science and society, a perspective from the global south, and a connection with the member organisations of ISC.

See the presentation at the ISC European Members website: <https://euro-isc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Vanessa-McBride-21.10.2025.pdf>

The Chair remarked that we seem to have very similar problems all over the world.

Geoffrey Boulton recalled that the mission of the ISC is to provide the global voice of science. The obvious question is: how to achieve that? ISC is not well known even among scientists.

Vanessa McBride responded that this is a work in progress. But I think in terms of global representation for the voice, I see it's quite strong. In terms of which audience, we would like to reach out to, who is hearing that voice, there is a lot of work to do. The focus in the last couple of years has been growing the audience in the multinational system. Whether that is a good or bad choice, we can decide based on the feedback of members to us. Within the two years I have been in the system, there is progress in that. It still remains for us to decide whether the ISC needs another audience, be it general public, fellow scientists. It's an open question.

İlkay Erdoğan-Orhan asked where the ISC has any specific plans to strengthen the role of women in science.

Vanessa McBride responded that the ISC has performed relevant surveys in every 5 years. This year it is called "Advancing gender representation in science organisations". It is a little bit of a niche area because UNESCO has a big program on gender equality in science. There is no point to repeat it. We support this program and are looking for leadership in science

organizations and how gender (balance) is changing in that leadership over time. It is quite a strong program, with a baseline study in 2015, repeated in 2020, and again this year, and we are just processing the results. Even if it is not clear yet which the main recommendations come out of that, hopefully it is a kind of product that the ISC Members can also use to put recommendations forward.

Augusta Maria Paci asked whether and/or in which role the ISC is involved in the program of social sciences.

Vanessa McBride explained that the ISC is a general supervisor of the. We have put together the steering committee. They have met at least for the first time, but the composition is maybe not announced yet. With are working with this program and with the topic of science publishing to broaden the input, to have not simply the steering committee of 12 people but a broader working group of 50 to 100 contributing people who might want to provide input in some structured way. This also helps us to take some other geographical diversity of our membership into account.

Geoffrey Boulton came back to his "crack record". He remarked that there is a logical problem: The reason why UNESCO and other UN bodies talk to us is because we say we are the global voice of science. Then I ask my question: we say to ourselves there is why this is the global voice of science? Is the UNESCO and other UN bodies listen to us? It is a very circular argument with no beginning and no end. Somehow we have to find the way through.

Vanessa McBride replied that, to her understanding, this is not totally right. The reason why we say that we are the global voice of science is that we represent on the ground global scientific organisations. UNESCO does similar representation but not of scientific organisations of the UN member states.

Tarmo Soomere remarked that the discussion has reached large philosophical questions. He offered a possibly oversimplified understanding from the viewpoint of a mathematician of how the ISC works: the ISC has the ability to identify questions and problems which hinder our progress towards better future. Then, the ISC frames these problems and brings this frame to the tables of decision-makers, hoping that decent decisions will be made. In this context, it is natural that there are different viewpoints on how the ISC works. We have seen from the feedback of members how different the members are, even though the feedback has mostly been from the academies of sciences and only one example from a research council. We have seen how different the members are in terms of capacity, from a few 100s of thousands of euro up to 600 million pounds They are so different in terms of their weight at both local and global scale, in terms of their position on the science and policy landscape. It is thus absolutely natural that they focus on different aspects. He expressed the personal feeling that this kind of variety is very good. This gives us a more or less realistic picture of what happens. There is no way to unify what different members are doing. This variety and enormous dispersion form a feature and not a bug in the ISC and also in the European Members. The overview by Vanessa McBride gives a clear frame about what is going on and also gives us a hint where we can join this work.

Anna Mauranen thanked Vanessa for the very helpful overview. She asked Vanessa to exemplify what she sees as the main kind of support that you provide for the member organisations. Also, she asked whether Vanessa could give an example of an active action regarding the points that she took position on. We agree that the positions that she presented are very good and can be generally accepted among the scientific community. But is there any action that you see particularly welcome?

Vanessa McBride started from a response to the second question. In essence, you were saying that it's great to make statements and put forward decisions but how do we follow through on them. Maybe one way in which we follow through on that is through the case work that is quite

invisible to most members on monitoring cases of constraints to the free practice of science. We have about 38 ongoing cases now that are managed between our executive secretary of the relevant committee and our special advisor who is based in New Zealand. These are areas where we think that where our members report to us that science is maybe discriminated against because of the work they do, and so their rights are being infringed in some way. We take action on that, often quite quiet, maybe through a letter to government or to some legal representative, or some other way we take action around those statements. This is one way of doing that. Maybe to say that there is upcoming another example of doing that is the statement on international scientific collaboration. We'll take some action through that on having broad dialogue with the scientific community as to what still they see as the principles of international scientific collaboration and innovation. That will be something we do as kind of a statement translated to the action.

The Annual Meeting noted the presentation and thanked Vanessa McBride for this overview.

6. Future of the leadership of European ISC Members

The Chair reminded that there are four items that the Annual Meeting is invited to discuss and/or note.

(1) The composition and expansion of the Management Group. All regular seats of the Management Group were filled at the 2024 Annual Meeting. All members of the group are actively contributing. Thus, elections of new members are foreseen in 2027.

The Statutes and Rules of Procedure of European Members of the International Science Council approved in 2024 contains an option of inviting one member into our Management Group from the ISC Governing Group. This is formulated as follows:

5. Management Group

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2 The Management Group is composed of members with voting rights as follows:

- a. 1 Chair from the Member Organisation that hosts the European ISC Members;
- b. 1 representative from the Member Organisation that precedes as host organisation (hereafter: Past Chair);
- c. 5 representatives from different Member Organisations (hereafter: regular Management Group Members);

/--/

e. optionally one (1) invited member from the ISC Governing Board.

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4 The /--/ term of the invited member from the ISC Governing Board is decided by the Annual Meeting.

If we decide to do so, then we have to make another decision: to decide for how long we invite this member.

Following an internal recommendation of the Management Group, Tarmo Soomere proposed to invite Geoffrey Boulton (who represents both Royal Society (of London) and Royal Society of Edinburgh):

- (i) to take the seat of invited member of the Management Group
- (ii) for two years.

According to the Statutes, these decisions should be made separately.

The justification is simple. You have seen and heard him contributing to our work. Geoffrey has exceptional experience and expertise in international cooperation of academies and other

research performing and research financing institutions. His participation will strengthen the entire Group and ensure tight cooperation with the ISC Governing Board. He has already, without any formal obligation or mandate contributed a lot to our work. It is thus likely that he will be a very useful member of the Management Group.

Note: The Statutes do not set any limitations to the quorum. Traditionally, it is assumed that quorum is formed by the Members who decide to actively contribute to the activities of the European Members and thus participate in the Annual Meeting either personally or using electronic means.

This proposal (both items (i) and (ii)) was unanimously accepted.

The decision:

Geoffrey Boulton was invited to the Management Group for two (2) years

(2) The location of Annual Meeting 2026

The Chair noted that a lot of annual activities of the European Members, about 70–80%, are concentrated around the Annual Meeting. This includes production of notes, minutes and making the keynote presentations public on the website. It is important that we choose properly the location, the topic, and the persons who are associated with this event.

Our policy has been to organise this meeting in one year somewhere in a renowned centre, like London 2022 or Stockholm 2024, and in every second year in a less travelled region, to hear views and opinions that often do not have much space of floor in big centres. This policy seems reasonable and has had no major objections. We have also discussed another reasonable option of organising this meeting sometimes back-to-back with our sister organisations, such as ALLEA, where more than half of our group are regular members and delegates are also delegates to that meeting.

Currently we have one offer for the next Annual Meeting: Spain, most probably Madrid.

İlkay Erdoğan-Orhan proposed to consider also the Turkish Academy of Sciences as the host of the next Annual Meeting and the location somewhere in Turkey.

The Chair resumed that both proposals are excellent and fit to the strategy of European ISC Members. Turkey and Spain are both large, well-visited and well accessible countries. The final decision will be made by the Management Group – not by competition but by pragmatic considerations. We need not to decide that here. It is good to know that we have excellent offers. The time and location will probably be decided in spring 2026. The main foci of the Annual Meeting depend on the location, so these three aspects must be decided together.

(3) The new host country and Chair

The Chair Tarmo Soomere informed the Management Group in May 2025 about stepping down from the Chair's position because of a major and unexpected budget cut of the Estonian Academy of Sciences. The document pack for this Annual Meeting contained an invitation to suggest candidates for the position of the Chair and the host country. No suggestions were received.

Several attempts to fill the seat of the Chair and find a new host country have been made since then. The Chair has officially approached the French Academy, German Science Foundation and Royal Society (London) with the proposal to consider taking the leadership of European ISC Members. French Academy and Royal Society responded that they are not in position to take over this leadership.

German Science Foundation has not yet provided the final answer. It is actually important that some of the ISC members – research councils take over the leadership. While the voice of

academies of sciences is strong in the European Members, the voice of research councils is weak on our meetings and on our doings. The ISC is not only about classic academies. It's also about financing, about professional unions and young academies. For some time, the voice from research councils, including what is done in Science Europe, would eventually be beneficial for the future.

The Management Group continues to contact with possible host countries. We shall let you know as soon as possible if there is any offer. The decision can be made only by the Annual Meeting. Formally, Annual Meeting can also be organised twice a year, and electronically as occasion requires. Thus, we can choose the new Chair and host country before the next physical Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting was invited to take note and accept this situation.

The decision:

The Annual Meeting accepted that Tarmo Soomere steps down from the position of the Chair

(4) *Tarmo Soomere* shortly described an option of how to continue the work of the European Members. The Statutes request the presence of the Chair and the host country. We cannot deviate strongly from Statutes. However, we could interpret the relevant words more broadly. Estonia can provide a large part of services from those that the host country is expected to provide: keep the website living, update it regularly, compile minutes of the Annual Meeting, support the work of the Management Group in terms of setting up electronic meetings, etc. He would be happy to serve as a kind of substitute to the Chair, like a caretaker. The Chair whose time has expired is expected to continue as Past Chair. *Tarmo Soomere* would be happy to continue as Past Chair with a slightly larger set of responsibilities, coordinating our actions in the situation where Estonia cannot provide as many services and contributions as is expected from the host country. In this way, the Management Group is not left without a caretaker or coordinator.

On behalf of the Management Group, *Tarmo Soomere* invited the Annual Meeting to approve the work of Management Group without the Chair and without the host country until the new Chair is elected. This is within the mandate of the Annual Meeting to find a reasonable way out of the situation, to continue activities and at the same time focus on identification of the new leader. The point is that finding a new leader should not be made in hurry. The Management Group has already agreed that every Group member will contribute slightly more than in the usual situation.

Ilijan Malollari proposed to consider Albania as the next host country.

Tarmo Soomere replied that the document pack for this Annual Meeting contained an invitation to suggest locations for the next Annual Meeting and candidates for the position of the Chair and the host country. No suggestions were received by the beginning of the current meeting. Offer by Spain to host the 2026 Annual Meeting was made a couple of months ago. Today Turkey made an offer to host the 2026 Annual Meeting in Turkey.

No offers were made regarding the host country were received by the beginning of the current meeting. Does Albania suggest serving as the host country for the next three years? *Tarmo Soomere* explained that the responsibility of the host country is to keep the entire organisation working for three years, including the organisation of the Annual Meeting. The host for the Annual Meeting provides local organisation, finds rooms, and covers costs of catering and dinner, like Albania this year. This also means co-creation of the program, finding good speakers, and proposing topics.

The Management Group is open to proposals for the new Chair and the host country. Albania is warmly welcome to make an offer. However, such decisions take time to consider, so we are not prepared to make such decision right now. This is also why we did not make here the decision between Spain and Turkey.

The decision:

The Annual Meeting unanimously approved the work of the Management Group without the Chair and the host country, with the Past Chair Tarmo Soomere serving as a caretaker and coordinator, and the Estonian Academy of Sciences provides core services for the Group, until the new Chair is elected.

Thus, the Management Group and the Past Chair have the legal ground to continue under circumstances.

5. Any other business

No other business was initiated.

Tarmo Soomere thanked the organisers and the Albanian Academy of Sciences for their efforts and closed the meeting.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Voting eligibility is indicated in bold

	First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country
1.	Esmira	ALIRZAYEVA	Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences	Azerbaijan
2.	Jūras	BANYS	Lithuanian Academy of Sciences	Lithuania
3.	Besnik	BARAJ	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
4.	Geoffrey	BOULTON	Royal Society (London) / Royal Society of Edinburgh / International Science Council	United Kingdom
5.	Manuel	DE LEON*	Royal Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences,	Spain
6.	Muris	ČIČIĆ	Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina
7.	Miodrag	ČOLIĆ	Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts	Serbia
8.	Xheladin	DRAÇINI	Medical University of Tirana	Albania
9.	İlkay	ERDOĞAN-ORHAN	Turkish Academy of Sciences / Lokman Hekim University	Türkiye
10.	Neki	FRASHËRI	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
11.	Akli	FUNDO	Polytechnic University of Tirana	Albania
12.	Skender	GJINUSHI	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
13.	Anila	HODA	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
14.	Artan	HOXHA	University of Tirana	Albania
15.	Vesna	KILIBARDA	Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts	Montenegro
16.	Ruzhdi	KUÇI	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
17.	Mirela	KUMBARO FURXHI	Albanian Ministry of Education	Albania
18.	Margit	LEHIS	Estonian Academy of Sciences	Estonia

19.	Ilirjan	MALOLLARI	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
20.	Anna	MAURANEN*	Council of Finnish Academies	Finland
21.	Vanessa	MCBRIDE	International Science Council	France
22.	Arben	MERKOCI	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
23.	Ilia	MIKEREZI	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
24.	Mirela	MUÇA	Albanian National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation	Albania
25.	Rrapo	ORMENI	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
26.	Augusta Maria	PACI	National Research Council (CNR)	Italy
27.	Zuzana	PANCZOVÁ	Slovak Academy of Sciences	Slovak Republic
28.	Fatbardh	SALLAKU	University of Agriculture of Tirana	Albania
29.	Tarmo	SOOMERE	Estonian Academy of Sciences	Estonia
30.	Genc	SULCEBE	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
31.	Katarina	TERZIC	Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts	Montenegro
32.	Svjetlana	TERZIC	Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts	Montenegro
33.	Ilze	TRAPENCIERE*	Latvian Academy of Sciences	Latvia
34.	Terje	TUISK	Estonian Academy of Sciences	Estonia
35.	Simone	TURCHETTI	University of Manchester	United Kingdom
36.	Majlinda	VASJARI	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania
37.	Gabriella	VIERO	National Research Council (CNR)	Italy
38.	Kledi	XHAXHIU	Academy of Sciences of Albania	Albania

* Remote participation

APPENDIX 1. PRACTICAL INFO ON THE VENUE

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF ALBANIA

MEETING VENUE

Host and meeting venue: Academy of Sciences of Albania

Address: Academy of Sciences of Albania, Shëtitorja Murat Toptani, Tirana 1000, Albania <https://akad.gov.al/>

The Academy is in the heart of Tirana, in the pedestrian area known as “Shëtitorja Murat Toptani,” near the National Art Gallery and Parliament building. It is within walking distance from Skanderbeg Square and many central hotels.



Nearest bus stops:

Urban lines stopping near “Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit” or “Rruga Abdi Toptani”.

ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION

Starting time: Oct 20, 2025, 10:00 AM (Albania, Tirana, CET)

Link to Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/93121532514?pwd=ycW2unoaEnrwa6xzCk5Uz5Ay8Peokx.1>

Meeting ID: 931 2153 2514

Passcode: 078568

CONTACT

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Terje Tuisk, +372 5110356, terje.tuisk@akadeemia.ee

Head of Development and Coordinator of International Relations, Estonian Academy of Sciences

THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF ALBANIA

The Academy of Sciences of Albania (ASA) is the highest public institution of scientific research and intellectual authority in the Republic of Albania. It serves as a central institution for science, culture, and public life in the country. Officially established in 1972, the Academy evolved from earlier structures, including the Institute of Sciences (founded in 1948) and various research sectors developed throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Its founding marked a significant milestone in the institutionalization of science in Albania, and since then, it has played a leading role in shaping and advancing the nation’s academic and scientific development. It serves as an independent body that supports the development of science, innovation, education, and cultural heritage in Albania. The Academy plays a central role in shaping national research policies and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue within the academic community.

As the co-organizer of this event, the Academy of Sciences is committed to promoting international cooperation, scientific dialogue, and the exchange of knowledge between scholars and institutions.

TRAVEL TO AND IN TIRANA

Tirana International Airport (Nënë Tereza) is located approximately 17 km from the city centre.

Transportation options getting from Tirana International Airport to the City centre:

Taxi:	Official airport taxis are available 24/7 outside the arrival terminal. The ride to downtown Tirana takes about 20–25 minutes and costs approximately 1,500–2,000 ALL (15–20 EUR). We recommend using authorized taxis for safety and reliability.
Rinas Express (Airport Shuttle Bus):	The shuttle bus operates daily from 06:00 to 24:00, every hour. The departure point in Tirana is behind the National Museum (City Centre). Ticket price: 400 ALL (approx. 4 EUR). Duration: 30–35 min. More info: https://www.tirana-airport.com
Private transfer services or taxi-ordering apps	You may also use local ride-hailing services such as <i>Speed Taxi</i> or <i>UPs Taxi</i> through their apps. International services like Uber are not available in Albania.

HOTELS NEAR THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

The Academy of Sciences of Albania is located near Murat Toptani Pedestrian Street. Some recommended hotels within walking distance of the venue:

Maritim Hotel Plaza Tirana https://www.plazatirana.com/sq/	• Located in Skanderbeg Square, just a short walk from the Academy of Sciences. • One of the most luxurious and well-known hotels in central Tirana. • Address: Rruga Abdi Toptani 18, Tirana, 1001
Tirana International Hotel & Conference Centre https://www.tiranainternational.com/	• Also located in Skanderbeg Square, very close to the Academy of Sciences. • One of the most established hotels in Tirana's city centre. • Address: City Centre, Scanderbeg Square, Tirana, Albania
Hotel Oxford Tirana https://hoteloxford.al/en/	• Situated in the heart of Tirana's Old Town, Oxford Hotel is a boutique-style hotel offering comfort and central access. • Address: St. Xhorxhi Martini 10, Tirana
Hotel Boutique Vila 135 https://vila135.com/	• Located on Rruga e Barrikadave, approximately 600 m from Skanderbeg Square. • A stylish boutique hotel with a cozy and modern atmosphere.

CURRENCY

Lek (ALL) is the official currency of Albania. 1EUR=~97ALL