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## European Science Advice Forum (ESAF) Annual Meeting 2023 (ESAF-9)

12. September, 2023

West University of Timișoara, ROMANIA

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### SESSION 1. MESSAGES FROM ROMANIA AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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**Chair: Prof. Tarmo SOOMERE**, Estonian Academy of Sciences

- Research and Science Advice Systems in Romania  
**Prof. Tudor PRISECARU**, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Research

An overview of Romanian Research system based on the description of the structure and performance of the Romanian Academy of Sciences (with 66 research institutes mainly dealing with fundamental research, funded by state), Universities (50 state owned universities and ~ 45 private universities) and National Research Institutes (45 institutes, not funded by state, depending on competitive funding).

The last 10 years the state investment to research infrastructure has been ~1.8 billion of euros. Lack of researchers and the interest of young people to career in research is a gradually growing problem also in Romania.

- Research Environment in Timișoara  
**Prof. Florin Alin SAVA**, vice-rector for research, West University of Timisoara ([see the overview in the slides](#))

The European Science for Policy (S4P) ecosystem

**Alessandro ALLEGRA**, Policy Assistant to the Deputy Director-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission. ([see the slides](#))

Main features of the ecosystem:

- Support the uptake of scientific knowledge by policymakers
- Improve the coherence and quality of policies across Europe
- Support the further development and interconnection of the national S4P ecosystems across Europe
- Promote coordinated actions to achieve common medium- and long-term policy objectives as well as to better respond in emergencies, when needed
- Support the design of better policies that benefit the society and strengthen citizens' trust in science
- Foster the trust among S4P actors and bridge the existing gaps between them.



- „Towards sustainable food consumption. Promoting healthy, affordable, and sustainable food consumption choices”. GCSA Scientific Opinion published in June 2023, **Jacques VERRAES**, Deputy Head of Science Policy, Advice, and Ethics Unit, European Commission. ([see the slides](#))

Overview of the structure and role of SAM and The Group of Chief Scientific Advisors (GCSA). Overview of policy recommendations of GCSA Scientific Opinion on sustainable food consumption:

1. Make healthy and sustainable diets the easy and affordable choice.
2. Secure the provision of adequate and trusted information about the environmental and health impacts of different foods in order to encourage healthy and sustainable decision-making by all actors in the food system.
3. Mandate new interventions to promote the availability and accessibility of products for healthy and sustainable diets.

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## SESSION 2. ERA OF TRASH INFORMATION PROVIDED BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CHALLENGES OF SCIENCE ADVICE

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**Chair: Prof. Maria Chiara CARROZZA**, President of the National Research Council of Italy

- **Key-note presentation:**

The emergence of the pseudo-scientific discourse: crisis of science or crisis of the public sphere?

**Professor Alina BÂRGĂOANU**, PhD. The Dean of the College of Communication and Public Relations, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, ROMANIA. Member of the advisory board of the European Digital Media Observatory, affiliate member of the European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, Helsinki.

Overview of mega changes in our information society:

- Information-rich environments -> create knowledge resistance
- The smartphone age: blending of social and traditional media into one algorithmic, data-driven, always on continuum
- Exponential technologies (time space compression) -> create subjective psychological effects of disorientation and alienation
- Private control of public spaces -> elonmuskization of public conversations
- Non-Westernization of the global sphere -> global conversations are no longer shaped by Western actors

And the way forward:

- Understanding the mega-changes (almost all being co-substantial with the explosion of digital, mobile, Internet technologies)
- Acting at the core of the problem: hyper-connectivity, information overabundance, new features of the info-sphere
- Deciphering the “mystery” of the pandemic as a political and geopolitical phenomenon
- Taking into account differences:



- Export of the political representation crisis in major democracies as a result of their mainstreaming power  
([for details see the slides](#))
- Challenges to science advice in the context of AI 'hallucinations'  
**Franklin A. CARRERO-MARTÍNEZ**, Senior Director, Global Sustainability and Development & Science and Technology for Sustainability, The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine of the United States of America

Science Advise and AI – Challenges and Opportunities:

- To regulate or not to regulate: THAT is the question. IT took long time before we got used to electricity and it is safe for us, feels like human right. BUT most inventions did not get publicly used without testing it. ChatGPT did and we do not know what the consequences are.
- Implications for diversity, equity and inclusion – no matter is it a person, business, language or country – if you are small, ChatGPT does not recognize you. You do not appear in searches and texts. This definitely has implications on equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Public perceptions of credibility and reliability – how to reach the balance between democratization of information and spreading of mis-, dis- and mal-information  
([for more see the slides](#))
- Undermining Trust: The Impact of Scientific Fraud on EU Financing and Research Integrity.  
**Robert MISTRİK**, Slovak Research and Development Agency

An overview of series of scientific fraud and research misconduct cases in Slovakia with following conclusions:

- Prominent representatives of European Commission nominated person who has committed research misconduct to the highest decision making body in Slovak republic
- Fail to apologize for their mistake
- They neglected to address the error, they just ignored it, regardless of public outrage
- EC sent a message to the scientific community that The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity is just piece of paper, feel free to ignore it
- Dishonesty appears to be rewarded and plenty of dishonest scientists can further benefit from EU funds
- EC should ensure that consequences for fraudulent activities are strict and consistent, serving as a deterrent for potential offenders  
([for details see the slides](#))



- Ongoing SAM work on Artificial intelligence for research and innovation. European Commission  
**Jacques VERRAES**, Deputy Head of Science Policy, Advice, and Ethics Unit, European Commission ([see the slides](#))

An overview of the preparation of GCSA Scientific Opinion on “Successful and timely uptake of Artificial Intelligence in science in the EU” due in March 2024. More information in slides and at:

<https://scientificadvice.eu/advice/artificial-intelligence-in-science/>

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### SESSION 3. HOW TO MAKE NATIONAL SCIENCE ADVICE TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER COUNTRIES?

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**Chair: Robert MISTRİK**, Slovak Research and Development Agency

- Warsaw Communiqué on Climate Change in Europe  
**Prof. Gerald HAUG**, President of the German Academy of Science Leopoldina (remotely, represented by **Dr. Lucien Brujan**) ([see the document](#))
- EU perspectives on evidence-informed policymaking in governance and public administrations  
**Agnieszka GADZINA-KOŁODZIEJSKA**, deputy Head of Unit Science for Democracy and Evidence-Informed Policy Making, Joint Research Centre

An overview of different initiatives JRC is running on evidence-informed policymaking.

(for details [see the slides](#))

- Speaking truth to power: towards building resilient democratic citizenry in a challenged legally based world order  
**Prof. Silviu ROGOBETE**, PhD. Former Consul General of Romania in South Africa, Director of the Doctoral School of Philosophy, Sociology and Political Science at West University of Timișoara



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## SESSION 4. ESAF MEMBERS CLOSED MEETING. DISCUSSIONS ON THE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS AND FUTURE OF ESAF. ELECTION OF THE ESAF NEW CHAIR.

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**Chair: Prof. Tarmo SOOMERE**

- Overview of ESAF activities 2022-2023.  
**Prof Tarmo SOOMERE**, ESAF Chair  
Minutes of the ESAF meeting 2022 where adopted.

Tarmo Soomere made an overview of 2022–2023 activities (see the attached document).

- **New statute of ESAF. Changes in Terms of Reference and membership agreement.**

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** At the last annual meeting it was decided that we do need a new statute for ESAF. We have two basic documents for ESAF: Terms of Reference and Description of the rules for ESAF membership, both were created already seven years ago. Situation has changed and many references made in these documents are no longer valid. Statute does not allow us to have UK and Switzerland around the table with us. Last year we mandated a group of ESAF members to work out the new statute, which merges 2 documents: Terms of Reference and membership conditions. They have not only produced the new document, but also made quite some research about how this kind of documents should look like.

**Anne-Greet KEIZER (Member of the Working Group)** introduced the work of the working group and further plans. Draft of the documents with explanation note was sent to ESAF members before the meeting. ([see the slides](#) and attached documents)

A draft document was produced to be used as a basis for consultation among ESAF members at the annual meeting in Timisoara.

The working group started from background discussions within following lines:

- What has changed since 2017? A lot has changed in Europe and also in the in the landscape of national ecosystems, this has influence on the future of ESAF.
- What ESAF features are important to its members? Based on the discussions at previous ESFA meetings.
- How can we secure a future of ESAF, and how can we also be less dependent on the willingness but also the possibility of one national member to really carry the load of the coordination of ESAF. (during the work of the working group it was not clear will there be candidate to take the chairing over from Estonia)

What is most important in this discussion is that we agree on the on the increased ambition along two lines: first of all, a need for bigger involvement of all ESAF Members. In addition to physical annual meetings there could be more common work done during the year – workshops or online meetings on specific topics, meetings where non ESAF members can be invited to participate etc. And for second – need to secure a future for ESAF. There is need to think of a structure that allows members to participate more actively without having to become a chair and be responsible for the complete



coordination. The voluntary involvement of ESAF members cannot be taken for granted. So there is need to start the discussions on what kind of connection do members see with ESAF and who and how much members will be able to play an active role in ESAF.

Another issue for the discussion is the membership structure.

As a result of working group internal discussions 2 figures can be found in slides: ESAF Membership and ESAF Structure.

Proposed general direction of the draft statute and next steps after introducing the draft documents:

Step 1: Discussion about the draft statute with the members, collect suggestions for amendments.

Decide on mandate for further internal and external consultation.

Step 2: Consultation with ESAF members not present

Step 3: Consultation with the EU bodies mentioned in the statutes on their role within ESAF.

Step 4: Finalizing new statute.

#### DISCUSSION:

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** One thing what we probably should think of is how to address potential new members from different institutions than national governments. So we might want to change the wording slightly by adding for example “we invite members of European Parliament to be part of the discussions ...”

**Lucian BRUJAN (speaking on behalf of President Gerald HAUG):** We see that the expertise is there, but the tricky part is connection between the expertise in ESAF, the National Governments and the citizens. We want to emphasize the citizens as an important actor in this constellation. And we see ESAF as a possibility to bridge this gap. That's why the focus should be on creating the mechanisms for sharing experiences.

Our second point is that like every such structure is only going to be alive if there is ownership. Unfortunately all members of ESAF have so many additional tasks and ESAF membership is just one small part of what we do. That is why we propose an intermediate structure of permanent representatives that would take care of day-to-day business.

Third point: After the pandemic we have the possibility to speak with one voice when it comes to the necessity of building scientific expertise in decision making. It's not self understood and there is a lot of ad hoc policymaking and there is lot of bureaucratization of processes. That's why we never could support the proposal of doubling the number of ESAF members just for being more inclusive, it's not about being more effective, and having an added value in comparison to other networks like SAPEA, INGSA etc. The added value is that we are focusing on Europe, and what is happening in the European Union. At the same time, we want to have a good, friendly relation to the countries that are officially associated to Europe. Not everyone, but those who are candidates, or those who are part of the European Economic Area. Thank you personally Tarmo for your steady leadership through very difficult times pandemic, war, crisis, virtual meetings, you did a wonderful job from our point of view. We are sincerely thankful for this and we hope that the enthusiasm on ESAF will remain with the members.



**Tarmo SOOMERE:** Thank you very much Lucien for those nice words. Yes, Gerald wrote personally to me and specifically stressed that we should keep the door open for countries like Ukraine or the rest of Balkans. I think that this is now included in the working version of statute.

- European Commission expectations on how to work together with ESAF.  
**Jacques VERRAES**, Deputy Head of Science Policy, Advice, and Ethics Unit, European Commission  
**Alessandro ALLEGRA**, Policy Assistant to the Deputy Director-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission

**Jacques VERRAES:** The Commission appreciates efforts of the ESAF and discussion about its structure and functions, the direction for the future towards more ambition. We believe that the proposed revised Terms of Reference represent a solid basis for discussion about the future of ESAF. This is a constitutional document, that is because you will be in a way setting ESAF up again. We think that it requires like any constitutional document a discussion, deliberation and decision of all members, before any member can be considered as being bound by the text.

One of the issues that in our view need some reflection is the operation of the newly proposed structures that require consistent administration, coordination of keeping the records that the chair and its secretarial staff for the benefits of all members and associated members will do. The issue of resources of proposed structures need to be adequately addressed.

For the European Commission ESAF is a valuable network for the exchange of information, practice, experience and results between actors and practitioners of Science Advice in Europe and embraces the existing institutional diversity in ESAF members. ESAF is both key part of the European Science for Policy Ecosystem, as well as a channel through which to develop this ecosystem further. ESAF should be part of the shaping of the European Science for Policy ecosystem. For the European Commission ESAF can be an independent network of science advice actors who connect for the first place to the scientific knowledge producing community and in second place to the science advice using policymaking community in the countries.

In the context of building up the science advice ecosystem first in the Member States and then together at European level, ESAF should be independent, but not isolated from this ecosystem. ESAF should be a platform of practitioners who are active in science advice, promoters of the uptake of science into policymaking in between the supply side and the demand side. The Commission therefore assumes that ESAF members have access to national policymakers, as well as producers and sources of scientific knowledge. For permitting that EC expects that ESAF has the structure and means necessary to ensure active cooperation that allows the communication of relevant information to and from its members, cooperation towards information sharing that can take multiple forms, such as organization have annual special events, learning exercises, and other activities that can be developed that context.

**Alessandro ALLEGRA:** From the perspective of the Commission, we think that the mission as stated in the new Terms of Reference is very much in line with what we think is the value of a network like ESAF. So the focus on information sharing, mutual learning is definitely an important one. We very much see ESAF as a place for practitioners of science advice to come together and discuss common issues both in



terms of the content of scientific advice, and how you give scientific advice. While understanding that ESAF is not the forum to produce scientific advice collectively, that's not the purpose and it's also not a place to discuss research policy. There are other fora for that, although some of the people involved might have multiple hats. I think it is important that we keep clear line between these different functions. To accomplish this mission we agree that ESAF needs to have as members people who are actually in a scientific advisory position in the country, see the value of engaging in the network and have the time to be engaged or who can nominate someone who can do it on their behalf. And you need to have adequate structures as a network to make it happen. So the discussion of the structure and governance should go hand in hand with an idea of some of the specific activities that could be done by ESAF. From the perspective of the commission we can think about three things that might be useful.

1. Sharing the information. From the perspective of the commission, ESAF can be a great platform for us to engage with the National Ecosystems of science for policy, to have a two way dialogue between the European level and the national levels. This could take the form of disseminating advice that's being produced at the European level to relevant stakeholders in government in the member states, but also help us identify what are the issues that are of concern. ESAF could be the transmission mechanism between scientific advice at the EU level, and scientific advice, and demand for scientific advice at the national level.

How can we do this in a more structured way? For example, the dissemination of reports produced by one member. The information is sent around by email to the network, but then what happens? How can ESAF members activate their networks back home to actually facilitate this flow of information two ways? Not just distribute and broadcast, but also gather feedback and report back?

2. The mutual learning.

The common question in each country is how to do science advice better, how to be more influential with the advice. There is great value in ESAF and ESAF is very well placed. To some extent this exchange of ideas has been happening. There have been lots of discussions among ESAF members, and those are captured in the minutes of the meetings. But how can this be done in a more structured way to capture and disseminate such learnings? There is a bit of feeling that in the science advice community each meeting you go to we always come to some conclusions. So maybe we need to think about how to capture these to systematize it in a structured way that actually is usable for someone who is thinking of changing the system in their country or improving it? So there could be a repository of resources they can look up and learn from. And they have people in the network to call to and ask for advice. That's the value of the mutual learning, having a network of people you can rely on the point on the diversity of science advice and structures is a very important one.

3. The development of the science for policy ecosystem in Europe.

Diversity is a great asset and value of the European ecosystem, but also poses some challenges in terms of the fragmentation. So what role could ESAF play in mapping out and making sense this diversity? At some point ESAF members described their systems and there is a collection of these descriptions. The problem in my view with that document was that everyone was using very different categories and this way the result was not very comparable. So maybe ESAF can offer a space to come up with common structured ways of thinking about this. Same for the principles of scientific advice, the issue of independence, transparency, there is a lot of talk about this. ESAF could be the forum for these discussions.





We are doing a lot of activities at the EU level as you heard from previous presentation. And of course we want to know how this can be helpful for you. We want to make this all relevant to the national context, not just the European context. That's where a dialogue with the ESAF is important for us. We also want to help in disseminating these results, but also in being an active part of this initiative. ESAF can help us shape these initiatives in a way that's actually useful at all levels of governance, not just at the EU level. And also to learn what can we do to support you?

All of these are just some ideas about activities, which I think should go hand in hand with thinking about what are the structures that you need in order to carry out such activities. The ESAF annual event could be the conclusion of a journey throughout the year, so that it becomes the culmination. And also a way to involve the other scientific advice community beyond the members of ESAF, and the local stakeholders of the place where we meet. For example, the proposal of involving other European advisory bodies like STOA in the parliament. I'm not sure whether having them as members is the right solution, but we definitely need to involve them.

#### REACTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** It is absolutely natural, that European Commission must have a strong view here. ESAF was initiated by European Commission, and it can only exist in collaboration with the European Commission, simply because the members are invited by European Commission. So, there must be a kind of balance between actually three sort of players, National Science advice systems, the representatives of countries in ESAF and the European Commission.

It's not easy to share information about local solutions of science advice. There is a strong language barrier between almost all the countries in Europe. This is a very strong limitation to sharing the information which is created on national level. Sharing is better possible with strategic documents, which are prepared over several months and are typically peer reviewed in decent systems. But it's not possible for operational advice. Nobody has time to translate. In addition, there are different semiotic systems and different cultural backgrounds involved. The same advice is most probably given in different words and considered by different governance structure of different countries.

This is the aspect we have been trying to formulate. I think that this is one of the largest achievements of ESAF that we understand the difficulties on this way. But I fully agree that this could've been done in more structural way.

Until now, the policy of ESAF has been that the contribution is based on interest and voluntary work. If this policy will be changed, then we need a completely new agreement with ESAF members. So far ESAF members do not necessarily represent the official view of the country. This gives enormous freedom for talking also about delicate issues. If the network will be representing the official interests of countries, it will be political. Whether we want it or not, it will be political, then it will be same type as gathering of ministers of research. Those who have been on those gatherings know how diverse opinions are. But I fully understand that what we do should be more structured.

Mutual learning – we learn from each other's experience and the most complicated thing is how to make sense of diversity. In terms of ecosystem theory, diversity is a foundation of existence. If we lose



diversity, you'll lose ecosystem in principle. Diversity is an asset. Losing any type of national science advice system means losing diversity, it's one option less for prosperous future of Europe. Europe is strong because of its diversity.

Expectations of EC described by Alessandro are all valid. I'm just trying to frame the limitations of ESAF. One of the biggest limitations is time ESAF members have in their hands for dedication to ESAF business. I agree that we should try to have more cooperation with other networks and players in Science Advice landscape in Europe, we should try to be more structured and maybe also the ESAF Annual meeting should grow into a bigger conference. The content is already here.

Another issue is the sharing of responsibilities in this very unusual community. On the one hand, we have countries who appointed us, we are free to say what we think, we do not need to represent official views of countries. On the other hand, there is European Commission who invites countries to nominate the representatives. We have to balance the responsibilities very delicately.

For example, if some representative just doesn't show up, we should have kind of possibility to ask the government to replace him or her. This kind of requests have been made over the last years by me personally to relevant ministers. They haven't really worked. But this is also not a solution that the chair is talking to the minister or the country. It's simply not right. In this sense, I would really appreciate the comment of SAM unit people what they think. Are they ready to invite nominations as before? Or would they like to change the situation? The same goes for keeping the track record of nominations. The chair does not have any paperwork on nominations because the nominations have been made to SAM unit. This is the issue is really important for the future functioning of ESAF.

From here I think that we should follow the procedure proposed by Anne-Greet. My recommendation is to change a little bit the wording on associate members. It should be like "associate members are invited from the following organizations ...".

**Jacques VERRAES:** We should not refer to countries associated to the EU, we should refer to countries associated to the research and innovation framework program, that is Horizon Europe and the states associated to that program. There're many countries all over the world associated to the EU in many ways and forms for many purposes. For that reason, I think that when you speak in the context of research and innovation, about associated members, we should speak about those countries who are associated to Horizon Europe (before that Horizon2020). But we have time to discuss that in the future.

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** We take note on that. By now there are two proposals of small editorial changes one by me and other by Jaap (=Jacques Verraes).

**Melle KROMHOUT:** I think we still need some changes before we move to adopting the document. Referring to paragraph IV.2.d regarding the sherpas. There is a question whether all members are able financially or practically to appoint a sherpa. Now it says "members and associate members appoint one permanent representative". Maybe we should rephrase it to "are encouraged to appoint".

**Lucian BRUJAN:** I think that the members of the working group are open to any kind of wording changes. Also I think that you, Tarmo, pointed out very well, the spirit of ESAF and the main direction of ESAF and the statute. Other thing is what Alessandro proposed about the combination between mission, structure and impact of ESAF. In the working group we had long discussion on these issues. I



have a problem with the quantity of things we put into the document. We have great ideas on the table, but we need to be realistic about our possibilities. Is it possible to implement those ideas with the limited resources that we have? Not only the financial resources, but also human capacity.

From German position, we emphasize that we need to engage somehow with the European Parliament, not just the government's because policymaking is not just the executive part, but also the legislative.

**Maria Chiara CARROZZA:** My position on this issue is that we have a very good draft of this statute, but we have to discuss together about the mission and the boundaries for our activities. What I think is requiring more discussion is the mission and the agreement of the different members to the activities that are ongoing, because if we are changing our constitutional system, we need to engage all members and get the consent. In Europe, decisions are made with based on unanimous consent for this kind of activity. Here we represent only a part of members. Even among the members that are here, we have different views about these issues. In a way the current version of the statute is more appropriate for an association not a network. I think that the good thing to do is to agree that this is a very good base for future discussions if we become as an association. If we still stay to a network, maybe we need an organization, but all members should agree on that.

**Lucian BRUJAN:** I disagree with some of the points. First of all, the point about having a statute referring to becoming an association. There are many networks in Europe and globally that have a statute, I think we should not fall into the trap of discussing fundamental problems about the names, we can call it terms of reference, we can call it constitution, we can call it whatever, that's not important for us. Important is the content.

Second aspect – ESAF is not a legal entity, so any kind of document doesn't have any kind of legal binding. It is very clearly stated in the text. And third point is, I think we are quite clear on what the mission of ESAF is and has been in the last 10 years. This is to exchange information and ideas between people who provide direct scientific advice to their governments in different forms. I think we should not fall into the trap of opening the discussions on basics that might not have an end because then we will lose again too much time discussing the same things and drawing the same conclusions.

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** Referring what has been said, it's a very good base for going forward. It is the point of decision whether we can have all the ESAF members to approve it, because some members are simply not accessible, they do not respond, even to private telephone calls. For future what might be added to the document is a mechanism how a new member of ESAF is called for and nominated.

I fully agree the basic principles that decisions should be made based on consent. It's just not clear how to reach that on the existing situations.

**Maria Chiara CARROZZA:** I do not agree that we should stop the discussions and accept that all ESAF members are not actively involved in activities and in decision making. We have to find a way to activate them. If you have only part of the members that are participating, you cannot approve something, which is putting some constraints to all at least you have to formally ask to all member states to express their position.

**Marko TOPIC:** Definitely we don't want to be an “any” association and we don't want to have legal status. We are a network that can define our rules of operation that's why it is not binding, but it just



helps us to form modus operandi. As for reaching the consent this is a golden rule in Europe for European Commission: if anyone objects, then you should raise the voice. If you are quiet, you have obviously approved the thing. And this is modus operandi we have also used in ESAF.

**Melle KROMHOUT:** My preference would be to agree on adopting the spirits of these statutes saying this is a sound basis to go forward and then agree on a fixed period for comments. For example six months to consolidate, to consult with the other members. See what other views might come and then update, you know, make a final version and then adopt the document. So as a middle ground between voting today and an indefinite discussions procedure.

**Anne-Greet KEIZER:** One more thing, I think there's also a difference between whether we formally need to consult the members that are not here and not active, or whether we want to use the opportunity to try to engage them for the future. So, I heard the candidate chair very well, if Italy is happy to try to connect with the non-active members and see if we can engage them more, this would be a great opportunity to do so.

**Lucian BRUJAN:** Thank you very much the proposal from Netherlands. And I would like to say that, you know, we could have a six months period but not longer. Because I can say on the German side, our enthusiasm will drop to a critical value if it's longer than six months. It seems to me that we have different understandings and also new chair on the way, and that's why **I propose that the six-month transition period to adopt today the spirit of the document and extend the working group with the new chair, and also with the people from the Commission in dialogue. But at least once more pressure will be today to adopt the spirit that we need to reform and to adopt the spirit of the paper presented.**

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** We stop the discussion here and agree on moving forward with the document as Lucian proposed.

- **Election of the new chair for the next 3 years.**

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** I'm really happy that Maria Chiara Carrozza has expressed interest for taking this burden for the next three years. There seems to be no other candidate. Before reverting to the election procedure, I have to say that ESAF has established no election procedure. Terms of Reference say that the chair is "specified". It is a good message that we have technically 15 votes around the table. Jaap expressed concern that it is not normal in his understanding that some of the members instead of giving the vote to sherpa have given the vote to other ESAF member. I have to say that this is a long-term solution in academic world where this is absolutely normal standard procedure.

**Jaques VERRAES:** I agree, but here the members are nominated by the member states. But they don't represent their countries.

**Alessandro ALLEGRA:** Just to refer to your original proposal in exchange of emails about this meeting was to use the same voting procedure today that are foreseen in the new proposed Terms of Reference. The new proposed Terms of Reference explicitly say that members can delegate their vote to their permanent representative, they don't say that they can delegate it to another member. Now, we can agree that this is the case, but then it should be reflected in the terms of reference, because at



the moment the Terms of Reference say something different. So something just to keep in mind when we review the bureaucratic aspects of the terms of reference.

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** We have not adopted the new Terms of Reference. I don't think that it is a good argument to refer to a document which has not been adopted. As for mandating somebody to vote: To act against the will of ESAF members is a thing what I as a still chair, wouldn't do even if we have some deviating views. It was clearly expressed will to all the ESAF members from Eric Panda and Alex Stojanovic.

**Maria Chiara CARROZZA:** introduction (see the [CV](#))

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** (to Alessandro) My email from August 8 reads: "(2a) The spirit of ToR seems to be that *the members* elect the coordinating country, the Chair, and/or the hosting country for the next (annual) meeting. I suggest that we stick to this policy." (See the message in attached document)

**Alessandro ALLEGRA:** In my opinion point (2b) goes in a different direction, but I think that there is no need to go on.

**Tarmo SOOMERE:** (to Alessandro): It was absolutely clear recommendation, "we can decide" (in the message from August 8), this was my suggestion, that is not a rule.

We have 15 members present in some or another way and two associate members present which is even a better quorum than only members. I think that the point with giving mandate to other ESAF member has been completely solved because point (2a) in my letter from August 8 only refers to the spirit of existing terms of reference.

Let's go on with the voting.

**Question 1.** What is your opinion on associate members to be part of the voting process?

The result is "No".

**Question 2.** Who is willing to have Maria Chiara Carrozza as the chair of ESAF for next three years please raise your hand.

**All are voting in favour. ESAF has a new chair.**

The meeting ends with congratulations to Maria Chiara Carrozza and with sincere thanks to the local organisers and speakers.

No other business items suggested.

Notes taken by Terje Tuisk.