

Minutes

RSAI COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 2023

Tuesday, June 12, 2023, 2 CEET

Zoom

1. Apologies (Annex 1)
2. Approval of the minutes of the Apr. 13, 2023 meeting (Annex 2)
3. Recommendations of the committee for deciding RSAI policies for assigning APC waivers
4. Decision on the 2024 World Congress of the RSAI
5. RSAI activities on PRSCO soil
6. Status of the work of the committee in charge of restructuring PRSCO
7. AOB
8. Next meeting

Minutes of the Apr. 12, 2023 meeting

At 2.04 pm CET Prof. Westlund welcomes council members. The following members join the meeting:

- Andrea Caragliu (RSAI Executive Director)
- Elizabeth Mack (NARSC representative)
- Eveline Van Leeuwen (ERSA representative)
- Hans Westlund (RSAI President)
- Hidehiko Kanegae (PRSCO President and representative)
- Jouke Van Dijk (Councillor at-large)
- Lily Kiminami (PRSCO representative)
- Martijn Smit (RSAI newsletter Editor)
- Mina Akhavan (RSAI newsletter Editor)
- Rosella Nicolini (councillor at large, EiC of PiRS)
- Tomaz Dentinho (councillor at-large, EiC of RSPP)

Voting members participate in the number of nine. Andrea Caragliu stresses that this means that the council meeting does not meet the requirements for voting decisions to be binding. He reminds the Council that, according to the RSAI constitution, Article V, Section 8:

“If the number of voting Council members at any meeting of the Council is less than 50 percent of the total voting membership of the Council any decisions taken shall not be considered final until they have been:

submitted by the Executive Director to the full Council in written form and approved by ballot, or formally voted upon at the next meeting of the Council at which a quorum is present.”

Prof. Caragliu suggests that any decision made at the current meeting will be circulated and voted online by all Council members non attending today. The voting of non-attending members has been subsequently unanimously in favor of approving all motions in the present minutes.

1. Apologies (Annex 1)

Apologies received from Carlos Azzoni, Daniela Constantin, Soushi Suzuki, and Serena Erendira.

2. Approval of the minutes of the online meeting (Feb 7, 2023; Annex 2)

Andrea Caragliu reports a suggestion from Rosella Nicolini. Lily Kiminami asks to correct her name on the minutes. Prof. Smit reports two minor typographic issues: "our" address is listed in the header as "offices at University of Azores, Oficce 155-156", which should be "Office", not "Oficce". He also suggests to amend the following statement: "The Publisher shall include the notice: An official Journal of The Regional Science Association International" - should that not be "of the Regional..." rather than "of The Regional..."? Prof. Smit stresses that the acronym of the association is RSAI, not TRSAI.

Prof. Westlund suggests to approve the minutes in their present form, while the rest of the council will report any suggestion within Friday Apr. 14. Minutes are officially approved.

3. Approval of the contract with Elsevier for publishing PiRS and RSPP (Andrea Caragliu, Annex 3)

Andrea Caragliu reports about the procedure of approving the contract. Elsevier's draft was reviewed by a lawyer (Dr. Letizia Belfiore, from the LIEN law firm in Paris/Milan), and by the President and the Executive Director.

Rosella Nicolini reports that she had a very fruitful meeting with the Elsevier staff. She reports concerns about article 3.2.a, which talks about review articles, which PiRS does not publish. She suggests to eliminate this item. At article 3.2.b, APCs seem to be applied also to review articles. She suggests to clarify whether this refers to review articles, or to book reviews; in the latter case, she suggests to fully waive all APCs. Andrea Caragliu replies he agrees it is best to eliminate this reference from the contract. Martijn Smit suggests that this may be due to Elsevier's vast experience with hard sciences and medicine, where Reviewe articles are way more frequent.

Tomaz Dentinho adds that p. 6 in the draft contract mentions the EiC or some other RSAI officer in charge of assigning waivers. Prof. Van Dijk stresses that as the clause is stated it seems it is actually two officials with the veto power. Prof. Westlund stresses that this change increased flexibility. Eveline Van Leeuwen argues that it is good to have both the EiC and the President/Executive Director. Andrea Caragliu suggests to change the formulation from "*The Society, through the Editor-in-Chief or another individual designated by the Society*" to "*The Society, through the Editor-in-Chief, after consulting with the President and/or the Executive Director*".

Prof. Dentinho stresses that only articles have APCs – book reviews typically don't. Rosella Nicolini proposes to approve the contract with the presently suggested changes, Jouke Van Dijk seconds. The contract is unanimously approved, with the proviso by Prof. Westlund hat these decisions are sent out to voting members who are requested to have their saying within Friday, Apr. 14, 2023 at the latest.

4. Creation of a committee for deciding RSAI policies for assigning APC waivers (Hans Westlund, Annex 4)

Prof. Westlund explains that he would like to create a committee to propose policy guidelines for APC waivers. He indicated possible committee members, including the RSAI ED, the two EiCs of the

RSAI journals, Prof. Peter Nijkamp from the LRPC, Prof. Roberta Capello from the publications committee and immediate past EiC of PiRS, and a representative from the supranationals not covered by these colleagues.

For PRSCO, Prof. Kanegae says he will consult with Prof. Kiminami, Prof. Kim, and Prof. Suzuki about alternative solutions. Prof. Westlund replies he would like to have a member from each supranational. Prof. Van Dijk adds that no persons from low income countries are indicated. Prof. Dentinho suggests Budy Resosudarmo (PRSCO), or Patricio Aroca or Carlos Azzoni (LARSA). Rosella Nicolini further stresses, agreeing with Hans Westlund, that Presidents of the supranational sections should have a saying. Andrea Caragliu stresses the need to find someone with knowledge about geographical heterogeneity in the exposure to APCs costs. Prof. Kanegae asks whether this committee will decide about the allocation a budget. Andrea Caragliu replies that no discussion about the extra budget will be tasked to this committee. Prof. Mack suggests to consider using these policies to also promote a renewal in the authorship of the journals, for instance by not granting two consecutive waivers.

5. AOB

No OB is reported.

6. Next meeting

The next RSAI Council meeting will take place in Siem Reap, Cambodia, at the forthcoming PRSCO summer institute to be held on June 13-14, 2023.

With no more items to discuss, Prof. Westlund adjourns the meeting at 2.58 PM CET.

Minutes

RSAI COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 2023

Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, 1 pm CET – 3 pm CET

Zoom link: <https://polimit.zoom.us/j/97772923050?pwd=bHRIRS9DM3FYQVlobmM5dG5iUmt5QT09>

Meeting ID: 977 7292 3050

Password: 652655

At 1.05 pm CET the RSAI President, Hans Westlund, after checking that the Council has the deliberation faculty threshold, welcomes participants in the meeting.

The following Council members attend: Rosella Nicolini (at large, PiRS EiC); Hans Westlund (RSAI President); Isabelle Thomas (at large); Andrea Caragliu (RSAI Executive director; Elizabeth Mack (NARSC representative); Jouke Van Dijk (at large); Brian Kim (PRSCO representative); Hidehiko Kanegae (PRSCO President and representative); Daniela Constantin (at large); Martijn smit (Newsletter editor); Serena Erendira (LARSA president and representative); Lili Kiminami (PRSCO representative); Lise Bordiaeu-LePage (ERSA representative); Roberta Capello (LRPC); Sandy dell’Erba (NARSC representative); André Torre (ERSA President and representative); Tomaz Dentinho (At-large and RSPP EiC).

1. Apologies (Annex 1)

Apologies received from Soushi Suzuki (PRSCO ED) and Eduardo Haddad (Immediate past president).

2. Approval of the minutes of the Montreal meeting (Nov. 2022; Annex 2)

Andrea Caragliu reports that the minutes of the previous meeting, held in Montreal at the 2022 NARSC meeting, have been circulated via email and no comment was received. He asks the council whether there is any further suggestion. With none received, Prof. Thomas proposes to approve the minutes, and Prof. Nicolini seconds. The minutes of the November 2022 meeting are unanimously approved.

3. Choice of the new publisher for PiRS and RSPP for the period 2024-2028 (Andrea Caragliu; Annex 4)

Andrea Caragliu explains how the negotiations with various potential publishers have been carried out. Negotiations for a possible renewal with Wiley started in Spring 2022. On Jan. 23, 2023 the RSAI president and ED met with the publications committee (made up of Prof.

Roberta Capello, Politecnico di Milano, immediate past EiC of PiRS; Andrés Rodrigues-Pose, LSE, co-EiC of Economic Geography; Dan Rickman, Oklahoma State University, immediate past EiC of Growth and Change; and Jean-Claude Thill, RSAI LRPC, and responsible for the previous round of negotiations with Wiley). On Jan. 31, a similar meeting with the LRPC has been held. Recommendations from both bodies have been attached to this meeting's agenda.

A lawyer (Letizia Belfiore, LIEN advocates, Milan/Paris), expert of intellectual property, researched both the present and the previous contract, and concluded there is no preferential renewal agreement that prevents the RSAI to opt out of the contract, if so decided.

During negotiations, all major players publishing regional science, economics, geography, or planning journals have been contacted:

1. Wiley (current publisher)
2. MIT press
3. Oxford University Press
4. Cambridge University Press
5. Elsevier
6. Sage
7. Springer-Nature

After at least one call with each of them, four got back to the RSAI with the offers attached to the agenda of the meeting.

Rosella Nicolini shares a wish list of PiRS Editors for the new contract. She explains the editors expect some relevant unequal effects from any contract based on a switch to gold open access. Prof. Kanegae asks how many years the contract would last; what level would APCs reach; and how many papers should be published under the new contract. Andrea Caragliu provides the information, which is available in the contracts proposals attached to the council agenda.

Martijn Smit asks about the user friendliness of their submission platforms. Andrea Caragliu replies with some additional details on the systems – most publishers using either manuscript central or editorial manager.

Elizabeth Mack asks about possible waivers. Scholars from the US could be discouraged from submitting. She praises Elsevier's submission platform – she is co-editing *Telematics and Informatics*. She suggests to advertise this transition as much as possible. The California university system is in favor, but Michigan doesn't approve of switching to gold open access, so Prof. Mack would expect quite some heterogeneity in the response in terms of submissions even from within high-level income countries.

On this point, the Executive Director asks if there is a list of US institutions with their policy towards open access, which unfortunately is not available. Prof. Mack and Prof. dell'Erba reply they will gladly help in assembling some of this information in due time.

André Torre is in favor of waivers for low-income countries and universities not covered by transformational agreements. He stresses there is going to be competition from other open access publishers such as *MDPI*.

Kidehiko Kanegae asks details on how this information and the debate should be kept confidential. Andrea Caragliu replies that the minutes will be published with the exception of any information related to this debate, and that members of the Councils are expected not to disclose information related to this debate or to the material attached to this agenda.

Jouke Van Dijk also says that Wiley has not been a best case transition. He also asks how long the offer remain will valid. Andrea Caragliu replies that the offers are to be considered valid for a couple of months, because publishers agree to some time for the council to discuss the details of the offers.

With no more comments or questions, the council proceeds to voting with a system proposed by the ED: 5 points to the preferred option, to 1 to the least preferred option, among Springer Nature, Wiley, Elsevier hybrid, Elsevier Gold open access, and Sage. Voting is public, and the option to move both RAI journals with Elsevier in Gold Open Access prevails with 65 points.

4. Funding the costs for printing a special of RSPP on Ukraine (Tomaz Dentinho; Annex 3)

Due to the temporary absence of Prof. Dentinho from the council, Andrea Caragliu explains the proposal on his behalf, along the lines of the attached Annex 3.

Rosella Nicolini stresses that this is a humanitarian undertaking, but at the same time no more extra budget should be allocated to RSPP. André Torre adds that in the past RAI organized several workshops in low-income countries, and because this created troubles, the nurturing talent programme was created. However, other events are being funded with RSPP events, and these have to be kept under the RAI control. Andrea Caragliu replies that some events sponsored by RSPP brought new sections and potential members.

Hans Westlund adds that the proposal from RSPP should be financed with RSPP budget, but given Ukraine's situation we could agree on an exception. Isabelle Thomas adds that rules should be enacted to regulate this process and decision-making. Liz Mack agrees with the need for rules, to avoid to create a precedent. Jouke Van Dijk also disagrees in principle. Daniela Constantin adds that the Romanian section was not informed of this proposal. The Council proceeds to anonymous voting. The proposal is approved with 5 votes in favor, 4 against, and one abstained.

5. RSPP Best Special Issue award (Tomaz Dentinho, Annex 5)

Prof Dentinho proposes to create a new award to celebrate impactful special issues. These will be awarded on the basis of the average number of citations received. Prof. Westlund congratulates on the initiative, but stresses that no additional (extra) budget should be dedicated to this undertaking. Rosella Nicolini motions to approve the proposal, provided that it is funded by budget already available to RSPP; André Torre seconds. The proposal is unanimously approved by the council.

6. Replacement of member of the diversity and inclusion committee (Andrea Caragliu)

Andrea Caragliu explains of the election: Dr. Milena Sorzano stepped down from the committee diversity and inclusion committee. Sandy dell'Erba stresses that NARSC has lacked in the collection of data on congress participants. He suggests to collect it when attendees register for a regional science meeting; in fact, the procedure should become automatic.

Serena Erendira says that AMECIDER has data on 20 years back – to provide feedback on national sections. Isabelle Thomas added that ERSA worked on this theme and she recommends to keep fine-tuning this strategy. Information can lead to do something for changing things. Hans Westlund replies that diversity and inclusion is one of the issues on top of his agenda.

7. Proposal to temporarily (2023) fund APCs for PiRS authors from LARSA and PRSCO sections presently without transformational agreements (Rosella Nicolini; Annex 6)

Rosella Nicolini explains her proposal to use some of the PiRS funds to finance APCs for LARSA and PRSCO authors in 2024, with the aim to enhance the impact factor of the journal (usually open access papers get more citations), and in line with the strategy of the journal to broaden their geographical coverage. In that spirit, she requests the council to fund APCs for RSAI members hailing from LARSA or PRSCO.

Hans Westlund stresses that the decision should not be decided by the Council, because it is in the power of the EiC to so decide. For future reference, bargaining with Elsevier will go also though the request of additional waivers for the first year. André Torre also agrees it is a good idea. Prof. Constantin also supports the proposal, and she stresses that PiRS did not use any extra budget for this goal.

Isabelle proposes to approve the proposal; Daniela Constantin seconds. The proposal is unanimously approved.

8. Renewal of LARSA Councilors

Andrea Caragliu explains that LARSA has transitional issues and need to elect a new President. The three present councilors are proposed to stay frozen on the council until issues are being solved, hopefully within June 30, 2023. A committee made up of the three LARSA councilors and a representative of each national section will elect the new councilors. Sandy dell'Erba offers help in spreading the word. Rosella Nicolini approves the proposal, Jouke Van Dijk seconds. The proposal is unanimously approved.

9. Next meeting

The council will gather again around mid April 2023 to approve a draft of the contract with the new publisher.

With no more items to discuss, at 3.08 pm Prof. Westlund adjourns the meeting.

Proposal to form a committee for developing guidelines for handling waivers of the Open Access Fees for PiRS and RSPP

The transition to the new publisher Elsevier is simultaneously a transition to full open access for all the contents of PiRS and RSPP. The contracts with Elsevier states that, in addition to the fully waived or discounted access fees for authors from low income countries and low-to-middle income countries (which is standard for open access Elsevier journals), the editors-in chief will be entitled to grant up to 20 full waivers (PiRS) or 50 full waivers (RSPP) of the Open Access Fee by invitation only, to authors selected by the Editor-in-Chief.

I propose that the RSAI council, on its meeting in connection to the PRSCO summer institute in Cambodia in June 2023, should decide on guidelines for how these waivers should be handled. In order to develop these guidelines, I propose that the council on its online meeting in April 2023 appoints a committee to prepare and present guidelines to be decided on at the RSAI council meeting in June 2023. I propose the following members of the committee: Andrea Caragliu, Sandy dall'Erba, Roberta Capello, Peter Nijkamp, Rosella Nicolini and Tomaz Dentinho.

Hans Westlund
RSAI President