

Research Staff Collegium

Tuesday 21 September 13.30

via Zoom

Minutes

Minute taker: Timo Smit

1) Minutes of the last meeting and any matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Research Staff Collegium (RSC) on 22 June 2021 were approved.

2) Covid-19: Update, questions, discussion

The Swedish government is lifting most remaining Covid-19 restrictions on 29 September 2021. This includes the recommendation on working from home whenever possible. Dan said that current guidance from SMT will remain in place until mid-October; staff are welcome to work from the office as long as they inform Christina in advance. From mid-October onwards all staff will be encouraged to work from the office more often. Work continues on a policy on the gradual return to the office and on working from home post-corona. All guidance remains subject to change, depending on how the pandemic evolves.

Sepideh asked when and how offices and desks will be allocated, as several staff have joined during the pandemic and have not yet been assigned a workplace. Dan responded that work on a seating plan is ongoing. Colleagues are asked to be flexible and sit wherever there is place, until the process has been completed.

3) Governing Board meeting 15-16 November:

a) Agenda items

Dan said that the next Governing Board (GB) meeting will quite likely be held in a hybrid

format, with some members of the GB attending in-person and some virtually, but that a decision had not yet been taken. The current RSC meeting is one of two RSC meetings scheduled ahead of the GB meeting. There will likely be another RSC meeting before Christmas at which the staff observer to the GB can report back about the meeting.

Timo (in his capacity as staff observer to the GB) said that he would e-mail all staff ahead of the next RSC meeting to remind/inform everyone about the role of the staff observer to the GB. He encouraged everyone to reach out to him whenever they have questions or would like to raise any issues with him.

All staff were invited to discuss suggestions for topics that could be put onto the agenda of the Governing Board meeting.

Joakim said that he will meet with the Chair of the GB (Jan Eliasson) on the next day to discuss the agenda of the upcoming GB meeting, among other things. The agenda will include the usual items such as Dan and Joakim's report to the GB, the institute budget, and a meeting between the GB and local Union representatives. The GB will also discuss potential new GB members.

Nan asked whether and how the GB discusses SIPRI's five-year strategy and how the progress of the implementation is measured. Dan responded that the GB had a progress report at the previous meeting in May 2021. Several indicators are used to review progress, some of which are being refined following a discussion with the GB.

Dan reminded all staff about the request recently made by Stephanie to submit to her anecdotes about the policy impact of our work. That reflects in part the discussion that was had in the last GB meeting. Finally, Dan said that the contextual background assessment in the strategy is revised each year to reflect developments in international peace and security.

Frank asked if the GB has discussed the work environment action plan, which were developed based on the outcome of the first &Frankly survey, and he suggested to add it to the agenda for the next GB meeting. Dan responded that the action plan was referred to in the Director

and Deputy Director's report to the GB but was not discussed in detail. Joakim added that the action plan was shared with the GB afterwards at their request.

Nan asked whether the announced ceiling of 99 staff may affect our ability to meet the capacity needs that clusters have identified based on the Institute strategy. Dan responded that this issue will feature in the report to the GB. There are ways in which we can expand our capacity without extra permanent staff, for example through associate staff. Moreover, we are not yet at the ceiling of 99 staff so there is still room for manoeuvre. There is no hiring stop but we need to think hard before deciding to hire new staff. In the short term, the main bottleneck is not the capacity of the building but overstretch in the institute infrastructure such as operations and outreach.

Timo asked whether the dates of the GB meeting scheduled 23-24 May 2022 will change as they overlap with the dates of the 2022 Stockholm Forum (23-25 May), or whether SIPRI will use the occasion to give the GB a bigger role in the Forum. Dan said that, in addition to the Forum, the annual SIPRI lecture and the launch of the Environment of Peace report also coincide with the Forum and the GB meeting in May 2022. It was decided that, all things considered, including the availability of the Forum venue, it would make the most sense to do everything at once. The SIPRI lecture will be more integrated with the Forum than in previous years, and GB members will be available to participate in the subsequent panel discussion. The working assumption is that the Forum (including the Lecture) will be a hybrid event combining physical attendance in Stockholm with a large online audience. The 2022 Stockholm Forum and all related events will be an item on the agenda of the next GB meeting in November 2021.

b) New Governing Board member(s)

GB members are appointed for a term of five years, which can be renewed once. The GB membership of Dr Radha Kumar was recently renewed for another five years. Ambassador Ramtame Lamamra has stepped down from the GB following his (re-)appointment as Foreign Minister of Algeria, so we need to think about a replacement for him. The first five-year term of Espen Barth Eide is due to expire soon and he has indicated that he would love to serve

another term on the GB in principle, but is awaiting the result of the September 2021 elections in Norway. If his party would do well in the elections (which it did) and lead a new coalition government (which it likely will), there is a possibility that Barth Eide will become a minister and thus also step down from the GB. We should therefore be thinking about one or two potential candidates for GB membership: certainly one candidate from the African continent, ideally with a good relation to and network within the African Union; and possible also one candidate from Europe.

Several staff made suggestions for potential candidates, such as Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (former Deputy President of South Africa and until recently Executive Director of UN Women); the new Chairperson of the Munich Security Conference (who has yet to be appointed); Celso Amorim (former Foreign Minister and Defence Minister of Brazil); Mohamed Ibn Chambas (former SRSG and head of UNOWAS); Mohamed Yahya (Resident Representative UNDP Nigeria); and Angela Merkel.

More generally, in terms of profiles, Florian mentioned that a current or former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (like Espen Barth Eide) might be interesting for the GB, and Siemon mentioned that it might be interesting to look for candidates with a background in military and defence, and for candidates that are experienced yet mid-career professionals, to ensure a balanced GB in terms of age.

4) &frankly follow-up

Joakim briefly explained what the &frankly survey is for the benefit of new colleagues who joined SIPRI after the first survey was taken in March 2021. It is a survey tool that can be used to measure staff sentiment in a number of different areas. The survey in March focussed on discrimination, workload, and work environment. Almost all staff members responded to the survey, which generated interesting results on the perceptions of these issues among staff. The outcomes have been discussed at length at different levels within SIPRI: at the RSC, at the GB meeting, in the clusters, and within teams.

Following this exercise, SMT has drafted a plan of action that includes a number of headings

and identifies different objectives and measures to address areas where we believe there is room for improvement. The GB has seen the action plan.

Joakim emphasized that the action plan and related efforts remain a work in progress and that we are learning by doing, because this is the first time that SIPRI has conducted this kind of survey. It was evident from the start that there are issues that can be addressed quickly, but also aspects that require longer processes. At some point there will be another survey; it has not yet been decided whether it will contain the same (or similar) questions as before or whether we may zoom in on particular issues.

The pandemic and the related restrictions, which have been in place longer than initially anticipated, and capacity shortfalls in operations have caused some delays in the development and implementation of the action plan and follow up to the survey.

One focus area of this work is discrimination. There is a need to distinguish between what is perceived as discrimination and what as a lack of diversity among staff. SMT has been discussing how we can promote diversity, and a scoping exercise is currently being discussed. We have also started looking at our recruitment practices and are exploring ways of making better use of LinkedIn to reach a wider and more global pool of potential candidates.

SMT has also identified the need to mainstream into the entire organization that discrimination in any shape or form will not be tolerated at SIPRI. There are different ways in which we could be doing this more systematically, including through training and by embedding this into the introduction of new staff into the institute.

In terms of stress and workload, planning has been identified as an important factor, including the need to factor in time-consuming activities that are not necessarily part of projects into project applications as well as project management and planning.

In terms of work environment, SMT wants to promote a coherent and supportive organizational culture. The gradual return to the office presents an opportunity for this. There has been a survey about work preferences in 'the new normal' and input of the informal

working group on the return to the office has been feeding into decisions of the SMT. A working from home policy has been drafted and will be discussed at SMT.

The refurbishment of the attic is ongoing and is expected to take three months. There will be 8 work stations there; it has not yet been decided to whom these will be allocated. A plan for the allocation of work spaces is ongoing. The (re-)allocation of offices and desks aims to bring together departments and clusters, without putting teams into one room and while ensuring proper balance and mix between the various clusters and programmes.

Joakim said that SIPRI has been randomly selected for an inspection by the Swedish Work Environment Authority. They will review the policies SIPRI has in place, among other things. We are currently reviewing or planning to review some of these policies, so the inspection will be quite helpful. It will not be an inspection of the actual work environment at SIPRI but will support us by ensuring that our policies are complying to the relevant legislation. The inspection will take place in the fall of 2021, and will involve Joakim, Maria, Helena, and Ulla (in her role as safety officer). In the meantime, we are working on improving the intranet, where relevant SIPRI policies are available to SIPRI staff.

Joakim ended by saying that SMT has also been discussing the issue of training opportunities for staff, and that the &frankly survey and action plan are on the agenda for the next cooperation group meeting.

Lena asked if the work that is being done on the ventilation of the attic is also being done in other parts of the building, as the ventilation in her former office as well as some other parts of the building has been suboptimal in her view. Maria responded that the whole office building was refurbished in 2015 and that the ventilation was renovated at the time and should be in order. If staff are experiencing issues, however, we may have to ask for an inspection of the ventilation to see if improvements are needed.

Pieter asked if and how discrimination has been defined, in the context of the &frankly action plan, or if that is something that we might be discussing further within SIPRI or that we can adopt from an external organization. It might be helpful for the conversation if the issue were

more concrete. Dan responded one of the conclusions after the first & frankly survey was that there evidently was room for confusion on concepts and categories, such as discrimination and diversity. This has been identified as something that we need to discuss more in-depth, perhaps with the help of external facilitation.

Frank asked whether the cooperation group is going to remain the channel through which staff can feed into the action plan. Dan answered that this is the case at the moment, but that this will probably change. We have taken a pragmatic approach so far, discussing the matters in virtual meetings of the RSC, clusters, teams and an *ad hoc* working group. Using different mechanisms and modes will remain the methodology for now, but we will also be able to do more when we are back at the office.

5) AOB

There was no other business.

List of participants

1. Abeer Ahmad
2. Alexandra Marksteiner
3. Amal Bourhrous
4. Andrea Gadnert
5. Andrea Varisco
6. Annelies Hickendorff
7. Anniek Barnhoorn
8. Caroline Delgado
9. Caspar Trimmer
10. Cecilia Bagge
11. Christina Ekberg
12. Claire McAllister
13. Claudia Pfeifer
14. Dan Smith
15. Daniele Crimella
16. Diego Lopes
17. Dylan O'Driscoll
18. Elena Haapaniemi
19. Elin Elmgren
20. Elise Remling
21. Emma Zetterström
22. Erik Danielsson
23. Evelina Francesca Cristofano
24. Farah Hegazi
25. Fei Su
26. Florian Krampe
27. Frank Esparraga
28. Frederic Daudon
29. Giovanna Maletta
30. Helena Berger
31. Ian Anthony
32. Issaka Souare
33. Jakob Faller
34. Jannie Lilja
35. Jenny Mildton
36. Jiayi Zhou
37. Joakim Vaverka
38. Joey Fox
39. Johanna Eliasson
40. Jonathan Hall
41. Jurg Staudenmann
42. Karolina Eklöw
43. Katongo Seyuba
44. Kheira Tarif
45. Kolja Brockmann

46. Kristina Tschunkert
47. Laura Bruun
48. Lena Kappelin
49. Luc van de Goor
50. Lucie Beraud-Sudreau
51. Lucile Robin
52. Luke Richards
53. Magdalena Söderqvist
54. Manon du Bus
55. Maria Kaemmerle
56. Maria Volakaki
57. Marie Riquier
58. Marina Caparini
59. Mark Bromley
60. Martina Selmi
61. Meray Maddah
62. Nan Tian
63. Noel Kelly
64. Olle Persson
65. Pauline Poupart
66. Pranav Satyanath
67. Sepideh Soltaninia
68. Shannen Young
69. Shannon Kyle
70. Shivan Fazil
71. Shourjya Deb
72. Sibylle Bauer
73. Siemon Wezeman
74. Simone Bunse
75. Tania Ferre Garcia
76. Timo Smit
77. Tytti Erästö
78. Ulla Hurtig Nielsen
79. Vincent Boulanin
80. Virginie Baudais
81. Vongai Murugani
82. Alexandra Manolache
83. Alexandra Kuimova
84. Pieter Wezeman