



Minutes

1) Minutes of the last meeting and any matters arising

The minutes of the last RSC were approved.

The agenda for this meeting was adapted to include two more items: Covid-19 and Swedish elections.

2) Covid-19

Given that many staff have been sick recently, it was decided that the Monday morning meeting (hereinafter, MMM) on 19 September will be virtual. The one on 26 September might be in person. The organizers of the Wine & Cheese planned for 22 September are expected to decide by Tuesday (20/09) whether to maintain the event. Helena confirmed that there is no new guidance from the Swedish Public Health Agency in relation to Covid-19. The current guidance, which should be observed by SIPRI staff, is to work from home in case of any symptoms – including those who tested negative in a self-test.

3) Swedish elections

Joakim reported on the results and expectations in relation to the Swedish elections that took place on 11 September, including possible implications for SIPRI. There will be a change in the government in Sweden, with a new Prime Minister most likely from the Moderate Party.

To a certain extent, the effect of the elections results on SIPRI will depend on the policies and personalities in decision-making positions. The core grant SIPRI receives from the government is likely to remain unaltered, but the strategic grant might be affected. The work on the application for the new strategic grant is currently ongoing. SIPRI is communicating with non-political officials in the Swedish MFA about how to take the best approach in the application. The idea is for SIPRI to make the most of the new circumstances and of the fact that its work is appreciated both in Sweden and internationally.

Claire asked about the possibility of the strategic grant being renewed without changes for one year (rather than having a three-year budget), considering the foreseen difficulties of forming a new government. Dan affirmed that this is indeed a possibility.

Responding to a concern raised by Simone, Joakim affirmed that the MFA officials with whom SIPRI staff usually interacts will not be substituted by political appointees.

Answering Sepideh's question, Joakim clarified aspects about the formation of the new government in Sweden and affirmed that until the new government is announced, not many decisions will be taken. A new cabinet will probably be in place in October.

4) Governing Board matters

a) Update on Board membership and arrangements for next Board meeting (14-15 November)

SIPRI's nomination for Marietje Schaake as member of the Governing Board (hereinafter, GB) is being processed. It is possible that the decision might have to wait until a new government is established. In the next GB meeting, there will be opportunities for meetings between GB members and SIPRI staff. Further details will be arranged and SIPRI staff will be informed. There will be 1-2 virtual sessions in which staff will attend and some people will be asked to make brief presentations. There will also be a meeting in a venue in Stockholm on Monday (15/11) evening, which will act as a closing session for the SSC.

b) Discussion / brainstorming of agenda ideas for the coming Board meeting

Board members would probably like to have a discussion on the impact of the Swedish elections on SIPRI; the situation in Ukraine; and the disputes between China and the US in relation to Taiwan.

Tytti suggested discussing the impact of Sweden joining NATO on SIPRI's role and reputation as an independent institute. Simone suggested discussing how to ensure that peace fora continue to include Russian and Chinese participants, representatives, and speakers.

Further ideas can be communicated directly to Timo, Joakim, or Dan.

5) New &frankly survey

Joakim informed the meeting about preparations for the next &frankly survey, which will be open for responses from 3 to 9 October. The 12-questions survey plans to capture staff's opinion in relation to working environment, wellbeing, and social organization. There are four extra questions compared to the previous survey, related to the engagement training conducted in April. In the week of the 19 September, programme directors will receive an introduction to the survey tool and background information on the subject areas in the survey. Further information to all staff will be provided in the MMM of 26 September along with an email with practical aspects of the survey and background information that will allow staff to better address the questions. The results will be presented in the MMM and discussions in different levels (cluster, team, etc.) will follow. The report on the discussions will probably be made at the end of November.

The other key change in the questions compared to the previous survey is related to the subject of discrimination. Background information on the legal definition on discrimination will be provided.

6) AOB

No other business was raised.