



**In the canteen**

Minute taker: Sofie Waller Snygg

**Agenda**

**1. Notes of the last meeting and any matters arising**

- No comments on the minutes of the previous RSC meeting (6 March).

**2. SIPRI Finances**

- Dan provided an overview of SIPRI's financial situation, highlighting that it was more challenging than it had been in recent years. This difficulty was attributed to several factors: inflation, increased military spending diverting resources from other areas, dwindling resources, and rising costs. Additionally, the current government had been less supportive of SIPRI compared to its predecessor.
- Core funding from the Swedish MFA had remained stable at 28.4 million SEK, the same level as it was in 2003, two decades ago, though it had fluctuated in the meantime. The strategic grant from the Swedish MFA had decreased substantially over the past two years, from 32.5 million SEK in 2022 to 20 million SEK in 2023, and further reduced to 15 million SEK in 2024. Despite these challenges, SIPRI staff were commended for responding to the situation admirably.
- At the time of the RSC, SIPRI could see a deficit based on the first three months of the year. However, there was reason to hope for an upward trend soon. Applications worth 245 million had been submitted, covering 2024 to 2026.
- Certain programs have received funding more readily due to the higher current demand for their work. This has resulted in an imbalance, with some programs being overfunded while others remaining underfunded. Additionally, reallocating personnel between these programs has proved difficult because of the different competences and skillsets involved. It was noted that moving forward, there is a pressing need to increase efforts and resources in the underfunded areas.
- It was mentioned that reporting and financial management had been tightened to meet the required standards. Activities not externally funded will need to be critically evaluated for their value.
- Overall, Dan noted the importance of maintaining composure, continuing essential work, submitting applications, and managing costs as accurately as possible.
- Several questions were raised and addressed:
  - o Diego inquired about SIPRI's current funding gap. Kristina responded that the gap stands at 25 million SEK, but that the figure fluctuates rapidly. She emphasized that the first quarter is typically less active and highlighted the urgency of addressing the funding gap before the summer break.
  - o A question was posed regarding steps taken to streamline projects and fundraising activities. The Grants Acquisition and Development Team, formally starting to work on 1 April 2024, has been set up as a way to meet the needs of the increasingly difficult funding environment. The team's

main objective is to strengthen and coordinate SIPRI's work on grant acquisition and fundraising.

- Fred asked whether SIPRI had explored obtaining strategic or core grant support from other governments. The response confirmed that while attempts had been made, they had not yet been successful. Efforts will continue, including reaching out to philanthropists and affluent individuals, with initiatives such as those undertaken at the Swedish Lunch in Davos aimed at identifying new funding sources.
- Claire inquired if the financial presentation at the upcoming Governing Board meeting on 16-17 May would be shared with all staff, to which Kristina replied affirmatively.

### **3. May Governing Board meeting**

- Joakim announced that the next Governing Board meeting would take place on 16-17 May. Noha El-Mikawy, SIPRI's newly appointed Board member, will join the meeting for the first time.
- Regarding the schedule of the meeting, Joakim noted that:
  - There would be a photo opportunity for staff with the Board on 16 May at noon, followed by a lunch between randomized groups of staff and pairs of Board members, with discussions focusing on the implications for SIPRI of Sweden joining NATO.
  - At the end of the Board meeting's first day, there would be a public event hosted at SIPRI, featuring the Board members as a panel, moderated by Dan.
- Joakim explained that the main agenda points for the Board meeting concern
  - the next SIPRI Strategy for 2024-2029;
  - the process for selecting the next SIPRI Director; the future of the Yearbook;
  - SIPRI's finances; and
  - potential new Board members (Joakim noted that with Noha El-Mikawy having joined the Board, and with Feodor Voitlovsky having stepped down, two seats are open).
- Several questions were raised and addressed:
  - Amelie asked whether Feodor Voitlovsky had officially resigned from the SIPRI Governing Board, to which Joakim responded affirmatively.
  - Siemon inquired about the future of the SIPRI Yearbook and requested additional information. Dan responded by emphasizing that no decisions had been made yet and that the Governing Board would discuss this matter in their upcoming meeting. Dan noted that some sections of the Yearbook might be reduced or removed to cut costs, with the possibility of publishing reduced content in alternative formats.

### **4. Selection of the next SIPRI Deputy Director**

- Dan outlined the process for selecting the next SIPRI Deputy Director, noting that the advertisement for the role would be posted on 1 May. The recruitment committee consisted of Stefan, Dan, and Kristina. A meeting between shortlisted candidates and a selection of staff members would take place before a formal decision was taken.

## 5. Selection of the next SIPRI Director

- Dan left the meeting during this agenda item.
- Joakim outlined the process for selecting the next SIPRI Director and reminded the RSC of the decisions taken at the last RSC meeting. He noted that the Board had decided to launch the recruitment process for the next Director at the extraordinary online Board meeting held in February. Joakim also noted that discussions regarding what qualities and experiences staff would like to see in the next Director were under way in the institute. Staff input would be compiled and shared with the Board before the May Board meeting.
- Joakim presented the draft recruitment process timeline, highlighting that it would need to be approved by the Board in May.
- Joakim reminded the RSC that since the appointment of the last Director, the institute's statutes had been amended. Previously, the Director had been appointed by the government like other Board members; now, the Director would be appointed by the Board, following consultation with the Research Staff Collegium and staff unions. The Staff Observer would also play an important part in the process.
- Gretchen and Diego reminded staff about the follow-up discussion on the Director recruitment scheduled for next Tuesday, 30 April, at noon. It was decided that the outcomes of this discussion would be documented and shared in writing with the Deputy Director.
- Several questions were raised and addressed:
  - o A question was raised regarding the Deputy Director's role in the recruitment process. Joakim responded that, as secretary to the Governing Board, the Deputy Director would be responsible for providing all necessary documentation to the Board and with other administrative tasks.
  - o A second question was raised regarding if an external agency would be used in the recruitment process. Joakim replied saying that nothing had been decided yet and that it would be up to the Board to decide at the next Board meeting.
  - o Fred inquired who would be responsible for drafting the advertisement for the Director position. Joakim replied that the Deputy Director would make a first draft, with assistance from the HR department. The final version would then be approved by the Board.
  - o Timo inquired whether staff could begin spreading the word about the recruitment of the Next Director to their communities during the 2024 Forum. Joakim responded that they were welcome to start sharing this information informally.
  - o Pieter asked whether a shortlist of candidates would be shared with staff once decided by the Board, to which Joakim replied affirmatively. He also noted that staff would have an opportunity to interact with the shortlisted candidates during the recruitment process, but that the format of this interaction had not been decided yet by the Board. The role of staff would be discussed at the May Board meeting.
  - o Steph raised a concern about maintaining effective communication with the Board during the recruitment process, given the distance between the Board and staff at the institute. She emphasized the need to establish clear

communication channels to leverage the Board's strengths and integrate them with the operational expertise of the staff. In response, it was agreed that the role of the Staff Observer would be crucial and additionally, that the Deputy Director would also play a significant role in facilitating the interaction.

#### **6. AOB**

- It was observed that the building's temperature had been colder than usual throughout April. Typically, the weather during the month of April would generally be warmer than it was this year, prompting an automatic reduction in the building's heating. However, due to the unusually cold weather this April, the heating system will need to be inspected to ensure it maintains a comfortable indoor temperature.