

Advisory Committee
Meeting of 15 October 2019
Meeting minutes

Participants at the meeting

The ANVUR Advisory Committee met on Tuesday 15 October 2019, at midday, at the organisation's headquarters at Via Ippolito Nievo, 35 in Rome. The following individuals were present:

Organisation	Member of the Advisory Committee	Present	Present by videoconference	Absent with apologies	Absent
European Research Council	Claudio Bordignon			X	
National Council for Economics and Labour (CNEL)	Maria Castriotta			X	
National Council of University Students (CNSU)	Nicola D'Ambrosio			X	
National Council for Economics and Labour (CNEL)	Michele Dau	X			
National Council of University Students (CNSU)	Pietro De Ponti			X	
National Council of University Students (CNSU)	Mario Donadio			X	
European Students' Union/ESIB	Fernando Miguel Galan Palomares			X	
Lyncean Academy	Renato Guarini	X			
National Council for Economics and Labour (CNEL)	Costanzo Jannotti Pecci			X	
Unified Conference of the State, Regions, Cities and Local Authorities	Domenico Laforgia		X		
National Council for Economics and Labour (CNEL)	Andrea Lapicciarella	X			
Conference of Rectors of Italian Universities (CRUI)	Gaetano Manfredi			X	
European Research Council (ERC)	Cristina Grasseni		X		
National University Council (CUN)	Alessandra Petrucci	X			
Permanent Conference of the Administrative Directors and Managers of Italian Universities	Gabriele Rizzetto		X		
European Students' Union/ESIB	Mattia Sguazzini		X		
European University Association	Rolf Tarrach			X	
Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	Dirk Van Damme			X	

The meeting was also attended by Ines Panico from the Technical Secretariat/Legal Affairs, who assisted the

President as the secretary compiling the minutes. The initial part of the meeting was also attended by the Director of ANVUR, Mr Daniele Livon.

Activities of the meeting

The President, Prof. Alessandra Petrucci, first informed the persons present that although the number of people present at the meeting was not legally sufficient to be able to deliberate, the meeting would nonetheless take place in order to further explore the issues included on the agenda.

The meeting commenced with an analysis of the items on the agenda, which were the following:

1. Notices
2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2019
3. Guidelines for Gauging the Opinions of University Students
4. ENQA accreditation
5. Potential proposals for the ANVUR 2020 Activity Plan under Article 3(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Committee
6. Working plan for the Advisory Committee, in accordance with Article 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Committee
7. Other business

1. Notices

The President welcomed the new Director of ANVUR, Daniele Livon, appointed by the Governing Board in June. Mr Livon was attending the meeting to introduce himself and provide his own institutional greeting. The Director stated that he had met the Prof. Petrucci just before the summer break and had learned of the existence of a problem in the functioning of the Advisory Committee, due in part to the limited attendance of members at its meetings. Mr Livon indicated that he was fully available for the purpose of finding a system to make dialogue with the Advisory Committee more effective. The Director added that it was in the interests of the Agency to improve dialogue with the members of the Advisory Committee and asked those present to put forward proposals aimed at achieving better cooperation between the Agency's bodies and the Committee. Lastly, he thanked those present for their attention and left the meeting. Prof. Petrucci took the floor again and updated those present on the appointment of Prof. Cristina Grasseni (designated by the European Research Council (ERC)) as a new member of the Advisory Committee as a replacement for Prof. Nicolosi and advised them of the resignation tendered by Fernando Galan Palomares (designated by the European Students' Union (ESU)). The President then added that the term of office of Rolf Tarrach (designated by the European University Association (EUA)) had ceased and the Committee was awaiting corresponding notification. Lastly, the President noted that the new

National Council of University Students (CNSU) came into office on 1 October last and the representatives on the Advisory Committee would be appointed shortly.

Prof. Lapicciarella then took the floor and, with reference to the information provided by the Director of the Agency, stated that he believed that the non-attendance by members was due to the perception that the meetings were pointless, because the Advisory Committee served no purpose.

Prof. Guarini then spoke and agreed with Prof. Lapicciarella, stating that documents should be submitted to the Advisory Committee before the corresponding formal deliberations by the ANVUR Governing Body. The process needed to be reversed, because the Committee's contribution should precede the decision-making process.

Prof. Petrucci took the floor to state that she agreed with the comments made by Prof. Lapicciarella and Prof. Guarini, but believed that the question also needed to be addressed from another point of view, namely that the Advisory Committee should be the body presenting proposals and suggestions. Prof. Lapicciarella stated that the suggestions made by the Committee had no binding effect and were not therefore taken into consideration.

The President resumed the floor and proposed the following dates for the next meetings of the Advisory Committee: 4 February 2020, 12 May 2020 and 15 September 2020. Prof. Guarini then spoke, stating that the dates of the meetings should be linked to the questions periodically submitted for approval by the Governing Body and rescheduled on that basis. The Advisory Committee expressed its approval of the meeting schedule proposed by the President.

Prof. Grasseni, designated by the European Research Council (ERC) and recently appointed as a new member of the Advisory Committee, joined the meeting by telephone. Prof. Grasseni greeted the participants and introduced herself. The President asked the members to introduce themselves in turn.

Discussion of the first item on the agenda having been concluded, the President introduced the next item.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2019

In relation to the abovementioned item, the President asked for any comments from those present about the minutes described above.

As there were no comments, Prof. Petrucci declared that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2019 were approved.

Discussion of the second item on the agenda having been concluded, the President introduced the next item.

3. Guidelines for Gauging the Opinions of University Students

In relation to the abovementioned item, Prof. Petrucci reviewed the principal points of the Guidelines for Gauging the Opinions of University Students submitted by ANVUR for a consultation phase and asked those present for their opinions about the summary document prepared and previously sent to all members. The President stated the the trialling of those Guidelines has been conducted at four universities, which were all different in terms of characteristics and geographical location: Milan Bicocca University, the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, the University of Bari 'Aldo Moro', and the UniNettuno Online University.

Mattia Sguazzini then took the floor, stating that he agreed with the content of the document and proposed to supplement it, also developing a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results obtained in relation to the implementation of student support services. This issue should be introduced into the final questionnaires submitted to students. Mr Sguazzini also suggested that opinions be gauged in relation to the platforms used, such as CINECA, and that a modular questionnaire be developed, which could be adapted to the specific situation of each university. Lastly, Mr Sguazzini stated that he believed the trial conducted at Bicocca University to be ineffective, because that university was not representative of the general reality of universities in Italy, and stated that he thought it more meaningful to conduct a trial on a larger sample of universities.

Prof. Guarini then took the floor and stated that he believed that the summary drafted by Prof. Petrucci was in line with what should be the purpose of the Advisory Committee, he agreed with the document and, in relation to point 8), he believed that it was necessary to retain the questions that make it possible to ensure comparability of certain aspects over time. Prof. Guarini added that he did not believe the trial conducted at Milan Bicocca University was appropriate, because, among other reasons, the university does not have a faculty of experimental sciences and the problems of the students in such faculties are very different from those of students of social sciences.

Michele Dau then took the floor and stated that he agreed with the development of a modular questionnaire so as to obtain comprehensive analyses in line with the specific context of each university, because this tool should be useful and not a bureaucratic instrument. Mr Dau added that there was a need to ensure that this tool was effective, as it should be objectively usable and should not be reduced to a bureaucratic formality but, rather, should be a positive organic measuring tool. Mr Dau restated his agreement with the comment made by Mattia Sguazzini in relation to the drafting of a questionnaire that can be adapted to the various contexts of Italian universities and proposed that this be suggested to the ANVUR Governing Body. Finally, Mr Dau asked for discussion on the ability to achieve transparency of the results emerging from the feedback processes concerned. Prof. Petrucci stated that the University Quality Assurance Offices guarantee the transparency of these results, which are public data.

Gabriele Rizzetto then took the floor, and stated that, rather than talking about sharing and transparency of the

results, there was a need to report and publicise the objectives and actions that the universities intended to implement following analysis of the opinions provided by the students. Mr Rizzetto added that the students must be able to believe in the value of the tool, as only if they do will they treat it not as a mere formality but as an active contribution to improvement.

Mattia Sguazzini then resumed the floor, and stated that the publication of the results of the questionnaires was guaranteed through the Single Annual Report Forms (SUA). He also noted that there was a need to undertake summary processing of the data provided in those forms, with preparation of a short document summarising the results obtained and the objectives to be pursued.

Prof. Grasseni then took the floor, stating that she agreed with the comments made so far and suggesting that the Agency proceed with caution in respect of the use of this type of questionnaires in comparative terms. They represent valuable feedback, but could have a distorting effect if used as a benchmarking tool. There is a student 'market', and universities compete to attract students and could exploit these instruments for their own interests. Prof. Laforgia then spoke to say that he agreed with all of the comments made by the other members involved in the discussion.

The President took the floor, advising that the summary document would be supplemented with the factors emerging from the current discussion and would then be sent to the ANVUR Governing Body.

The discussion on the third item on the agenda having been concluded, the President introduced the next item.

4. ENQA accreditation

Prof. Petrucci reported on the positive outcome of the accreditation procedure by ENQA, notified to the Agency in June, and continued with a review of the principal points of the final evaluation report. The President noted that there is a section in the report on the final recommendations reporting the information stated by the panel from the Advisory Committee heard by the ENQA during the inspection visit, relating to the need to explore new ways to involve the Committee to enable it to perform its consultative function.

Mattia Sguazzini took the floor, and requested information about the inclusion of ANVUR in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Prof. Petrucci confirmed that she would put the question to the Governing Body. Mattia Sguazzini added that the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) require evaluation agencies to have an advisory board and he therefore doubted that the EQAR would accredit ANVUR. Lastly, Mattia Sguazzini proposed that the ENQA be advised once again that the Advisory Committee was not called upon by the ANVUR Governing Board in its capacity as advisory board but, rather, merely as a working group. It was necessary to indicate that there is a persistent problem that has already been reported.

Discussion of the fourth item on the agenda having been concluded, the President introduced the next item.

5. Potential proposals for the ANVUR 2020 Activity Plan under Article 3(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Committee

The President advised that this agenda item had been included following a suggestion from the ANVUR Director, Daniele Livon. The President added that the ANVUR 2020 Activity Plan would be discussed and approved by the Governing Body by November and asked the members of the Committee to make any relevant proposals. The President herself took the floor first, and suggested that the 2020 Activity Plan include the following proposals: 1) with regard to AVA and in view of the new accreditation cycle, a survey could be undertaken on the performance of the inspections, involving a sort of self-evaluation of the most recent inspection cycle; 2) she suggested that the MIUR be asked to draw up a final version of the Single Annual Report Form on Departmental Research (SUA – RD); 3) with reference to the TECO project (TEst sulle Competenze, Skills Testing), she asked for clarification as to how the project would develop, whether the intention was to continue to operate using the same methods used so far or to make a change, given that this is currently an activity performed voluntarily and only for some disciplines.

Gabriele Rizzetto then took the floor, and proposed the introduction of a dialogue with ANVUR about the methods for evaluation of research outputs, because this could have have a significant impact on the next EQR.

Mattia Sguazzini spoke, and asked for consultations with the Advisory Committee to be calendared in the ANVUR 2020 Activity Plan. With regard to the request made in the past to make the the data processed for the purposes of preparing the *Third Biennial Report on the status of the university and research system* available in open format, Mattia Sguazzini noted that no response had been received from the Agency. Lastly, Mattia Sguazzini stated that it would be valuable for those data to be in open format and also noted the absence of information about the processing methods used.

Discussion of the fifth item on the agenda having been concluded, the President introduced the next item.

6. Working plan for the Advisory Committee, in accordance with Article 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Committee

The President reminded those present that Mattia Sguazzini was preparing a document relating to the proposed new Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Committee and that a draft would be provided as soon as possible.

The President urged those present to exchange views and suggestions over the coming months in relation to the changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Committee.

Prof. Lapicciarella took the floor, and stated that a body without specific guidelines serves no purpose and that a proactive approach must have an outlet. The non-attendance at meetings of the Advisory Committee was caused

by the fact that the Committee had no function.

Discussion of the sixth item on the agenda having been concluded, the President introduced the next item.

1. Other business

There was no Other Business.

The President thanked the participants and declared the meeting closed at 13:40. The next meeting will be held on 4 February 2020.

THE PRESIDENT (Prof. Alessandra Petrucci)*