

# **International Science Council (ISC)**

## **Activity report - Year 2023**

**Michele Muccini - Representative**

**Augusta Maria Paci – Alternate Representative**

### **1. Introduction**

The International Science Council (ISC) is a non-governmental international associative Entity for natural and social sciences, based in Paris, which promotes the values of science for society and which includes 40 International Scientific Unions, over 140 national scientific bodies, Academies and Council, and from 2022 also associative networks of young scientists. Since 2018, the year of the merger between ICSU and ISSC, the CNR has continued to join ISC, attributing an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental value to this Entity.

ISC's primary mission is to represent the global voice of science. The main activity consists in promoting coordinated and relevant actions to address issues that require integrating science, politics and society and which, at a global level, are summarized by the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs). Since 2022, ISC has developed new ways to involve members and to acquire associative scientific networks of young scientists. The purpose of ISC is to promote, through sharing and interdisciplinary collaboration, issues related to emerging global crises. ISC also promotes scientific dialogue without distinction of race, citizenship, religious or political belief and gender. Since 2022 it has become a relevant interlocutor of the United Nations on science and policies and collaborates with the various United Nations structures, contributing to thematic studies and projects, also involving members.

In 2023, numerous initiatives were carried out by the Governing Board and by the President Peter Gluckmann, elected in the General Assembly in October 2021 and in office until 2024. In particular, the Governing Board dedicated commitment both to updating the association statute and to the affirmation of ISC in the role of interlocutor for global science. This process, still not completed, is necessary to accredit the active role of ISC in the multilateral system in support of science and the scientific community in general with the aim of achieving significant improvements for the lives of people and the planet.

In this perspective, the ISC scientific structure has organized itself to collect requests for studies from third parties and offer scientific contributions in international working groups, projects and documents. Expert committees are established and individual participations selected through calls and notices published on the website, inviting ISC members to propose names. In particular in 2023, the commitment to involve members through the Call for Nominations to identify experts with relevant skills for initiatives and projects of the international intergovernmental system and in particular the United Nations continued. The operations of ISC are effectively carried out by the very active and articulated Secretariat, which in 2023 played an important liaison role with the members. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Salvatore Aricò, appointed in December 2022, coordinates the Secretariat's initiatives and represents ISC in events. ISC has achieved a notable level of dissemination and communication of its activities both in relation to its members and with the public and social media. This ability has therefore become increasingly relevant precisely for promptly communicating the multiple activities through an effective information and updating action towards and between members.

### **2. Significant activities for Italy and for CNR carried out in 2023 by ISC**

During 2023, the international scientific body ISC offered the possibility of accessing a space of multiple, global and interdisciplinary relationships to affirm the role of science for progress and sustainability.

In general, the participation of CNR representatives in ISC and in the initiatives and projects to which CNR contributed also in 2023, allowed them to participate in direct and practical experiences, to develop a better perception of the global perspective of scientific research and the factors of policies that currently intervene in the choices of governments and national research funding agencies. The cultural diversity in the implementation of projects and collaborations in ISC highlights the importance of broadening scientific perspectives to include reflections that express different societies and economies in the world, making science a necessary and also unifying activity for progress and protagonist of improvements.

By giving its members a voice for the common and priority objective, ISC therefore allows the development of elements and conditions founding a more open and aware practice and communication of science at a global level. This also constitutes an opportunity for visibility for people and events of CNR and of our Country, which have achieved excellent results internationally and are of potential interest in the global network.

In 2023, ISC strengthened the themes of Open science, Science Advice, Science Diplomacy, Women equality Plans and CNR delegates participated in the meetings with the President, being informed of the decisions taken by the Governing Board and the ongoing initiatives.

In fact, during 2023, under the leadership of President Gluckman, ISC characterized its international profile and consolidated relations with the United Nations, underlining the Mission of global science and the Vision of expressing a global voice of science. This approach was shared with members in the Mid-term Meeting of ISC Members: Capitalizing on Synergies in Science, which took place in Paris on 10-12 May 2023 and presented the main areas of strategic interest. The alternate representative of the CNR, Augusta Maria Paci, took part in this meeting, which marked an important stage towards the General Assembly to be held in Oman in 2025.

In this context, the participation of CNR, national member of ISC, continues to offer the Italian scientific system new and interesting collaboration opportunities within the framework of international work for the definition of the United Nations 2050 Agenda, interacting authoritatively in the broad panorama of relations science policy multilaterals. The thematic areas presented during the mid-term meeting in Paris represent a strategic plan with thematic priorities rather than a defined action plan, members will be contacted in 2024 for a consultation on these issues.

### **3. Activities carried out as Representative in 2023 within ISC and indications regarding the impact on the national scientific community**

Following the appointment of the Representatives by order of the President of the CNR on 14 February 2023, Dr. Michele Muccini and Dr. Augusta Maria Paci have been appointed Representative Delegate and Alternate Delegate respectively for the three-year period 2023-2026.

The associative activities carried out in 2023 were carried out in collaboration with the International Relations Unit of the CNR. In summary, the CNR's attention was focused on 4 actions for 2023:

1. Revision of the ISC Statute
2. Participation in ISC Roster of Experts
3. Monitoring of the UN WATER strategic topic
4. Participation in the Management Board of Euro-ISC

For these important actions, the Representative Delegate and the Alternate Delegate collaborated continuously.

For the Statute, particular active and proactive participation was necessary during the preliminary meetings and online voting sessions. The new Statute, approved online in 2024, will be ratified at the General Assembly in Oman in January 2025. The Review of the ISC Statute and Regulations was necessary to complete the transformation of ISC. There have been discussions with ISC members from other European countries and with the Secretariat. For this significant institutional activity, the CNR Delegate, Michele Muccini, participated in the voting of the extraordinary online General Assembly on 28-29 February.

In 2023, the CNR recommended 10 CNR experts to the ISC Call for Nominations Roster of Experts. These experts are therefore part of an ISC group divided into 20 themes for 2024 on science policy topics. The contribution of reflections, case studies, experiences can be freely submitted for Working Groups aimed at ISC Reports and events to contribute to UN policy for Agenda 2030. The UN Water issue continued to be the subject of attention by the CNR expert who invited ISC to participate in the event scheduled for 2024. In 2023 the CNR collaborated on the success of a European ISC Fellow candidacy.

As already reported, in 2021, the CNR was elected institutional member of the Euro-ISC Management Board Group for the three-year period 2022-24 and Augusta Maria Paci continued to collaborate in these activities. In 2023 the 6th Annual Meeting of Euro-ISC was organized in Podgorica, Montenegro on 14-15 September, at the invitation of the Academy of Sciences of Montenegro, the previous 5th Annual Meeting was organized in London at the invitation of the Royal Society and the British Academy on 12-13 October 2022.

The Euro-ISC Group is the network of European ISC members and aims to dialogue on important topics in ISC and to identify interests and synergies. The Euro-ISC group is made up of Academies and scientific

institutes and is currently chaired by the President prof. Tarmo Soomere President of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

Furthermore, the CNR Delegates ensured participation in the online meetings held by President Gluckman. These quarterly meetings aim to update and interact with members on the main activities established by the Governing Board. During these meetings, the President, after having illustrated the initiatives launched and having informed the members on ongoing or completed actions, offers the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. These conversations with the ISC President usually take place during specific ISC deadlines.

#### **4. Evaluation of participation in the ISC in relation to the benefits and costs of membership**

As mentioned, 2023 was characterized by a rapid organizational renewal of ISC. The Delegates developed contacts with the scientific network in a targeted way to focus the Science policy and inviting participation for the following purposes:

1. qualify the presence of CNR in ISC and increase the visibility of experts from the CNR scientific network. To this end, together with the International Relations Office, names were proposed for the ISC Call for Nominations and the participation of the CNR was highly appreciated.
2. Develop a relationship between the ISC Delegates and some CNR Delegates at other international scientific bodies. The collaboration with CNR researchers operating in IUPAC and the collaboration with SAR continued. This synergy made it possible to hold successful joint events.
3. Maintain annual appointments on transversal topics such as Gender Gap in February and Conversations on Sustainability in September. The participation of CNR researchers showed the high individual interest and of the research groups that joined the initiatives.

In the coming years, ISC will on the one hand accentuate the collaboration with the thematic offices of the United Nations, proposing itself as partners and on the other it will identify other collaborations on the main themes for policy actions. Furthermore, it will listen to National Members and their proposals for priority issues during the consultations.

The profound transformation of public research institutions that began in 2023 with important Forums and Associations for science in Europe and for the G7 countries, can benefit as a national member of ISC to participate in the global policy for science in the international arena. In fact, ISC allows access to a dynamic space of global and common comparison and dialogue, rich in multiple and interdisciplinary relationships, strengthened by the scientific solidity of important research institutions and international scientific unions. In this perspective, ISC intends to acquire the profile of "Umbrella Organization" for science, guaranteeing its members a representative place in the multiplicity of institutions and bodies. In this way, ISC can, from time to time, offer the individual associate and individual researcher greater opportunities for visibility, participation, inclusion, integration and influence to bring shareable messages globally.

With membership involvement, ISC is able to develop an authoritative voice to speak to policy makers about the need for policies and decisions for a role for science in addressing global challenges, progress and sustainability.

#### **5. Evaluations of Italian participation with proposals to improve interest and involvement in ISC**

The participation of the CNR scientific network which is being configured with the ISC Roster of Experts can constitute a first basis for bringing the world of research closer to scientific and transversal policy issues. Furthermore, in relation to more specific requests for skills and experience at an international level, we will continue to submit applications. The successful return of applications in response to ISC's Call for Nominations will continue to be the important way to succeed in highly competitive selections globally. In particular, reference is made to the November 2023 ISC invitation to members to nominate experts to participate in an international meeting published by the IPCC. The nominations of the national experts, to whom the CNR presented a candidacy, were collected by the Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change (CMCC), as IPCC Focal Point for Italy.

An information action could be launched by the ISC Delegates with the CNR Delegates at the Scientific Unions to verify interest in transversal initiatives often started by ISC involving the Presidents of the Scientific Unions.

Such contacts could be useful for the launch of the Decade of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development in 2024. Collaboration could be a way to bring international scientific unions together on some objectives of Italian science, facilitating very demanding organizational aspects at the level of a single associative body.

ISC's transversal work themes such as Open science, Science Advice, Science Diplomacy, Gender Equality could be presented and shared in an online event directly by ISC President Peter Gluckman or by a member of the Governing Board to the Italian Representatives.

## **6. Italian experts with top roles appointed within ISC or in related Commissions and Programs (of which we are aware)**

Still in office, after the elections which took place in 2021, are two Italian representatives who participated in 2022 respectively 1) for the ISC Governing Board, Prof. Maria Paradiso, (Federico II University of Naples), geographer, representative holder for the CNR of the International Geographical Union (IGU/UGI), and 2) for the Management Board of the Euro-ISC Group which is made up of representatives of European Academies of Sciences, Dr. Augusta Maria Paci, currently Associate Technologist Manager at the ICCOM-CNR Institute and ISC Alternate Representative.

The Euro-ISC Group, made up of 49 representatives of the European Academies of Sciences, aims to share the ISC priority actions in the European context to enhance the European perspective and the activities of the European members in the global action plan carried out by ISC in collaboration with the United Nations and partners from other continents. The 6th annual meeting was held on 14-15 September in Podgorica, hosted by the Academy of Sciences of Montenegro. For the CNR, Dr. participated in person. Stefano degli Uberti and Dr. Augusta Maria Paci online.

## **7. If Body with Italian Committee, brief summary of the Commission's 2023 activities**

There is no National ISC Commission. In 2023 the Delegates brought attention to the importance of resuming contact with the Accademia dei Lincei. The possibility remains open, in the event of significant events, to contact the International Relations Office of the Accademia dei Lincei to evaluate interest in possible collaboration proposals.

## **8. Notes**

ISC is a particular international body which, not dedicating itself to a specific disciplinary area, takes on an interdepartmental character in the CNR and the specialized scientific contributions are very relevant for characterizing science policy proposals. The delegates appointed by the President of the CNR currently belong to the Department of Chemical Sciences. Various publications online and in periodicals have been created with the aim of improving the dissemination of information about the ISC objectives aimed at stimulating all scientific knowledge.

## **9. Conclusions**

For the multiple and relevant ISC activities carried out in the last year and which have been highlighted in this report, for Italy's roles in the ISC body and for the involvement of CNR experts with different experiences and characterizations, it is hoped to achieve a growth both in the visibility of the CNR in ISC in the medium term and in the opportunities to interact efficiently in the global network.

The CNR will be able to benefit from new approaches and initiatives by taking advantage of ISC's proposals to open up to perspectives on science at a global level.

As previously mentioned, in the coming years the commitment to developing a dialogue and potential collaborations between the CNR Delegates in international scientific bodies could constitute a significant factor in the growth and valorization of the CNR's skills in the natural and human sciences at a global level.

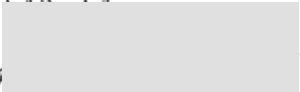
In fact, due to the intensified interconnections between the areas of the ISC world it can be very useful for research activities that can broaden perspectives and prepare to address a sense-making process and greater awareness of crisis issues through associative collaboration in ISC global.

Therefore, identifying areas of direct collaboration between CNR and ISC, in the next three years, may become relevant for the CNR to maximize the impacts of scientific and innovation activities in sustainable transformation quickly and effectively.

The membership of the CNR in ISC can represent and contribute to strengthening the voice of Italian science and research towards the international world which already appreciates its competence and seriousness and towards society as a whole.

The hope is therefore that the CNR can continue to participate actively in ISC and involve researchers who have been engaged and active for years in relevant European projects and in European associations in the various opportunities that will arise. In fact, ISC can develop new capabilities and understanding of the impacts of scientific activities at a global level.

Signature  
Michele Muccini Representative



Augusta Maria Paci Alternate Representative  
ICCOM-CNR Associate

Place and date

Rome 31 July 2024

