

Minutes Board Meeting (December 3-4, 2025) – ELI Beamlines, Prague, Czechia

Present

Board members: Kristel Crombé (KC – Chair), Ken McClements (KM - Hon. Sec.), Hana Barankova (HB), Agata Chomiczewska (AC), Fabrizio Consoli (FC), Andrew Gibson (AG), Daniela Grasso (DG), Costanza Maggi (CM), Mervi Mantsinen (MM), Daniele Margarone (DM), Emanuele Poli (EP), Brian Reville (BR), Monica Spolaore (MS), Luca Volpe (LV)

EPS2025 PC chair and LOC representatives: Marija Vranic (MV - remote), Jelena Tamulienė (JT - remote), Alice Trägerova (AT)

EPS2026 PC chair and LOC chair: Fernanda Rimini (FR), Fulvio Militello (FM - remote)

EPS2027 LOC chair: Yves Martin (YM - remote)

EPS2028 LOC chair: Pablo Cirrone (PC)

AAPPS representative: Mitsuru Kichuchi (MK - remote)

APS representative: Félicie Albert (FA - remote)

PPCF representative: Jon Graves (JG)

Apologies

Catarina Riconda (CR), Corinne Champeaux (CC)

Open session minutes

1. EPS 2025 conference - Vilnius

1.1 Report from the LOC (AT)

AT delivered a brief, final LOC report on the Vilnius conference. She reported that around 10 – 20 Chinese scientists had been forced to cancel their participation due to being unable to obtain visas in time. A total of 43,850 euros had been received in sponsorship. There was no room hire charge for the Women in Plasma Physics (WiPP) lunch: it was necessary to pay only for the lunch itself. Overall, the conference almost exactly broke even, with a net profit of under 600 euros. There were 499 registrations in total (including cancellations), of whom 96% registered ahead of the early deadline. Of these, 12% paid the EPS member rate, 53% the non-member rate, and 30% the student rate. The remaining 5% registrations were complimentary. The country with the highest number of registrations was Germany (16%). The leading non-European countries were the USA (10%), Republic of Korea (5%) and Japan (4%). MV asked if there had been any follow-up with sponsors; AT said that she would find out.

1.2 Report from the PC (MV)

MV delivered the final PC report, first thanking AT and KC for their assistance. All of the feedback she has received on the conference has been very positive; many people had congratulated the organisers for holding a successful conference. However, a number of lessons could be drawn. First, the PC realised only after the invited/plenary selections had been made that there was to some extent a lack of balance, although it is in any case difficult to achieve balance in every respect (topically, geographically, in terms of gender, etc.). The PC first met online in early September 2024. MV suggested that the PC chair and sub-chairs should also meet early on in the conference cycle to discuss their roles. She feels that the eligibility rules for invited/plenary speakers need to be clarified and that there should be a better flow of information from one PC to the next. The PPD should store information on best practice for the scientific organisation of the conference and provide it to each successive PC. MV reported that some PC members had struggled to persuade their institutes to pay the conference registration fee and the costs of attending PC meetings. To offset the registration fee, she argued that the EPS-PPD should try to persuade some sponsors to have a presence at every conference and commented that many low temperature plasma companies would be interested in doing this. She suggests that there should be a dedicated member of the board coordinating sponsorship: MM was in favour of this idea. To help with the costs of PC membership generally she asked the board to consider the provision of back-up funding for attendance at meetings. Another way of cutting costs would be to make the March PC meeting online only.

A childcare facility at the 2025 conference was considered but ultimately not provided because it was found to be far too expensive. MV suggested the introduction of a family grant to make it easier for participants with childcare responsibilities to attend the conference, starting perhaps with just a few such grants as a pilot scheme. MM asked what level of support might be offered; MV suggested 500 euros. AT commented that fewer than 10 participants had expressed interest in childcare services at EPS2025. It is expensive because of the need to pay insurance costs. MK commented that the AAPPS-DPP provides support for participants in its annual conference from less well-funded Asian countries such as Vietnam and suggested that the EPS-PPD should have a similar support fund. DG suggested that facilities for breast-feeding mothers should be provided and emphasised that fathers as well as mothers could benefit from making the conference more family-friendly. On the sponsorship issue, DG felt that the central EPS should be responsible for this. KC countered with the point that the PPD has better knowledge of who the likely sponsors are. EP suggested that conference fees could be waived for PC members: KC said that she would be in favour of doing this for participants from Ukraine.

There was some discussion of the proposal to have a sponsorship coordinator on the board. This could be just a contact person: there could also be a sponsorship *expert* outside the board. MM would like there to be more transparency in financial

matters. KC made the point that finances are controlled by the central EPS. The funds are held in one bank account, with portions allocated to each division and group. It might be worth considering the appointment of a board treasurer whose role would be restricted to the reporting of debits from and credits to the DPP portion of the account.

1.3 Report on the PPCF Special Issue (JG)

JG started with the comment that the special issue of PPCF linked to the annual conference continues to be important for both the EPS-PPD and the journal. A total of 23 articles have been submitted so far for the EPS2025 special issue. There were only 10 papers in 2023 and 29 in 2024. Only one or two additional papers at most were expected for the 2025 issue. Several lessons had been learned from the 2023 experience, for example that the special issue needs to be flagged to potential contributors ahead of the conference. In the 2024 special issue there was a fairly balanced representation of the subject areas, although with more BSAP papers than BPIF ones. MV had very helpfully provided to JG a list of possible referees for the 2025 special issue, suggested by the PC sub-chairs. JG reported that he had received many requests for extensions of the submission deadline, and that papers were still being received in the first week of December. His preferred deadline is the end of August.

MM informed JG that there was a new winner of the Jacquemot Prize (see item 9 below), supported by PPCF, and asked for the prize money to be paid as soon as possible. JG said that this could be arranged at any time of the PPD Board's choosing by Iain Trotter at IOP Publishing.

There was some debate regarding a proposal to include papers based on contributed orals in the special issue. Concerns were expressed that such a move would dilute the prestige for invited and plenary authors of having a paper in this issue. To counter this, JG suggested having a breakdown on the webpage between plenary/invited and contributed papers. CM made the alternative proposal of having a separate special issue of PPCF for contributed orals, with the possible addition of contributed posters at a later stage. JG was strongly in favour of this idea, since it would address the concerns regarding the prestige of publishing in the plenary/invited special issue, although it was noted that it could accelerate the decline of the 4-page contributed proceedings papers. The discussion moved on to the question of whether to implement this change in 2026 and, if so, whether the new special issue should be for contributed orals only or for orals plus selected posters, the latter chosen by guest editors on the basis of submitted 4-page papers. JG said that he would put these proposals to the PPCF Executive Board and inform the PPD Board of its decision.

2. EPS 2026 conference - Edinburgh

2.1 Current status from the LOC (FM)

FM gave an update on local preparations for EPS2026. A conference app is being designed and contributed abstract submission will open on January 5, 2026. Two

organisations have so far expressed interest in sponsorship. FR, noting that some days of the conference could be very long, asked if it would be possible to have five rather than four parallel sessions. FM replied that this should be possible, depending on how large the parallel sessions are. No more than 300 people will be able to attend the public lecture. This will be primarily aimed at the general public: it will not be advertised on the conference website since the LOC doesn't want to flood the event with conference attendees. It is not under the direct control of the LOC.

DG wanted participants to be asked their gender at registration and suggested that they would be more likely to provide this information if the reasons for seeking it were explained and if assurances of privacy were provided. DG also commented that she would like there to be a WiPP plenary talk as well as a lunch. KC made the point that 90 minutes is generally allocated for lunch, potentially giving sufficient time for both a plenary talk and lunch in the same slot. MM suggested that the WiPP talk could be scheduled on the Tuesday evening. DG, however, was not keen on allocating an evening slot for this. HB reported that there had been some complaints at EPS2025 from people who had expressed interest in the WiPP lunch but were unable to go. DG asked if a sponsor for the lunch would be sought: FM affirmed that this was the case.

2.2 Report from the PC (FR)

FR reported on the PC meeting at ELI Beamlines on December 2 2025, commenting first that one day was not sufficient for the committee to complete its deliberations. She proposes that 1.5 days be allocated in the future to the December PC meeting.

For the first time self-nominations for invited and plenary talks had been allowed, and a significant number had been received, but none were selected. A rough schedule for the conference has been worked out. It is intended that there will not be a poster session on the Friday and only contributed orals in the afternoon followed by a closing plenary session, finishing at around 16:00. A dedicated stellarator session, focussing on physics gaps, is planned. Bids in this category were dominated by Germany. Tokamak bids covered the topics of tungsten physics, negative triangularity, ELM-free and ELM-suppressed regimes, gyrokinetics, exhaust and runaway electrons. Moritz Linkmann (University of Edinburgh) was not initially selected, but FR indicated that she would endeavour to find a slot for him in the programme. There will be one invited talk on ITER (boronization of plasma-facing surfaces). CM suggested that there were too many plenaries by around a factor of two in the draft programme: KM commented that there is only one plenary per day at the APS-DPP meeting.

The possibility of US-based speakers withdrawing from the conference was raised (there were no US participants at the 2025 IAEA Fusion Energy Conference). It was noted that one of the US plenary speakers, Thomas Eich, was from the private sector and hence unlikely to cancel, while the other one was partly funded by the US Department of Defence, and for this reason also perhaps a low cancellation risk. BR commented that he was happy with invited or plenary speakers from private companies provided that the talks had clear scientific content: in response MM observed that the

physics content of Alex Creely's (CFS) talk at EPS2025 was rather weak. CM expressed the view that private companies should only be allocated oral slots if they have experimental results to present. FR countered with the point that younger scientists especially need to be made aware of likely future developments in the field. It was suggested that Germany was over-represented in the selections; in response EP pointed out that the German IPP is a large institute. CM proposed downgrading one of the German plenaries to an invited talk; FR was willing to accept this.

KC suggested that participants could be offered a choice between talks or free time on the Wednesday afternoon, and reminded the board that there would need to be slots for two Alfvén Prize winners (2025 and 2026). MM was concerned about moving the Jacquemot Prize talk to the Monday afternoon to make time for the second Alfvén talk in the opening session: BR proposed moving the 2025 Alfvén prize talk to the afternoon instead.

3. EPS 2027 conference – Lausanne (YM)

YM reported that the SwissTech Convention Center (STCC) near EPFL would be the conference venue. The main auditorium can accommodate up to 800 participants and is adjustable. Rooms can be easily added or subtracted, depending on the requirements of the programme. There is plenty of space for posters and a separate area for coffee breaks plus an exhibition. The first phase of registration and the pre-conference board meeting will take place at the Swiss Plasma Center. The STCC will provide an all-inclusive package for exhibitors. YM sought and obtained confirmation that the board would be in favour of Indico being used for abstract submission. He is currently assuming that there will be around 500 - 600 participants. It was pointed out that 2027 will be an IAEA Fusion Energy Conference year, and that this may reduce somewhat the number of participants since many institutes limit the number of conferences that their employees can attend each year. It will be possible to keep the registration fee low to some extent since STCC charges a special rate for EPFL. The fee will be set at a level that aims for a balanced budget if there are 600 paying participants, but the exact amount has yet to be determined due to uncertainties in some costs, for example that of the coffee breaks.

For accommodation, a block of rooms will be reserved at a range of hotels. There are no plans to organise a programme of events for accompanying persons but excursions are planned for the Wednesday afternoon. The STCC is one of five options being considered for the Monday evening welcome reception. Two options are being considered for the gala dinner: the École Hôtelière de Lausanne and the Olympic Museum. YM asked who the contact was on the board for the WiPP lunch: DG indicated that she had taken that role. He also asked whether there would be an event like Generation Fusion at EPS2025 and who the contact on the board was for these events: he was told that there is no such person at present. YM suggested that there could be a satellite meeting on moving large plasma databases to Europe from the USA. MM was in favour of this for databases generally. On a different topic, she asked if there would

be provision for childcare during the conference: YM said that this had not yet been considered. He commented that a smaller conference will take place in Lausanne from September 28 to October 2 2026 (the IAEA Technical Meeting on Energetic Particles in Magnetic Confinement Systems), and that this will be a useful dry run for EPS2027. The possibility of charging public and private bodies different rates to exhibit at the conference was raised. AG commented that LTDP conferences don't discriminate in this way, and both FC and DG were opposed to the idea.

4. EPS 2028 conference

PC reminded the board that Taormina in Sicily will be the venue for this conference. He is considering the option of organising buses from Catania Airport to this location and is getting advice from FC. The dates have yet to be fixed: PC asked if the conference could take place in either May or September 2028 to avoid having to pay Summer high season prices. KC said that June, including early June, might be possible; KM commented that he had attended EPS plasma conferences in the past that took place in early June. The main concern with this timing is that the academic year at some universities may not have finished by then. PC is starting to choose LOC members from various research institutes in Italy. FC said that he favoured having five parallel sessions at this conference. He also commented on the importance of ensuring that lunch options are available. PC said that this would not be a problem since Taormina is a popular tourist destination. KC pointed out that the central EPS offers a conference service, but the PPD hasn't used them, so she was unable to comment on the quality provided. The company that organised EPS2025 (C-IN, based in Prague) is another option. A final decision on the venue in Taormina has not yet been made, but the Giardini Naxos Hotel on the seafront is the currently preferred option.

5. Report from AAPPS-DPP representative

MK reported that the AAPPS-DPP had nearly 4000 members and would be holding its 10th annual conference in 2026 (Busan, Republic of Korea, October 11-16). Its flagship award is the Chandrasekhar Prize and it also coordinates an award similar to the EPS-DPP Innovation Prize. Noting the Landau-Spitzer Prize, he suggested that it may be worth setting up a similar award for collaborations between plasma physicists in Europe and Asia. The 2025 AAPPS-DPP annual conference at Fukuoka, Japan had nearly 900 participants despite occurring at almost the same time as the IAEA Fusion Energy Conference. KC observed that the AAPPS-PPD is growing and suggested that the AAPPS-PPD Women in Plasma Physics representative should work with her EPS counterpart. MK commented that the AAPPS-DPP conference has a large number of invited talks and relatively few posters. This is partly due to the fact that many Asian countries do not support conference attendance except for invited speakers.

6. Report from APS-DPP representative

FA informed the board that Carolyn Kuranz (University of Michigan) is now chair of the APS-DPP; FA is chair-elect. There were 2165 registrations for the 2025 APS-DPP annual meeting (Long Beach CA, November 17-21), of whom around 92% actually participated, in-person or remotely. Nominations for the Maxwell Prize will close in early April 2026. EP asked if the sexual minority discrimination concerns relating to the proposed choice of venue for the 2027 annual meeting (Memphis TN) had been resolved. FA replied that an APS-DPP working group had considered the options for 2027, taking into account financial penalties that would have applied had the venue been cancelled, and decided in favour of Memphis, despite the concerns. KM commented that the number of attendees at the APS-DPP annual meeting was holding up well and asked how many participants were from the private sector. FA didn't have exact figures but acknowledged that a significant proportion of attendees were from fusion startups.

Closed session minutes

7. Minutes of previous meeting (KMC)

The minutes of the previous full meeting of the board on June 25 and July 6 2025 were approved. The actions in these minutes were all closed. AC commented that an action for KM, to generate and distribute a table assigning tasks to board members, was incomplete because she was not listed in it as statistics coordinator.

Action: KM to add AC to the table listing tasks assigned to board members.

8. Landau-Spitzer Award (CM)

CM is taking over the role of coordinating this prize from former board member Vladimir Tikhonchuk. She gave a brief presentation, informing the board that the 2026 award will be made at that year's APS-DPP annual meeting (Chicago, November 2 - 6). The APS-DPP will take the lead. Nominations will open on January 1 and close on April 1 2026. European members of the selection committee will be CM, Frederico Fiúza (IST) and Michel Koenig (LULI). Self-nominations will not be accepted. There was a brief discussion concerning eligibility. It was agreed that there needs to be an element of collaboration between Europe and the USA in the work that is recognised, but the award is generally made to individual scientists.

9. EPS – PPCF Sylvie Jacquemot Early Career Prize (MM)

MM commented that there had been 10 nominations for the prize this year, lower than in the two previous years. She suggested that this may have been because the prize money was not mentioned in the nomination call. Before the meeting board members

had previously been asked to list their top candidates: from the responses received, MM had reduced the number of nominees under consideration to 5. She then chaired a *tour de table* discussion in which each board member was given an opportunity to express their views on the merits of these 5 candidates. From this discussion, Liz Grace (LLNL) emerged as the winner.

MM indicated that she wants the prize winner to be guaranteed a talk on the first day of the EPS annual plasma conference. In future calls, she also wants to stipulate a minimum of 3 years postdoctoral research experience as one of the eligibility criteria (nominees this year included very recent PhD graduates). There was some discussion of whether to change the rule that nominees should have no *more* than 6 years postdoctoral experience. Some board members were in favour of extending the period to 7 or 8 years, but no formal decision was taken. MM remarked that no nominees in the 3 years of the prize so far had invoked career breaks as a reason for requesting an extension of the eligibility period.

10. Innovation Prize (HB)

HB reminded the board that the call for nominations for this prize had been issued and that February 1 2026 had been set as the deadline. A reminder email will be sent out in January. A decision on whether to award the prize and to whom will be needed before the meeting of the EPS2026 PC on March 2 – 3 2026. This decision may be taken at an online meeting of the board.

11. PhD Prizes (MS)

MS reported that nominations for these prizes had closed on November 21, 2025 and that 6 out of 26 nominees are women. There is a maximum of four awards. The breakdown of nominations between plasma physics topics is as follows: 15 MCF, 3 BPIF, 4 BSAP and 4 LTDP. A list of possible judges was discussed: a panel of 5 judges needs to be selected from this list. EP asked how possible conflicts of interest were dealt with. MS made the point that judges are mostly retired scientists who generally don't have such conflicts. Some additional proposals were made for the panel.

Action: MS to contact potential judges and select panel.

12. Alfvén Prize (BR)

BR chaired a *tour de table* discussion in which each board member was given an opportunity to express their views on the merits of the eight nominees or teams of nominees for this prize. A vote was then taken, which reduced the number of candidates under consideration to three. The board was initially unable to reach a majority decision on which of these remaining candidates should be selected for the prize. KC asked board members to send her brief emails justifying their choice of candidate. At a subsequent online meeting of the board, on December 12 2025, Philippa Browning (University of Manchester) emerged as the winner.

It was noted that the Alfvén Prize statutes need to be revised to be consistent with a new requirement introduced by the central EPS for each prize, that both men and women must be nominated for the prize to be awarded.

Action: BR to draft a modification to the Alfvén Prize statutes to incorporate this rule.

13. Status of EPS2027 PC

A number of proposals have been made for the MCF sub-committee but more are needed, and it was noted in particular that no CEA representatives have so far been proposed. A separate selection meeting for this sub-committee was required, but this could be delayed until January if necessary. A full list of BSAP sub-committee members has been proposed, but nominations for BPIF and LTDP are still needed. Also it was noted that an overall chair of the PC was needed, and that if possible the chair should be from LTDP.

Action: KM to arrange online meeting of MCF board members to select MCF sub-committee for EPS2027 PC.

14: Open Discussion

14.1 Report from Inclusivity Subgroup (MM)

MM reported on the activities of the working group (WG) that organised the WiPP lunch at EPS2025 in Vilnius: this WG had been chaired by MM. There had been a very lively discussion at this lunch and a document summarising the discussions and recommendations had been prepared. MM is planning a dissemination campaign, including a blog post on the PPD website, a LinkedIn post and a new WiPP Actions webpage or section on the PPD website. Going forward, DG will coordinate the activities of this subgroup.

14.2 Relations of PPD with central EPS (KC)

KC reported that she was now on the EPS Executive Committee, which meets regularly in Mulhouse, France. She has made contact with the webmaster for the new EPS website, Ahmed Ouarab, and has raised with him a planned switch from CIEMAT to the central EPS site as the main PPD web host. A meeting will be arranged between Ahmed, EP and KM to discuss the timetable and practicalities of this switch.

KC informed the board that she would step down as PPD chair and also from the board itself at EPS2027. The board will need to have elected a new chair by that time.

Action: Board members to consider whether they would be willing to serve as PPD chair.

14.3 Location of December 2026 Board Meeting (All)

ENEA (Frascati, Italy) was proposed as the venue for the December 2026 EPS2027 PC and board meetings, with Madrid as a back-up, and with Tuesday December 1 – Thursday December 3 as the most likely dates.

Action: FC to check with ENEA whether these meetings can be hosted at Frascati on the dates proposed.

14.4 Visibility of DPP, presence in social media (AG)

AG reported that he had drafted a set of terms of reference for DPP's engagement with social media and would circulate this document to the board. The issue of whether to target Europe only (i.e. not the rest of the world) was discussed. KM expressed the hope that the division would not have a presence on the X social media platform.

Action: AG to circulate to board draft set of terms of reference for engagement with social media.

15. Next Board Meeting

The next in-person meeting of the board will take place in Edinburgh (at a venue to be decided, but likely to be a room at the University of Edinburgh) on Sunday June 28 2026 from 17:00 to 19:00.

16. Any other business

In the closed session the board agreed with the suggestion of a separate special issue of PPCF for contributed papers, including posters selected on the basis of 4-page paper submissions, starting in 2026, provided that this was strictly voluntary and that there would be no delay in the start of abstract submissions for EPS2026 (scheduled for January 5 2026).

MM would like to have better time keeping at board meetings to avoid a rush to complete the agenda towards the end. She suggested that some agenda items could be fully online, such as the reports from the APS and AAPPs representatives. CM proposed that an in-person December meeting could prioritise important items such as the Alfvén Prize, with a separate fully online meeting on a different day to deal with other matters. KC commented that it might then be possible to revert to a one day in-person meeting. However EP said that he didn't want to reduce the present one and a half days allocated to the December in-person meeting.