



Young European Associated Researchers

Annual Report 2022



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the end of the COVID crisis, the YEAR network could finally perform its main goal again: bringing early-career researchers together. For the first time in three years, we were able to organise our conference in September. This year's conference was hosted by SINTEF in Trondheim, Norway. It provided networking opportunities and training for professional development, idea generation and networking. A month later, we again brought together a group of enthusiastic researchers, this time in Cork (Ireland), where we organised a training session on the writing of proposals for Horizon Europe, hosted by Tyndall National Institute.

The possibility of organising face-to-face events again, in combination with the webinar and online training programme that we developed in the previous COVID years, resulted in our most diverse gamma of events since the foundation of our network. Our events ranged from targeting specific research topics (blockchain, quantum technologies), to necessary research skills (e.g., proposal writing, networking) and soft skills (the balanced researcher, burn-out prevention). We noticed that in the aftermath of COVID, the last category formed the most attended events, indicating that we should more than ever keep an eye on the mental health of our early-career researchers.

We are optimistic that we can proceed on the path taken. In 2023, we aim for an increase in our activities by organising nine high-quality events, including our annual conference hosted by Tyndall National Institute and two face-to-face training sessions. The rest of our programme will be completed with webinars and online training. These events will, like this year, be focused on networking, skills development, and attention for the mental health of our early-career researchers.

Jef Bergmans

President, Young European Associated Researchers

2 YEAR VISION AND MISSION

2.1 WHO WE ARE

YEAR, the Young European Associated Researchers Network, is a non-profit organisation gathering young professionals from different Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) and Industrial Research Bodies (IRBs) across Europe. YEAR aims to support the career of young researchers, providing them with opportunities to increase their skills, spread their professional network and gain international experience.

2.2 OUR MEMBERS

At the end of 2022 the YEAR member organisations were:

- **AICIA** – Andalusian Association for Research and Industrial Cooperation (Spain)
- **AIT** – Austrian Institute of Technology (Austria)
- **RISE** – Research Institutes of Sweden (Sweden)
- **SINTEF** (Norway)
- **TNO** – Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (The Netherlands)
- **TYNDALL** – Tyndall National Institute (Ireland)
- **VITO** – Vlaamse instelling voor technologisch onderzoek (Belgium)
- **VTT** – Technical Research Centre of Finland (Finland)



2.3 OUR MISSION

The YEAR Network exists to support its member organisations by giving tailored opportunities to young researchers to develop their careers. We have a special emphasis on the internationalisation of research, and we achieve our mission through the three following pillars:

1. **NETWORKING** across different fields of science and technology within an international context and supporting mobility initiatives of young researchers.
2. **TRAINING** through various events (topic-specific seminars, webinars, workshops and the annual conference), dealing with key issues aiming to improve young professionals' skills within the European Research Area.
3. **CONSULTANCY** to represent the young European researchers on important and timely topics at the European Commission level.



“ It was my honor to open the 2022 YEAR conference in Trondheim. Young researchers are one of the most important resources we have in the fight against climate change, we must do all we can to support and encourage their curiosity and their development. YEAR is also an important arena for international sharing of expertise and different perspectives. Keep up the good work! ”

Inge Røinaas Gran
CEO, SINTEF Energy Research

3 REPORT 2022

3.1 ACTIVITIES

3.1.1 Summary of activities

After two years with no face-to-face events, in 2022 we managed to maintain our high number of online events while organising two face-to-face training events. In this section, we provide a high-level overview of these events. Note that details of these events could be found on YEAR's website under Events (<https://www.year-network.com/events/>). In summary, in 2022, we organised a total of six online events (including webinars and trainings) in addition to a face-to-face training session in Cork, Ireland and our annual conference in Trondheim, Norway.

3.1.2 YEAR Annual Conference 2022

The YEAR Annual Conference was held on September 26-27 and hosted by SINTEF at Trondheim, Norway. The event targeted young and early career researchers from YEAR member organisations. It provided networking opportunities and training for professional development and idea generation. The annual conference was then accompanied on the 28th of September by a visit of SINTEF Energy labs.

Professional development & idea generation

The key focus of this year's YEAR conference was on professional development & idea generation which was facilitated by Joppe Quaedvlieg. In the two-day conference, 59 young researchers from SINTEF, VTT, VITO, TNO, AIT, Tyndall, and RISE had the opportunity to learn the theory and apply theoretical knowledge in interactive sessions. First day of the conference started with a welcome speech from the CEO of SINTEF Energy Research and YEAR board, followed by the first session about active listening and understanding others' needs. In the afternoon session, theory was applied in a live networking exercise. In the second day of the conference, the theme was more focused where the participants learned about expressing what they have to offer in a professional environment. Later in the day, Joppe introduced the participants to tools for keeping track of their network which were demonstrated in a group work with the intention for each group to start a project together in the future. The conference concluded on the third day with a lab visit during the morning.



Prior to the conference, there was an optional social weekend planned. It started with a city tour on Saturday followed by a coffee break and a dinner in the evening with mini golf. On Sunday participants went on a hike in the surroundings of Trondheim.



3.1.3 Trainings and Webinars

In this year, we offered monthly online events– a mix of training sessions and topic-specific webinars. Moreover, apart from the organisation of YEAR’s annual conference in Trondheim, Norway, a training event was organised in Cork, Ireland. In the remainder of this section, we provide a summary of the events organised in 2022.

- YEAR Pub Quiz (January 25, 2022)

<https://www.year-network.com/ourevents/year-pub-quiz-2/>

This event was organised mainly with a networking purpose. Researchers from different RTOs were placed within different groups and asked to answer a series of questions prepared for them prior to the event by YEAR. Over 20 researchers from the member RTOs attended this event.

- Blockchain technology (March 3, 2022)

<https://www.year-network.com/ourevents/year-blockchain-webinar/>

This topic-specific webinar brought together two researchers from YEAR Member Organizations – Guillaume Bour from Sintef (who talked about blockchain for fish supply chain traceability), and Erik de Graaf (who talked about electronic voting with blockchain) from TNO – to talk about Blockchain technology. Over 50 researchers attended this webinar.

- Beyond preventing burnout: How to thrive as a scientist (April 1, 2022)

<https://www.year-network.com/ourevents/beyond-preventing-burnout-how-to-thrive-as-a-scientist/>

In this 90-minute training session, Déborah Rupert from Dear Academia dove deep into topics beyond preventing burnout. This topic is of high importance especially for those who conduct research in a highly competitive environment where scientists are required to constantly perform at the top to push the limit of knowledge. The training was one of our most attended trainings with over 100 attendees.

- The balanced researcher (June 29, 2022)

<https://www.year-network.com/ourevents/the-balanced-researcher/>

Our final event before the beginning of the summer break was a two-hour webinar that focused on properties of a balanced researcher. The presenter was Hugh Kearns. Amongst the topics presented, one could find important matters such as (i) how to be effective with your time, (ii) how to cope with email overload, (iii) how to deal with distractions and interruptions, and (iv) how to say NO gracefully. Over 90 researchers attended this webinar.

- Quantum Technologies (September 5, 2022)

<https://www.year-network.com/ourevents/quantum-technologies/>

Our first event after the summer break was a webinar focusing on quantum technologies. In this webinar, 3 researchers from VTT (Himadri Majumdar), Tyndall (Gediminas Juska), and TNO (Önder Gül) presented their work and focus connected to quantum technologies. Over 25 researchers attended this webinar.

- How to write proposals for Horizon Europe @ Tyndall, Ireland (October 26-27, 2022)

<https://www.year-network.com/ourevents/year-seminar-cork-ireland/>

This training event was our second face-to-face training event organised in 2022. It was organised with the support of Tyndall as the local organiser of the training. Over 30 researchers got together in a two-day training event learning about key techniques on how to write a good proposal for Horizon Europe. The trainer of this event was one of Europe's most highly esteemed and sought-after trainers – Sean Mc Carthy of Hyperion. The event included one day of training with Sean, and a day of information on ERC and MSCA Grants with speakers from Tyndall and University College Cork (Louise Burgoyne, Martin O'Connell, Maria Aburto, Michael Nolan, Sinan Bugu, and Patrick Morrissey).



- From research to market: A success story from 3 RTO spin-offs (December 8, 2022)

<https://www.year-network.com/ourevents/from-research-to-market-a-success-story-from-three-rto-spin-offs/>

Our final event of the year was a webinar that gave three speakers the opportunity to share their journeys from research to market. The presenters were from three different RTOs, providing the audience with a good overview of similarities and differences between their journeys. Simo Ellilä (VTT) talked about eniferBio, a Finnish biotech start-up producing game-changing protein ingredients through fermentation; Alexis Sevault (Sintef) presented his journey from an internal project on Thermal Energy Storage to a start-up; and John D. Lambkin (Tyndall) talked about Firecomms, a technology company whose principal business is manufacturing optical transceivers for use in industrial power electronics and medical applications. Over 25 researchers attended this webinar.

3.1.4 Consultancy

Activities conducted under the pillar “Consultancy” enable YEAR to increase its visibility as the “voice” of young European researchers. In 2022, the YEAR network delegated a representative to the Industrial Forum organised by the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs. We will continue to voice our opinion there in 2023.

3.2 BOARD MEETINGS

The YEAR Board had monthly online Board Meetings and two General Assemblies: beginning of June (VITO, Belgium) and end of September (connected to our annual conference at Sintef, Trondheim). The aims of these meetings were to gather at least one representative per member organisation and to take representative decisions.

- We discussed and planned the organisation of our conference, seminar and webinars.
- We made sure to keep a healthy financial balance.
- We discussed our role in the EC Industrial Forum on the Green Deal.

3.3 INTERNAL YOUNG NETWORKS

YEAR has been supporting the creation of internal networks of young professionals inside each member organisation, with Tyndall being the most recent example. For this purpose, a guideline has been created to assist in building young researcher networks. This document was recently published on the YEAR website.

3.4 FINANCES

YEAR’s funding comes through the YEAR membership fee, which is based on the size of the institute separately calculated for each member. The fees have a nominal 5€ per employee fee, with a minimum and maximum fee of 800€ and 6 000€, respectively. In case of running an internal young-researchers network, the member institute receives a discount of 15%.

However, since we increased the number of training and webinars and taking the inflation rate into account, our fees for 2023 will be increased by 10% (5.50€ per person), with the minimum membership fee of 880€ and maximum fee of 6600€. Our 15% discount for institutes with an internal young-researchers network remains.

A summary of the 2022 transactions is provided in the table below.

Bank account balance on 01.01.2022	58 300.14 €
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Membership fees 2022	+27 542.50 €
Board meetings	-6 664.85 €
YEAR Annual Conference	-15 535.09 €
External relations & EU affairs activities	0.0 €
Training and webinar costs	-3 065.65 €
Legal and accounting costs	-8 308.47 €
Lawyer & Notary fee	ink - 4 808.47 €
EARTO accounting	ink - 3 500.00 €
Other costs (bank, hosting website, annual report, webinar solution, etc.)	-1 801.51 €

Bank account balance on 31.12.2022	50 476.56 €
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4 EXECUTIVE BOARD

4.1 COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

At the end of 2022, the YEAR Board is composed as follows:



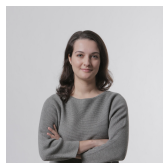
Jef Bergmans
(VITO)
President



Salvatore Tedesco
(Tyndall)
Vice
President



Anahid
Jalali
(AIT)
Treasurer



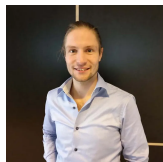
Jennifer Carreiro
Spencer
(VTT)
Secretary
General



Behrooz
Sangchoolie
(RISE)
Activity
Officer



Cansu Birgen
(SINTEF)
External
Relations



Mike
Wilmer
(TNO)
Communications



Nicolaas van
Strien (VTT)
Communications/
Social Media



Simon
Gunkel
(TNO)
Technology
Manager



Ghazal Etminan
(AIT)
European
Affairs

All member organisations have at least one board member, ensuring a voice for all YEAR Network members.

4.2 CONTACT DETAILS

YEAR
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1000 Bruxelles, Belgium

E-mail: contact@year-network.com

Website: www.year-network.com

Twitter: @year-network

LinkedIn: YEAR Network - Young European Associated Researchers

5 BECOME A MEMBER

5.1 WHO CAN BECOME A MEMBER?

Any RTO or Research and Development departments of industrial organisations established in member countries of the European Union or of the European Economic Area who are willing to support the career of its young researchers can become a YEAR member. YEAR activities are specially intended for **young-minded people**; therefore, there is no age limit to participation.

An internal network of young researchers is not required for an institution to become a member. Nevertheless, according to YEAR's experience, an organised internal platform or group of young researchers helps to both increase the visibility and efficiency of YEAR, as young people feel more directly concerned.

5.2 WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

Considering the three pillars of YEAR - networking, training and consulting, the following advantages arise from a YEAR membership:

- **Frequent networking opportunities** with young researchers from all over Europe to get to know and find research partners, exchange experiences, develop new ideas, etc.
- **Yearly event (conference) with a fine-tuned education programme** for young researchers on proposal writing, European programmes, interdisciplinary training, mobility opportunities, etc.
- **Topic-specific trainings and webinars** where experts from each member institution have the opportunity to talk about their research, establish new collaborations and share their questions and concerns with members of the European Commission or other important personalities linked to the development and financing of research.
- Opportunities of **young researcher exchanges** between two member organisations or assisting researchers in the process of getting funding for an exchange.
- Assistance in formalising an internal network of young researchers.
- Assistance to develop initiatives around the YEAR pillars.

5.3 HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER?

Contact us at contact@year-network.com and we will guide you through the steps. We have elaborated a simple, clear and efficient process diminishing the administrative burden.

NETWORKING – TRAINING – CONSULTANCY

www.year-network.com

