



Young European Associated Researchers

Annual Report 2018



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its creation, YEAR Network has intensively worked to support the career of young researchers from our member institutions by promoting the development of their professional skills and facilitating the international cooperation and exchange of knowledge among them. With this purpose in mind, the network also bridges the generation gap between researchers in Europe; fosters excellence in industrial research and technology; and gives voice to young researchers at European Commission level regarding policies that directly affect them.

After 10 years and numerous success stories, 2018 has been a time for revising our vision, critically analysing our activity plan, the way the network is internally managed and the strategy followed during this period. The aim; to revamp our vision and mission, as well as our short- and long-term strategy according to the present challenges of the European Research Area, guaranteeing the growth and sustainability of the network. According to that, young-researcher-oriented activities will still be our main focus, indeed an intensive activity agenda is already planned for 2019. The ever successful annual conference, workshops and webinars will be organized as well as new interesting proposals. Additionally, a team within the board will be in charge of boosting our external relations with two main objectives in mind. On the one hand, to reinforce the collaboration with other young researchers networks and maintain the collaboration with European Commission level giving voice to young researchers and, on the other hand, to enhance the network visibility and bring new members. Finally, internal management has been addressed in terms of efficiency and network sustainability.

Apart from several internal activities regarding YEAR vision and strategy, 2018 has also brought a new edition of our Annual Conference. Co-organized and sponsored by AIT, it gathered more than 50 young researchers in Vienna for a two-day workshop on innovative ideation focused on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Public Engagement. The Social Weekend offered young researchers the networking time prior to the conference creating the adequate collaboration environment for the workshop and making this event unique. Also a webinar on experiences in the creation of successful spin-offs gave our young researchers an insight in other ways of knowledge transfer, specifically, in the challenges that the creation of an innovative company entails.

At consultancy level, YEAR network remains part of the Open Science Policy Platform (OSPP) that has extended its mandate until 2020. Our role here is particularly notable as YEAR Network is the only young researchers network that has representation in the platform.

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 2018 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)
- **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 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 (specific topic seminars, annual conference, webinars and workshops), dealing with key issues able 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.



“ YEAR provides a fantastic platform for Young Researcher development and strengthening of our European networks from the bottom up. ”

Antti Vasara
President & CEO,
VTT – Technical Research Centre of Finland

2.4 REVISING OUR VISION AND MISSION

In 2018, the YEAR board conducted an intensive workshop to examine our organisation and considered changes to our strategy going forward. The first step in the exercise was for each of us to discuss with the relevant leaders and managers in our RTOs and find out their existing impression of YEAR and what they would like to see in the future. Board members discussed these inputs and highlighted resonances between institutes. Next, we focused on where we are now by conducting an honest and open SWOT analysis of YEAR to identify our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. With a foundation on the task, we looked towards the future. First by defining the problem that we exist to solve, and what would be the utopia in which we would no longer be needed. From this perspective, we worked intensely on summarising our mission in a single statement. Furthermore, we examined our pillars, as our means of achieving our mission and realising our vision. We examined each pillar, training, networking and consultancy in terms of what we are doing well, what is wasteful, what we must continue and what we would like to add.

A lot of new insights were uncovered at the workshop and a revamped vision and mission is on the horizon in 2019!

3 REPORT 2018

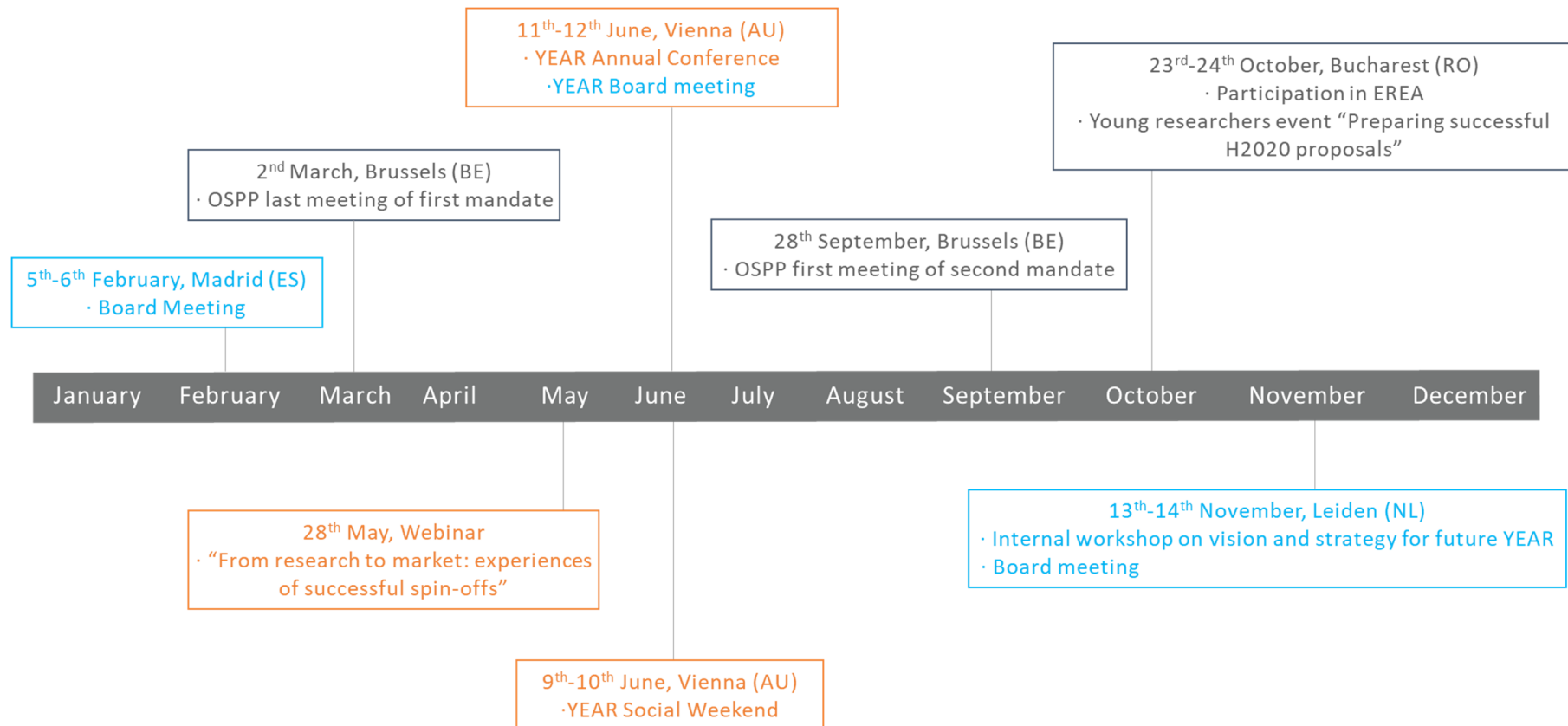
3.1 ACTIVITIES

3.1.1 Summary of activities

During 2018, various events and activities were organized both at the member and network levels. As every year, YEAR organized its main networking event, the 'Annual Conference' with this year's topic: 'From Idea to Impact'. The Annual Conference was facilitated by professional trainers who helped the participants develop their ideas within a co-creational workshop format. With aid from YEAR, the team with the winning idea at the conference was given the opportunity to follow up with their idea and work on it further. In addition, YEAR continued the successful webinars, and in 2018 a webinar on the topic "From research to market: experiences of successful spin-offs" was arranged. Furthermore, YEAR was consulted several times as a representative of the Young Researchers community and was invited to take part in different events in order to share its perspective on Open Science.

The Association of European Research Establishments in Aeronautics (EREA) invited YEAR to the Executive Secretariat meeting in 2018 to meet its representatives from various top level RTOs in Europe. The goal was to seek ways to collaborate and get mutual inspiration regarding the activities and actions taken towards young researchers. Fruitful discussions lead to an invitation to attend the EREA Young Researchers events in October at INCAS (Romania) where renowned Sean McCarthy provided a training on "Preparing successful H2020 proposals" and YEAR was presented to the audience of young researchers from the EREA network. Plans for further collaboration with Sean McCarthy are also on-going for 2019.

The timeline in the next page will chronologically sum up the activities made in 2018. The following pages detail the content and the outcomes of these events.



3.1.2 YEAR Annual Conference 2018: another successful edition

Young AIT and the YEAR Network organised the Annual Conference this year

The YEAR Annual Conference 2018 took place on 11th-12th June at the new premises of AIT Austrian Institute of Technology in Vienna. The event targeted young and early career researchers. It provided networking opportunities and training for improving their interdisciplinary skills and developing novel project ideas.

From Idea to Impact

In a two-day workshop, 50 young researchers developed novel research project ideas from scratch in seven interdisciplinary teams. The interactive format enabled them to develop ideas with co-creation methods and to practice pitching techniques.

Professional trainers facilitated the development of project ideas within a co-creational workshop format that was thematically focused on societal impact and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. On the second conference day, the NGO Sense about Science gave a workshop about Public Engagement. At the end of the second day, the teams pitched their ideas to a jury and the most promising project idea was awarded.



We congratulate the members of the winning team who convinced the jury with their innovative research project idea for improving access to affordable and clean energy: Robert Kalcik (AIT), Francisco Lizana (AICIA), Talieh Rajabloo (VITO), Chiara Bordin (SINTEF), Caitlin Huotilainen and Sergio Motta (VTT). YEAR supported the winning team to further develop their project idea.

Social Weekend

The participants had the opportunity, as in previous years, to attend the Social Weekend before the Annual Conference. During the weekend nearly 40 of the participants explored Vienna in a social programme organised by Young AIT. Highlights were the Invisible Smart City Tour with Eugene Quinn and the visit of the traditional Viennese Coffee House Café Landtmann.



Feedback

Before closing the conference, we asked all participants to provide feedback on various aspects of the conference. Overall the feedback was good, with 2/3 rating the Annual Conference as “good” and 1/3 as “very good”. The participants valued “networking opportunities”, learning about “each other” as well as about “public engagement” and the interdisciplinary workshop.



“Events like this are key for sharing knowledge and experience among junior and more experienced young researchers across Europe”.

Maria Badal Tejedor, Project Manager, RISE



“Multidisciplinary perspectives combined with fresh ideas lead to new visions of research in highly relevant scientific areas”

Jesús Lizana, Researcher, AICIA



“The perfect opportunity to learn state-of-the-art methods for Co-Design and let interdisciplinary teamwork inspire novel project ideas.”

Anja Köngeter, Researcher, AIT



“I am impressed by the level of engagement of participants in developing an idea from the first brainstorming session to an eight-minute pitch. The conference helped to widen my scientific network and I am looking forward to collaborating with the other young researcher in the future”

Behrooz Sangchoolie, Researcher, RISE

3.1.3 Webinars

YEAR and VITO organised a webinar on May 28th, 2018: “From research to market: experiences of successful spin-offs”. In this webinar, the founders of two successful VITO spin-offs – Tim Op’t Eyndt (CEO of iFlux) and Koen Meuleman (CFO of Unifly) described their personal story. They gave an insight into the challenges of starting a company and provided the audience with some tips and tricks.



Outline: Research is the breeding ground for a lot of disruptive ideas. But how do you bring these great ideas to a higher business level? How do you bring together the right people and financial profiles and refine your business plan? The speakers in this webinar developed their idea into a successful start-up and described their road from research to market. The introduction of the webinar was given by Bart Dooms, Venture Creation Manager at VITO. He described the importance of start-ups.

The video and the slides of the YEAR webinar are available on the [YEAR website](#).

3.1.4 Consultancy

Activities conducted under the pillar “Consulting” enabled YEAR to increase visibility as a “voice” of the young European researchers. Consequently, the Board was invited to present their views and perspectives at different occasions.

3.1.4.1 Open Science Policy Platform

The mandate of the European Open Science Policy Platform (OSPP) was extended until 2020. Since May 2018 Jan Rörden took over the representation of YEAR in this board. Michela Vignoli stepped down from representing YEAR at European level.

On April 22nd, 2018, a set of prioritised actionable recommendations concerning the eight Open Science ambitions of Commissioner Moedas have been adopted by the OSPP. These recommendations constitute integrated advice on all Open Science ambitions of Commissioner Moedas. The [integrated advice from the OSPP](#) includes next step towards the longer-term vision articulated by Open Science consultations and expert groups set up by the EC and other organisations in Europe and worldwide.

The first meeting of the second mandate of the OSPP took place on September 28th, 2018. The [meeting minutes](#) are accessible online. New working methods were discussed, and the new chair explained the rationale behind planning stakeholder meetings and working towards Practical Commitments for Implementation. The OSPP discussed Plan S and the final deliverables to be produced until the Competitiveness Council event in May 2020.

3.2 BOARD MEETINGS

Face-to-face Board meetings were organised three times in 2018 in order to define the main orientations and prepare the planned activities of the network. The aim is to gather at least one representative per member organisation in order to take representative decisions. Decisions are discussed and voted unanimously. If some points need to be clarified in between, a teleconference is scheduled. The main objectives are to:

- Prepare the Annual Conference (main topic, dates of the event, potential speakers to be invited, organisation of the social weekend)
- Define the topics, schedule and host of the upcoming webinars, seminars and workshops
- Evaluation of the visibility of the communication channels/improvement of the communication material
- Enlargement of the network: potential new members
- Interactions with the EU: increase the visibility of YEAR towards the European Commission; get contacts to support our actions
- Finances

3.3 COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

YEAR continued its communication strategy this year. Communication within the research organizations was conducted by the board members as representatives of their RTO. The Young networks present at the respective RTOs are very important for internal promotion of the events arranged by YEAR. As for the external communication, webpages, LinkedIn and Twitter were used to inform the followers about the YEAR events. Our LinkedIn group "YEAR Network – Young European Associated Researchers" is especially successful with more than 1100 members. In total, our network brings together a potential of about 4,000 young researchers in Europe.

The communication strategy will be continuously updated according to the needs of the network. The main goals remain the improvement of the visibility and the attractiveness of YEAR and the support of its growth.

YEAR enhanced its outreach communication strategy in 2018. One board member undertook an intensive one-day workshop with a professional communication consultant. The goal was to sharpen the key messages YEAR would want to bring to an audience of RTO Executive decision makers and make an attractive pitch 'story'. The presentation materials were revamped, and the strategy of introducing YEAR to high profile audiences was the focus.

3.3.1 Communication Tools and Data Storage

Multiple options to improve the technology used within YEAR were proposed and discussed during the board meeting in Leiden (November 2018). The main aim was to improve both the tools for communication within the board, but also the communication with all our members on the one hand, and to improve our data storage and management on the other. Further efforts in this matter will be made during 2019.

3.4 FINANCES

YEAR gets its funding through the YEAR membership fees. The fee is calculated for each member institute, based on 5 € per employee, with a minimum of 800 € and maximum fee of 6,000 €. A 15 % discount applies when the member institute runs an internal network of young researchers.

Since 2013, YEAR Network has significantly invested in the organisation of different events with a solid budget dedicated to the annual conference and the YEAR Award. It should be mentioned that each member organisation also allocates significant internal resources for supporting the participation and organisation of YEAR events. It is also of first importance for the board to reasonably use the resources available. In that sense, board meetings, for instance, are organised in parallel to other YEAR activities in order to reduce the travel costs.

During 2018, the YEAR Award 2018 was not claimed by the winner team, and thus, the budget will be allocated to organize more activities in 2019.

Summary of transactions 2018

Bank account balance on 01.01.2018	36,198.29 €
Membership fees 2018	29,183.75 €
Board meetings	3,665.96 €
YEAR Annual Conference (sponsored by AIT)	11,657.54 €
RTOs conferences and meetings with potential member institutes	1,926.70 €
Bank, hosting address and accounting costs	3,665.93 €
Other costs (website, annual report, webinar software, etc.)	1,092.90 €
Bank account balance on 31.12.2018	43,474.10

4 EXECUTIVE BOARD

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

In 2018, the YEAR Board was composed as follows:



Clara Lujan
(AICIA)
Chair



Jan Rörden
(AIT)
European
affairs



Johanna Björkmalm
(RISE)
Secretary



Colm Mc Caffrey
(VTT)
Vice-chair and
Treasurer



Michela Vignoli
(AIT)
Communications



Simon Gunkel
(TNO)
Technology
manager



Alexis Sevault
(SINTEF)
External relations



Tiia-Maria Tenhunen
(VTT)
Information
manager



Jef Bergmans
(VITO)
Information
manager

CONTACT DETAILS

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European Associated Researchers

5 BECOME A MEMBER

5.1 WHO CAN BECOME A MEMBER?

Any RTO (Research and Technology Organisations) or Research and Development departments of industrial organisations established in member countries of the European Union or of the European Economic Area and 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 participate.

An internal network of young researchers is not required for an institution to become a member. Nevertheless, and according to YEAR's experience, an organised internal platform or group of young researchers helps increasing the visibility and efficiency of YEAR; 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 with a fine-tuned education programme** for young researchers on proposal writing, European programmes, interdisciplinary training, mobility opportunities, etc.
- **Topic specific seminars, workshops 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

