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Max Wertheimer MINERVA Centre for Cognitive Processes and Human Performance

Report of the 11th Advisory Council Meeting

The 11th Advisory Council Meeting took place in Haifa from 19 – 21 March 2017.

The meeting started on Sunday, 19 March with a scientific colloquium at the University of Haifa. During this colloquium three of the members from the University of Haifa, i.e. Ruth Kimchi, Yaffa Yeshurun and Morris Goldsmith, presented their recent research together with doctoral students. This was followed in the afternoon by an informal meeting of the members of the advisory council with about 30 doctoral students of the University Haifa and Technion. Four students of the University of Haifa with direct relations to the centre presented their research followed by a general discussion of the council members with the students. This informal meeting with students was organized in response to a wish of the council members during the last meeting of the advisory council. It turned out to be an very interesting and productive meeting for both sides.

A second colloquium was held on Monday, 20 March 2017 at the Technion. It included scientific presentations of all PIs from the Technion, i.e. Ido Erev, Daniel Gopher and Eldad Yechiam, supported again by doctoral and/or master students who presented their resarch.

The Council's formal meeting took place on Tuesday morning, 21 March 2017. This meeting comprised an internal discussion of the members of the Council, as well as a closing meeting with the directors of the Centre, Prof. Dr. Ruth Kimchi (Haifa University) and Prof. Dr. Ido Erev (Technion).

The three German members of the Council,

- **Prof. Dr. Dietrich Manzey** (Council Chair, Department of Psychology and Ergonomics, Berlin Institute of Technology),
- **Prof. Dr. Ralph Hertwig** (Centre for Adaptive Rationality, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin),
- **Prof. Dr. Michael Herzog** (Institute of Psychophysics, Ecole Polytechnique Fédéral de Lausanne, Lausanne Switzerland),

and the Israeli members,

- **Prof. Dr. Uri Leron** (Churchill Family Professor (Emeritus) of Science and Technology Education at the Technion) and
- **Prof. Dr. Daniel Algom** (Department of Psychology Tel-Aviv University),

participated in the symposia and the students' presentations at University of Haifa and Technion, as well as the internal discussion and closing meeting. The third Israeli member, **Prof. Dr. Kobi Rosenblum** (Department of Neurobiology and Ethology, University of Haifa), was not able to attend the meeting of the Council this time, due to other obligations.

Dr. Lou Bohlen (Minerva Foundation, Munich) attended the symposium at the University of Haifa and the first part (morning session) of presentations at Technion as representative of the Minerva Foundation. Her attendance was appreciated very much by both, the members of the Council, as well as the PIs of the centre.

In addition to the presentations and discussions in Haifa, the Council reviewed also the following sources:

- The Centre's Report of Activities 01/10/2014 – 30/09/2016 (see attachment).
- The fiscal reports for the periods 10/2015-09/2016 (included in the report)
- The budget proposal for the periods 10/2016 – 09/2017, and 10/2017 – 09/2018.

Based on these sources the Council agreed on the following conclusions.

1.

For the more than 20 years since its establishment in 1996, the *Max-Wertheimer Centre of Cognitive Processes and Human Performance* has always been a very active and productive scientific centre with a high international visibility and reputation in the field of cognitive psychology and human factors. The activities and achievements of the past two years again confirm this general assessment. Considering only publications since 2015, the seven PIs of the centre have published a total of 47 articles in scientific journals, and this list is complemented by a number of book chapters, as well as numerous contributions to international conferences. Among the publications are a number of articles published in some of the most prestigious journals in the field of cognitive psychology (e.g. *Psychological Review*), decision-making (e.g. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*), and at the interface of cognitive psychology and human factors (e.g. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*). Even though not all of these publications can be considered as direct results of the research activity within the centre alone, they nevertheless document the excellent scientific level and productivity of the centre's members.

As in the past years, the two sub-centres have clear scientific profiles. The sub-centre at the

University of Haifa mainly focuses on research on attention, perception, and meta-cognition, with an emphasis more on basic than on applied research. The research conducted at the Technion mainly has comprised basic research on human decision-making, as well as human factors research. However, the common umbrella which unifies the two centres is a clear focus on theory-guided experimental research.

2.

The Council was pleased to see that the PIs of the centre were again very successful in raising additional funds. This is reflected in a total of three new grants for projects which were acquired since the last report in 2015. These include projects funded by the Israeli Science Foundation, the US-Israel Binational Science Foundation, and an ERC grant. Together with other ongoing projects the members of the centre currently conduct a total of eight projects based on grants from other sources. In addition, they have submitted proposals for five other grants which currently are under review. This proves that the PIs of the centre again have made effective use of the money provided by Minerva as seed money for their scientific activities.

3.

The number of students and scientists from both sub-centres who have attended the two scientific symposia and contributed to the discussions have again provided evidence for a lively cooperative and harmonious relationship between the two sub-centres. This is also reflected in a total of eight joint seminars for Minerva PIs and students which were conducted during the past two years since our last report. Usually, these seminars were based on a lecture provided by a well-known German or Israeli scientist followed by a discussion. One particular highlight in this respect, however, was a panel discussion with Daniel Kahnemann (Emeritus; Nobel Prize Laureate for Economic Sciences). In addition, a joint activity between PIs of both sub-centres has started since the last report (cooperation of Daniel Gopher and Yaffa Yeshurun). All this can be taken as a prove that, although both sub-centres have different scientific foci, students and PIs of both sub-centres clearly benefit from being part of a common Minerva Centre.

4.

Currently a total of ten doctoral students (four at University of Haifa and six at Technion) have got scholarships of the Minerva centre. Other doctoral and master students are associated with the centre. Most of these students presented their work during the symposia or the informal meeting at the first day. The Council was particularly impressed by the high quality of these doctoral and master students. The student's research presented was already on a comparatively high scientific level, and all of the students showed very good presentation skills and turned out to be highly competent in the discussions of their work. It became immediately obvious that the PIs of the centre put much effort in educating and coaching of young scientists. All students seemed to be highly motivated and interested in science. The Council assess this to be a particular important achievement and benefit of the Max-Wertheimer Minerva Centre.

5.

A number of new bilateral scientific collaborations between members of the centre and German scientists have been established during the past three years. These included, for example, collaborations between Morris Goldsmith and Michaela Waenke (University of

Wuerzburg) who submitted a joint GIF proposal, between Eldad Yechiam and Thorsten Pachur (MPI for Human Development, Berlin) who have co-authored two articles, and between Yaffa Yeshurun and Elisabeth Hein (University of Tübingen) who collaborate in a project focussing of aspects of visual attention. In addition, again a total of five Minerva Workshops were organized during the past two years by Prof. Ido Erev, with German participants of the University of Goettingen, the Technical University Berlin, the RWTH Aachen, and the Max-Planck-Institute for Human Development, Berlin. Thus, the PIs of both sub-centres have again made effective use of the centre as a platform for establishing scientific cooperations with German scientists.

6.

The Max-Wertheimer Minerva Centre faces the last two years until its designated closing in March 2019. The plans of the different PIs for this phase are convincing and it can be expected that the centre will maintain its high level of scientific productivity during the upcoming two years.

7.

Overall, the Advisory Council considers the scientific achievements and activities of the centre as outstanding and the use of the seed money provided through the Minerva Foundation as exemplary. Given this, the members of the Council regret that the centre will be closed in two years.

8.

The Advisory Council took the following formal decisions:

- The Report of Activities 1/10/2014 – 30/09/2016 is fully approved
- The Fiscal Reports for the period 1/10/2015-30/09/2016 is fully approved
- The Budget Proposals for 1/10/2016-30/09/2017 is fully approved.
- The Budget Proposal for 1/10/2018 – 30/09/2018 is fully approved

These decisions were taken in accordance with all Council members who participated in the Council meeting.

9.

The Advisory Council gave its unanimous consent to this report.

Berlin, 02/04/17



Prof. Dr. Dietrich Manzey