

# Center for **Emerging Risk Research**

Activity Report 2019

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## **Preliminary remarks**

The aim of this activity report is to highlight the activities of the Center for Emerging Risk Research in the 2019 financial year and to show that these activities are in line with the purpose of the association.

The name of the association, "Center for Emerging Risk Research", and its abbreviation "CERR" are used synonymously throughout this report.

The activity report is divided into four parts: general information pertaining to the association, the association's activities during the financial year, asset management and annual financial statements.

## **General information pertaining to the association**

The first part of the activity report addresses various aspects of the organisation. This includes information concerning the legal basis of the activities and the composition of the board.

### **Legal basis**

According to the Memorandum of Foundation dated 16th July 2019 and the entry dated 18th September 2019 in the Commercial Register of the Canton of Basel-Stadt (company number CHE-455.562.321), an association by the name of the "Center for Emerging Risk Research", with its registered office in Basel, was established within the meaning of Art. 60 ff. ZGB (Swiss Civil Law Code).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the association is defined by the Articles of Association dated 16th July 2019, and reads as follows:

*The association aims to improve the quality of life of future generations to the best possible extent. For this purpose, the association in particular promotes the research and implementation of approaches for the prevention of technological risks. Subject areas of particular relevance for this are artificial intelligence, decision and game theory, prioritisation research, moral philosophy and population ethics as well as peace and conflict research.*

*The association realises its purpose in particular by pursuing scientific research and procuring and granting subsidies. It employs scientific methods to achieve its goals in the most cost-efficient way. The association operates both in Switzerland and abroad.*

*It does not pursue any commercial interests and is not profit-oriented.*

## **Board**

As of March 2020, the association's Board of Directors was composed of the following:

- Ruairí Donnelly, President, collective signature with two signatures
- David Althaus, Vice-President, collective signature with two signatures
- Jonas Vollmer, Managing Director, collective signature with two signatures
- Daniel Kestenholz, Finance Officer, collective signature with two signatures

The members of the Board of Directors perform their functions on an honorary basis.

## **Auditors**

The Center for Emerging Risk Research is not subject to audit. The Board of Directors has appointed Balfina Revision AG (company number CHE-330.489.601), with its headquarters in Basel, as independent external auditors. The auditors' report on the annual financial statements is available.

## **Activity of the association in the financial year**

The second part of the activity report presents the activities of the Center for Emerging Risk Research in 2019. Two areas of action are distinguished for this purpose: research and grantmaking.

### **Research**

Improving the quality of life of future generations as comprehensively as possible requires fundamental academic research. CERR contributes to this both in a direct function by means of its own research activities and in a coordinative function through the evaluation and networking of external research projects.

Achievements in the 2019 financial year included the following:

- In collaboration with the Effective Altruism Foundation, CERR developed a research agenda entitled "Cooperation, Conflict, and Transformative Artificial Intelligence".<sup>1</sup> The agenda outlines promising avenues for the development of technical and policy interventions aimed at avoiding conflicts between transformative artificially intelligent systems. It draws on

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<sup>1</sup> [emergingrisk.ch/research-agenda](http://emergingrisk.ch/research-agenda)

research in international relations, game theory, behavioural economics, machine learning, decision theory and formal epistemology.

- CERR evaluated the key players within the relevant research fields and explored possible partnerships. In this context, contacts were established with researchers at leading institutions.
- The financing of the research activities was sustainably ensured thanks to a larger donation to the association during the financial year. Intensive contact maintenance with the partner organisations and the existence of a clear and convincing research agenda and strategy were crucial to this success.

## **Grantmaking**

CERR is committed to deploying its financial resources where they will make the most difference. To this end, it identifies and evaluates external funding opportunities and, on this basis, awards financial support to particularly promising research projects.

In the 2019 financial year, CERR did not award any grants to external projects, but chose to focus on developing a research agenda. The agenda will guide the way for the allocation of funding in the future.

## **Asset management**

The Articles of Association do not define any specific requirements with regard to asset management.

In the 2019 financial year, all the association's assets were held in the form of liquid assets. CERR did not engage in any other investment activities.

## **Annual financial statements**

The annual financial statements are divided into the balance sheet, income statement and appendix.

The auditors have audited the annual financial statements and approved them with their report. The General Assembly approved the annual financial statements and this activity report without reservation at the General Assembly on 8th September 2020.