

March 2020

Dear members of NRSN,

The Covid-19 pandemic is influencing your daily activities as well as those of all members of our society in Norway and abroad. As a PhD student, employed on a contract with a limited duration, you may have started to worry about the consequences of this for your future; you are likely hindered in your experimental work, need to work mostly from home, which works for many, but often is less efficient.

I have been approached by several in my own community with questions about how such impact will be handled; what measures are taken to assure that you can continue your planned work and finish it without being curtailed in your possibilities. We all realize that your PhD period is your way into a career, either in Science or outside. No matter where you will continue, it is a competitive world and you need to have the opportunity to prepare optimally.

As NRSN, we do not control your working conditions nor your contract, that is the prerogative of your employer/university. I have been informed that both universities as well as the Norwegian Research Council are looking into ways to remedy the effects of the current situation, but it is still too early to expect clear decisions or detailed plans in this regard. I suggest that you stay in touch with your direct leadership and ask for information as soon as that becomes available.

What we can do and will do as NRSN is to make our contributions to the Norwegian PhD education in Neuroscience as flexible and versatile as possible. We are contemplating about the best ways to assure that your plans and ambitions for high-level education will not get stopped by delays due to cancellations or other reasons. I hope that we can provide more details very soon, but you may think about flexibility in coverage of travel costs, allow you to postpone booking tickets till the last minute, postponing the actual implementation of grants till your course has taken place such that you only have to apply ones and if approved that approved grant will be there for you as soon as the course will happen.

For now, I wish that you all stay healthy and get through this, and I am still optimistic that our activities planned for after the summer will all take place.

Menno Witter /s/  
NRSN Scientific Director

Hans Ekkehard Plesser /s/  
NRSN Board Chair