

# **Standing Identification Committee for the selection of members of the Scientific Council of the European Research Council**

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Former European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn appointed on 27 May 2014 a standing Identification Committee consisting of seven high-level scientists to identify and propose candidates for the ERC Scientific Council's renewals. The legal provisions for the identification of the Scientific Council members are set out in the Council Decision establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon 2020 - the Framework programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) of 3 December 2013 (2013/743/EU), article 7.1 and section 1.3 of Part I of Annex I.

The present report summarises the process and outcomes of the Identification Committee's work in preparing the renewal of the ERC Scientific Council on the expiry of the terms of office of some of its members in January 2015 and January 2017 and following the resignation of three of its members in October 2014 and June 2015.

## **Context**

The European Research Council operates as an autonomous science-led funding body consisting of an independent Scientific Council supported by a lean and cost-effective dedicated implementation structure (the European Research Council Executive Agency). The Scientific Council is composed of the president of the ERC and 21 other members.

The European Commission ensures the continuity and renewal of the Scientific Council. The members of the Scientific Council are appointed by the Commission, following an independent and transparent procedure for their identification agreed with the Scientific Council, including a consultation of the scientific community and a report to the European Parliament and the Council. Members are appointed for a term of up to four years, renewable once. A member may be appointed for a period of less than the maximum term to allow a staggered rotation of members. Members remain in office until they are replaced or their term expires. In duly justified cases, in order to maintain the integrity or continuity of the Scientific Council, the European Commission may terminate the term of a member on its own initiative.

The terms of office of nine of ERC Scientific Council's members came to an end on 31 December 2014. The mandates of two of them, having reached the limit of eight years, could not be renewed, while the remaining seven could be considered for renewal.

The ERC Identification Committee proposed to the Commission to appoint three newly identified members for full terms of office of four years, a renewed full mandate of four years for one member (which could not start until 1 July 2015 due to a personal situation), a

renewed term of office of two years for one member, and a renewed mandate of one year for four members (refused by two of them, who preferred to step down).

## **Methodology**

From the pool of candidates established after the previous renewal exercise (thoroughly described in the previous report of the Identification Committee of 28 November 2014), the Committee proposed five newly identified members for full terms of office of four years starting on 1 July 2015 (for three of them) and on 1 January 2016 (for the remaining two).

During 2015 and the first half of 2016 the ERC Identification Committee met three times and held one web-conference. In accordance with the provisions of the Decision establishing ERC and previous practice, the Identification Committee carried out a systematic consultation of the scientific community on possible candidates for Scientific Council membership, on the basis of a statement on methodology (Annex 2), which was sent to the main representative organisations of the scientific community in Europe and to the national representatives in the ERC Configuration of the Horizon 2020 Programme Committee, inviting suggestions of candidates from other representative organisations.

In response to Committee's invitations, a total of 27 organisations, as listed in Annex 3, sent nominations. The ERC Identification Committee greatly appreciated these contributions, which have been thoroughly examined. On the basis of informal consultations, the Committee identified itself other suitably-qualified candidates in areas which have not been adequately covered despite the efforts of the nominating organisations.

The Identification Committee consulted the President of the Scientific Council in order to obtain a broader appreciation of the current context in which ERC is operating, its state of development and the range of activities which the Scientific Council will oversee in the coming period.

## **Committee's proposals**

The ERC Identification Committee proposed to the Commission to appoint two newly identified members for a full mandate of four years starting on 1 July 2016 to fill up the two remaining vacant ERC Scientific Council positions.

For the current eight Scientific Council members whose terms of office will come to an end on 31 December 2016, the Identification Committee's proposals are:

- Two newly identified members for a full mandate of four years to replace one member whose term of office cannot be further renewed and one member who chose not to be renewed
- A renewed mandate of two years for four members
- Two newly identified members for full terms of office of four years to replace two current Scientific Council members whose mandates are not recommended for renewal at first stage.

## **Developing issues**

During the 2016 and 2017 renewal exercises the Committee faced a number of developments that prompts reflection for its future work.

The Committee would like to raise three issues:

1. Serious allegation or misconduct on the part of a member of the Scientific Council: the Committee has proposed that the European Commission establish a procedure in which the Committee may play a role. The European Commission would suspend the individual Council member pending inquiry and inform the Chair of the Identification Committee and the ERC President. The Committee, with the engagement of its President, would consider the case within days or weeks (depending on the circumstances), including appropriate interaction with the concerned Council member. The ERC Identification Committee would then report its recommendations to the Commission, which decides on the actions to take. The Committee does, however, recognise that a policy on serious allegation or misconduct must be coherent with policies in other instances and comply with the broader legal and accountability in Horizon 2020 and at EU level in general
2. Automatic renewal of Scientific Council membership: in order to manage expectations that the ERC Scientific Council members may develop regarding their automatic renewal, the Identification Committee considers the principle of an automatic renewal of two years being reasonable under normal circumstances, in order to allow a staggered rotation of the members of the Scientific Council. Non-renewal after the first mandate of four years will be justified following an opportunity for the concerned Council members to make their case to the Committee before it sends its recommendation to the European Commission
3. Potential conflict of interest on the part of serving members of the Scientific Council: there have been numerous discussions and considerations regarding the issue of potential conflict of interest concerning candidates to membership (they will not be able to apply for ERC funding during their mandate and during an embargo period following its end). Similar issues of conflict of interest may arise with (serving or prospective) Scientific Council members who hold executive positions in organisations which receive ERC grants. For reasons of consistency and in order to maintain the perception of integrity of the European Research Council, such potential conflicts of interest will be given serious consideration by the ERC Identification Committee in its recommendations on prospective and to-be-renewed members of the Scientific Council.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The proposals accompanying this report represent the completion of the principal tasks of the Identification Committee for the 2016 and 2017 renewal exercises. The Committee will continue its work to assure a smooth and effective staged renewal of the ERC Scientific Council in the future.

Annex 1: Members of the ERC Scientific Council as of 1 January 2016

Annex 2: Statement on methodology

Annex 3: List of organisations that provided nominations for members of the Scientific Council

### Members of the ERC Scientific Council as of 1 January 2016

Name and Institute	End of term of office
Klaus BOCK, Danish National Research Foundation	31 December 2016
Margaret BUCKINGHAM, Pasteur Institute, Paris	30 June 2019
Christopher CLARK, University of Cambridge	31 December 2019
Athene DONALD, University of Cambridge	31 December 2016
Barbara ENSOLI, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Roma	31 December 2016
Nuria Sebastian GALLES, University of Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona	31 December 2016
Michael KRAMER, Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy, Bonn	30 June 2019
Tomas JUNGWIRTH, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic	31 December 2018
Matthias KLEINER, Technical University of Dortmund	31 December 2016
Eva KONDOROSI, Hungarian Academy of Sciences	31 December 2016
Barbara ROMANOWICZ, Berkeley Seismological Laboratory	31 December 2019
Mart SAARMA, University of Helsinki	31 December 2016
Nils Christian STENSETH, University of Oslo	31 December 2017
Martin STOKHOF, University of Amsterdam	31 December 2017
Janet THORNTON, European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) European Molecular Biology Laboratory	31 December 2018
Isabelle VERNOS, Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats, Barcelona	30 June 2019
Reinhilde VEUGELERS, Catholic University of Leuven	31 December 2016
Michel WIEVIORKA, Centre for Sociological Analysis and Intervention, Paris	31 December 2017
Fabio ZWIRNER, University of Padova	31 December 2018

## **ERC Identification Committee's Statement on methodology**

### **Introduction**

The members of the ERC Scientific Council are appointed by the European Commission on the basis of a search process carried out by an independent Committee, including a consultation of the scientific community, according to the provisions of the Horizon 2020 Specific Programme<sup>1</sup>. The Identification Committee carries out its work independently and transparently.

The current identification process intends to further extend the pool of candidates for future Scientific Council membership, including those who will be appointed in January 2017, at the end of term of some of the existing members. The consultation methodology follows closely the approach observed on previous occasions. The pool of possible candidates aims to cover all fields of science and scholarship.

### **Consultation of the research community**

The Identification Committee considers it should actively consult the main organisations representative of the various segments of the research community at European level. The consultation will be done by means of a letter from the Chairman of the Committee to the President of each organisation.

The consultation will not necessarily be the exclusive source of candidates. Candidates put forward during previous consultation exercises will also be reconsidered and it will be open to other representative organisations and the members of the Identification Committee themselves. However, self-nominations will not be considered. All candidates, regardless of source of nomination, would be considered by the Committee using the same process as described in section Methodology below.

### **Factors and criteria to be taken into account**

The composition of the Scientific Council must demonstrate that the Council can exercise authoritative and absolutely independent scientific leadership, combining wisdom and experience with vision and imagination.

The credibility of the Scientific Council is built on the balance of qualities amongst the men and women who make it up, and they should collectively reflect the full breadth of the research community across Europe. Members of the Scientific Council must individually have an undisputed reputation as research leaders and for their independence and commitment to research. Generally they must be current or recent research practitioners that exercised scientific leadership at European or world level. Proper consideration should also be given to younger, next-generation leaders.

Members must reflect the broad disciplinary scope of research, embracing the exact sciences and engineering, as well as the social sciences and humanities. However, they should not be considered as representatives of a discipline or of a particular line of research and should not

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<sup>1</sup> Article 7(1) of the Council Decision 2013/743/EU of 3 December 2013 establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon 2020 - the Framework programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)

perceive themselves as such; they should have a broad vision which reflects an understanding of important developments in research, including inter and multidisciplinary research, and the needs for research at European level.

Beyond their proven reputation as scientists and researchers, the membership should collectively bring a broader range of experience, acquired not only across Europe but also in other research-intensive parts of the world. This could include experience in areas such as support and promotion of basic research or organisation and management of research and knowledge transfer in universities, academies, business and industry, and an understanding of national and international research activities, relevant research funding schemes and the wider political context in which the European Research Council is situated.

The membership should reflect the various components of the research community and the range of scientific institutions which carry out research; it should include those with experience in universities, research institutes, academies, funding bodies or research in business and industry and those who have experience in more than one country. Some members may also be drawn from the research community outside Europe.

## **Methodology**

To draw up the list of candidates, the organisations consulted (and others who would wish to nominate individuals) will be asked to provide suggestions of persons who, in their estimation, have the highest eminence as research leaders and the qualifications and experience reflecting the criteria set out above, are available and willing to work as a member of the ERC Scientific Council independently of any other interest, and would be expected to have the trust and confidence of the scientific community.

The Identification Committee will regard the names and personal details of candidates as confidential. The Committee will only consider candidacies that will be accompanied by a short statement by the nominating organisation regarding the qualifications and profile of each candidate, adequate for it to make an informed judgement, which would be expected to include:

- A synopsis of the candidate's background and curriculum vitae;
- Relevant professional experience (e.g. universities, scientific institutions, business, government etc., indicating also any administrative or science policy experience);
- Research interests and experience (indicating the major research projects in which the candidate was involved);
- Major publications and other significant works and prizes;
- Broader aspects of the candidate as appropriate (e.g. country of residence, experience abroad, nationality).

It is recommended to use the attached template in order to provide information about the qualifications of the proposed candidates.

The Identification Committee recognises that the availability of persons to participate in the ERC Scientific Council will be affected by the precise duties of the latter. It should be noted that the Council typically meets five times per year for two days meetings which are normally held in Brussels or other European capital city and are conducted in English.

While nominations of individual candidates would not guarantee the selection, the Identification Committee expects the nominating bodies to establish the willingness of candidates to serve before forwarding their names.

### **Main representative organisations to be consulted**

- **Academia Europaea**
- **ALLEA** (European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities)
- **BUSINESSEUROPE**
- **CESAER** (Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research)
- **EARTO** (European Association of Research and Technology Organisations)
- **EASAC** (European Academies Science Advisory Council)
- **EIRMA** (European Industrial Research Management Association)
- **ESF** (European Science Foundation)
- **EUA** (European University Association)
- **Euro-CASE** (European Council of Academies of Applied Sciences, Technologies and Engineering)
- **LERU** (League of European Research Universities)
- **Science Europe** (Association of European Research Funding Organisation and Research Performing Organisations)

As already indicated, the Committee also invites other interested representative organisations of the scientific community to put forward high-level nominations during the consultation.

### **Provisional timetable for the further work of the Identification Committee**

The provisional schedule for the next stages of the Committee's work is as follows:

End November 2015 – consultation letters sent to representative organisations

6 January 2016 – receipt of proposed candidates and relevant information

January – April 2016 – evaluation of candidates

May 2016 – confidential proposal to the European Commission and report of the Identification Committee

### **Electronic address for the consultation**

Organisations should send the nominations to the following electronic address:

**rtd-erc-id@ec.europa.eu**

## **List of organisations that provided nominations for members of the Scientific Council**

### **Organisations directly consulted:**

1. Academia Europaea
2. European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA)
3. Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research
4. European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO)
5. European University Association (EUA)
6. European Council of Academies of Applied Sciences, Technologies and Engineering
7. League of European Research Universities (LERU)
8. Science Europe

### **Organisations that responded to the general invitation:**

1. Academy of Finland
2. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)
3. Bangor University
4. British Academy
5. Center for Research and Technology Hellas – CERTH
6. European Academy of Sciences
7. EU-LIFE
8. Istituto Nazionale di Alta Matematica "Francesco Severi"
9. Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs
10. Piraeus University of Applied Sciences
11. Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO)
12. Research Promotion Foundation
13. Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences



14. Swiss National Science Foundation
15. Technical University of Munich (TUM)
16. Universidad Católica de Valencia “San Vicente Mártir”
17. Universities Austria
18. Universities Denmark
19. Universities UK