

Standing Identification Committee for the renewal of the ERC Scientific Council

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Former European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn appointed a Standing Identification Committee consisting of seven high-level scientists to identify and propose a shortlist of candidates for the ERC Scientific Council's renewal in 2015. The legal provisions for the identification of the Scientific Council members are set out in the Council Decision establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon 2020¹. This report summarises the process and outcomes of the Committee's work at the end of 2014.

1. Context

The Scientific Council, the governing body of the ERC, defines the overall strategy of the ERC. It is composed of the President of the ERC and twenty one other members, all eminent scientists and scholars, including some Nobel Prize laureates. The members have a mandate of up to four years, renewable once for a maximum of four more years.

The term of office of **nine of its current members came to an end on 31 of December 2014**. The term of office 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 Committee's task was therefore to propose a renewed Scientific Council, consisting of the remaining twelve members who are still within their current mandate, those whose term of office will be renewed, and the new members to be identified in line with a statement of methodology (see Annex. I).

2. Methodology

The Committee started its work in April 2014 and met three times in the period up to 21 October 2014, with the support of a small secretariat offered by the Commission. It carried out a systematic consultation of the scientific community on possible candidates for Scientific Council membership on the basis of a statement of methodology (see Annex 1).

¹ 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 statement of methodology was sent to the main representative organisations of the scientific community in Europe and it was also published on the ERC web-site and announced via a press release inviting also suggestions of candidates from other representative organisations.

In response to the Committee's invitation, a total of 13 organisations suggested 144 candidates which were thoroughly examined by the Committee. On the basis of further consultations with thematic and national research organisations and academies, the Committee identified additional high scientific quality candidates in areas which have not been adequately covered despite the efforts of the representative organisations.

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

3. The Committee's proposals

The Committee proposed to the Commissioner to appoint three newly identified members, for a full mandate of four years for starting on the 1st January 2015.

For the current members whose mandate came to an end on the 31st December 2014:

- A renewed full mandate of four years¹ for one member, starting on the 1st January 2015
- A renewed mandate of two years, for one member, starting on the 1st January 2015
- A renewed mandate of one year, for four members, starting on the 1st January 2015²

4. Concluding Remarks

The intention of the new Identification Committee was to propose a significant renewal for 2015, to start a new period of stability and continuity following the initial phase of nine years of work of the Scientific Council. The proposal accompanying this report is the outcome of the work of the Standing Identification Committee at the end of 2014.

The Identification Committee will continue its work in 2015 in order to conclude the completion of the staged renewal of the Scientific Council to its full membership of twenty-one members.

¹ While this report was being drafted the mandate of this member could not be renewed due to a personal situation.

² Two of the four members proposed for a renewal of one year declined the offer while this report was being drafted and as a consequence the Identification Committee will continue its work and propose two new members by early 2015.

Annex 1: Statement of methodology

Annex 2: List of organisations providing nominations for members of the ERC Scientific Council

ANNEX 1. ERC Identification Committee Statement on methodology

1. Introduction

ERC Scientific Council members are appointed by the European Commission on the basis of a search process carried out by an independent Identification Committee, including a consultation of the scientific community, according to the provisions of the Horizon 2020 Specific Programme¹. The Identification Committee carries out its work independently and transparently.

The current identification process relates to the appointment of Scientific Council members who will come into office in early 2015, at the end of the term of some of the existing members. The consultation exercise will contribute to this and possibly future identification processes. The Committee is publishing this methodology it will adopt for this consultation, which follows closely the approach followed on previous occasions.

2. Consultation of the research community

The Committee intends to create a pool of possible candidates for Scientific Council membership covering all fields of science and scholarship. It is envisaged that the pool will be regularly updated in order to provide candidates for future renewal of the Scientific Council, including potential retirements or resignations.

The Committee considers it should actively consult the main organisations representative of the various segments of the research community at European level (see below). 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 considered and it will be open to other representative organisations and the members of the Committee themselves, to suggest other possible candidates. 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 4.

3. Factors and criteria to be taken into account

The factors and criteria for identification of Scientific Council members are set out in the Commission's Decision establishing the ERC as follows:

¹ 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) and repealing Decisions 2006/971/EC, 2006/972/EC, 2006/973/EC, 2006/974/EC and 2006/975/EC, OJ 347/965, 20.12.2013

The composition of the Scientific Council must demonstrate that the Council can exercise scientific leadership which is authoritative and absolutely independent, combining wisdom and experience with vision and imagination. The credibility of the Scientific Council will be 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, as well as those who have exercised scientific leadership at European or world level. 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 the humanities. However, they should not be considered as representatives of a discipline or of a particular line of research and should not perceive themselves as such; they should have a broad vision which collectively reflects an understanding of important developments in research, including inter- and multi-disciplinary 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 the support and promotion of basic research, organisation and management of research and knowledge transfer in universities, academies and industry, 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, research in business and industry, for example. Members should include those who have experience in more than one country, and some should be drawn from the research community outside Europe.

4. Methodology

To draw up the list of candidates, the organisations consulted (and others who 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 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 broader profile of each candidate, adequate for it to make an informed judgement.

This 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 has been 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 Committee recognises that the availability of persons to participate in the Scientific Council will be affected by the precise duties of the latter. It should be noted that the Scientific Council currently meets typically 5 times per year for 2 day meetings which are held normally in Brussels or other European capital cities and are conducted in the English language.

While nominations of individual candidates would not be any guarantee of selection, the Committee would expect that the nominating bodies would establish the willingness of candidates to serve before their names were forwarded to it.

5. Main representative organisations to be consulted

1. SCIENCE EUROPE (Association of European Research Funding Organisations and Research Performing Organisations)
2. EUROCASE (The European Council of Applied Sciences and Engineering)
3. ESF (European Science Foundation)
4. EUA (European University Association)
5. EASAC (European Academies' Science Advisory Council)
6. ALLEA (All European Academies)
7. Academia Europaea (organisation representing individual scientists and scholars)
8. Business Europe (Formerly UNICE - Union des industries de la Communauté européenne)
9. EARTO (European Association of Research and Technology Organisations)
10. EIRMA (European Industrial Research Management Association).

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

6. Provisional timetable for the further work of the Committee

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

May 2014 – consultation letters sent to representative organisations

10 July 2014 – receipt of proposed candidates and relevant information

July – October 2014 - evaluation of candidates

October 2012 – confidential proposal to the European Commission and report of the Identification Committee

February 2015 – review of the 2014 exercise meeting

7. Electronic address for the consultation

Organisations should send the nominations to the following electronic address:
RTD-ERC-ID@ec.europa.eu

Annex 2: List of consulted organisations that provided nominations for members of the ERC Scientific Council

1. Academia Europaea
2. All European Academies (ALLEA)
3. BUSINESS EUROPE
4. European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO)
5. European University Association (EUA)
6. European Council of Applied Sciences and Engineering (EURO-CASE)
7. European Science Foundation (ESF)
8. SCIENCE EUROPE

Annex 3: List of organisations responding to the general invitation to submit nominations for members of the ERC Scientific Council

1. Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives (CEA)
2. Royal Irish Academy
3. The National University of Public Service, Hungary (NUPS)
4. Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (FWO)
5. Rectors' Conference in the state of Mecklenburg- Vorpommern