

# **European Research Council**

## **Identification Committee**

### **Final Report**

**20 June 2005**

**Lord Patten of Barnes**, Chancellor of Oxford and Newcastle Universities (*Chairman*)

**Dr. Catherine Bréchnac**, Director, Institut d'Optique, Université Paris Sud

**Prof. Jüri Engelbrecht**, Vice-President of the Estonian Academy of Sciences

**Prof. Guido Martinotti**, Facoltà di Sociologia Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca

**Prof. Erwin Neher**, Director, Max-Planck-Institut für biophysikalische Chemie, Göttingen

# **Final report of the ERC Identification Committee**

## **1. Introduction**

The European Research Council (ERC) Identification Committee was set up by the European Commission as an independent Committee with a mandate to identify the members of the Scientific Governing Council of a future European Research Council.

The Committee started its work on 25 January 2005, and published an interim report on 21 March. Since that time there have been a number of political developments in the effort to establish and fund the ERC, amongst which include the adoption by the Commission of its proposals for the 7<sup>th</sup> research framework programme (2007-2013).

The Committee met in Brussels on 5 occasions, between 25 January and 9 June 2005. It followed a two-stage process, based on the consultation of representative bodies of the scientific community in Europe. The first stage established the main factors and criteria to be taken into account in the identification process itself; the second stage was concerned with carrying out the identification. The results of the first stage, and methodology to be employed in the second stage were published in the Interim Report which is appended for information. The Final Report provides a review of the Committee's work in the second stage; for a complete overview of the identification exercise, it should be read in conjunction with the Interim Report.

### ***Note on terminology***

*The proposals for the 7<sup>th</sup> framework programme adopt a modified terminology from that used up to now, referring to a "Scientific Council" for the ERC rather than a "Governing Council". The Committee therefore adopts this terminology in its final report, on the understanding, that the role of the Council remain unchanged from that presented in Annex 2 of the Interim Report. The Scientific Council will be an independent body whose role is to assure the implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme Ideas (frontier research) programme in accordance with the principles of autonomy and transparency. The Commission has reasserted to the Committee its commitment to give the Scientific Council authority over scientific strategy and scientific decision making in the ERC, as stated in the 7<sup>th</sup> framework programme proposals.*

## **2. Nomination of candidates for the Scientific Council**

As announced in its Interim Report, the Committee requested suggestions of candidates for the Scientific Council by letter to each of the organisations which contributed to the first stage consultation (on methodology). As in the first stage consultation the Committee announced that it would also accept suggestions from other representative organisations.

In total, approximately 40 organisations sent nominations, which resulted altogether in nearly 300 candidates. In many cases, the same person was nominated by more than one organisation. A list of nominating organisations is given in Annex 1.

### **3. Observations on the identification process**

The work of the Committee was greatly facilitated by the efforts of the responding organisations to put forward their nominations promptly, and for the quality of their nominations, which have served to provide the majority of names put forward by the Committee. In order to provide a well-balanced and representative group of individuals, the Committee was required nevertheless, to identify a small number of additional candidates by its own efforts.

The Committee has followed the criteria set out in its Interim Report, and is satisfied that the proposals it has made to the Commission are for a Scientific Council of the highest possible repute, whose capacity to make decisions relating to science and scholarship across the broad spectrum of research domains to be addressed by the ERC should hold the confidence of the research community in Europe.

### **4. Submission of the Identification Committee's proposals**

The Committee presented its proposals, consisting of a list of 22 persons, to the Commission on 24 June 2005. On the basis of the information available to the Committee, these persons are understood to be available and willing to serve. However, in cases where one or other nominee is unable to respond positively to a request by the Commission, a number of possible alternative nominees have been put forward, these to be considered, in consultation with the Committee.

### **5. Additional recommendations from the Identification Committee**

In the light of its reflections, the Committee would make the following additional recommendations regarding the terms of appointment and subsequent renewal of the membership of the Scientific Council.

#### *Terms of appointment*

- The first Scientific Council should be in place for a reasonable time; in the committee's view up to 4 years, to be in the position to measure the first impact of the implementation of the ERC.
- The Scientific Council should itself be responsible for its internal structures, for example the election of a chairperson and vice-chairs.

#### *Process of renewal of members of the Scientific Council*

- In order to ensure the independence in the process of renewal, a similar style of Identification Committee should be established, independent of the Scientific Committee and the Commission

## **6. Final Remarks**

The Committee is pleased to have contributed to the process of establishing a Scientific Council, which represents an important step towards the establishment of the European Research Council, a critical component of Europe's strategy to maintain and enhance its economic and cultural position in the face of an ever more intensive global competition.

Key to the success of the ERC is the confidence it engenders amongst Europe's research community. We would like to stress that we perceived our decisions to be based on scientific and scholarly considerations, independent of political influence. We recognize that the delegation of decisions on the membership of the ERC's Scientific Council to an independent Identification Committee is a concrete demonstration of the Commission's commitment to the principle of autonomy of the ERC. The Committee is confident that the example of trust, co-operation and collective engagement that has characterized the identification exercise will serve as a model for the subsequent steps of setting up and running the ERC.

## **Annex 1: List of representative organisations which sent nominations**<sup>1</sup>

### **A. Representative organisations consulted by the Identification Committee**

- Academia Europaea (organisation representing individual scientists and scholars)
- ALLEA (All European Academies)
- EARTO (European Association of Research and Technology Organisations)
- EASAC (European Academies' Science Advisory Council)
- ESF (European Science Foundation)
- EIRMA (European Industrial Research Management Association)
- EUA (European University Association)
- EUROHORCs (European Heads of Research Councils)
- UNICE (Union des industries de la CE), Working Group “*Research and Innovation*”.

### **B. Other organisations that sent nominations**

- Biosciences Federation
- CBI Confederation of British Industry
- COSCE (Confederation of Scientific Societies of Spain)
- EAESP (European Association of Experimental Social Psychology)
- EASD (European Association for the study of Diabetes)
- EATCS (European Association for Theoretical Computer Science)
- EEA (European Economic Association)
- EFIS (European Federation of Immunological Societies)
- EFOMP (European Federation of Organisations for Medical Physics)
- EMBO (European Molecular Biology Organization)
- EMS (European Mathematical Society)
- ENII The European Network of Immunology Institutes
- ENSA (European Neutron Scattering Association)
- EOS (European Optical Society)
- EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne)
- EPS (European Physical Society)
- EPSO (European Plant Science Organisation)
- ERCIM (European Research Consortium for Informatics and Mathematics)
- ESHG (European Society of Human Genetics)
- Estonian Academy of Sciences
- ESO (European Southern Observatory)
- EuCheMS (European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences)
- EURADIA (European Research Area in Diabetes)
- EUROSCIENCE
- FENS (Federation of European Neuroscience Societies)
- Fundación Ramón Areces
- IADR (International Association for Dental Research)
- Institusjonen Fritt Ord (the Freedom of Expression Foundation)
- JET (Joint European Torus - Nuclear fusion)
- MCFA (Marie Curie Fellowship Association)
- Slovak Nuclear Society
- The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation
- The Hague Club
- UK Research Councils

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<sup>1</sup> Nominations were invited to the mail box [rtd-erc@cec.eu.int](mailto:rtd-erc@cec.eu.int). In addition, the Committee has been contacted by some individuals and representatives of government.