

Standing Identification Committee for the European Research Council Scientific Council

Report on the renewal of the ERC Scientific Council

16 December 2010

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The independent Standing Identification Committee was charged by Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn with the mandate of overseeing the staged renewal of the ERC Scientific Council as members' terms of office come to an end. The present report addresses the work of the Identification Committee in preparing a renewal of the ERC Scientific Council on the expiry of the first term of office of the founding members in February 2011. The process involved the consultation of the scientific community; future Scientific Council members were identified on the basis of the criteria set out in the Commission Decision establishing the ERC.

This report summarises the process and outcome of the Committee's work to renew the Scientific Council, according to a staged process, at the end of the first term of the latter's founding members.

Context

The ERC Scientific Council was set up in February 2007, consisting of 22 members with a mandate of 4 years, renewable once. In February 2009 the seats of three of the founding members who had resigned were filled by new members. Thus, the first term of office of 19 members, one of whom has now passed away, comes to an end in February 2011.

An earlier Identification Committee proposed a methodology for the staged renewal of the Scientific Council which, bearing in mind the 4-year term of office, involved a renewal of approximately one third of the members every two years, so as to cater for continual refreshment of the membership while maintaining continuity. On the basis of this approach, the Committee's immediate task has been to propose a renewed Scientific Council, consisting of both founding members, whose term should be renewed for either two or four years and new members, which fulfils the factors and criteria set out in the Commission Decision establishing the ERC¹.

Methodology

The Committee started its work on 14 September 2010 and has held three meetings in the period to 16 December 2010. In accordance with the provisions of the Decision establishing the ERC and previous practice, the Committee carried out a systematic consultation of the scientific community on possible candidates for Scientific Council membership, on the basis of an initial statement of

1 Decision 2007/134/EC

methodology (Annex 1), which was sent to the main representative organisations of the scientific community in Europe, published on the ERC web-site and announced via a news release inviting suggestions of candidates from other representative organisations.²

In response to the Committee's invitation, a total of 30 organisations sent nominations, as listed in Annex 2. The Committee has greatly appreciated these contributions, which have been thoroughly examined. The Committee has also, on the basis of informal consultations, itself identified other suitably-qualified candidates in areas which have not been adequately covered despite the efforts of the nominating organisations.

The Committee consulted the Chair of the Scientific Council on the identification methodology and received inputs from the Director General of DG Research and the Director of the ERC Executive Agency, to obtain a broader appreciation of the 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.

The Committee's chair also consulted each current member of the Scientific Council, both to understand their experience and views regarding future needs and their own interests as regards the possible renewal of their terms of office.

The Committee's proposals

The Committee has proposed to Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn a renewed Scientific Council consisting of:

- 3 current members whose first term of office ends on 26 April 2013;
- 5 current members whose term of office is renewed for a full term³;
- 7 current members whose term of office is renewed for 2 years;
- 7 new members, appointed for a full term.

Each member has agreed to serve for the term indicated.

Concluding Remarks

The proposals accompanying this report represent the completion of the first task of the Standing Identification Committee. In the coming period, it will continue its work to assure a smooth and effective staged renewal of the Scientific Council in the future.

Annex 1: Initial statement of methodology

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

² See: http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/Press_Release_ERC_Identification_Committee.pdf

³ It is noted that a full term of four years cannot be accommodated within the ERC's lifetime, as defined by the "Ideas" programme under the 7th Framework programme, which comes to an end on 31 December 2013. The Committee however recommends that, to the extent that the ERC and the ScC continue to exist under future Framework programmes, account be taken of the consequent early termination of some members' terms of office in the interest of continuity of operations.

ANNEX 1

ERC Identification Committee

Initial statement on methodology

1. Introduction

The third ERC Scientific Council Identification Committee has a two-fold mandate:

- to identify potential Scientific Council members for the staged renewal of the Scientific Council, in view of the end of mandate of the current membership in February 2011;
- to maintain a wider pool of potential candidates for future renewals and/or replacements after retirements or resignations.

Scientific Council members are appointed according to the provisions of the European Commission's Decision establishing the ERC.⁴ The Committee will thereby carry out its work independently and transparently, including a consultation of the scientific community. The Committee started its work on 14 September 2010 and agreed on the methodology it will adopt for this consultation, which follows closely the successful approach introduced by the previous two Identification Committees.

2. Consultation of the research community

The Committee intends to create a list of possible candidates for Scientific Council membership covering all fields of science and scholarship. This list will be used for the first staged renewal of the membership of the Scientific Council, which should concern approximately one third of the 22 Scientific Council members. It is envisaged that the list will be regularly updated in order to provide candidates for future renewal of the Scientific Council, including potential retirements or resignations.

The Committee considered it should consult the main organisations representative of the various segments of the research community at European level, rather than sectorial or national bodies (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; it will be open to other representative organisations, and the members of the Committee themselves, to suggest other possible candidates.

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:

The composition of the Scientific Council must demonstrate that the Council can exercise

⁴ Commission Decision of 2 February 2007 establishing the European Research Council (2007/134/EC) OJ L 57/14 24.2.2007

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 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 require a short statement of 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).

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 approximately 6 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

- EUROHORCs (European Heads of Research Councils)
- ESF (European Science Foundation)
- EUA (European University Association)
- EASAC (European Academies' Science Advisory Council)
- ALLEA (All European Academies)
- Academia Europaea (organisation representing individual scientists and scholars)
- Business Europe (Formerly UNICE - Union des industries de la Communauté européenne)
- EARTO (European Association of Research and Technology Organisations)
- EIRMA (European Industrial Research Management Association).

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:

Mid- September 2010 – consultation letters sent to representative organisations

29 October 2010 – receipt of proposed candidates and relevant information

October-November 2010 - evaluation of candidates

December 2010 – proposal for staged renewal

January 2011 - report of the Identification Committee

ANNEX 2

Organisations providing nominations for members of the ERC Scientific Council

Organisations consulted directly

1.	ACADEMIA EUROPAEA (organisation representing individual scientists and scholars)
2	EARTO (European Association of Research and Technology Organisations)
3.	EASAC (European Academies' Science Advisory Council)
4.	EUA (European University Association)
5.	EUROHORCS (European Heads of Research Councils)
6.	ALLEA (All European Academies)
7.	ESF (European Science Foundation)
8.	EIRMA (European Industrial Research Management Association)
9.	BUSINESS EUROPE (the main horizontal business organisation at EU level)

Organisations responding to the general invitations to submit nominations

1.	Academy of Finland
2.	Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
3.	DFG - Germany
4.	MPG - The Max Planck Society, Germany
5.	EU Affaires Office – Torino, Italy
6.	EUCHEMS (European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences)
7.	FWO – Flandres, Belgium
8.	IBM Research GmbH
9.	International Strategy Group (UK)
10.	LERU (League of European Research Universities)
11.	Royal Dublin Society (RDS)
12.	Science Foundation of Ireland (SFI)
13.	Solvay -Belgium
14.	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
15.	The Research Council of Norway
16.	TU Wien, Institute of Photonik (Vienna University of Technology)
17.	TUBITAK Ankara, Turkey
18.	UKRO (UK Research Office)
19.	University of Helsinki
20.	VU University of Amsterdam
21.	Leibniz Association - Brussels Office