

ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

- PRESS RELEASE -

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ERC Secretary General announced

Today the Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) announced the selection of the ERC Secretary General for the first 5 years of its operation. Prof. Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker will occupy the position from January 2007 to June 2009. Prof. Andreu Mas-Colell will take over from July 2009 to December 2011.*

The Secretary General will have a key role in ensuring the integrated operation of the ERC, based on the strategy and programme of activities prepared by the Scientific Council. He will be a member of the ERC Board, working together with the Chair and two Vice-Chairs of the Scientific Council and the Director of the Dedicated Implementation Structure/Executive Agency to oversee the implementation of the ERC strategy and work programme prepared by the Scientific Council.

The Secretary General selections were the outcome of a recruitment process conducted autonomously by the Scientific Council and based rigorously on relevant experience and scientific qualifications. Following an assessment and short-listing by an internal recruitment committee, the Scientific Council interviewed the leading candidates, held a vote and agreed on the final decision.

Professor Fotis Kafatos, Chairman of the ERC Scientific Council, said today:

“Amongst the nominations and applications for this important post, we were privileged to receive a number of excellent, highly qualified candidates. We thank them for their willingness to be considered. The final selection decision was agreed by a broad Scientific Council consensus. I am delighted that we will be able to rely on the support and advice of these two distinguished scientists and science policy leaders during the ERC’s years of initial operation: both in the start-up phase when a highly professional implementation structure must be developed and tested in operation and subsequently when the performance, further initiatives and growth of the ERC will be considered.

Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Munich, brings to the ERC enormous experience and success, such as the creation of the Gene Centre in Munich; notably he is completing three successful terms totalling the last 9 years as President and reformer of the DFG (German Science Foundation), the largest research funding agency in Europe, which also covers all fields of science.

Andreu Mas-Colell, currently Professor of Economics at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona and President of the European Economic Association, is known for his exceptionally successful initiatives as Minister of Universities, Research and the Information Society in Catalonia (2000-2003); there he established a series of institutes, research infrastructures and an innovative publicly funded foundation (ICREA), for recruiting internationally top researchers. The exceptional record of these Secretary General recruitments and their combined strengths in both strategy and implementation, represent an invaluable asset towards successful development of the ERC.”

Professor Helga Nowotny, Vice-Chair of the ERC Scientific Council added:

"The decision of the Scientific Council to select two consecutive highly qualified Secretaries General reflects its farsighted view and balanced assessment of what the ERC will need in the near future: the experience and strengths that both Secretaries General bring with them."

Note:

* The ERC will be established as part of the 7th Research Framework Programme of the European Community, which is expected to be agreed by the European Parliament and Council of Ministers towards the end of 2006.

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