

ERC Identification Committee

Initial statement on methodology

1. Introduction

The ERC Scientific Council Identification Committee has a two-fold mandate, first to identify three Scientific Council members to fill the seats vacated by resignations in 2008, second to provide suggestions on the approach to be adopted for future renewal of Scientific Council members, for example at the end of their term on retirement.

Scientific Council members are appointed according to the provisions of the European Commission's Decision establishing the ERC.¹ The Committee will thereby carry out its work independently and transparently, including a consultation of the scientific community. The Committee started its work on 9 October 2009 and agreed on the methodology it will adopt for this consultation, which follows closely the successful approach introduced by the earlier Identification Committee which identified the founding members of the Scientific Council.

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 in the first instance as the basis on which the three vacant seats on the Scientific Council will be filled. It is envisaged that the list, updated from time to time could also serve to provide candidates for future renewal of the Scientific Council, pending the Committee's suggestions on the approach to be adopted in this respect.

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.

¹ Commission Decision of 2 February 2007 establishing the European Research Council (2007/134/EC) OJ L 57/14 24.2.2007

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 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- October 2008 – consultation letters sent to representative organisations

November 7, 2008 – receipt of proposed candidates and relevant information

November-December - evaluation of candidates

December 2008 – three Scientific Council members identified

January 2009 - final report of the Identification Committee