



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The Director-General

Brussels
RTD/02.FA/ML

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Dear Mr. Alvarez Pelegry,

European Commissioner for Start-ups, Research and Innovation Ekaterina Zaharieva has launched a process to recruit a new President of the European Research Council (ERC) and has set up an independent search committee to assist her in this task.

This letter is an invitation to you and other EU science organisations to nominate appropriate candidates for this exceptionally important position for European research.

You will find the details of the required profile, the tasks and associated conditions in the attached document. The new President of the ERC is due to take office from 1 October 2027.

The deadline for nominations is 23 November 2026, to allow sufficient time for candidates to come forward.

We would be very grateful for your full support in this important process. We are available should you wish to discuss any matter relating to this process and can be contacted through the Secretariat (RTD-ERC-ID@ec.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,

Marc Lemaître

Enclosure: Statement on the search process and requirements for the next President of the European Research Council (ERC)

Annex

Statement on the search process and requirements for the next President of the European Research Council (ERC)

1. Introduction

The current President of the European Research Council (ERC), Professor Maria Leptin, was appointed by the European Commission in June 2021. The mandate of Professor Leptin expires on 30 September 2027.

The successor to Professor Leptin should be appointed to take office from 1 October 2027 onwards.

2. Search process

According to Article 8(3) of the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe, [t]he ERC President shall be appointed by the Commission following a transparent recruitment process involving an independent dedicated Search Committee. The recruitment process and the candidate selected shall have the approval of the ERC Scientific Council.

The Committee is composed of high-level, independent experts with a breadth of experience, knowledge and competence that ensures an impartial assessment of the requirements for the position of the next ERC President.

The Search Committee is set up by the Commission under the administrative responsibility of the Commissioner responsible for Start-ups, Research and Innovation and DG RTD. It is tasked with establishing a shortlist of three outstanding candidates for the position of ERC President, who fulfil the conditions under point 3 below.

Letters bearing the signature of the Director-General of DG RTD will be sent to European research organisations inviting them to nominate candidates.

Individual EU research organisations can nominate a maximum of three candidates. The members of the Search Committee will be requested to take a proactive role to encourage suitable candidates to have themselves nominated.

3. Requirements and conditions

The ERC President should be:

- A senior and internationally renowned and respected scientist.
- An innovative research leader, combining wisdom and experience with vision and imagination and acknowledged openness towards all fields of science and scholarship.
- A personality that has the trust and confidence of the scientific community and is renowned for their independence and commitment to research.
- A prominent figure of European Science that demonstrates strong strategic leadership capacity, including as Chair of the ERC's 22-members Scientific Council. The role implies also representing the ERC at a global level promoting the EU values internationally.

- Knowledgeable and supportive of the EU, with experience in science policy and able to make the case for frontier research in Europe.
- A national of an EU Member State

The ERC President will reside in Brussels for the duration of the mandate and devote most of their time (in principle at least 80%) to ERC activities.

Under the current legislation, the term of office is limited to four years, renewable once. No age limit applies.

4. How to apply

The Commission invites all the scientists fulfilling the above requirements to request their research organisation to nominate them as their candidate for the position of ERC President.¹

All applications will be treated as confidential.

EU Research organisations wishing to nominate candidates must send the following to the dedicated email address (RTD-ERC-ID@ec.europa.eu):

- A *statement* from the research organisation explaining why the proposed candidate meets the requirements and is among the best candidates for the post of ERC President [max. 1 page];
- A *curriculum vitae* [max. 2 pages], including;
 - 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);
- A *list of the ten most relevant publications and/or other significant works as well as prizes and distinctions awarded* [max. 2 pages].

The Committee will only consider applications that include all of these elements. They will subsequently be assessed according to the requirements and conditions set out above.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview with the Committee.

Nominations should be sent to the following electronic address: RTD-ERC-ID@ec.europa.eu

The deadline for European research organisations to submit applications is 23 November 2026.

¹ The European Union institutions apply a policy of equal opportunities and accept applications without discrimination.

5. Composition of the ERC Search Committee

- Pearl Dykstra (Chair), Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Margrethe Vestager, former Vice-President of the European Commission;
- Nicole Grobert, University of Oxford;
- Fabio Zwirner, former member of the ERC Scientific Committee, University of Padua;
- Janusz Bujnicki, International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw.

6. Useful links

- [EC presents proposal for next Framework Programme | European Research Area Platform](#)
- [European Research Council](#)
- [Horizon Europe - Research and innovation - European Commission](#)