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ORGANISATION EUROPÉENNE POUR LA RECHERCHE NUCLÉAIRE
CERN EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH

PROCEDURE FOR SELECTING AND APPOINTING THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CERN

This procedure was adopted by the Council at its 211th Session on 24 March 2023. It cancels and replaces the previous version adopted in December 2015 (CERN/2329/Rev. 4). At its 217th meeting on 20 June 2024, the Council modified the access status of this previously confidential document, pursuant to Rule 10 b) of the Rules of Procedure of the CERN Council.

PROCEDURE FOR SELECTING AND APPOINTING THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CERN

Article 1

Scope of application

The procedure set out herein shall apply to the selection and appointment of the Director-General of CERN provided for in Article VI of the CERN Convention (1971 Edition).

Article 2

Duration of the term of office of the Director-General

The term of office of the Director-General of CERN shall be a single fixed period of five years.

The term of office cannot be extended or renewed.

Article 3

Date of appointment

For a term of office starting on 1 January of the year Y, the Council shall, if possible, decide on the appointment of the Director-General in December of the year Y-2, to enable the selected candidate to be aware of the appointment about one year before it commences and to allow the Director-General Designate time for sufficient consultation and familiarisation with the Organization.

Article 4

Initiation of the Selection Procedure and institution of a Search Committee

The Council shall initiate the selection procedure at its March Session of the year Y-2 by deciding on the detailed qualification profile as provided for in article 7 and by instituting a Search Committee.

The Search Committee shall comprise the Chair of the Scientific Policy Committee; four members of the Scientific Policy Committee elected by the latter for this purpose, ideally representing a range of competencies, including managerial experience; two external[1] members appointed by the Council with outstanding managerial and scientific backgrounds; the President and the two Vice-Presidents of the Council; and the Chair of the Finance Committee.

Due consideration shall be given to establishing a suitably diverse Search Committee.

The members of the Search Committee shall not be eligible for positions involving senior managerial responsibilities within the Director-General Designate's top-level organisational structure.

The Search Committee shall elect a Chair from among its members.

The Search Committee is assisted by an external expert in human resources management, who is not a member of the Committee but acts in an advisory capacity.

Article 5

Advertisement of the post

The post of Director-General of CERN shall be advertised. The text of the advertisement, which shall include the detailed qualification profile as provided for in article 7, shall be approved by the Council at its March Session of the year Y-2. A corresponding vacancy notice shall be published on the first day of the month of April of that year, via channels to be decided by the Council.

[1] "External" shall be understood to mean a person who is neither a member of the CERN employed or associated personnel nor a member of any of CERN's governing bodies or committees.

Article 6

Candidates

Individuals may submit applications no later than 31 May of the year Y-2.

Member State delegates may suggest candidates by the same deadline to the Chair of the Search Committee.

The Search Committee may also identify candidates.

The Chair of the Search Committee shall compile a long list of all the candidates from the above three sources, which can be consulted by Council delegates under conditions of strict confidentiality.

Article 7

Qualification profile

The qualification profile shall take account of the Organization's requirements for the period concerned and shall include but not be limited to the following:

- outstanding expertise and a high reputation in particle physics and/or closely related fields;
- demonstrated experience in the successful management of a large-scale project or a large organisation; and
- the capacity to provide scientific and managerial leadership for CERN, to represent the Organization in dealings with governments and other bodies in and outside the Member States and to build consensus effectively within the Organization, the Member States and internationally.

Article 8

Establishment of a short list by the Search Committee

The Search Committee shall consider all candidates (i.e. individual applicants, candidates suggested by Member State delegations and those identified by the Committee itself) and decide which candidates it wishes to interview.

To be eligible for shortlisting, candidates shall satisfy all aspects of the qualification profile determined by the Council.

The Search Committee shall draw up a short list of three or more candidates, for consideration by the Council at its Session in September of the year Y-2.

The Search Committee may consult any person it deems appropriate.

Following the selection and appointment of the Director-General, the list of names of the candidates interviewed by the Search Committee can be consulted by Council delegates under conditions of strict confidentiality.

Article 9

Presentation of shortlisted candidates to the Council

The Search Committee shall designate from among its own members a spokesperson for each shortlisted candidate, who shall be responsible for presenting the latter’s candidature to the Council.

Article 10

Interviewing of shortlisted candidates by the Council

The Council should interview the shortlisted candidates at its September Session and in any case prior to its Session in December of the year Y-2.

Article 11

Selection and appointment

The Council shall converge on one candidate, according to the principles set out in document CERN/2762/Rev.[2] This typically takes place at a special Session convened between the September and December Sessions and is immediately followed by a vote, for which at least a two-thirds majority of all the Member States is required, confirming the selection of the candidate for formal appointment.

The selected candidate should then be appointed by the Council by at least a two-thirds majority of all the Member States no later than at its December Session of the year Y-2.

Article 12

Notification of shortlisted candidates

Once the Council has approved the selection, the President of Council shall be responsible for notifying the shortlisted candidates of the outcome of the selection procedure.

Article 13

Conditions of appointment

In accordance with the Council's decision of 23-24 June 1977 (CERN/1265 and CERN/1268), a committee composed of the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Council and the Chair of the Finance Committee shall determine, on behalf of the Council, the conditions of appointment of the new Director-General.

These appointment conditions shall be set out in a letter of appointment to be signed by the President of the Council and the Director-General being appointed.

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[2] Report of the Working Group on the procedure for future elections of the President of the Council and the Chairs of the CERN Committees.