

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Call for expressions of interest for the members of the Scientific Committee of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Ref.: CEI-SCIE-2012

(2012/C 152/05)

1. THE AGENCY

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is an advisory body of the European Union based in Vienna, Austria ⁽¹⁾.

The objective of the FRA shall be to provide the relevant institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and authorities of the Community and its Member States when implementing European Union law with assistance and expertise relating to fundamental rights in order to support them when they take measures or formulate courses of action within their respective spheres of competence to fully respect fundamental rights ⁽²⁾.

The Agency focuses on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU and its 27 Member States. Candidate countries and countries which have concluded a stabilisation and association agreement with the EU can be invited to participate. This is currently the case for Croatia.

The FRA comprises the following bodies:

Management Board

Executive Board

Scientific Committee

Director

2. THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

This call for expressions of interest invites experts, possessing the necessary experience in one or more scientific disciplines in the field of fundamental rights, to express their interest in becoming members of the Scientific Committee of the Agency.

In accordance with Article 14, paragraph 1 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 (hereinafter referred to as the 'Regulation') establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (hereinafter referred to as the 'Agency'), the Management Board of the Agency shall appoint a Scientific Committee which shall be comprised of 11 independent persons, highly qualified in the field of fundamental rights.

Role of the Scientific Committee:

In accordance with Article 14, paragraph 5 of the Regulation, the aforementioned Scientific Committee shall be the guarantor of the scientific quality of the Agency's work.

⁽¹⁾ Its founding regulation adopted by the Council of the European Union was published in OJ L 53, 22.2.2007, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Article 2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

For that purpose, the Director of the Agency shall involve the Scientific Committee in the preparation of documents drawn up in the context of the tasks the Agency is according to Article 4, paragraph 1(a-f) and (h) of the Regulation entrusted with, namely:

- the collection, recording and dissemination of relevant, objective, reliable and comparable information and data on fundamental rights, including results from research and monitoring communicated to the Agency by EU Member States, Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, research centres, national bodies, non-governmental organisations, third countries and international organisations including the competent bodies of the Council of Europe,
- the development of methods and standards to improve the comparability, objectivity and reliability of data on fundamental rights at a European level, in cooperation with the European Commission and the EU Member States,
- the carrying out of scientific research and surveys, preparatory studies and feasibility studies on issues related to fundamental rights,
- the formulation and publication of opinions on specific thematic topics related to fundamental rights,
- the publication of an annual report on fundamental rights issues covered by the areas of the Agency's activity, also highlighting examples of good practice,
- the publication of thematic reports based on the Agency's own analysis, research and surveys,
- the development of a communication strategy and the promotion of dialogue with civil society, in order to raise public awareness of fundamental rights and actively disseminate information about the Agency's work.

The functioning of the Scientific Committee:

Different from the Management Board, the Scientific Committee is an advisory body that is not involved in the administration and the steering of the Agency. At the same time, the Committee is a working body that is involved in the research processes of the Agency. This implies that the members are expected to be fully committed to make a substantial contribution in terms of time and workload to the Agency's work; with their input being in the form of reasoned arguments concerning the quality of the Agency's work, which may necessitate detailed written contributions. According to the current working methods ⁽¹⁾, the individual members of the Committee supervise one or more specific research projects as 'rapporteurs' from the very inception of the project idea to the publication of the final results. However, decisions concerning the 'scientific quality of the Agency's work' are taken in a collective manner by the Scientific Committee's members. The Committee is headed by its Chairperson that is elected by the Committee for a term of office of one year ⁽²⁾. The Chair is assisted by a Secretariat within the operational services of the FRA.

Composition of the Scientific Committee:

In accordance with Article 14, paragraph 1 of the Regulation, the Scientific Committee shall be composed of 11 independent persons, highly qualified in the field of fundamental rights. The Management Board shall appoint the members following a transparent call for applications and selection procedure after having consulted the competent committee of the European Parliament ⁽³⁾.

The Management Board of the Agency shall ensure even geographical representation in the membership of the Scientific Committee it shall appoint. Furthermore, the Management Board aims to achieve a balanced participation between women and men in the Scientific Committee. It will also pay due attention to the scientific disciplines and specialisations with the aim of covering the different areas as defined by the Agency's Multiannual Framework.

⁽¹⁾ Adopted by the current Scientific Committee and subject to modification.

⁽²⁾ Article 19 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

⁽³⁾ The Committee for Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs ('LIBE Committee').

In accordance with Article 14, paragraph 1 of the Regulation, the members of the Agency's Management Board are precluded from being members of the Scientific Committee.

The members of the Scientific Committee shall be experts in one or more of the disciplines related to or relevant for human rights, inter alia:

- social sciences; including candidates with expertise in the fields of research methodologies and cross-national, comparative research,
- law, including comparative constitutional law, EU law and international law,
- political sciences,
- statistics.

Term of office:

The term of office of the members of the Scientific Committee shall be five years. It shall not be renewed. The members of the Scientific Committee shall be independent and they have to comply with the rules of confidentiality.

They may be replaced only at their own request, or in the event of their being permanently prevented from fulfilling their duties. However, where a member no longer meets the criteria of independence, he or she shall forthwith inform the Commission and the Director of the Agency. Alternatively, the Management Board may declare, on a proposal of one third of its members or of the Commission, a lack of independence and revoke the person concerned. The Management Board shall appoint a new member for the remaining term of office in accordance with the procedure for ordinary members. Where the remaining term of office is less than two years, the mandate of the new member may be extended for a full term of five years. The list of members of the Scientific Committee shall be made public and shall be updated by the Agency on its website.

Meetings of the Scientific Committee:

In accordance with Article 14, paragraph 6 of the Regulation, the Scientific Committee shall meet four times a year in plenary session. The venue of the meetings is the seat of the Agency (Vienna), unless an exception is made. The members are expected to participate in these meetings and to make a substantial contribution in terms of time and workload, including the review of and comments on material submitted to them — which should preferably be in written form and substantiated.

Members of the Scientific Committee shall be entitled to indemnities related to their participation in the activities of the Scientific Committee ⁽¹⁾.

3. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED, CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT

A. Eligibility criteria

Applicants for membership of the Scientific Committee must fulfil the following four criteria:

- having a postgraduate or comparable university degree in a relevant scientific area,
- having seven years of proven professional experience dealing with fundamental rights in the context of disciplines such as the social sciences, political sciences, law and/or statistics — after obtaining the abovementioned degree,
- nationality of one of the EU Member States,

⁽¹⁾ Articles 24(1) and 25(1-3) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights; and Decision No 11FIN 2010 of 20 April 2010 on the 'Rules on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by members or alternate members of the Management Board, members of the Executive Board, members of the Scientific Committee, external members of Selection Committee(s) and experts invited to attend meetings'.

- thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the EU and a satisfactory knowledge of another language of the EU ⁽¹⁾.

B. Selection criteria

ESSENTIAL:

The **five essential requirements** for the selection of the members of the Scientific Committee are:

- **scientific excellence:** scientific excellence related to the fields of the mandate of the Agency, including publications in these and/or closely related fields,
- **cross-national, comparative experience:** extensive experience of having worked and/or conducted research in more than one country in fields closely related to the work of the Agency,
- **in-depth insight concerning fundamental rights in practice:** extensive experience with respect to legal, social sciences, policy and/or practical implementation of fundamental rights in practice — such as experience of fieldwork and data analysis, giving technical advice, legal judgments, or having worked for an international governmental or non-governmental organisation,
- **delivery of opinions and/or recommendations:** experience in drafting opinions, or recommendations at national or international level related to the fields of interest of the Agency, which can be in the form of conclusions and findings from major research,
- **excellent scientific English:** an excellent knowledge of written and spoken English. The working language of the Agency is English.

ADVANTAGEOUS:

The following three criteria will be considered as added **advantages**:

- holding or having held a permanent professorship or lectureship in an academic institution,
- a doctoral degree,
- professional experience in a multidisciplinary environment, preferably in an international context.

In particular the compliance with the abovementioned essential requirements will be assessed according to the following scale of merit points, facts and evidence:

1. Scientific excellence (0-30 points)

- relevant scientific publications — minimum of 10 high-quality publications,
- relevant expert opinions, recommendations or conclusions delivered to public authorities,
- relevant research projects in different EU Member States,
- relevant teaching in different EU Member States and experience in chairing at international conferences, in participating in international working groups and in multidisciplinary projects.

2. Cross-national, comparative experience (0-15 points)

- relevant experience of fieldwork, including e.g. multinational surveys,
- relevant experience in giving policy and legal advice in an international or transnational context,
- relevant experience in comparison of political systems and comparative constitutional law (EU).

3. In-depth insight concerning fundamental rights in practice and policy (0-15 points)

- relevant experience in public administration or policy, including holding or having held leading positions,

⁽¹⁾ Note: the working language for all meetings and deliverables — for both the FRA and members of the Scientific Committee — is English. The FRA translates only the final versions of its deliverables into other EU languages, therefore, candidates are expected to have a very high standard of English — listening, reading and writing — as translation and interpretation are not possible with respect to the work of the Committee.

- relevant experience in the judiciary, including holding or having held leading positions,
- relevant experience in non-governmental organisations, including holding or having held leading positions,
- relevant experience in national human rights institutions or other human rights bodies at national level, including holding or having held leading positions,
- relevant fundamental rights experience at international level, including holding or having held leading positions.

4. Delivery of opinions and/or recommendations/conclusions (0-15 points)

- extensive experience in translating scientific research into relevant recommendations for practice,
- extensive experience in providing concise and policy relevant expert-opinions to public administrations and NGOs,
- extensive experience as a scientific editor,
- experience in communicating fundamental rights to a broader public.

5. Excellent scientific English (0-10 points)

- excellent scientific written English,
- extensive experience in scientific writing and editing in English.

The criteria indicated as advantageous will be scored 0-5 points.

The need to ensure a fair geographical and gender balance shall also be taken into account in the selection phase.

4. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Candidates are requested to submit their application electronically through the Agency's website: <http://www.fra.europa.eu>

Only online applications will be accepted. An application will be deemed admissible only if it includes:

- a **letter of interest** (maximum one page),
- a **registration form** provided on the Agency's website in the page related to this call for expressions of interest,
- a **list of scientific publications** in books and peer-reviewed journals, including **the abstracts of the five most relevant articles (three of these abstracts should be in English)**. Further supporting documents may be requested at a later stage of the selection.

Clarifications on the call and the applications procedure can be requested at the following address:

selection-scientific-committee@fra.europa.eu

5. SELECTION PROCEDURE, APPOINTMENT AND TERM

Pre-selection:

The Director of the Agency shall prepare and organise the work for the pre-selection of the members of the Scientific Committee. He or she shall chair a pre-selection panel, composed of the Heads of Department of the Agency and a person appointed for the purpose by the Council of Europe. Two members of the FRA Management Board may attend the pre-selection panel as observers.

The pre-selection panel shall verify the eligibility of the candidates, in accordance with the eligibility requirements. Failure to comply with one of these requirements will result in the exclusion of the concerned candidate from the next steps of the selection process.

The pre-selection panel shall then assess each eligible candidate according to the requirements for selection. It will draw up an 'individual assessment form' for each candidate which will include a short comment, highlighting the specific values/shortcomings of the candidate concerned.

The Director shall present the results of the pre-selection process to the FRA Executive Board, including information on the candidates deemed ineligible.

Selection:

The Executive Board shall assess all the candidates on the basis of the established selection requirements.

In this assessment the Executive Board shall take into account:

- the work of the pre-selection panel,
- the need that the specialist fields of the members of the Scientific Committee shall cover the most relevant scientific fields linked to fundamental rights, in accordance with the mission and objectives of FRA,
- the need to ensure even geographical and gender balance.

The Executive Board shall submit to the Management Board a list of most eligible candidates. This list should include more than 11 and fewer than 22 names. This list will also include merit points and a conclusion concerning the suitability as a member of the Scientific Committee for each candidate.

The Chair of the Executive Board shall present the results of the selection process to the Management Board, including a record of the candidates not included in the lists mentioned above as well as on candidates deemed ineligible.

The Agency's operational services shall provide technical and logistical support for the selection process.

Appointment:

On the basis of the list submitted by the Executive Board, the Agency's Management Board shall appoint the members of the Scientific Committee, after having consulted the competent committee of the European Parliament. The candidates not appointed shall be put on a reserve list.

In accordance with Article 14, paragraph 2 of the Regulation, members will be appointed for a five-year term, which shall not be renewable.

The reserve list shall be valid for the duration of the term of the appointed Scientific Committee. In case of a vacancy, the Management Board shall appoint a new member from the reserve list. The filling in of a vacancy shall be for the rest of the duration of the term of the Scientific Committee. However, in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 1 of the Regulation, the Management Board shall follow a process of appointment identical to the one followed for the appointment of the original member including consultation of the LIBE-Committee of the European Parliament. The LIBE-Committee may decide to make the names of the candidates and their CVs public.

6. DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT, INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The members of the Scientific Committee are appointed on a personal basis. Members shall undertake to act independently of any external influence. For this reason they will be requested to make a declaration of commitment and a declaration of interest ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Article 27(1-4) of Rules of Procedure and Annexes 2 and 3 to Annex I.

A declaration of confidentiality will be requested as well in order to comply with the rules of confidentiality when dealing with information specifically identified by the Agency as 'restricted or confidential' ⁽¹⁾.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The FRA urges anyone meeting the eligibility criteria and interested in becoming a member of the FRA Scientific Committee to apply.

The FRA is an equal opportunities institution and ensures that its selection procedures do not discriminate on the basis of gender, colour, racial, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, or any other status.

8. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

Please note that FRA will not return applications to candidates. The personal information FRA requests from candidates will be processed in line with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. This applies in particular to the confidentiality and security of such data.

Personal data shall be processed solely for the purpose of the selection procedure. Should the candidate have any query concerning the processing of his/her personal data, he/she shall address them to the following address:

selection-scientific-committee@fra.europa.eu

9. DEADLINE

The closing date for submission of applications is **4 July 2012 at 13.00** (local time, GMT +1).

Please note that due to the large number of applications we receive, the system may face problems in processing such amounts of data when reaching the deadline for submission of applications. We therefore advise to apply well ahead of the deadline.

⁽¹⁾ Article 26(1-3) of Rules of Procedure and Annex I to Annex 1.