



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

From: General Secretariat
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Subject: Criteria, modalities and best practices for the selection of the executive heads and guidelines for candidatures in the UN system organizations

At its meeting on 15 October 2012, the Council adopted the Criteria, modalities and best practices for the selection of the executive heads and guidelines for candidatures in the UN system organizations, as set out in the Annex to this note.

**Criteria, modalities and best practices for the selection of the executive heads and guidelines
for candidatures in the UN system organizations**

1. General principles

- The overriding concern of the EU is that candidates of appropriate professional, managerial and political standards are appointed and elected as heads of the UN system organizations.
- Advancing a candidature is a national right of any state and these guidelines are without prejudice to this right.

These guidelines replace and combine the revised guidelines for candidatures for heads of UN agencies adopted by the Council in March 1998¹, and the "Criteria, modalities and best practices for the selection of heads of UN agencies" of December 2000².

2. Field of application

The present guidelines cover the criteria for the selection procedures in the UN system organizations, the EU coordination of candidatures and the support to a third country candidate.

The following guidelines shall apply only to candidatures for posts of executive head of United Nations system organisations. These guidelines may be applied to candidatures for other high level positions, on a case by case basis.

¹ Doc. 6412/1/98 REV 1.

² Doc. 13221/00.

In principle, the procedure applies both to elections and appointments, in the former case, however, subject to any procedural rules governing the elections.

These guidelines can apply to candidates from both EU and, if appropriate, non EU member states.

Should the Council decide another specific procedure to be applied to organs or subsidiary bodies, organisations of the UN system, that procedure will take precedence over the present procedure.

The present guidelines do not prevent the Council or its preparatory bodies to address any issue related to candidatures beyond the scope of these guidelines.

The present procedure does not prejudice the question of EU competence in the United Nations system organisations.

A. CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION PROCEDURES OF EXECUTIVE HEADS IN THE UN SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS

Guidelines:

The EU supports the following procedures to be applied in the selection of executive heads in the UN-system organizations. These guidelines should be applied in particular to elections but also to appointments and nominations to the maximum extent possible.

1. Agreed and transparent procedure for election (appointment and nomination) which is codified in the constitution, statute etc. of the respective organization.
2. Specified qualifications for the posts which are tailored for the specific needs of respective organization. The Executive body should agree a job description, which should set out the particular skills and expertise required. This should then be approved by the entire membership.

3. Early and widest possible international dissemination of the vacancy notice to attract a wide selection of the best qualified persons to apply for the post.
4. Early identification and nomination of candidatures (preferably several months before nominations close) should be encouraged.
5. Open and transparent procedure for the presentation of candidatures under consideration by the Secretary-General while fully respecting his prerogatives.
6. Transparency with the list of candidatures towards the membership. Candidatures should be made public at least four weeks prior to the election.
7. Suitable screening process by a search group or other relevant body, to be chosen by the executive body or the membership of a given organisation, based on an adequate participation of member states giving the opportunity to verify the qualifications of candidates. Any search group should reflect the particularity of a given organisation and its expertise. A clear mandate should be given to any such body. The screening process should be undertaken as soon as possible after the closing date for nominations. As appropriate establish a short listing of candidatures by a search group or other relevant body according to the qualifications and priorities based on the results of the screening process.
8. The executive body or the membership of a given organisation should be given the opportunity to interview the candidates and hear an oral presentation of their visions for the organisation well in advance of the actual election.
9. The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations, which have not yet done so, should establish timelines for the selection process of their executive heads ending at least three months before the expiring date of the mandate of the incumbent, in order to ensure a smooth transition between the incumbent and the incoming executive head.

10. Agreed but flexible provisions to deal with situations where there is a tie between candidates.
11. The overall aim should be to select the best candidate for the post having the highest standard of efficiency, competence and integrity. Furthermore adequate consideration should be given to UN rules and practice including full gender balance.
12. Member states may support a candidate for two consecutive terms only, or, alternatively, for consecutive periods not exceeding a total of ten years³. This provision should be strictly respected and adhered to. The EU will continue to work towards introducing two term limitations in UN agencies⁴ which do not yet have them.

B. EU COORDINATION OF CANDIDATURES

1. General considerations

In order to arrive at a common understanding regarding which positions might be taken up by an EU national, the UN Working Party (CONUN) should consider elections coming up in the following two years at least once during each semester.

CONUN should proceed to an early identification of posts where there is an added value of having an EU national in a given position. CONUN should consider elections and appointments coming up in the following two years at least every six months at Director's level.

However, it is recognised as a legitimate concern of any individual Member State of the United Nations that it would like to see its nationals represented at the top management level of organisations of the UN system to an extent fairly reflecting their commitment to the United Nations.

Also, it should be taken into account whether a candidate is likely to attract the support of non EU member states of the United Nations.

³ The maximum length of the term of executive heads is 5 years.

⁴ IAEA and WMO.

2. Procedure

- A) The European External Action Service (EEAS) will compile a list of posts becoming vacant, to be distributed at each meeting of the UN Working group, with a view to completing the list with all information on vacant posts available to partners.
- B) A Member State wishing to propose a candidate for a given post is invited to inform partners at an early stage on their “intentions or interest” for posts that are identified by CONUN as being of interest for the EU and its Member States. Such information should ideally be shared before the official announcement of any candidature and before presenting the candidate officially to Third Countries, the Secretary General or other parties. The same applies if a Member State wishes to express its official support of a candidate of a non EU Member State of the United Nations. Partners wishing to react or comment on the candidature, or to reserve their position, should do so as early as possible.
- C) If and when an EU Member State candidate is supported by all Member States, national and EU efforts could be combined to promote the candidature. The Member State whose national is the candidate will continue being in the lead for the campaign on the promotion of the candidature. The EU (notably, through the Council, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and EU delegations) will support such campaign through the different EU tools.
- D) When more than one candidate has been proposed, consultations with the Member States concerned should be undertaken.
- E) The Chair of CONUN will communicate via COREU, or at UN Working Party meetings the results of the sounding out to partners, asking them, with a view to reaching consensus, to consider the said results and suggesting for the candidate, who attracts a wider support, to be the EU's common candidate. It will, nevertheless, remain the sovereign right of Member States concerned to draw their own conclusion in case that a general support of partners on a sole candidate has not been reached.

F) In certain circumstances, the Chairs of the relevant Council preparatory bodies or any Member State could raise these issues to a higher level (PSC, COREPER or Council).

C. SUPPORT OF A THIRD COUNTRY CANDIDATE

EU Member States may also lend their support to a third country candidate. Unanimous support by the EU represents a strong political message in line with the objectives of the Lisbon Treaty.

On a case-by-case basis, whenever possible, the practice of issuing a declaration of the High Representative on behalf of the EU to mark the EU support to a 3rd country candidate should continue.
