

San Domenico di Fiesole, November 15, 2010

Mr. Robert-Jan Smits
Director-General of
Directorate-General for Research
European Commission
Square de Meeus, 8
1050 – Brussels

Subject: The selection process for the post of "Principal Adviser in Directorate-General Research, Director Designate of the European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA) in Brussels" - COM/2009/2390 and COM/2009/10222

Ref.: Your letter of 12 November 2010

Dear Robert-Jan,

Thank you for your letter in reference, your acknowledgment that we share the same goal – that of turning the ERC into a world class frontier research organization - and for your request for my “support and constructive contribution to this endeavour”.

With the closing of the post of Director Designate of the European Research Council without appointment, a unique opportunity to materialize ‘my constructive contribution to this endeavour’ has been lost. However, in my (12/09/2010) letter to you, I was not raising a personal issue (after all, any of the three final candidates could have been selected), but rather, serious concerns regarding the irregularities I had witnessed in the final stages of the selection process. In my (19/10/2010) letter to Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn I also raised similar concerns and I added: “I could withdraw my candidacy if I were to see that by doing so I could help the process of consolidation of the ERC as an independent, properly funded and managed world-class research funding institution.” I was expecting that your letter would clarify my concerns and provide an explanation of the European Commission’s rationale for the failure of the selection procedure in question. I still hope such clarifications and explanations will be publicly provided, since I think they are important for the transparency and trust on which the EU organizations, and the ERC in particular, must be founded.

In spite of this experience, rest assured that my “lasting commitment to the development and success of European Science in general and the ERC in particular” remains intact and, therefore, whenever it is appropriate you can count on my collaboration.

Sincerely,

Ramon Marimon

Cc: Ms Irene Souka, Director-General for Human Resources and Security, Chair of the CCA
Mr John Bell, Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn
Mr Juraj Nociar, Head of Cabinet of Vice-President Maros Šefčovič