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Member of the European Commission

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D (2009) 545

Mr Enric Banda
President, Euroscience
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Dear Mr Banda,

Thank you for your letter and observations concerning the ERC Review. The independent Review of the ERC Structures and Mechanisms is an important contribution to our aim of building a world-class frontier research agency for Europe. It is an ambitious initiative and the Commission is committed to making it a resounding success, because we see it as having a central role in the European Research Area. The Commission's objective is to create an autonomous and accountable institution, financed by community budget that will increasingly attract the best scientists from around the world.

We believe strongly in the idea of the ERC as a "learning organisation" and, on the basis of early experience, we have already done a lot to develop and refine its operations. I very much welcome the review Panel's attention to the sustainability of the ERC's early achievements. It has drawn our attention to a number of important aspects where action is needed, recommending that we build on the present structure. The Commission's response, in the form of a Communication to the European Parliament and Council will be finalised soon and will address the key points and recommendations of the review, several of which you highlight in your paper.

I also agree that the interface between the ERC and national authorities and agencies is important and that the ERC can be a strong force towards more coherent European research actions. ERC funding is indeed already having an impact on the European research landscape beyond the specific projects being supported. Several participating countries have launched national initiatives offering the possibility for financial support to finalists of the ERC Starting and Advanced Grant competitions whose proposals could not be funded by the ERC due to budgetary limits.

Thank you for your continuing interest and support for the ERC,

Yours sincerely,

