

## EURAB Recommendations on the Descartes Prize

April 2004

EURAB strongly encourages the development of the Descartes Prize and its recognition by the scientific community and the general public in the EU and worldwide. The following recommendations aim at increasing the establishment of the Descartes Prize as a major scientific prize while strengthening the valorization of the Prize and its impact among the general public.

1. The originality of the Prize resides in its rewarding a team of research groups from various EU countries for scientific and technological achievements resulting from collaborative research. Therefore, EURAB recommends that in all instances, in particular on the Commission website, in press releases, and during the Award Ceremony, the emphasis be put on all members of each team and not only on the spokesperson.

2. EURAB recommends that the procedure of nomination no longer rely on self-nomination. Rather, nominations to the Prize should be signed and introduced to the European Commission for instance by Deans or Department Heads of Universities, or Directors of Corporate Research Centers, or Academies, all other eligibility rules remaining the same. Nominations of female scientists should be encouraged.

3. EURAB recommends removing the Oscar-like presentation of the Award ceremony. The Laureates and Finalists should be made known in advance (2-3 months ahead of the date of the Award ceremony); a press release should be ready at the time of the announcement to detail the impact of the respective achievements for the general public.

4. EURAB recommends that the videos of the Laureates and the Finalists be widely distributed among all television networks in the Member States and worldwide. The videos should be made in such a way as to catch the interest of the public in general, and of students in high schools in particular.

5. EURAB recommends broadening the composition and duties of the Grand Jury, taking into account the modifications in the nomination procedure outlined in recommendation number two. The composition of the Grand Jury should be as distinguished and diverse as possible. The duties should encompass deciding not only on the Laureates but on the Finalists as well, among a list proposed by the thematic panels.

6. EURAB recommends that the Award ceremony be a most prestigious event. A High Representative (preferably the Chief of State) of the Member State in which the ceremony is held and the Commissioner for Research should both be present. The press conference after the ceremony should target journalists not only from the Member States but from all over the world.

7. EURAB recommends that the Laureates and the Finalists (all chosen by the Grand Jury according to recommendation number five) be invited to the Award ceremony. While the focus of the ceremony will naturally be on the Laureates, the Finalists should be recognized as well by a diploma or a medal. Booths displaying the achievements of the Laureates and the Finalists should be accessible to the press.

NB: Having both the Laureates and the Finalists recognized insures a maximum media coverage across the EU.

8. EURAB recommends to organize high-level scientific events around the Award ceremony.

For instance:

- The Laureates should tour the major universities of the country hosting the Award ceremony for 2 or 3 days prior or after the ceremony.
- There could be a prestigious Symposium taking place before the Award ceremony with the Laureates and other top scientists.
- There could also be an event dedicated to research policy questions in which the Laureates discuss with policy makers issues of topical interest.

9. EURAB recommends that the new prize in communication science not carry the name of Descartes in order to prevent any confusion. The name “Descartes Prize” should be exclusively associated, in the eyes of both the scientific community and the general public, with an award for excellence in scientific collaborative research.

EURAB is looking forward to working with the Commission and the Grand Jury in shaping the Descartes Prize as a truly unique Award.