

Draft for a revised Nominations Policy for the DHST

Please find below a motivated proposal to revise the DHST nominations policy. This is a first proposed draft and open for feedback and changes. All representatives of commissions and national members are kindly asked to give their thoughts and feedback on the current proposal which will allow us to prepare a more definite proposal for the EGA end of November 2023.

During the DHST GA in 2021 a report of the nominations committee explicitly asked for a revised nominations policy based on the problems they faced in attempting to have a diverse and large enough pool of candidates for the different positions in DHST council (the report is attached as Appendix A to this report). In this report, an overview of the current situation is provided together with a number of proposals for changing the current policy and their arguments. The general rationale behind the proposed changes is that we want to have a ***clear, sound, simple and fair*** nominations process that guarantees a ***large, diverse and qualified set of candidates*** that are representative of the community at large. If we want DHST to be a more modern institute that is attractive also for the next generations, then having a more transparent nominations policy seems key.

This report contains the following sections:

Sec. 1: Summary of the proposed changes

Sec. 2: Current situation

Sec. 3: Issues with the current state of affairs

Sec. 4: Proposed changes

Annex: Report from the nominations committee (2021)

1. Summary of the proposed changes

The main changes proposed are:

- That commissions would not longer be treated as second-class citizens and be allowed to make direct nominations via the nominations committee
- Nominations can only be made through the nominations committee
- If, after sufficient time, the nominations received from commissions and sections does not result in a diverse and large enough pool of candidates, the nominations committee is given a more active role

2. Current situation

Article 22 of the DHST statutes specifies the following:

Article 22. At least two years before each Ordinary Session of the General Assembly, the Council shall appoint a Nominations Committee for the purpose of drawing up a list of nominations for the next Council. The Chair of the Nominations Committee shall invite all Ordinary Members to submit nominations for Council in writing at least nine months before the date of this Ordinary Session of the General Assembly. Other nominations for Council may nevertheless be submitted in writing to the Secretary General by any Ordinary Member at least forty-eight hours before the midnight which commences the day on which the election is to take place. Election is by secret ballot.

This means that we need to appoint a nominations committee. This article also appears to imply that there are two ways to nominate candidates: either through the nominations committee or through the secretary-general -- effectively bypassing the nominations committee.

Under 2.1. of the Rules of Procedure we find further explicit rules for the Nominations procedure:

A valid nomination for the Council shall consist of a brief written statement of nomination from at least one Ordinary Member, a one-page Curriculum Vitae of the nominee, and a letter from the nominee confirming willingness to serve in the post for which she/he is nominated. The Nominations Committee (Article 21 of the Statutes) shall verify the validity of the nominations it receives. It shall use its best endeavors to ensure that it receives at least two nominations for each elective office, and that the nominations have regard to the principles of gender balance and cultural diversity enunciated in Article 1.e. of the Statutes. For this purpose it shall if necessary solicit further nominations from Ordinary Members, and suggestions from Sections and Commissions, until no later than four months before each Ordinary Session of the General Assembly. It shall then have the list of valid nominations, with the mention of the nominating Ordinary Member or Members for each nomination, dispatched to Ordinary Members, Sections and Commissions, as well as to the members of the Council through the Secretary General no later than three months before each Ordinary Session of the General Assembly.

This means amongst others that the nominations committee has the task to assure a large and diverse set of nominees. However, it cannot play a very active role in that process, for it is not clear *how* it "shall use its best endeavors to ensure that it receives at least two nominations for each elective office." It is also unclear what the nominations committee can do with the suggestions it may solicit from Sections and Commissions. Moreover, it is implied here that there are *de facto* two rounds. There is a first round where only members can nominate. This first round starts at least nine months before the GA and ends at least four months before the GA. If the nominations committee finds that the list of candidates is not satisfactory, a second round can be started and this is at least four months before the GA to end three months before the GA. In this second round, commissions and sections can also *suggest* candidates but a nomination is valid only when an ordinary member supports it.

Issues with the current state of affairs

We identify three issues with the current nominations policy that we would like to solve through a revised policy.

A. The current DHST policy has certain unnecessary **complexities** if not **inconsistencies**:

- In art. 22, it appears that there is only one round for nominations that are to be sent to the nominations committee. However, 2.1. of Rules and Procedures states that there are in fact two rounds, a first round where only members can nominate and a second round where commissions and sections are also invited to make suggestions.¹
- It appears that the role of the nominations committee is undermined by the possibility for members to directly send nominations to the secretary-general until 48 hours before the midnight which commences the day on which the election is to take place.

It would be more consistent if only one of the two procedures would be possible. We believe that nominations should be in the hands of a committee that functions largely independently of the council and we propose that all nominations should in the future be handled *only* by the committee.

B. The current policy treats commissions and sections *de facto* as **second-class "citizens"** since:

- (1) they can only suggest candidates. Official nominations can only be sent by ordinary members.
- (2) they can only make such suggestions in a second round on the condition that the first round did not result in a diverse and large enough pool of candidates.
- (3) it is by no means clear what is to be made of those suggestions, since they can only become valid nominations if channeled through an ordinary member.

This process whereby commissions and sections can only nominate candidates with the help of at least one ordinary member is known to be a cumbersome and difficult process (See the Report of the previous nominations report in Annex). The commissions and sections of DHST have evolved to become a basic part of the daily life of the division with the organization of a multiplicity of activities and events, including the symposia at the ICHST congress. In recent years several new commissions have been created, often supported by an international group of earlier career scholars driven to establish their respective communities within the DHST. If we want DHST to stand for a community where **everyone is considered equal** and where also younger generations feel at home, then we believe that giving the commissions and sections the possibility to directly nominate candidates would be a logical step. Finally, it would likely dramatically increase the number and diversity of candidates, to the point of perhaps mooted the complex process of two-rounds plus last-minute suggestions via the secretary general. Note that it was also one of two recommendations of the previous nominations committee to revise the policy in this direction.

C. The nominations committee currently has a very passive role where they can only send out calls for nominations. They are not allowed to ask for nominations (1) for specific offices in

¹ Under the proviso that the nominations committee concludes that the list resulting from the first round is not satisfactory.

which nominations might be lacking (2) to increase the necessary background diversity or (3) to improve the gender balance. This was pointed out by the previous nominations committee as an important obstacle for having a diversified and large enough pool of candidates as required by the statutes. In that regard, we propose that the revised policy would give a slightly more active role to the nominations policy.

Proposed changes

We propose the following changes to the nominations policy:

- 1) That commissions and sections be given the possibility to directly nominate candidates, including in the first round. The first round should be started at the latest nine months before the GA and ends five months before the GA. This gives members and commissions/sections four months to send in their nominations, which seems a sufficient time.
- 2) The second round would be used to give the nominations committee the possibility to intervene when the initial pool of proposed candidates is found to be too small (it is not guaranteed that there are at least two valid nominations for a given position) or if the list of candidates is not representative of the diversity that the DHST stands for. This second round should start five months before the GA. The nominations committee would be allowed during this round to explicitly communicate about the kind of candidates that are missing plus make suggestions to the commissions and/or members of particular candidates they believe to be suitable.
- 3) Nominations can only be done via the nominations committee. Nominations end two weeks before the GA.

Appendix A. Report from the nominations committee 2021

Report of the Nominations Committee

After his nomination as chair of the Nominations Committee by the Council of DHST, Efthymios Nicolaidis contacted June Barrow-Green (UK), Silvia Figueirôa (Brazil), Donald Opitz (USA), and Shi Yunli (China). in order they participate at the Committee. The Committee was constituted on March 4, 2020.

On March 19, the Committee wrote a letter to the ordinary members (National Committees) of the DHST asking them for nominations. According to the rules of DHST, this first round of nominations ended November 25, 2020. Two reminders were sent to the ordinary members, before and after the summer vacations. At the deadline, eight countries (China, Czech Republic, Germany, France, Japan, Portugal, and Russia), had sent in nine 9 nominations. After this

deadline, the Committee sent on November 26 a second letter to all the members of DHST asking for additional nominations. Two reminders of this letter were sent, in January and March 2021.

At the deadline of this second round, on March 25, 2021, eleven ordinary members that had not sent nominations during the first round (Austria, Brazil, Greece, USA, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, and UK) and two ordinary members that had sent nominations during the first round (China and France) have sent nine new nominations and/or supported nominations of the first round. Czech Republic NC withdrew a nomination from the first round due to health reasons.

As far as we know, four commissions (HAPOC, ICHM, INHIGEO and WGS) suggested, during the second round, nominations to ordinary members.

The Nominations Committee has received all the required documents for the nominations to be valid: a proposal from an ordinary member, and a short CV and a letter of acceptance from each candidate.

The gender balance of the seventeen in total nominations is as follows: ten female candidates and seven male candidates.

We consider that these nominations are balanced as far as it concerns the scientific fields of the candidates. Furthermore, if we take into account the geographical repartition of the ordinary members, the geographical balance is acceptable: we have nine candidates from Europe, two from countries that are in Europe as well in Asia (Russian Republic and Turkey), three from Asia, one from South America and two from North America. Statistics about the nominees can be found in the annex of the report.

List of candidates

Browne Janet (UK, since 2006 works in USA)

Cohen Claudine (France)

De Mol (Liesbeth France)

Haddad Thomás (Brazil)
Hashimoto Takehiko (Japan),
Herlea Alexander (Romania)
Luo Xingbo (China)
Malpangotto Michela (France, Italy)
Mülberger Rogele Annette (Netherlands)
Phalkey Jahnavi (USA)
Pommerening Tanja (Germany)
Rentetzi Maria (Greece)
Sekyrkova Milada (Czech republic)
Shalimov Sergei (Russia)
Stevanovic Alexandra (Serbia)
Sun Xiaochun (China),
Zorlu Tuncay (Turkey)

We have summarised all the information about the nominations in page 3 and 4 of this document and related statistics in the annex.

Additional remarks.

During the whole process, the Nominations Committee has received enough – and well balanced – nominations for assessors but not at all enough nominations for the essential offices of the Council.

It seems that some Commissions have encountered difficulties in finding an ordinary member willing to introduce their proposal. Therefore the number of nominations during the second round was below our expectations. Last but not least, very few ordinary members have sent in nominations of colleagues that are not citizens of the country of the ordinary member that proposed them. In the future, the Council should encourage a more international approach for nominations.

Recommendations

The rules of procedure specify that “the Nominations Committee shall use its best endeavors to ensure that it receives at least two nominations for each elective office, and that the nominations have regard to the principles of gender balance and cultural diversity enunciated in Article 1.e. of the Statutes. For this purpose it shall if necessary solicit further nominations from Ordinary Members, and suggestions from Sections and Commissions, until no later than four months before each Ordinary Session of the General Assembly”. The same rules do not allow the Nominations Committee to actively interfere in the process.

We have sent six letters to the members in order to ask for more nominations but we were not allowed to ask for nominations for specific offices in which we lacked of candidates. We have not encountered problems about gender and geographic balance, but a similar remark could be applied to this in the future.

The requirement that a Commission has to have its nominations delivered through an Ordinary Member is not only cumbersome but, more importantly, it presents a barrier for candidates to come forward. This is reflected in the fact that, as far as we know, only 4 out of 21 Commissions proposed candidates. If a Commission does not have a personal contact with an Ordinary member, or there is no Ordinary Member aligned with the Commission’s academic field, it makes it difficult for that Commission to know to whom they should turn to present their nomination, and in the worst case that Commission could be in the awkward situation of having a strong nomination which does not go forward. From the potential candidate’s point of view, it can be off-putting to know that there is the possibility that their nomination might be rejected by someone outside their field, and this is particularly true of younger scholars who should be encouraged to come forward. Given that members of a Commission are experts in their field and respected members of their community, it is therefore reasonable to assume that they are able to come to a reasoned judgment as to whether the candidate is suitable for nomination. Given the fact that the life of DHST between the Congresses depends on the activity of the Commissions, we think that their role in the electoral process must be upgraded. The above mentioned facts plead for the changing of the rules of procedure of the elections.

Therefore, we suggest the following:

- a) That the Nominations Committee be allowed, if needed, to inform the members of DHST about the profile of additional candidates and the offices that must be fulfilled.
- b) To allow the Commissions to present nominations directly to the Nominations Committee.

The Nominations Committee

Efthymios Nicolaidis (Chair)

June Barrow-Green, Silvia Figueirôa, Donald Opitz, Shi Yunli (members)

Date: March 30, 2021

1 Note, however, that the previous nomination committee was appointed only on March 4 2020.