



FÉDÉRATION EUROPÉENNE DES GÉOLOGUES
EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF GEOLOGISTS
FEDERACIÓN EUROPEA DE GEÓLOGOS

Brussels, 3 June 2013

Mr. Stefaan Herman
Head, Unit B.2 'Skills'
DG Research and Innovation
Square de Meeûs, 8
B- 1049 Brussels

Subject: 'EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion' research field classification

Dear Mr. Herman,

We are contacting you to express our concerns that 'Earth science' (or Geosciences), which include several major academic disciplines, such as 'Geology', which is both an independent research field and profession, is not classed independently in the EURAXESS database. For some unexplained reason 'Earth Science' has been included in the broader field 'Environmental science' within the database and this is not correct.

Taking the example of geology, even if it is a scientific field dealing with certain environmental issues, it is an undeniable fact that it includes other scientific and professional fields such as minerals exploration, mining or energy. Geologists working in industry and the public sector depend on excellence in both academic research from universities and research organisations and geological data collected and maintained by National Geological Surveys. Masking 'Earth Science / Geosciences' within 'Environmental science' produces both an unfortunate lost opportunity and a serious hindrance to the securing of proper funding and support in this area. This masking effect also hinders the identification by the public, public authorities and commercial undertakings of appropriate geoscientific expertise that should be deployed (by appropriately qualified and regulated geoscientists) in the service, and for the protection of, the public.

It is also important to mention that there is an increasing emphasis on the security of raw materials for the EU currently in progress, notably through the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials and in debates and initiatives concerning energy issues and, particularly, the escalation of the importance of topics such as shale gas. Those topics and the related research rely fundamentally on geoscientists. Moreover geosciences and geology are clearly recognised in several EU and international programmes and legislative frameworks, which go far beyond the mere environmental component, such as the Copernicus and Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) programme or the INSPIRE Directive.

Therefore including 'Earth science' (we would prefer 'Geosciences' or 'Earth System Sciences') and 'Geology' in the general research field 'Environmental science' is too vague and does not reflect the broader spectrum of areas covered.

Moreover the database include other obvious mistakes, such as listing 'Geology' as a sub-field of 'Geophysical sciences' or 'Marine geology' as a sub-field of 'Hydrogeology'.

Through prior correspondence we learned that the research field classification currently applied by EURAXESS is based on "Ortelius" which was used by the European Commission for its Framework Programme for Research. In 2011 DG RTD informed us that EURAXESS was contemplating the use of a new classification



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structure to be implemented in 2012. As of today the database still does not contain 'Earth science' (or Geosciences), as an independent research field.

It is also undeniable that geology is a science branch at the level of physics, chemistry and biology having strong links to all of these science branches. However, the EURAXESS classification includes all the traditional scientific disciplines such as physics, chemistry and biological sciences all of which impact on environmental sciences, yet each has its own entry in the database. It is only logical that there is a significant overlap and synergy between geosciences and the other fundamental sciences, but geosciences must be listed alongside these disciplines and not embedded within them.

Based on our combined expertise and clear arguments we hope that you will be convinced that 'Earth science' should be listed alongside 'Environmental science' in the database and not as part of it, in the interest of proper weight being given to geoscience topics and deployment of appropriate expertise in the service and for the protection of the public.

Moreover the name should be changed into the more modern term 'Geosciences'. 'Geology' should be listed independently, directly under 'Geosciences', as should 'Hydrology'. 'Marine geology' should be listed independently, directly under 'Geology'. 'Paleontology' should be listed under 'Geology'.

With a view to anticipating general changes to be applied through Horizon 2020 policies, we kindly ask you to review the classification method applied to the EURAXESS portal and include 'Geosciences' (instead of Earth Science) as a specific and independent research field, also applying the changes proposed above.

We also recommend you consider using as a possible reference the ERC classification and specifically Panel 10 (PE10) of the Physical Sciences and Engineering research domain, available at:

http://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/content/erc_guide_for_applicants_advanced_grant_2013_call.pdf

Thank you for taking these concerns into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

<p>Ruth Allington President, European Federation of Geologists</p>	
<p>Mart van Bracht President, EuroGeoSurveys - The Geological Surveys of Europe</p> 	



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<p>Günter Blöschl President, European Geosciences Union</p>	
<p>Anton van Gerwen Executive Director, European Association of Geoscientists and Engineers</p>	
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