

Electoral Regulations

The Electoral Regulations are a welcome step toward transparency, and the choice of an external bailiff or accredited company for the ballot is sound. Two structural gaps nonetheless weaken the guarantees the text seeks to provide. First, the regulations nowhere fix the moment at which the electoral roll of voting members is certified and frozen; an uncertified roll is the single greatest vulnerability of any election. Second, the seat number is set after nominations close, and candidates have no right of access to the count. The proposals below address these points constructively, without reopening past disputes.

Article 1.4. (voters) The text identifies voters as active members but does not provide for certification of the roll. I propose adding a closing paragraph:

Art. 1.4 (addition). At the close of nominations, the Electoral Committee establishes and certifies the list of members entitled to vote. The certified list is communicated to all nominees and may not be modified thereafter, save for documented errors corrected by unanimous decision of the Electoral Committee and notified to all nominees.

Article 1.6 (Electoral Committee) Setting the number of seats at one-third of the nominees, after the number of nominees is known, exposes the threshold to manipulation. I propose that the rule fixing seats be expressed as a standing ratio determined independently of the identity and count of the candidates, and verified by the external officer:

Art. 1.6 (amendment). The number of seats is set at one-third of the valid dossiers (rounded up to the nearest whole number). The count of valid dossiers and the resulting number of seats are certified by the bailiff or accredited company before the ballot opens, and communicated unchanged to all voting members together with the ballot paper.

Article 1.7 (Proclamation of results) At present the bailiff or company reports to the Electoral Committee alone. I propose that the full report be available to nominees, so that the count is verifiable:

Art. 1.7 (addition). The complete report of the bailiff or accredited company, including the tally of votes, is preserved in the Academy's archive and made available, on request, to any nominee in the relevant election. The result is communicated to all members in decreasing order of votes obtained.

Article 2.5 (Scrutineers) Designating the two youngest members present as scrutineers offers no guarantee of independence and is easily circumvented. I propose designation by lot among willing members not party to any nomination:

Art. 2.5 (amendment). Before the vote, the active members present designate by lot two scrutineers from among those who are neither nominators nor related to a candidate. The scrutineers supervise the counting of the votes from the opening of the ballot papers.

Distinctions and Prizes

The Regulations on Distinctions and Prizes are clear in structure. One substantive point deserves attention: neither the Koyré Medal nor the Prize for Young Historians ties the assessment of merit to the history of science, the Academy's defining object. A dossier emphasizing only research, originality and international reputation may direct an award outside the discipline the Academy exists to serve. I propose an explicit disciplinary criterion in both dossiers. I also propose minor wording corrections to align the French and English versions of the conflict-of-interest clauses, which presently diverge.

Article 1-4 (Koyré Medal) I propose that the required CV demonstrate the relevance of the candidate's work to the history of science. Proposed addition to condition 2:

Art. 1-4, condition 2 (addition). The detailed CV will emphasize research and scientific contributions, the originality of the work, and the candidate's international reputation and activity, and will demonstrate the significance of that work for the history of science and, where relevant, for the aims of the Academy.

Article 2-4 (Prize of Young historians) The same criterion should govern the first-book prize. Proposed addition to the dossier conditions:

Art. 2-4 (addition). The one-page presentation and the nominators' reports will establish that the book constitutes a contribution to the history of science.

Articles 1-4 and 1-5/ 2-5- The French text of Art. 1-4 (« ni avec le candidat ») omits the reciprocal « entre eux » present in the English (“to each other or to the candidate”). The English text of Art. 2-5 omits “to each other.” I propose a single consistent formulation in both languages, in both articles:

Proposed uniform wording (FR). Les parrains doivent résider dans des pays différents et n’avoir aucun lien de parenté, mariage ou cohabitation, ni entre eux ni avec le candidat.

Proposed uniform wording (EN). The nominators must reside in different countries and must not be related by familial ties, marriage and/or cohabitation, either to each other or to the candidate.

Art. 1-2 and 1-4 (Koyré medal) allows each active member to sponsor “one and only one nomination,” while Art. 1-4 requires “at least two” sponsors per candidate. Combined, the two provisions make nominations structurally difficult. If intended, the ratio might be stated; otherwise I propose aligning the two, for example:

Art. 1-2 (amendment, if so decided). Each active member of the Academy may take part in sponsoring nominations but may not act as principal nominator for more than one candidacy.

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