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SCHOOL OF CELTIC STUDIES
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Professor Marja Makarow
Chief Executive
European Science Foundation
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Dear Professor Makarow,

The School of Celtic Studies of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies is the world's leading research institute and publishing house in its field. At its most recent meeting on 11 June 2009 the Governing Board of the School discussed the problems affecting the European Science Foundation's initiative for a European Reference Index for the Humanities, with special reference to the discipline listings and categories assigned to academic journals in the field of Celtic Studies.

The Board had to hand reports from the Royal Irish Academy and a variety of international scholarly bodies which are strongly critical of the ERIH scheme. We wish to advise you of our complete agreement with the numerous critics who have identified the misguided attempt at ranking scholarly journals into categories 'A', 'B' and 'C' as the scheme's principal and most fundamental flaw. We hereby urge the ESF to discontinue this aspect of the exercise forthwith.

The Board also discussed the numerous very serious deficiencies involved in classifying the journals, and noted that despite specific assurances that the project would be 'fully peer-review driven' and that its development 'must continue to be steered by scholars for scholars', no credible procedures for consultation and dialogue with editors and interested scholars have been put in place; the mechanisms for online submissions to facilitate revision and updating of the ERIH lists are altogether lacking in transparency and are without provision for accountability.

We consider the discipline lists compiled for ERIH to be unacceptably restrictive; moreover the categories recognized are misconceived and self-contradictory. In particular, we find the lists inappropriate in that they fail to recognise as a separate category philological journals devoted to the study of the linguistics and literature of individual languages. Besides, the lists betray a serious bias in favour of English-language publications and against the study of the cultures of smaller countries.

Celtic Studies journals have fared especially badly. The reason is clear: the membership of 'expert' panels for the disciplines relevant to Celtic Studies (Archaeology, History, Linguistics, Literature, Religious Studies and Theology) includes no representative with any degree of scholarly competence in our field. This is not good enough: Celtic (together with Finno-Ugric, Germanic, Greek, Romance and Slavic) is one of the six main language groups which for more than two thousand years have shaped the linguistic ecology of Europe.

The Board has determined that ERIH is a fatally flawed project which, if allowed to continue, has the potential to undermine academic publishing in Ireland and the future development of Irish and Celtic Studies as academic disciplines in Ireland, and elsewhere in Europe. Accordingly, we have decided to recommend that the editors of academic journals in the combined field of Irish and Celtic Studies should not engage with the process. In its current form ERIH does not merit recognition as a true reflection of the range and character of European scholarly endeavour.

Finally, the Board wishes to assure you of our full agreement with the ESF's aim; we too wish to encourage 'the exchange between different currents and traditions of Humanities research in Europe, which have contributed to its many linguistically and culturally distinct identities [and ...] to better interconnect these rich diversities by developing cross-national research infrastructures for the Humanities.'

Yours sincerely,



Professor Anders Ahlqvist
Chairman of the Governing Board