



# communiqué de presse

PARIS,  
02 NOVEMBER 2020

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## THIERRY COULHON APPOINTED HCÉRES PRESIDENT

By decree of the President of the Republic, dated 30 October 2020, Thierry Coulhon has been appointed President of the Board of the French High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcéres). Chosen from the shortlist of qualified candidates, he will serve on the Board with 29 other members appointed on the same date.

Thierry Coulhon, a university professor of mathematics and a specialist in geometric analysis, takes over from Michel Cosnard as President of Hcéres. He was appointed after an opinion from Parliament.<sup>1</sup> During hearings before the National Assembly and Senate, he presented his project for Hcéres, focusing on the need to:

- Maintain strict separation between evaluation and decision-making, with Hcéres' mission being to provide an objective basis for decision-making;
- Simplify evaluations and take better account of the evaluated entities' time constraints;
- Make a more decisive contribution to the evaluation of study and training policies, and create a Higher Education Observatory alongside the existing Science and Technology Observatory – a department of Hcéres;
- Consolidate the recently-created French Office for Research Integrity, which should coordinate a network of research integrity officers in universities and organisations;
- Increase the independence of Hcéres, with a view to transforming the High Council into an independent public authority.

### A clear overall vision for higher education and research informed by a rich career path

After being admitted to the École Polytechnique, Thierry Coulhon resigned in 1978 and turned his attentions towards mathematics and philosophy. He holds an *agrégation* (high-level teaching qualification) in mathematics (1981), a PhD from UPMC<sup>2</sup> (1984), a DEA (post-graduate advanced diploma) in history and philosophy of science from Université Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne (1985), and an accreditation to supervise mathematics research (UPMC, 1991).

After an initial post as an assistant professor, followed by a period as a university lecturer at UPMC (1984 - 1991), Thierry Coulhon was appointed as a university professor of mathematics at the Université de Cergy-Pontoise (1992), where he was successively elected to the posts of Vice-President of the Scientific Council (1995), and then Vice-President in charge of contractualisation (1996). In 2004, he was elected President of the institution and became Vice-President of the Conference of University Presidents in 2006.

In 2008, Thierry Coulhon joined the cabinet of Valérie Pécresse, then Minister for Higher Education and Research, first as a Special Advisor and then as Deputy Chief of Staff. Between 2010 and 2012, he led the Centres of Excellence programme (IDEX, LABEX, EQUIPEX, IDEFI) at the French General Investment Commission.

## HCERES

The French High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcéres) is the independent administrative body responsible for evaluating higher education and research entities, as well as approving the evaluation procedures implemented by other organisations. Through its analyses, evaluations and recommendations, Hcéres accompanies, advises and supports the process of continuously improving the quality of higher education and research in France.

<sup>1</sup> Hearings held on 21 October 2020 by the National Assembly Committee on Cultural Affairs and Education, and the Senate Committee on Culture, Education and Communication.

<sup>2</sup> Université Pierre et Marie Curie, now Sorbonne University



In 2012, he became Director of the Mathematical Sciences Institute at the Australian National University (Canberra), a position he held until 2014, before being appointed President of Université Paris Sciences et Lettres.

He has published around 70 research papers in international peer-reviewed journals that have been cited more than 2,500 times.

In 2017, Thierry Coulhon was appointed as an Advisor on "Education, Higher Education, Research and Innovation" to the French President.

### **The renewed Hcéres Board**

Mid-way between a scientific steering committee and a board of directors, the Hcéres Board deliberates on substance as well as the organisation of the High Council, and validates its entire programme of activities. As such, it guarantees the quality, transparency and publication of all implemented procedures.

In conjunction with the appointment of Thierry Coulhon, the following 29 persons were appointed, by decree, as members of the Board:

- Proposed by the CNU (French Universities Board):
  - Valérie Botta-Genoulaz, University Professor (INSA Lyon);
  - Sylvain Férez, University Lecturer, Director of the Health, Education and Disability Research Unit (Université de Montpellier);
  - Caroline Gruson, Professor of Mathematics (Université de Lorraine);
  - René Guinebretière, University Professor of Condensed-Matter Physics (Université de Limoges);
  - Aurélie Perrier-Pineau, University Lecturer (Université de Paris).
- Proposed by the CoNRS (French National Committee for Scientific Research) attached to the CNRS:
  - Jean-Luc Adam, Director of Research (Institut des sciences chimiques de Rennes UMR [Joint Research Unit], Université de Rennes 1);
  - Sylvie Brau-Nogué, Local "Ground Segment" Project Manager for the Euclid project (CNRS - IRAP);
  - Guiseppina Giglia-Mari, Associate Professor, Head of the "Excision repair at the crossroads with transcription" team (Institut NeuroMyoGène, Université de Lyon, CNRS, INSERM).
- Proposed by the evaluation bodies of all other public science and technology institutions:
  - Jean-Claude Sirard, Director of Research (INSERM).
- Proposed by the presidents or directors of research bodies:
  - Geneviève Almouzni, Head of the "Chromatin Dynamics" team (Institut Curie);
  - Michel Bidoit, Director of Research (CNRS);
  - Isabelle Oswald, Director of the Food Toxicology Laboratory (ToxAlim, INRAE).
- Proposed by the CPU (Conference of University Presidents) and the CDEFI (Conference of Directors of French Engineering Schools):
  - Laurent Foulloy, Professor (Polytech Annecy-Chambéry, Université Savoie Mont Blanc);
  - Manuelle Franck, University Professor, Geography, Indonesia, South-East Asia (INALCO, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne);
  - Paul Indelicato, Research Advisor to the CPU Bureau.
- Two other members with researcher, engineer or professor status:
  - Stéphane Dalmas, Innovation Advisor to the Executive Director of INRIA;
  - Nathalie Vergnolle, Director of the Institute for Digestive Health Research (INSERM, ENVIT, INRAE, UPS).



- Two student representatives proposed by student associations:
  - Benjamin Peutevynck, member of the UNEF National Bureau, Head of Academic Affairs;
  - Marine Ribals, Vice-President of Academic Affairs at the FAGE.
  
- Nine qualified individuals:
  - Yann Algan, Professor at Sciences Po Paris, member of the Council of Economic Analysis;
  - Hélène Bulet, Deputy Director of the Innovation Laboratory for New Energy Technologies and Nanomaterials (LITEN-CEA);
  - Daniela Cristina Ghitulica, Vice-President of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS);
  - Philippe Gillet, Scientific Director of SICPA, Professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (Switzerland);
  - Ronny Heintze, Commissioner for International Affairs at AQAS (Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen E.V), one of the German quality assurance agencies for higher education;
  - Didier Roux, Delegate for Communication and Scientific Information at the French Academy of Sciences;
  - Cathie Vix-Guterl, Head of Strategic Anticipation for R&D at the TOTAL Group;
  - Loulou Von Ravensberg, Senior Project Manager at the Swedish Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (Universitetskanslersämbetet - UKÄ)
  
- Two members of the French Parliament appointed by the Standing Committee for Higher Education and Research of each house:
  - Pierre Henriet, Member of Parliament (LREM);
  - Colette Melot, Senator (Les Indépendants Group - Republic and Territories).

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

##### 📄 **Infographic of the Hcéres Board**

<https://www.hceres.fr/fr/infographie-college-du-hceres>