

Selection of the OECD Secretary-General
Final Report from the Chair of the Selection Committee to the Heads of Delegation
12 March 2021

1. The process to select the OECD Secretary-General is set out in the Resolution of the Council on the procedure for Appointing the Future Secretaries-General C(2016)70. In accordance with the procedures set out in the Resolution, the selection process was launched at a meeting of the Heads of Delegation on 3 August 2020.
2. At this meeting, the Heads of Delegation endorsed the composition of a Selection Committee to oversee and facilitate the appointment process. The Selection Committee was chaired by Ambassador Sharrock (UK) as Dean of the OECD ambassadors. Ambassador Galvan (Mexico), Ambassador Okamura (Japan) and Ambassador Schommer (Luxembourg) were appointed to the Selection Committee by the Heads of Delegation. A Reserve Pool of Ambassadors was also formed, to help ensure resilience for the Selection Committee, which was composed of Ambassador Başçı (Turkey), Ambassador Selvaag (Norway), Ambassador Chenette (Canada) and Ambassador Lenoir (EU), and which could attend meetings of the Selection Committee and contribute to the reflections of the Selection Committee. Ambassador Chenette withdrew from the Reserve Pool in August 2020, and Ambassador Nolan (Ireland) joined in January 2021.
3. Throughout the selection process, the Selection Committee has acted to ensure that the selection process was implemented in line with the fundamental guiding principles set out in the Resolution including fairness, openness, transparency, inclusiveness and due process. Measures introduced to ensure adherence to these guiding principles included the “fire-walling” of Ambassador Sharrock, which excluded him both from discussions with other delegations on the merits of the candidates, and any discussions within the UK government concerning the UK position in the selection process, which became the responsibility of the UK Deputy Permanent Representative, Frances Hooper.
4. On 1 September 2020, the Chair of the Selection Committee wrote to Heads of Delegations of Member countries inviting nominations for the position of Secretary-General. The vacancy was also made public through a notification being published on the OECD website. Ten candidates were nominated by OECD Members¹ and a consolidated list of the candidatures received was posted on the OECD website and communicated in a press release.

¹ The nominated candidates (in alphabetical order) were: Mathias Cormann (Australia); Anna Diamantopoulou (Greece); Vladimír Dlouhý (Czech Republic); Philipp Hildebrand (Switzerland); Kersti Kaljulaid (Estonia); Ulrik V. Knudsen (Denmark); Michał Kurtyka (Poland); Christopher Liddell (United States); Cecilia Malmström (Sweden); William Morneau (Canada)

5. All candidates were invited to interview at meetings of the Heads of Delegation between 1-11 December 2020. Due to the global COVID19 pandemic, interviews were conducted virtually. Interviews lasted no more than 3 hours and began with a short presentation by the candidate articulating their vision for the OECD in the future, and how this could be achieved. This was followed by open questions from the Heads of Delegation.
6. Between 7 January 2021 and 23 February 2021, the Chair of the Selection Committee undertook four rounds of confidential consultations with the Heads of Delegation in order to narrow the field of candidates, and to try to identify the candidate around whom consensus could be built for appointment as Secretary-General. In these consultations, Heads of Delegations were asked to rank their preferences for the remaining candidates, allowing the Chair to identify aggregate levels of support for each. In each round, the Chair was accompanied by a member of the Selection Committee who acted as witness and validated his conclusions. Following each round of consultations, the Chair reported to Members in a Heads of Delegation meeting. The Chair's reports, and withdrawals of the candidates, were published on the OECD website.
7. The fifth round of Consultations took place on 8 March, with the aim of identifying which of the two finalist candidates, Mathias Cormann (Australia) and Cecilia Malmström (Sweden), had the most support. The fifth round of consultations confirmed both candidates had broad support across the OECD Membership. Following this final stage of Consultations, Heads of Delegations conducted a Straw Poll on 12 March 2021, which allowed the Chair of the Selection Committee to identify Mathias Cormann as the candidate with the most support.
8. Consequently, based on this report, and in accordance with the process agreed by Council in C(2016)70, the Chair recommends to Council to appoint Mr Mathias Cormann as the next Secretary-General of the OECD for a period of 5 years, starting 1 June 2021.
9. The Chair would like to thank all Heads of Delegations for the constructive spirit, the effort, and the commitment to consensus that they, their governments, and all ten candidates demonstrated so amply throughout this process. He would like to thank the Heads of Delegations of nominating Members for their constructive engagement in the process. He would like to thank all Members of the Selection Committee and Reserve Pool for their work, impartiality, and support. He would also like to thank the many members of the OECD secretariat, in particular the Directors and staff of Legal Affairs, Council Secretariat, and Public Affairs and Communications, as well as William Norris and Elizabeth Aveling from the UK Delegation, and Ingrid Magnus and Camilla Høvding Blom from the Norwegian Delegation for their support in delivering this process.