



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

Statement by the ERC Scientific Council
24 October 2012

On 23 October, 42 Nobel laureates and 5 Fields medallists warned against cutting the future EU research budget, in an [open letter](#) addressed to EU Heads of State or Government and Presidents of EU institutions. This appeal comes ahead of a special European summit on 22 and 23 November, where leaders will decide the overall EU budget for 2014 till 2020. Researchers from various scientific fields and different parts of Europe immediately responded to the open letter by launching a [petition](#) for securing the EU research and innovation budget. The ERC Scientific Council is overwhelmed by the resonance the open letter had in the research community and in the media. The letter was published by over 20 top newspapers across Europe. The online petition has collected over 40,000 signatures in the first day, and the Scientific Council expects that many more researchers will rally to support this call, initiated by the younger generation.

Professor Helga Nowotny, President of the European Research Council, reacted: *"This strong message to the leaders of Europe confirms the importance of the ERC Scientific Council's strategy to find, fund and empower the best researchers. It is therefore vital that the future EU Research Programme 'Horizon 2020' - and in particular the European Research Council - will be strengthened to achieve further scientific and technological breakthroughs, leading to greater innovation in the future. We urge political leaders to listen to the unanimous voice of Europe's researchers, both the most eminent ones and the next generation, and what they have to say to address the current economic crisis."*



European Research Council

Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

Note to the editors

Set up in 2007 by the European Union, the **European Research Council (ERC)** aims to stimulate scientific excellence in frontier research by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, based in or moving to Europe.

Led by the ERC President Professor Helga Nowotny, the ERC consists of a Scientific Council - its governing body setting the scientific strategy - and the Executive Agency, which implements the operations. The initiators of the open letter, Nobel Laureates Sir Tim Hunt and Prof. Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, are members of the ERC Scientific Council.

The ERC (or 'Ideas' programme) is part of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7) and has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013. Last year, the European Commission proposed a substantial increase in the ERC's budget for 2014 to 2020 under the new Framework Programme ('Horizon 2020').

The ERC is widely acknowledged as a major success story of FP7. Since its launch, the ERC has funded over 3,000 top researchers and their pioneering projects. It has also become a "benchmark" for the competitiveness of national research systems complementing existing funding schemes at national and European levels. The ERC operates according to an "investigator-driven", or "bottom-up", approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in all fields of research.

ERC website: <http://erc.europa.eu>