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**Statement by European Research Council President Professor Helga Nowotny
on the announcement of new ERC President**

17 December 2013

On the occasion of today's announcement by the European Commission that Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon will become the new President of the European Research Council (ERC) as of 1 January 2014, current ERC President, Professor Helga Nowotny, stated: *"I am very satisfied with this excellent choice and the thorough professional work accomplished by the independent Search Committee. As foreseen in the legislation, the ERC Scientific Council has also been involved in the process and has expressed its agreement. The ERC will enter a new phase under the EU research programme Horizon 2020. With his highly distinguished and international academic profile, Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon will be able to build on what has been achieved so far, but he will need to be vigilant to safeguard the unique specificity of the ERC in the years to come. I am sure that Professor Bourguignon will provide strong leadership and that the ERC will continue to thrive. I wish him much success."*

Prof. Bourguignon will be the first ERC President to be based in Brussels and to cover the previous role of ERC Secretary General. His mandate is for four years.

- [Exclusive video interview](#) with Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon on the appointment
- [Video - Exchange of views](#) Prof. Helga Nowotny and Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon

[Biography](#) of Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon



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Background

Based on the 2009 external ERC Review and the subsequent 2011 Task Force report, the ERC will undergo some changes in its governance when the new framework programme *Horizon 2020* comes into force. Most importantly, the ERC will for the first time have a Brussels-based President. This will in effect merge the current position of ERC President and ERC Secretary General. Until now, the latter has been the ERC Scientific Council's permanent representative in Brussels.

[Prof. Helga Nowotny](#) took office as ERC President in March 2010 and her mandate ends at the close of 2013. She succeeded the founding ERC President, Prof. Fotis Kafatos, before which she was ERC Vice-President (2007-2010). [Prof. Donald Dingwell](#)'s mandate as ERC Secretary General started in September 2010 and ends at the close of 2013. The founding Secretary General was Prof. Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, who was succeeded by Prof. Andreu Mas-Colell.

Set up in 2007 by the European Union, the **European Research Council** (ERC) aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age from anywhere in the world. From 2007 to 2013, as part of the seventh EU Research Framework Programme (FP7), the ERC's budget was €7.5 billion. Under Horizon 2020, the EU's new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), the ERC will have a budget of over €13 billion, which is a substantial increase.

The ERC has adopted an 'investigator-driven', 'bottom-up' approach, which allows researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research. Since its launch, the ERC has funded nearly 4,000 top researchers throughout Europe, and has become a "benchmark" of the competitiveness of national research systems as it complements existing funding schemes at national and European levels. The ERC is composed of an independent governing body, the Scientific Council, and the implementing arm in Brussels, the Executive Agency.

Links:

[European Commission announcement on new ERC President](#)
[ERC statement in French](#)
[Video interview in French](#)
[ERC website](#)

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