



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

Highlight:

European Research Council meets scientific talent in Bratislava

17 June 2013

From 17 to 18 June 2013, the European Research Council (ERC)'s governing body - the Scientific Council - gathers in Bratislava. At its plenary meeting there, which is the first to be held in Slovakia, the Scientific Council is to establish the ERC work programme for 2014, which falls under the new 'Horizon 2020' EU research programme. The ERC will also seize the opportunity to meet the Slovak research community. Last year, the first ERC grant was awarded to a researcher based in Slovakia, Dr Ján Tkáč.

On this occasion, ERC President Prof. Helga Nowotny commented: *"For the ERC Scientific Council, it is important to meet the Slovak scientific community and policy makers, as we are convinced that scientific talent exists everywhere in Europe. It is a matter of fostering it. The first ERC grantee in this country is a step in the right direction, and will surely serve as inspiration for many more. I would like to encourage Slovakia to further invest in R&D and to continue creating the conditions in which talent can flourish. At this Bratislava meeting, the Scientific Council will set the strategy for 2014. This will be the first year of the new "Horizon 2020" programme. We will build on the success that the ERC has had so far, but with the hope of widening participation for the many talented researchers to follow their aspiration".*

The meeting - hosted by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and co-organised with the Slovak Organization for Research and Development Activities - is in line with the ERC's efforts to widen participation in its calls in Central and Eastern Europe.

A public information event, "ERC: European funds for excellent researchers" - with ERC President Helga Nowotny, Slovakia's State Secretary of Education, Science, Research and Sport Štefan Chudoba, and ERC grantee Ján Tkáč among the speakers - takes place on 17 June to inform researchers about the funding opportunities that the ERC offers (17:30 – 19:00, Hotel Bôrik, Bratislava). The hope is that this will encourage more talent in Slovakia to apply for ERC funding and to increase their chances of success.

The ERC annual *work programme* defines the strategy for the ERC funding schemes. It provides information on the research activities for each year, which are implemented through ERC calls for proposals. It is set by the ERC Scientific Council.

- [Photos](#) from press conference (*available soon - click on tab "images"*) held earlier today with State Secretary and the ERC President
- [Video](#) featuring Ján Tkáč: "The ERC from a grantee perspective" (see also [Slovakian version](#))



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- Read [ERC story](#) on Dr. Ján Tkáč's research. He carries out his research at the Institute of Chemistry in the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava. After his postdoctoral experience at the universities of Lund and Linköping in Sweden, and later at Oxford University, he returned to Slovakia to continue his career in glycobiochemistry. His ERC project "Electrochemical lectin and glycan biochips" (ELENA) was selected for funding in the 2012 ERC Starting Grant competition. The grant has allowed Dr. Tkáč to set up a team of four PhD students and one post-doctorate student from Slovakia and the Czech Republic. His ERC grant is worth approximately 1.2 million EUR.
- [Brochure](#) "Spotlight on ERC projects in Central and Eastern Europe".

Note to the editors

European Research Council ([ERC](#))

Set up in 2007 by the European Union, the ERC aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age based in Europe. Since its launch, the ERC has funded over 3,500 researchers and their frontier research projects. It has also become a "benchmark" of 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. The ERC, part of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme, has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013. 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, led by President Prof. [Helga Nowotny](#), is composed of a Scientific Council and an Executive Agency. The [Scientific Council](#) sets the ERC scientific strategy and consists of 22 top scientists and scholars. They have already held some meetings in Central and Eastern Europe, and information events have taken place in several countries in this region, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Latvia.

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