



**Press release**

29 August 2011

**New ERC Secretary General appointed**

**Professor Donald B. Dingwell has been appointed by the ERC Scientific Council as the new Secretary General of the European Research Council (ERC). He will take office as of 1 September this year and his term lasts until December 2013.**

Professor Dingwell is a prominent geoscientist currently heading the Department for Earth and Environmental Sciences at Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany. Originally from Canada, he holds dual nationality (German and Canadian). Professor Dingwell's track record includes scientific distinctions such as the Bunsen Medal of the European Geoscience Union (2008) and he is a Distinguished Lecturer of the Mineralogical Society of America (2008/09). He was also awarded an ERC Advanced Grant in 2009.

Professor Dingwell takes over after the previous Secretary General, Professor Andreu Mas-Colell, who returned to his academic position as Professor at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, one year ago. Since then, the post has been vacant.

The ERC President Professor Helga Nowotny commented: *"As we move towards the new common strategic framework for research and innovation "Horizon 2020", we very much look forward to working with Professor Dingwell as the new ERC Secretary General. With his distinguished career in science and his international vantage point and background, I am convinced that Professor Dingwell will deliver an important contribution to the ERC, not the least in terms of international outreach and strategy - an area that lies at the heart of the ERC's mission."*



The ERC Secretary General is the Scientific Council's permanent representative in Brussels, with a key role to ensure effective liaison between the Scientific Council, the ERC Executive Agency and the European Commission.

### Background

Set up in 2007 by the EU, the **European Research Council (ERC)** is the first pan-European funding organisation for frontier research. It aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. The ERC, which is the newest, pioneering component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme ('Ideas' Specific Programme), has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013.

The **ERC Scientific Council** is currently chaired by Professor Helga Nowotny and is composed of 22 eminent scientists and scholars, including a number of Nobel Prize winners. Based in Brussels and with some 330 staff, the **Executive Agency** implements the strategy.

The Scientific Council appoints the **ERC Secretary General**, who is the Scientific Council's permanent representative in Brussels. The Secretary General is also a member of the ERC Board, working together with the Chair and two Vice-Chairs of the Scientific Council, as well as with the Director of the ERC Executive Agency to oversee the implementation of the ERC strategy and work programme prepared by the Scientific Council.

Previous ERC Secretary Generals:

- Professor Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, February 2007 - June 2009,
- Professor Andreu Mas-Colell, July 2009 - September 2010.

**ERC Governance changes:** In July 2009, the external ERC Review presented a number of recommendations for the ERC governance, including the streamlining of the organisation and the merging of the two posts of Secretary General and ERC Executive Agency Director. However, with the new research framework in sight, it was deemed wise not to implement this recommendation and to address various long-term ERC governance issues through a Task Force, set up by the Commission. In the Task Force's July 2011 report, one main conclusion was that, under the new framework programme, the ERC should have a permanent Brussels-based ERC President, which would make the role Secretary General redundant. This recommendation will take effect in the new framework programme in January 2014. Until then, the three top functions – ERC Secretary General, ERC President and ERC Executive Agency Director – will continue to co-exist.

### For more information:

Prof. Donald Dingwell's cv

[http://www.en.mineralogie.geowissenschaften.uni-muenchen.de/personen/head/dingwell/cv\\_dingwell/index.html](http://www.en.mineralogie.geowissenschaften.uni-muenchen.de/personen/head/dingwell/cv_dingwell/index.html)

EC press release on Task force

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/862&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

ERC website

<http://erc.europa.eu>

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