

European Research Council
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EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2022

CELEBRATING 10 000 GRANTEES
#ERC10kGrantees



Inga Berre
University of Bergen, Norway
Mathematical and Numerical Modelling of Process-Structure Interaction in Fractured Geothermal Systems (MaPSI)

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EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL GRANTS
for Top Researchers from Anywhere in the World

WEBINAR - 28 SEPTEMBER - 5 PM AEST



BERLIN SCIENCE WEEK



HOW THE ERC TRANSFORMED SCIENCE



Becas del Consejo Europeo de Investigación para los mejores investigadores del mundo

Miércoles, 6 de Octubre 2021
9:00 (MX, COL) 10:00 (BOL) 11:00 (AR, CL)



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Más información: https://bit.ly/ERC_Oct2021

The European Research Council Magazine



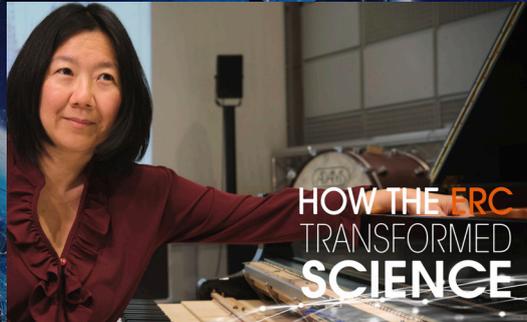
ERC INFORMATION DAY IN GREECE

“If you feel that you have an excellent proposal, a high-risk/high-gain breakthrough idea, then you should really go for it!”

Nektarios TAVERNARAKIS
ERC Vice-President



HOW THE ERC TRANSFORMED SCIENCE



European Research Council (ERC) @ERC_Research

🚩🤔 What are the cons of applying for an ERC grant? "I found none", says 🇷🇺 #EUfunded researcher Evgeny Skvortsov.

More info from our recent #webinar for scientists & scholars from #Russia 🇷🇺 bit.ly/3C1slwC

@EUinRussia @HorizonEU @umons @frsFNRS #OpentotheWorld #ERCworld



WEBINAR

ERC INFORMATION DAY IN POLAND

Tuesday, 14 December 2021
10:00-11:45 CET

More information: bit.ly/32zm6Tg

ERC WEBINAR FOR RESEARCHERS IN RUSSIA



#ERCWorld

<https://erc.europa.eu>

European Research Council

External Communication Strategy 2022

Table of Contents

1. Foreword	3
2. Objectives	4
3. Audiences	4
4. Actions – highlights in 2022	4
5. Channels	6
6. Internal communication and staff engagement	8
7. Key Performance Indicators	9
Annexes	10

1. Foreword

The Covid pandemic has thrust science and scientists into the spotlight. We have all become accustomed to seeing epidemiologists, virologists and other experts on the evening news.

And we know from opinion polling that Europeans are more interested than ever in science. In an era of fake news and misinformation, they want scientists to help them make sense of developments that will have an impact on their daily lives (including public health, but also the green and digital transitions and many other issues). Science has fundamentally always been a quest to satisfy human curiosity, and to better understand the world around us. And I must stress that when I speak of “science” I mean across all domains of research. From the social sciences and humanities, we can also contribute new ideas about how to live sustainably, how to confront inequality, how we might work and live and educate ourselves in future.

I know that some scientists are filled with horror at the idea of stepping out of their labs into a TV studio or the rough and tumble world of social media. And that’s fine. But many researchers do a fantastic job of engaging with the media and the public. So I’m delighted that the ERC will recognise the efforts of its grantees in this area through the second edition of its Public Engagement with Research Award.

But it’s not enough for researchers to reach out and communicate about their work. We also need to invite excellent communicators into our world in order to demystify science, build trust and promote mutual understanding. That’s why the ERC is for example planning to launch a new scheme bringing together grantees with science journalists.

If we look at the journey that got us to the mRNA vaccines against Covid-19, we can see that it took decades of work by dedicated scientists all around the world. Not only to understand the existence and purpose of mRNA, but also to find a way to reliably deliver the new vaccines. So mRNA vaccines are a great and topical example of the long-term benefits of frontier research.

But I believe passionately that pushing the boundaries of knowledge is a worthwhile end in itself. Not all research is there for exploitation. If scientists find out about the history of the Lascaux cave paintings, capture the first image of a black hole or work out how people lived in Pompeii, that’s just exciting, and people love hearing about it.

The ERC continues the proud scientific tradition of curiosity-driven research as part of the EU’s Horizon Europe programme. But this approach can sometimes be confusing for politicians. They are under pressure to deliver results in the short term, all the more so when confronted with a major crisis.

So, as the EU looks to the future, it will be more important than ever for the ERC through its communication actions to explain to policy-makers and the public why frontier research is a wise investment.

Maria Leptin
President of the ERC

2. Objectives

The ERC's communication actions in 2022 will be guided by the following strategic objectives.

1. **Attract the best ideas and the brightest minds** by ensuring that talented researchers in Europe and globally are aware of the funding opportunities offered by the ERC.
2. **Explain the intrinsic value of frontier research** as well as the contributions it makes to tackling societal, economic, environmental and policy challenges.
3. **Promote public understanding of science** by connecting researchers with citizens, journalists and policy-makers.

3. Audiences

The ERC's priority audiences for external communication are:

1. Potential applicants for ERC grants
2. ERC grantees and their research teams
3. Universities and research institutions that host grantees
4. Policy-makers and research stakeholders at European and national levels
5. Journalists and media
6. Members of the general public who take an interest in science

4. Actions - Highlights in 2022

We will announce the winners of our second **Public Engagement with Research Award** in July. The aim is to recognise ERC grantees who have demonstrated excellence in engaging with audiences beyond their field of research. A prize of €10,000 will be awarded to the winning projects chosen by a jury in each of three different categories: Involve (citizens science); Inspire (public outreach); Influence (media and policy). In order to bring the public engagement activities of ERC grantees to the attention of the scientific community, key stakeholders and the general public, a shortlist of finalists in each of the three categories will be opened to a public vote. The most popular public engagement activity will receive a "special mention" at the Award Ceremony, at the same time as the announcement of the results of the jury evaluation.

We will begin work on a new **science journalism grant scheme** designed to support stronger relationships and improve mutual understanding between ERC grantees and science journalists. Activities are expected to include the placement of science journalists in the labs of ERC grantees, as well as placements of grantees or their research team members in newsrooms. In 2022, we will carry out a small project to test key concepts and prepare for the planned launch of a larger scheme under the ERC's 2023 Work Programme.

We will continue to work with grantees in order to produce **ERC stories** showcasing their work. In line with the objective of explaining the intrinsic value of frontier research, the examples chosen will include projects that push the frontiers of human knowledge but without necessarily offering

immediate applications or impacts. The stories will be disseminated via the ERC's own channels, and in cooperation with the Commission (corporate campaigns, research success stories, Cordis etc) and European Parliament (European Science Media Hub etc). We will also work with grantees and their host institutions to pitch these stories to journalists and the media.

We will continue promoting **ERC grant schemes and funding opportunities** to potential applicants, including through a webinar to be organised following the adoption of the 2023 Work Programme. Targeted communication actions will be organised to support the ERC's work on widening European participation by encouraging applications from less represented countries. Global outreach events will support the ERC's objective of attracting applications from talented researchers around the world. Three widening countries have been identified and agreed by the Scientific Council as priorities for next year: Czech Republic (EU Presidency as of July 2022), Romania and Slovakia.

Under Horizon Europe, the ERC is mandated to join other parts of the framework programme in providing **feedback to policy** (consistently with the 'bottom-up' nature of the ERC). In close collaboration, with the dedicated sector in the ERCEA's Scientific Department and all other relevant actors in the agency, our communication actions will support this activity by bringing relevant data and examples to the attention of policy-makers in the EU institutions and in Member States. An important contribution in 2022 will be the release of policy factsheets highlighting research supported by the ERC under the Horizon 2020 programme. These factsheets, developed in the context of the ERCEA programme on Science Behind the Project (SBP), will highlight the links between frontier research and policy priorities in the area of the green and digital transitions, as well as public health. They will provide the basis for a session during the EU Research and Innovation Days.

Citizens' science plays an important role in encouraging public engagement with research. The ERCEA Communication Unit and Scientific Department plan to organise an event to promote good practice examples and to provide an opportunity for networking between ERC grantees who are active in this area. The first part of the event will address methodological issues covering all scientific domains. The second part of the event should be thematic to focus attention and target participants, and we plan to focus specifically on citizens' science in the area of climate change. It will bring together scientists, policy-makers, civil society representatives and a live audience of young European citizens. The theme of the second part of the event aligns well with global and EU policy priorities (COP27, EU research missions, European Year of Youth etc).

We will play an active role in ESO22 (**EuroScience Open Forum**) in Leiden. In addition to the Public Engagement with Research Award ceremony, we plan to organise sessions on the impacts of frontier research in different scientific domains as well as a workshop on ERC grant schemes and funding opportunities. In partnership with other Commission Services, the ERC will also look at ways of contributing to the Science in the City Festival and ESO22 exhibition.

A more detailed calendar of events and communication opportunities is annexed to this communication strategy, as well as a list of scientific conferences where Scientific Council members and ERCEA Scientific Officers will be speaking.

5. Channels

ERC communication tools and channels

Website

- > The ERC website attracted over 1 million visits in 2021. We will continue to update the website next year in order to ensure that it offers a reliable source of information for potential applicants, as well as a dynamic presentation of the Scientific Council's priorities and the work of ERC grantees. The upgrade of the website's content management system and the ERC website revamp will be finalised in 2022. This will allow for improvements to the site's information architecture, design, visibility and usability.

Multimedia

- > In 2021, ERC videos were viewed more than 500,000 times across different platforms. At the request of the Scientific Council's Gender Issues Working Group, we will produce a new video targeted at panel members on the need to mitigate against various forms of unconscious bias in evaluations. Other video productions next year are expected to include additional "ERC classes" (one on Synergy Grants, and potentially one on Open Science). A video featuring the Public Engagement with Research winners is also envisaged. We will also explore different formats to showcase ERC stories and data including videos, infographics and podcasts.

Social media

- > 2021 saw strong growth in the ERC's followers across our two main social media platforms, with a consistent increase of followers on Twitter (now reaching 120,000) and very rapid follower gains on LinkedIn (110,000). The shift to online communication channels due to the pandemic has meant rethinking how to run events, for example, necessitating the development of new competences and the reallocation of resources within the ERCEA Communication Unit.

Building on these achievements, we aim for a further increase in social media engagement in 2022, via careful community management (fulfilling the needs of our online audience through e.g. responding to comments and questions, and sharing the type of content our followers need). We will also consider integrating new tools (e.g. Twitter Spaces) and the online presence of the ERC President into our social media mix.

Online magazine

- > The ERC online magazine has now transitioned to a new editorial approach based on quarterly collections of articles with a thematic focus. We will continue with this approach in 2022, and also explore how best to promote the magazine content to our audiences.

Email alerts

- > The ERC maintains a database of more than 70,000 subscribers who have chosen to receive alerts about ERC funding and stories. In 2022, we will further maintain and develop this mailing list (in line with the relevant data protection rules).

Publications

- During the pandemic, the ERC discontinued print publications. This trend is expected to continue, with a limited number of exceptions, for environmental reasons. Our priorities for 2022 will be to focus on reader-friendly online formats and to enhance promotion on social media.

5b. Earned media

The ERC is frequently in the news. Every month, more than a thousand articles mention us in the online and printed press. During the last year, we have also seen increasing coverage on social media, through conversations about the ERC on different platforms. We intend to encourage and engage in these conversations even more during the coming year. We will also explore collaborations with audio-visual media (both traditional broadcast media and online channels).

During 2022, we will continue to provide media relations support to the ERC President and the Scientific Council. We will work with grantees and their host institutions to encourage media reporting of the results of ERC grant competitions, as well as groundbreaking research results by ERC grantees.

We will continue to cooperate closely with science, EU affairs, international and national journalists. Our media relations work involves prompt responses to journalists' enquiries, as well as reaching out proactively to the media with newsworthy information.

The Commission's Representations in EU Member States and the EU's Delegations in countries around the globe are important partners, as are the press offices of institutions hosting ERC grantees.

5c. Multipliers and communication partners

National Contact Points

The ERC's National Contact Points (NCPs) are the first port of call for potential applicants. We will continue to ensure that the NCPs have the latest information on ERC grant schemes and calls. Regular webinars with the NCPs and ERCEA staff will be organised throughout the year, with a physical event in Brussels possibly taking place towards the end of the year if the sanitary conditions allow.

Host Institutions

The communication departments of Universities and Research Institutions that host ERC grantees are key partners when it comes to the communication of call results as well as project examples. Following a survey launched in late 2021, we will relaunch and expand the network of communication officers from host institutions. Depending on the preferences of the members of the network, we will organise webinars and online exchanges on a range of themes in order to exchange good practices and encourage collaboration.

Association of ERC Grantees

The Association of ERC Grantees has now been formally established as an independent voice for the growing community of current and former grantees. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Association on its 'Science and Society' series of webinars and other communication actions.

European Commission Representations

The European Commission's Representations in the Member States play a key role in raising the visibility of EU policies and programmes amongst the media and the public. We will continue to cooperate with the Representations on success stories, call results and other announcements. Our participation at ESOF Leiden will provide an opportunity to cooperate with the Representation in the Netherlands.

European Parliament

We will continue to work closely with the European Parliament's Science and Technologies Options Assessment Panel (STOA) as well as the European Social Media Hub (ESMH) and to collaborate on various events and activities. A new Centre for AI was launched by STOA in 2021. It is a platform for dialogue and exchanging information on AI relevant topics with the aim to get expertise on the possibilities/limitations of AI and its ethical, legal, economic implications. It also aims to influence global standards on AI. STOA plans to organise events and hold roundtables in 2022 on specific AI topics and feature articles on different AI themes to which we will contribute.

EU Delegations / Euraxess network

Following on from the very successful series of global outreach webinars organised in 2021, we will continue to work with the Science Counsellors in EU Delegations and the Euraxess Worldwide Network in order to bring ERC grant schemes and calls to the attention of talented researchers around the world. We will also pursue our collaboration with the International Cooperation Directorate in the Commission's DG for Research and Innovation.

Commission DGs and EU staff

The Commission DGs use a wide range of communication channels to reach the European citizens and stakeholders. In 2022 we will continue building synergies with their communication services, in order to amplify the message and spot windows of opportunity, in close coordination with the Feedback to Policy sector in order to ensure maximal synergies. In addition, the European Commission counts more than 33,000 staff members and the total number of people employed by the EU is over 60,000 people. The ERC will continue to strengthen its internal networks, aiming to count on this important audience to relay its messages. The ERCEA staff will be part of this effort.

6. Internal communication and staff engagement

The sanitary crisis and new ways of working have further increased the need to connect the ERC Executive Agency staff with the mission and goals of our organisation, as well as to help them connect with each other and with their own drives for motivation.

Bringing ERC-funded research closer to ERCEA staff and stressing the importance of their role in funding the best worldwide researchers will be at the core of next year's internal communication objectives. Efforts will also focus on communicating the outcome of ERC-funded projects, including as regards feedback to policy and science advice to policy-makers. Part of next year's strategy will also be to enhance the visibility of the ERC President and the Scientific Council internally, as well as providing additional opportunities for ERCEA staff outside the Communication Unit to act as ambassadors for the ERC. This will include further training in various aspects of communication, including coaching for online speaking, linked in particular to the participation of staff in virtual events.

7. Key Performance Indicator

We will track the following KPIs in order to assess the performance of our communication actions:

Indicator	Baseline 2021
Website visits	1 million
Social media followers	Twitter – 120,000 LinkedIn – 110,000 Facebook – 35,000 YouTube – 4000
Twitter mentions	84,000
Mainstream media mentions	14,000
Views of ERC videos across different platforms	600,000
Subscribers to e-mail alerts	70,000
Grantees speaking at webinars/events	27
ERC stories shared via different channels	200
Events – participants/views	20,000
Public Engagement with Research Award - Number of applications - Views of Award Ceremony	138 7500

Annex 1 – Key Communication Opportunities in 2022

January	February	March	April	May	June
2021 Starting Grant call results	Webinar for researchers based in a widening country	Webinars for researchers based in Africa	ScC plenary, Helsinki	Webinar for researchers based in a widening country	EU Research & Innovation Days
World Economic Forum (Davos)		2021 Consolidator Grant call results	Science Behind the Projects policy fact sheets and full report	2021 Advanced Grant call results	
		ERC Annual Report 2021			

July	August	September	October	November	December
ESOF	European Association of communication professionals in Higher Education Webinar	ERC Open to the world Webinars	ERC Open to the world Webinars	Webinar for researchers in a widening country	Citizens Science event
Public Engagement with Research Award Ceremony			ScC plenary, Berlin	2022 Synergy Grant call results	
2023 ERC Work Programme adoption					

Annex II - List of potential Scientific Conferences attended by ERCEA Scientific Officers

Domain	Conference title	Date	Location
LS	16th Congress of the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union	04 - 08/04/2022	Limassol (CY)
LS	International Conference on Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences	22 - 23/04 2022	London (UK)
LS	European Federation of Biotechnology	22 - 25/05 2022	Maastricht (NL)
LS	Developmental Circuits in Ageing	27 - 30/05 2022	Heraklion (GR)
LS	International Conference on Arabidopsis Research	20 - 24/06 2022	Belfast (NI)
LS	FENS Forum 2022	09 - 13/07/2022	Paris (FR)
LS	Gordon Conferences	07 - 12/08 2022	Barcelona (ES)
LS	Congress of the European Society for Evolutionary Biology	14 - 19/08 2022	Prague (CZ)
LS	XIX ISDB congress	16 - 20/10 2022	Algarve (PT)
LS	Congress on Plant Molecular Biology	23 - 27/10 2022	Cairns (AU)
LS	attend only if remote	09-12 May 2021-postponed from 2020	Maastricht, NL
LS	European Cell Death Association* - "Mechanisms of Cell Death Communication in Physiology and Pathology"	October 2022	Eastbourne (UK)
LS	Society for Neuroscience (SfN) 2022	12 - 16/11 2022	San Diego (USA)
LS	attend only if remote	15-18 May 2021	Florence, IT
LS	European Ecological Federation Congress	November 2022	Metz (FR)
LS	21st European Carbohydrate Symposium	TBD	TBD
LS	Complex Networks 2021	30/11 - 02/12/2021	Madrid
LS	ESGCT Annual Congress	11 - 14/10/2022	Edinburgh
LS	Annual Tusványos Summer University	19 - 24 July 2022	Tusnadfurdo/Baile Tusnad
LS	Innovative Cancer Science	20 - 23/06/2022	Sevilla
LS	International Symposium on climate-resilient agri-environmental systems	07 - 10/06/2022	Dublin, IE
LS	FEMS (Federation of European Microbiology Societies) Annual Congress	30/6 - 02/07/2022	Belgrade, Serbia
LS	FEBS (Federation of European Biochemistry Societies) Annual Congress	09 - 14/07/2022	Lisbon, PT
LS	EMBC (IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology), Annual Conference	11 - 15/07/2022	Glasgow, UK
LS	ESOF 2022	13 - 16/07/2022	Leiden, NL
LS	FastBio (Athens) with expert, RNPdynamics	tbd	Athens, Ljubljana (Slovenia)
LS	ESMI (European Society for Molecular Imaging)	18 - 18/03/2022	Thessaloniki, GR
LS	Human Genome Meeting	23 - 25/05/2022	Tel Aviv,IL
LS	Euro Evo Devo 2022	31/05 - 03/06/2022	Napoli, IT
LS	16th World Drug Delivery Summit	28 - 29/10/2022	Vancouver, CA
LS	attend only if remote	17-18 July 2021	New Hampshire, USA
LS	Tissue engineering and regenerative medicine (TERMC)	16-17/09/2022	Paris (FR)
LS	35th World Congress on Pharmacology	08-09/08/2022	Zurich

Domain	Conference title	Date	Location
PE	2nd option - SPIE Photonics WEST 2022 (it is possible to organize a funding session still to be defined, and conference attendance)	22 - 27/01/2022	San Francisco (CA - USA)
PE	EGU General Assembly 2022	03 - 08/04/2022	Vienna
PE	1st option - SPIE Photonics Europe 2022	30 May to 6 June 2021	Yokohama, JP
PE	(funding session already confirmed and conference attendance)	03 - 07/04/2022	Strasbourg (FR)
PE	The Web conference 2022	25 - 29/04/2022	Lyon, France
PE	it could be also online	June 30 - July 2, 2021	Split, HR
PE	Chemical biology symposium 2022	09/05/2022	London
PE	ECOMAS - 8th European Congress on Computational Methods in Applied Sciences and Engineering	05 - 09/06/2022	Oslo, Norway
PE	48th European Conference on Plasma Physics	27/06 - 01/07/2022	Maastricht
PE	14th European Conference on Atoms Molecules and Photons, Vilnius	27/06 - 01/07/2022	Vilnius
PE	Discrete Mathematics Days 2020 --> 2022	04 - 06/07/2022	Santander, Spain
PE	THMT-22 (Turbulence Heat and Mass Transfer)	05 - 08/07/2022	St. Petersburg
PE	41th International Conference on High-Energy Physics, Bologna	06 - 13/07/2022	Bologna
PE	ACM GECCO 2022	09 - 13/07/2022	Boston, USA
PE	ESOF 2022	13 - 16/07/2022	Leiden
PE	International Conference on Quantum Communication, Measurement and Computing	11 - 15/07/2022	Lisbon
PE	European Women in Mathematics General Meeting	22 - 26/08/2022	Espoo
PE	EUChemS 2022b- European Congress of Chemistry	28/08 - 03/09/2022	Lisbon
SH	DH2020: "Responding to Asian Diversity"	25 - 29/07/2022	Hybrid (Tokyo & Virtual)
SH	ESOF 2022	13 - 16/07/2022	Leiden
SH	EAUH2022 - Inequality and the City	31/08 - 3/09/2022	Antwerp (NL)
SH	NECS - European Network for Cinema and Media Studies NECS		Not announced yet,
SH	usually June	22-25 June 2021	Coimbra, PT
SH	"Baltic Studies at a Crossroads" /The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies	27 - 29/05/2022	Seattle, WA
SH	Back up: 80th Biennial of the International Law association: "Our Common Good"	19 - 24/06/2022	Lisbon, Portugal
SH	EPSA 2022 the 12th annual conference	23 - 25/06/2022	Prague
SH	considering - International Council of Museums (tbc)	22 - 24/08/2022	Prague
SH	considering as 2 option - European Society for Aesthetics (tbc)	to be announced	to be announced
SH	2022 APS Annual Convention – Association for Psychological Science – APS	26 - 29/05/2022	Chicago

Domain	Conference title	Date	Location
SH	ESCOP 2022 – 22nd conference of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology	29/08 - 01/09/2022	Lille
SH	European Science History Society	07 - 10/09/2022	Brussels
SH	EASST 2022 - "Politics of Technoscientific Futures"	29/06 - 02/07/2022	Madrid
SH	Eurocrime 2022 - Annual Conference of the European Association of Criminology	21 - 24/09/2022	Malaga
SH	2022 RSA Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) - Bridging Old and New Divides: Global Dynamics and Regional Transformations	14 - 17/09/2022	Leipzig, Germany
SH	(or online - to be decided)	31.08-03.09.2021	Barcelona, ES
SH	IALE European Landscape Ecology Congress	11 - 15/07/2022	Warsaw, Poland
SH	Global Meeting on Law and Society	13 - 16/07/2022	Lisbon, Portugal
SH	68th Annual Meeting	30/03 - 02/04/2022	Dublin
SH	Considering WUF11 — World Urban Forum 11	26 - 30/06/2022	Katowice, Poland
SH	The 8th biennial meeting of the European Philosophy of Science Association	15-18 September2021	Turin, IT
SH	50 Poznań Linguistic Meeting (PLM)	16-19 September2021	Poznan, PL
SH	APSA Annual Meeting (1st choice)	30 September- 3 October 2021	Seattle, USA
SH	International Conference on Environmental Psychology	Due in March but postponed to Autumn 2021	Syracuse, IT
SH	27th Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science association	11-14 November 2021 (moved from 2020)	Baltimore, USA



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