



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

# EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2021

22 Sep | 16.00  
HUB 10: ERC

**Frontier research to fight COVID-19**

**SIR PETER RATCLIFFE**  
On coronavirus, research funding and passion for science

**ERC SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR**

From planes to cups:  
The development and evolution of leaf shape

with  
Prof. Enrico Coen  
John Innes Centre, Norwich, UK

**30 October 2020**  
11:00 - 12:30

**COMMUNICATING SCIENCE THROUGH ART**

ERC GRANTEE LUIS OLIVEIRA ADVISES

ERC Public Engagement with Research Award 2020  
#ERCengage

Konstantinos Nikolopoulos  
Exclusive project  
Winner in the category "Public Outreach"

Anna Davies  
Stability project  
Winner in the category "Online and Social Media"

Erik van Sebille  
TIDES project  
Winner in the category "Press and Media Relations"

**13**

Let's make better batteries!  
Faisons des meilleures batteries!

**WEBINAR FOR RESEARCHERS IN ASEAN COUNTRIES**

- ERC grant schemes
- Grantee experience
- Evaluator perspective

**19 November 2020**  
4:00 PM (Singapore time)

**VIRUSES**  
ENEMY OR ALLY?

**ERC INFO WEBINAR IN BULGARIA**

Meet the ERC  
Learn how to apply for a grant

23.11.2020 at 10:00 EET | Registration open

MARIYA GABRIEL  
EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

KARINA ANGELIEVA  
Deputy Minister of Education and Science

ANELIA KASSABOVA  
ERC Synergy grantee

MARTIN VECHEV  
ERC Starting grantee

**SYNERGY GRANTS 2020**  
HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT EXAMPLES

Free seminars for ERC international applicants

**#OpentotheWorld**

Ms Mariya Gabriel  
European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

<https://erc.europa.eu>



# European Research Council External Communication Strategy 2021

## Table of Contents

1. Context	4
2. Objectives	4
3. Audiences	5
4. Actions	5
5. Channels	6
5a. ERC communication tools and channels	6
5b. Earned media	7
5c. Multipliers and communication partners	8
6. Key Performance Indicators	8
Annexes	9



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**MARIYA GABRIEL**  
EU Commissioner for Innovation,  
Research, Culture, Education and Youth



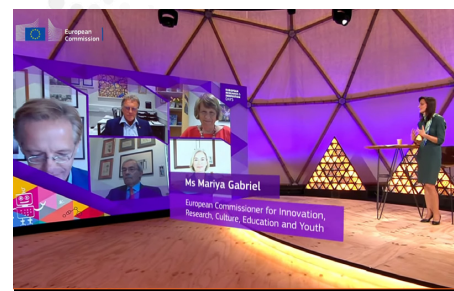
**KARINA ANGELEVA**  
Deputy Minister of Education and Science



**ANELIA VASSABOVA**  
ERC Synergy grantee



**MARTIN VECHEV**  
ERC Starting grantee



## 1. Context

2021 will see the launch of the EU's new seven-year research framework programme Horizon Europe. A key communication priority for the coming year will be to explain the relevance of the European Research Council that, under Horizon Europe, will continue to support curiosity-driven frontier research. It will also be important to show the synergies that exist between the ERC and other parts of the programme, as well as coordinating the promotion of the ERC's funding schemes with the broader communication effort around the launch of Horizon Europe.

While continuing to defend the bottom-up approach to excellent science that drives the ERC, in 2021, we will pursue our efforts to demonstrate the societal, economic and policy relevance of the ERC's approach by highlighting research carried out by ERC grantees. This will include the necessity to support frontier research and showcasing how it feeds into the EU's political priorities, not least the green and digital transitions as well as the research missions under Horizon Europe.

The coming year will see further changes in the ERC's leadership, with the arrival of a new President, two new Vice-Presidents and several new members of the Scientific Council. The ERCEA's External Communication Unit will continue to support the President and Scientific Council in fulfilling their mandate to communicate with the scientific community, key stakeholders and the general public (in line with the Specific Programme Implementing Horizon Europe).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound influence on the communication landscape in 2020. Restrictions on travel and the organisation of large physical events are expected to continue in 2021. Building on the positive results achieved in 2020, we will continue to embrace a "digital first" approach to our communication.

## 2. Objectives

The ERC's external communication actions in 2021 will be guided by the following strategic objectives.

1. We will seek to **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. We will **make the case for frontier research** by showing how the support for non-directed research provided by the ERC helps to address challenges, both immediately and in the longer-term .
3. We will **share our passion for science** by mobilising our grantees and other stakeholders as ambassadors for the ERC.



### 3. Audiences

The ERC's priority audiences for external communication are:

1. Potential applicants, ERC grantees and their research teams
2. The wider research community, including universities and research institutions that host grantees
3. Research policy-makers and influencers at European and national levels
4. Journalists and media
5. Members of the general public who take an interest in science

### 4. Actions

The following flagship communication actions are planned for 2021:

1. Publicise ERC grant schemes (with a particular focus on European countries that have been less successful in past calls, as well as global outreach activities in countries granted associated status in the Horizon Europe programme).
2. Celebrate the ERC's 10,000th grantee (to be announced in Spring 2021, this will be an opportunity to recognise all current and former grantees, as well as mobilising their Host Institutions and other partners).
3. Showcase 15 examples illustrating how the ERC has helped to transform different fields of science (based on a list of ground breaking ERC projects curated by the Scientific Council).
4. Launch the ERC's second Public Engagement with Research Award (to be announced as part of the ERC's 2022 Work Programme, with applications due to open in autumn 2021).
5. Participate in the EU's third Research & Innovation Days (ERC Hub and priority sessions to be organised, building on experiences from the two previous events).

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

### 5a. ERC communication tools and channels

#### Website

- > The ERC website attracted over 1 million visits in 2020. The site will be upgraded to a newer content management platform in 2021. This process will include an assessment of all functionalities and rationalisation whenever necessary. The design will be modernised with a strong focus on user experience and accessibility. The ERC website will continue to improve the way it displays information on its funded projects. New visual data presentations will be embedded in the website, with dynamic maps and charts, different filter options and exports. These new features will help the user find more complete information on ERC projects in a visually attractive and intuitive way. For the celebration of the 10,000th grantee, a dedicated web space will be created to highlight examples of ERC projects that have helped to transform different fields of science.

#### Social media

- > The ERC has established a solid presence on Twitter, and we expect to pass the milestone of 100,000 followers in early 2021. We also have a fast growing audience on LinkedIn, while Facebook has become less relevant. The ERC's YouTube account serves as a dissemination channel and a repository for the ERC's expanding collection of audio-visual products. To date, the vast majority of follower growth has been achieved organically (rather than through paid promotion). With the pandemic in 2020, the ERC's social media channels have become an even more important channel to promote events that have had to move to a virtual format. Our social media channels provide platforms for many of these events (e.g. through Twitter Periscope, YouTube Live and Facebook Live). In 2021, we aim to: increase reach and audience engagement across different social media channels; consolidate our relationship with key influencers and partners; build new relationships with potential multipliers; develop online communities; and further develop support for the promotion of online events. These aims will be achieved by maintaining our current approach plus placing a greater emphasis on community management and making targeted use of promoted (paid for) content.

#### Audio-visual communication and virtual events

- > The increased use of audio-visual communication is expected to continue in 2021, not least due to the ongoing restrictions on physical events linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. We plan to organise a series of live webcasts on funding opportunities, square videos presenting call results and project examples for social media, testimonial videos featuring grantees, as well as explanatory videos on different aspects of the ERC's application and evaluation process.

#### Online magazine

- > The ERC Magazine serves as a platform for sharing thematic articles, interviews and opinion-pieces. It is promoted via a monthly email digest, social media and other channels. Its content covers a wide range of topics and themes, including excellent curiosity-driven research, current popular research fields and the inner workings of the ERC. We intend to further develop the editorial content and increase the readership of the magazine in 2021.

### **Web stories**

- > The Stories section of the ERC website features articles on individual ERC projects and the researchers who lead them. The stories are promoted via social media, email alerts, and other channels. In 2021, we intend to continue putting emphasis on multimedia content and also strengthen our relationships with potential multipliers to increase their reach. Additionally, in 2021 we intend to put an additional emphasis on stories which show how frontier research contributes to EU's political priorities (green and digital transitions, research missions under Horizon Europe). As part of the communication actions to mark the 10,000th grantee, a multimedia series of 15 stories will be produced to showcase examples of ways in which ERC grants have helped to transform science.

### **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 2021, we will further maintain and develop this mailing list (in line with the relevant data protection rules).

### **Publications**

- > Print publications will be discontinued in 2021 (apart from duly justified exceptions) taking into account the general trend towards more digital forms of communication among the ERC's main audiences, together with the acceleration of this transition due to the restrictions on physical events linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ERC will fully embrace a digital first approach to its communication, based on the production of engaging content for the website, social media and other online channels. Key publications such as the guide to ERC grant schemes will be adapted for online dissemination.

## **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 2021, 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 and international 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

In 2021, we intend to reinforce the ERC's cooperation with our core communication partners (including National Contact Points, Host Institutions, the Euraxess Worldwide Network and R&I Science Counsellors in the EU's Delegations, European Commission services). The celebration of the ERC's 10,000th grantee will provide an important opportunity to engage and mobilise these partners. They will also play a key role in disseminating information about the ERC's grant schemes and funding opportunities.

In line with the ERCEA's strategy for internal communication and staff engagement, we will aim to provide next year additional opportunities for 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 increased participation of staff in virtual events. We will strengthen cooperation within the ERCEA in order to communicate the outcome of ERC-funded projects, including as regards feedback to policy and science advice to policy-makers.

## 6. Key Performance Indicators

### 5a. ERC communication tools and channels

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

Indicator	Baseline 2020
Website visits	1 million
Social media followers	Twitter – 95,000 • LinkedIn – 68,000 Facebook – 31,000 • YouTube – 1,500
Social media mentions	100,000
Mainstream media mentions	15,000
Views of ERC videos across different platforms	300,000
Subscribers to e-mail alerts	70,000
Grantees speaking at events	40
Participants in online events	20,000



## Annex 1 - Key Communication Opportunities in 2021

January	February	March	April	May	June
World Economic Forum (online)	Portuguese Presidency conference (Horizon Europe launch event)	Scientific Council plenary	ERC 10,000 <sup>th</sup> Grantee celebrations	World Economic Forum Annual meeting (online, tbc)	Advanced Grants 2020 call results
			Scientific Council plenary	Global Research Council (Durban, South Africa)	
				ERC National Contact Points (Spring meeting – virtual sessions)	

July	August	September	October	November	December
		Public Engagement with Research Award – opening of applications	Scientific Council plenary	ERC National Contact Points (Autumn meeting – timing and format tbc)	Scientific Council plenary
		EU Research & Innovation Days – hybrid event (timing and format tbc)	Annual ERC Scientific Conference (timing, theme and format tbc)		

### Other (ongoing activities during the year)

- > Widening campaign
- > Global outreach actions

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

This list is provisional as attendance at a listed conference will be dependent on if the ERC will have a session in the conference programme or as a separate webinar event. Additional conferences will also be added during the year.

Domain	Conference title	Date	Location
LS	65th Biophysical Society Annual Meeting	22-26 February 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	European Association for the study of diabetes	22-2 February 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	Microbiology Society Online Event	26-30 February 2021	Birmingham, UK
LS	Women in Science month 2021	Virtual meeting-Feb/March	Barcelona, ES
LS	EMBO/EMBL symposia: Synthetic Morphogenesis: From Gene Circuits to Tissue Architecture	17 March 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	11th Glycobiology World Congress	28-29 March 2021	Vienna, AT
LS	14th International Conference on Proteomics, Genomics & Bioinformatics	12-13 April 2021	Paris, FR
LS	The Global Plant Council	20-22 April 2021 - postponed from November 2020	Limassol, CY
LS	Microbiology Society Online Event	26-30 February 2021	Birmingham, UK
LS	Experimental Biology society Annual Meeting	27-3 April 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	European Federation of Biotechnology	09-12 May 2021-postponed from 2020	Maastricht, NL
LS	European Association for the study of obesity	10-13 April 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	AAI annual meeting: Virtual Immunology 2021	10-15 May 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	Heart Failure 2021	15-18 May 2021	Florence, IT
LS	European Society of Endocrinology	22-26 May 2021	Prague, CZ
LS	Developmental circuits in ageing	28-31 May 2021	Heraklion, GR
LS	European Atherosclerosis Society Congress	30/05-02 June 2021	Helsinki, FI
LS	International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids 2021 Congress	04-07 June 2021	Nantes, FR
LS	European Association for Cancer Research: EACR 2021 Virtual Congress: Innovative Cancer Science: Better Outcomes Through Research	09-12 June 2021	Virtual Meeting
LS	European Hematology Association Congress	09-17 June 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	7th Congress of the European Academy of Neurology	19-22 June 2021	Vienna, AT
LS	Center of Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (BG)	14-17 June 2021	Varna, BG
LS	Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography	22-27 June 2021	Palma de Mallorca, ES
LS	Annual meeting "The global stem cell event" International Society for Stem Cell Research	23-26 June 2021	Hamburg, DE
LS	Meeting of the European Society for Evolutionary Developmental Biology (Euro Evo Devo 2021)	29/06-02 July 2021	Naples, IT

LS	45th Federation of European Biochemical Societies Congress	03-08 July 2021	Ljubljana, SI
LS	56th International Conference on Medicinal Chemistry	07-09 July 2021	Bordeaux, FR
LS	31st European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases	09-12 July 2021	Vienna, AT
LS	7th International Caparica Conference on Analytical Proteomics 2021	12-15 July 2021	Caparica, PT
LS	International Conference on Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences	12-15 July 2021	Oslo, NO
LS	Gordon Research Conference (GRS) in Molecular Membrane Biology 2021 [tbc, only if virtual or webinar]	17-18 July 2021	New Hampshire, USA
LS	21st European Carbohydrate Symposium	18-22 July 2021	Paris, FR
LS	International Coral Reef Symposium	18-23 July 2021	Bremen, DE
LS	13th European Biophysical Societies' Association Congress	24-28 July 2021	Vienna, AT
LS	Annual International Conference of the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society [tbc, only if virtual or webinar]	26-30 July 2021	Guadalajara, MX
LS	The 7th International Conference on Bioengineering and Biotechnology	05-07 August 2021	Prague, CZ
LS	Federation of European Microbiological Societies Congress	12-14 July 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	34rd World Congress on Pharmacology "Exploring new Horizons in Pharmacology: Drug Discovery Design & Development"	16-17 August 2021	London, UK
LS	Congress of the European Society for Evolutionary Biology	22-27 August 2021	Prague, CZ
LS	European Society of Molecular Imaging	24-27 August 2021	Gottingen, DE
LS	FENS Regional Meeting	25-27 August 2021	Krakow, PL
LS	European Society of Cardiology Congress	28-31 August 2021	Virtual meeting
LS	European Congress of Immunology	01-04 September 2021	Belgrade, SRB
LS	17th World Congress on Structural Biology	13-14 September 2021	Prague, CZ
LS	Cell la Vie	22-24 September 2021	Paris, FR
LS	Genome Engineering and Synthetic Biology (4th edition)	23-24 September 2021	Ghent, BE
LS	XXV World Congress of Neurology	03-07 October 2021	Rome, IT
LS	The 25th Human Genome MeetingThe Next Frontiers in Genomics	04-06 October 2021	Tel Aviv, IL
LS	XIX ISDB congress	17-21 October 2021	Algarve, PT
LS	Annual Congress European Society of Gene and Cell Therapy	19-22 October 2021	Brussels ,BE
LS	American Heart Association 2021 Congress [tbc, only if virtual or webinar]	13-15 November 2021	Boston, USA
LS	NanoBioTech	15-17 November 2021	Montreux, CH
LS	Society for Neuroscience SfN 2021 [tbc, only if virtual or webinar]	13-17 November 2021	Chicago, USA
LS	EMBO epigenetics and metabolism	17-20 November 2021	Heidelberg, DE
LS	ASCB/ EMBO meeting - Cell Bio 2021 [tbc, only if virtual or webinar]	11-15 December 2021	San Diego, CA
LS	The 10th International Conference on Complex Networks and their Applications	Dec 2021 TBC	TBC

LS	European Ecological Federation Congress	TBC	TBC
LS	American Association for Cancer Research [only if virtual or webinar]	not yet announced	Virtual Meeting
PE	CHISA 2021 (International Congress of Chemical and Process Engineering)	15-18 March 2021	VIRTUAL (organized from Prague, CZ)
PE	EGU General Assembly 2021	19-30 April 2021	Vienna-Online event
PE	JpGU	30 May to 6 June 2021	Yokohama, JP
PE	3rd IEEE International Conference on Flexible and Printable Sensors and Systems	20-23 June 2021	Manchester, UK
PE	8th EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON MATHEMATICS	20-26 June 2021	Portoroz, SI
PE	5th International Conference on Multi-scale Computational Methods for Solids and Fluids, ECCOMAS MSF 2021	June 30 - July 2, 2021	Split, HR
PE	EUROMAR 2021	4-8 July 2021	Portoroz, SI
PE	Goldschmidt 2021	4-9 July 2021	Lyon, FR
PE	EUCASS-3AF 2021: 9th European Conference for Aeronautics and Space Sciences	4-9 July 2021	Lille, FR
PE	10th GRACM International Congress on Computational Mechanics	5-7 July 2021	Athens, GR
PE	International Conference on Quantum Communication, Measurement and Computing (QCMC)	5-9 July 2021	Lisbon, PT
PE	International Symposium on Turbulence, heat and mass transfer	6-9 July 2021	St. Petersburg, RU
PE	ICML 2021; International Conference on Machine Learning	18-24 July 2021	Vienna, AT
PE	11th Liquid Matter Conference	18-23 July 2021	Prague, CZ
PE	AGU	13-17 December 2021	New Orleans, USA
SH	European Historical Economics Society	26 January 2021	online
SH	European Social Science History Conference	23 March 2021	Online
SH	Renaissance Society of America	tbc, first quarter 2021	Dedicated online seminar
SH	Association for Art History Annual Conference	14-17 April 2021	Online
SH	Open Science Practices in Environmental Archaeology	24 April 2021	Online
SH	9th International Symposium on Biomolecular Archaeology	1-4 June 2021	Toulouse, FR
SH	NECS- European Network for Cinema and Media Studies	16-18 June 2021	U of Palermo, IT
SH	Conference in Classics and Ancient History	22-25 June 2021	Coimbra, PT
SH	Screen Studies Conference	25-27 June 2021	U of Glasgow, UK
SH	New Directions in the Humanities	30 June - 2 July 2021	Blended version of on-line and onsite, ready to move fully online if need be. The onsite part will be in Madrid, ES
SH	International Medieval Congress, Special thematic strand: Climates	5-9 July 2021	fully online
SH	IPSA World Congress (2nd choice)	10-14 July 2021	Lisbon, PT
SH	ICP 2020 - International Congress of Psychology	18-23 July 2021	Prague, CZ

SH	Energy Ethics 2021	August 2021	St Andrews, UK (if possible, otherwise online)
SH	XIX Nordic Political Science Association Congress	10-13 August 2021	Reykjavik, IS
SH	International Conference on Frontiers of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (FAIML 2021)	13-15 August 2021	Stockholm, SE
SH	34th International Geographical Congress	16-20 August 2021	Istanbul, TU
SH	EARLI (European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction) biennial conference	24-28 August 2021	fully online
SH	"In the Search of the Common Good", Sixth Biannual Conference of the European Society for the History of Political Thought	26-28 August 2021	Helsinki, FI
SH	The European Sociological Association Conference. Sociological Knowledges for Alternative Futures	31.08-03.09.2021	Barcelona, ES
SH	European Sociological Association 2021 Conference: "Sociological Knowledges for Alternative Futures", 15th Conference of the ESA.	31 August - 3 September 2021	Barcelona, ES
SH	European Society for Environmental history Conference	5-9 July 2021	Bristol, UK
SH	21st Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology "(Il)legal organizations and crime"	08-11 September 2021	Bucharest, RO
SH	2021 ESIL Annual Conference (European Society of International Law)	9-11 September 2021	Stockholm, SE
SH	The 8th biennial meeting of the European Philosophy of Science Association	15-18 September 2021	Turin, IT
SH	50 Poznań Linguistic Meeting (PLM)	16-19 September 2021	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



"The European Research Council has, in a short time, achieved world-class status as a funding body for excellent curiosity-driven frontier research. With its special emphasis on allowing top young talent to thrive, the ERC Scientific Council is committed to keeping to this course. The ERC will continue to help make Europe a power house for science and a place where innovation is fuelled by a new generation."

Jean-Pierre Bourguignon  
ERC President and Chair of its Scientific Council



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