

The ERC logo consists of a grey square with a pattern of red dots of varying sizes, and the lowercase letters 'erc' in white to its right.

erc

The background image shows a large, modern glass building with a curved facade, situated behind a park area. In the foreground, a fountain sprays water upwards, creating a rainbow. The scene is surrounded by trees with autumn foliage and a clear blue sky.

Equality of opportunity in European Research Council Competitions

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ERC Scientific Council

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Univ. of California, Berkeley | 1*

What is the ERC?



The ERC supports excellence in frontier research through a bottom-up, individual-based, pan-European competition

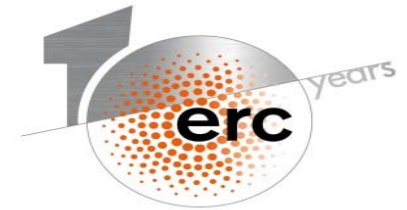
Strategy

- Support for the **individual scientists** – no networks!
- No predetermined subjects (**bottom-up**)
- **No quotas** of any sort
- Global peer-review
- Support of **frontier research** in **all fields of science and Humanities**
- **Scientific quality** as the only criterion aiming for excellence

Legislation

- Scientific governance: **independent Scientific Council** with 22 members including the ERC President; **full authority over funding strategy** and **evaluation**
- Support by the **ERC Executive Agency** (autonomous)

EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL



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No positive discrimination

No affirmative actions

No quotas

ERC awardees
are selected based on
EXCELLENCE only



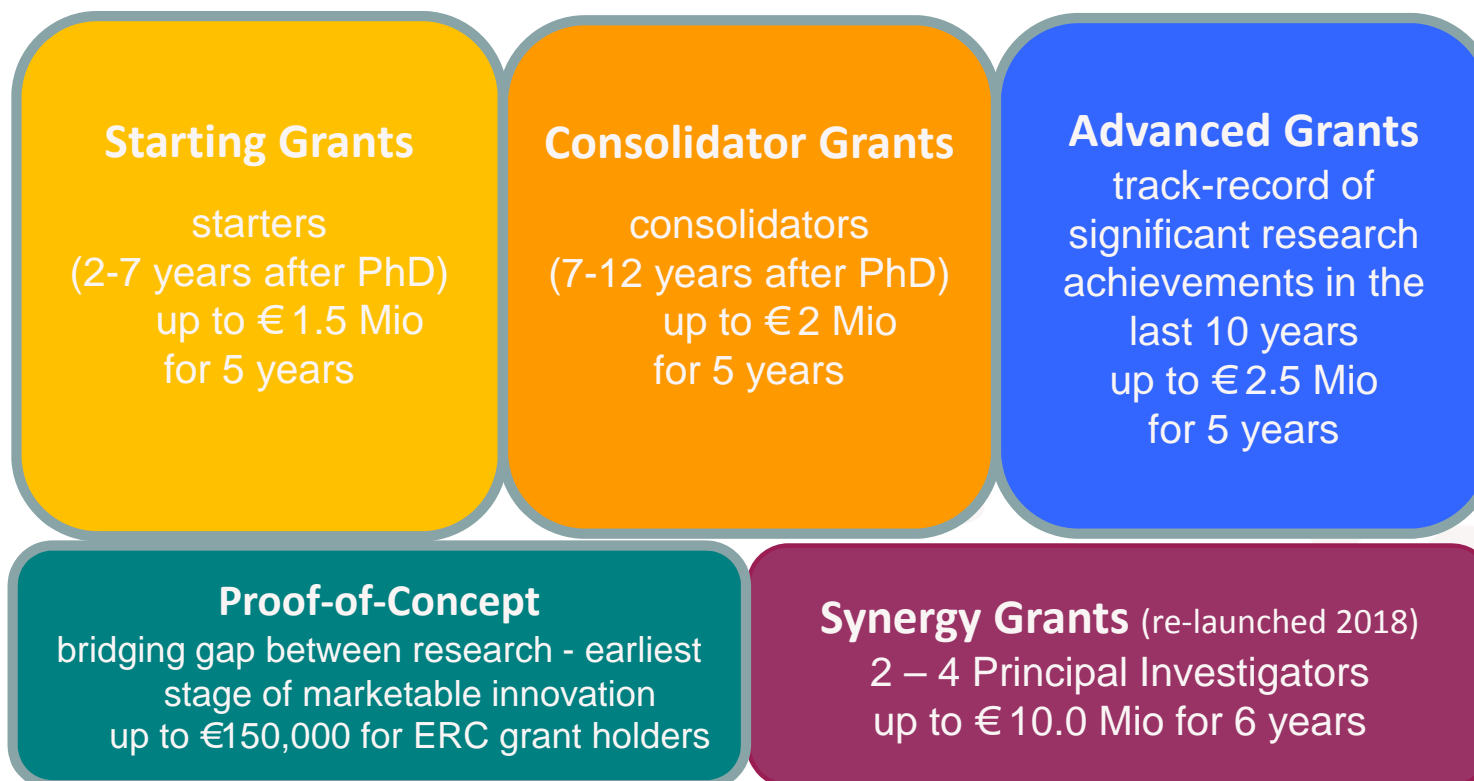
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ERC Grant Schemes



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For the ERC "diversity and inclusion" means:



To contribute to a truly **inclusive European culture of competitiveness in science** by way of:

-> **strengthening the participation** of researchers from Europe's less research-performing regions."

-> **giving equal opportunities** to men and women

in all ERC competitions

The main diversity and inclusion issues at the ERC



- **Women under-representation** primarily in **submission rates** (varies across scientific areas and career stages)
 - *Success rate is not a problem*
 - **Under-performing countries**, in both submission rates and success rates
- >ERC collects and analyses data for every Call/year**

ERC internal approaches



- **Design of the programme**
 - PI driven, any nationality, from anywhere in world, all scientific fields
- **Evaluation**
 - Criteria: PI track record + Scientific project
 - Research environment (group, host institution) is not an evaluation criteria
 - Diverse panel composition (discipline, nationality, gender, etc.)
- **Exceptions granted to eligibility windows**
 - Maternity leave (18 months per child)
 - Paternity leave (equal to the leave taken)
 - Long term sickness
 - Military service
 - Care for sick relatives

ERC external approaches

(ERCEA and ERC Sci. Council)



- **Women under-representation (Gender Balance Working Group)**
 - ERC Gender Equality Plan
 - Take part in international gender summits
 - Organise sessions at international policy conferences (ESOF)
 - Organise sessions at major discipline oriented conferences (EGU, EMBO, etc.)
- **Under-performing countries (Widening Working Group)**
 - Various ERC high-level events in these countries
 - Meetings with national/regional politicians, policy-makers and researchers
 - Visits to ERC projects located in these countries
 - Promotion of national initiatives (e.g. [ERC Visiting Fellowships](#))

• GENDER



2007

Extension eligibility by **12** months per child born *after* PhD;

2010

Extension eligibility by **18** months per child born *before or after* PhD award.

2013

Scientific leadership potential (self-evaluation) section **removed**

2014

Model CV template included in application forms

• GENDER



2015

No limit to eligibility extension (before it was 4,5 years)
Care of sick relative counts for extension of the eligibility
Track record focus on 5/10 publications

2016

Video on unconscious bias shown to panel members

2017

Activities promoting **equal opportunities** or **gender balance** are **eligible costs**, clearly stated in the Work Programme



• GENDER



2018

Unconscious bias training to 2/3 Programme Officers

2019

Unconscious bias training to:

- all Programme Officers
- Management
- ERC Scientific Council



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ERC overview figures, FP7 and H2020

Gender



FP7

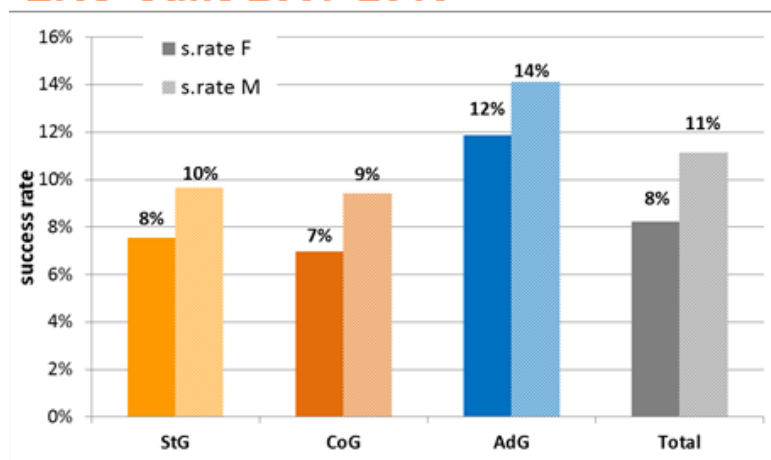
H2020

- **Scientific Council members**
from **23% women** to **36%** → **43%** (Dec 2018)
- **Panel members**
28% women → **32%**
- **Evaluated**
25% women
(~15% senior + ~30% junior) → **28%**
(~16% senior + ~32% junior)
- **Grantees**
20% women
(~13% senior + ~25% junior) → **27%**
(~16% senior + ~31% junior)
- **ERCEA Scientific Officers**
60% women → **64%**

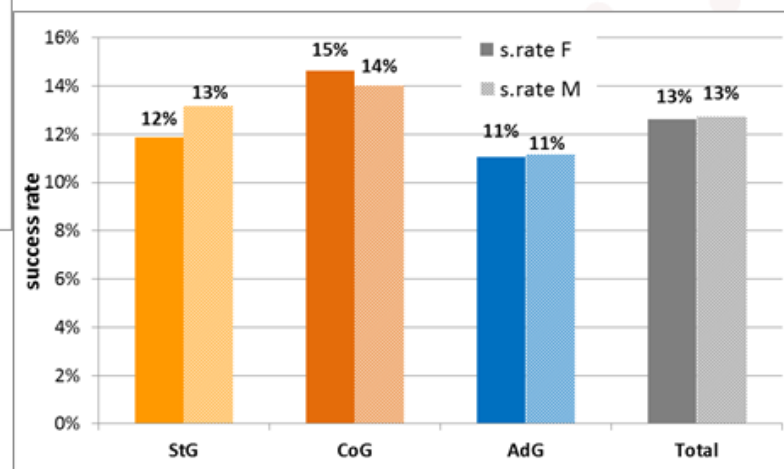


Success Rate by Type of Call

ERC Calls 2007-2013

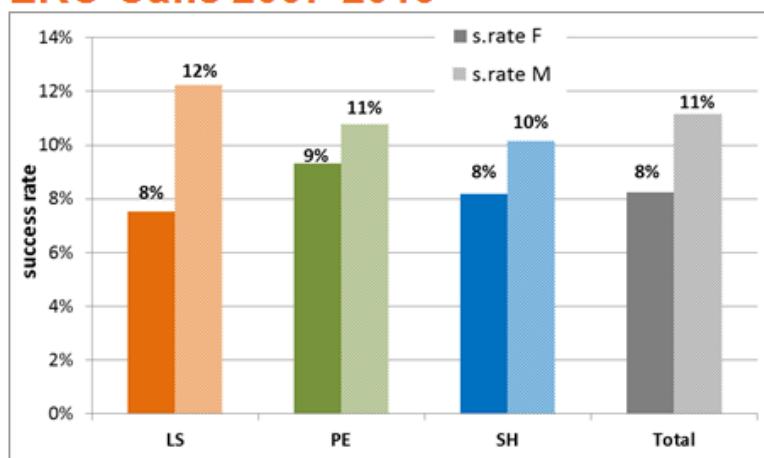


H2020 (2014-2017)

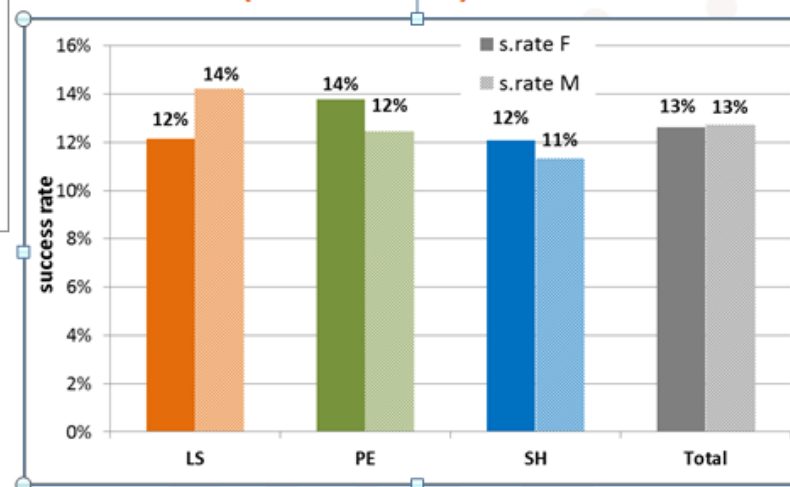


Success Rate by Domain

ERC Calls 2007-2013



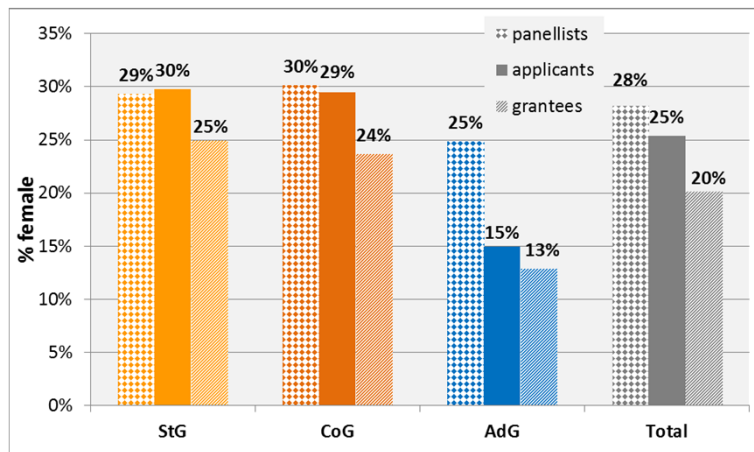
H2020 (2014-2017)



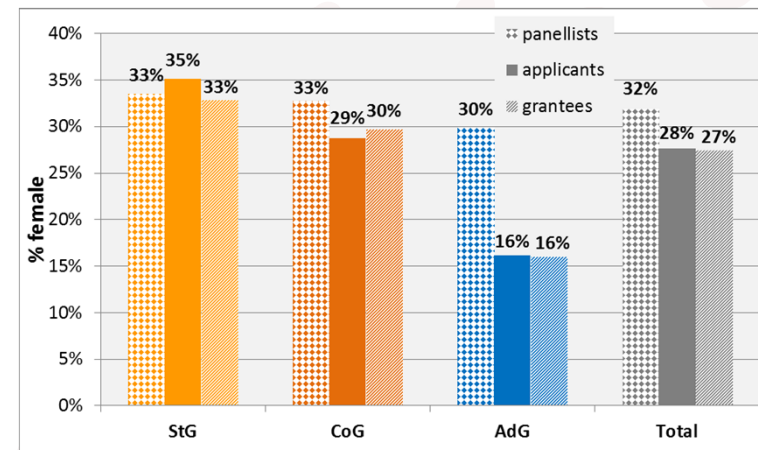
ERC Calls by type % Female



ERC Calls 2007-2013 (FP7)



ERC Calls 2014-2017 (H2020)

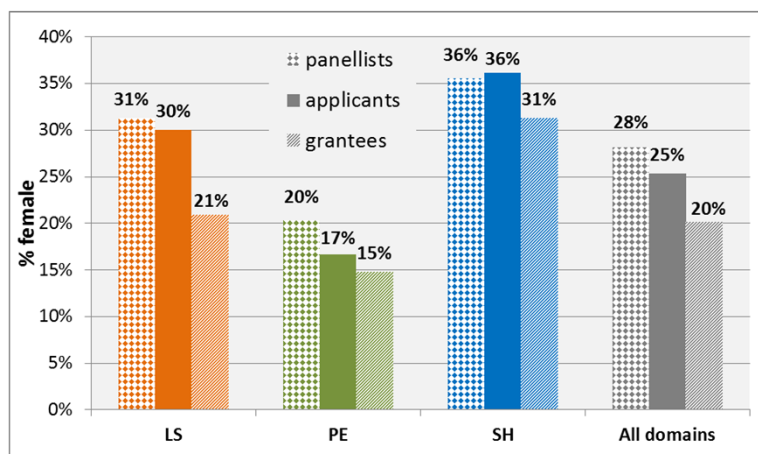


ERC Calls by domains

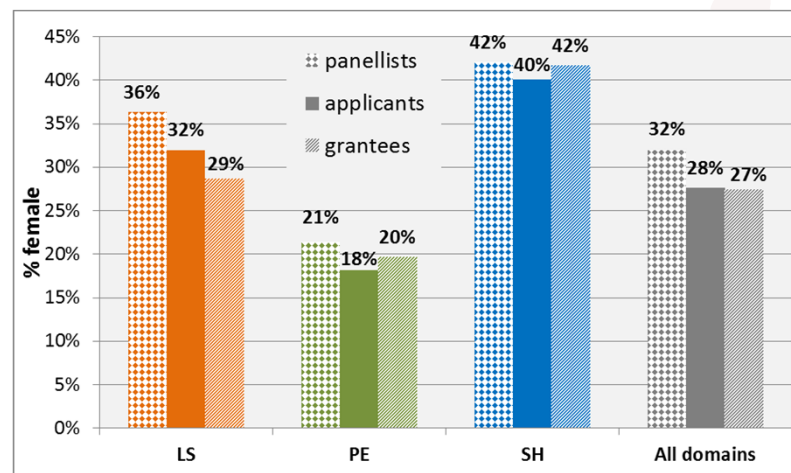
% Female



ERC Calls 2007-2013 (FP7)



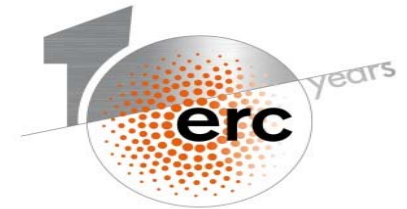
ERC Calls 2014-2017 (H2020)



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GOALS FOR THE FUTURE



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More applications from women
Especially in Advanced Grants

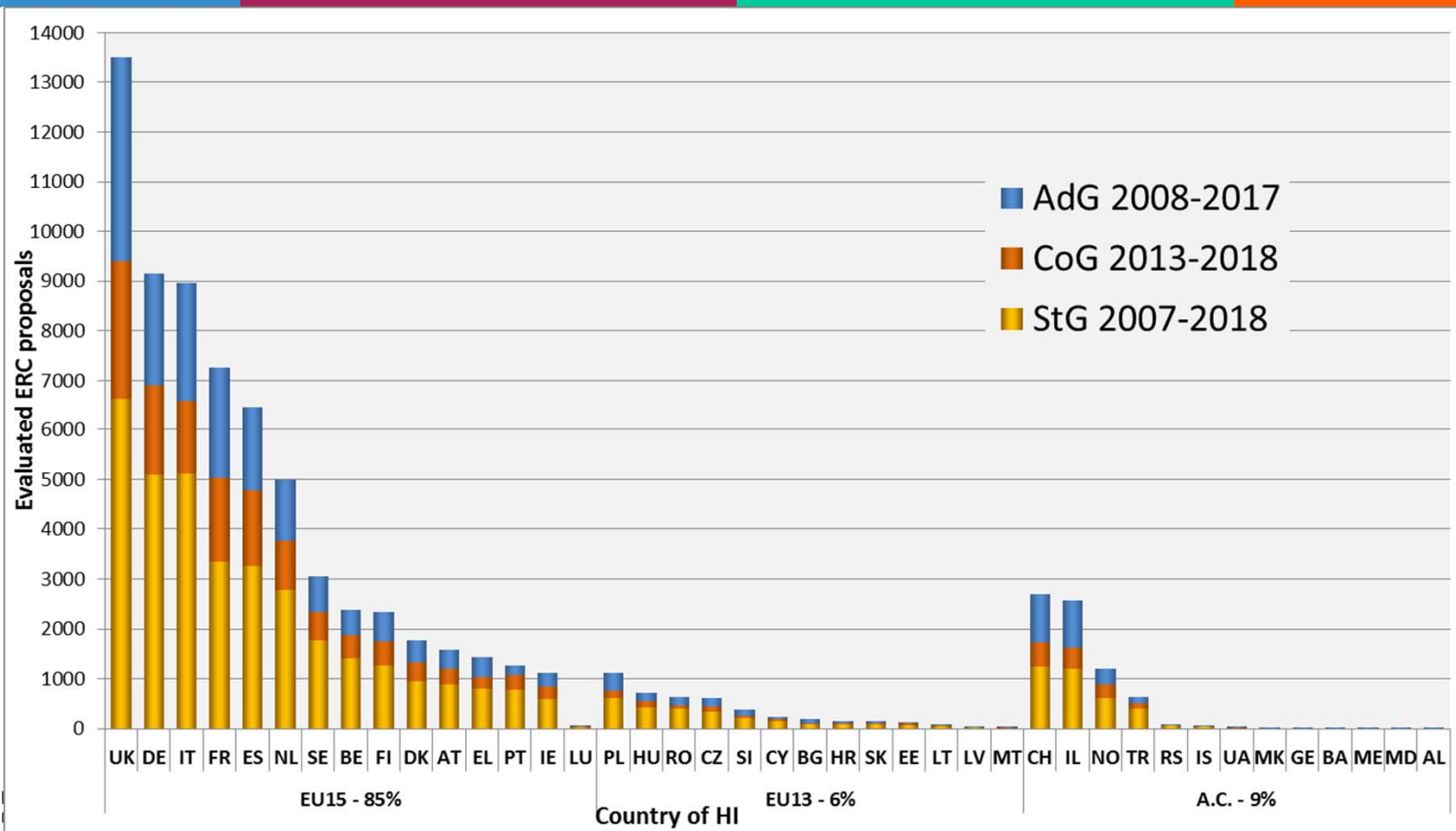
Maintain diversity in our panels
Men acceptance rate 70%
Women acceptance rate 58%

Maintain dialogue with scientific societies

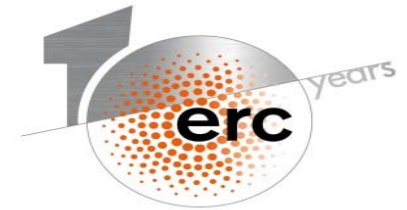
Evaluated ERC Proposals by HI Country



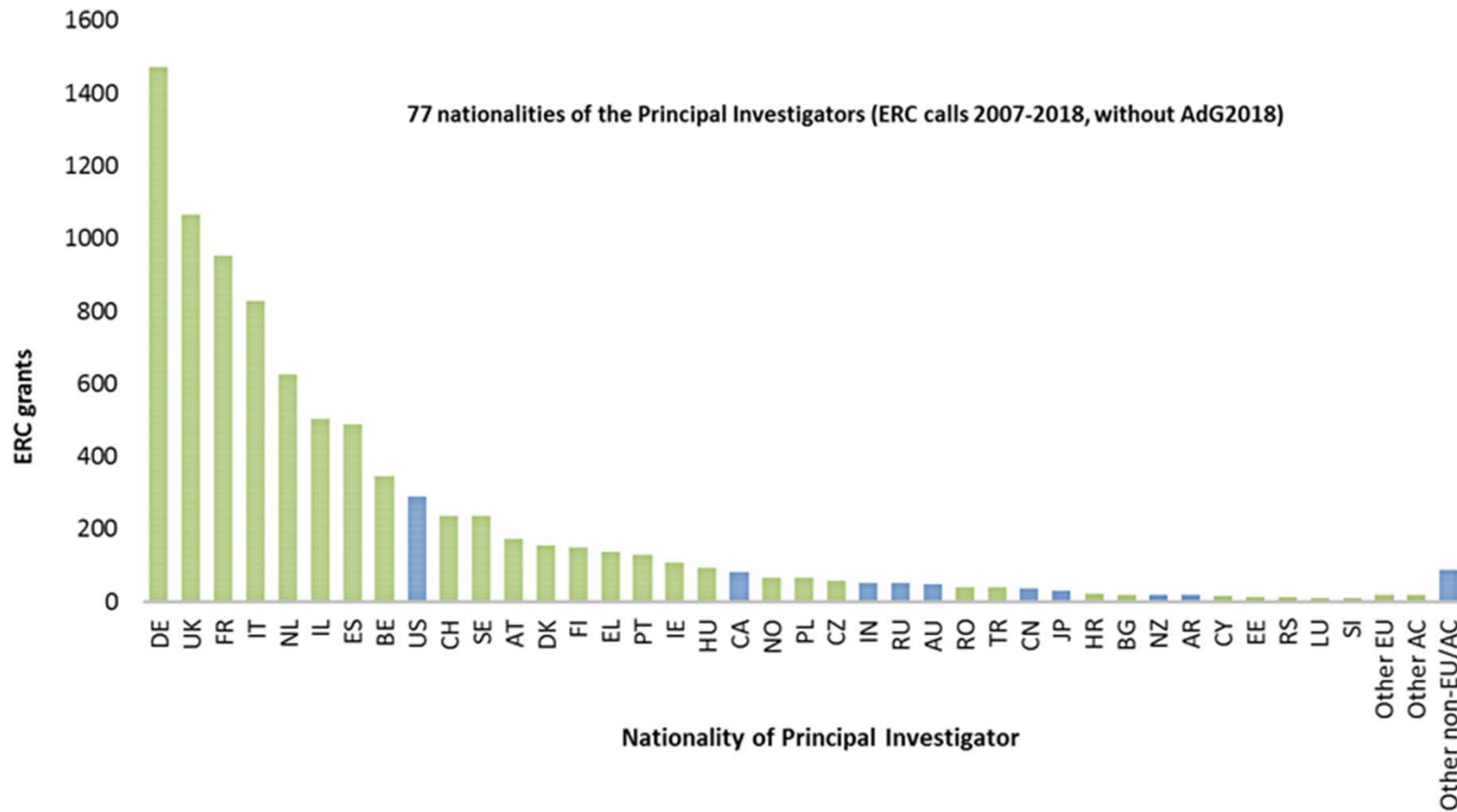
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Nationalities of the PI's (ERC calls 2007-2018) without AdG2018)



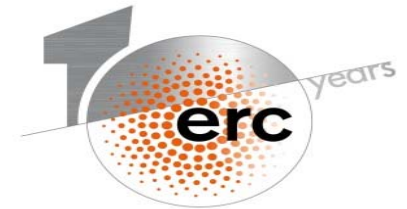
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EU13 + MOBILITY (no brain drain, brain circulation!)

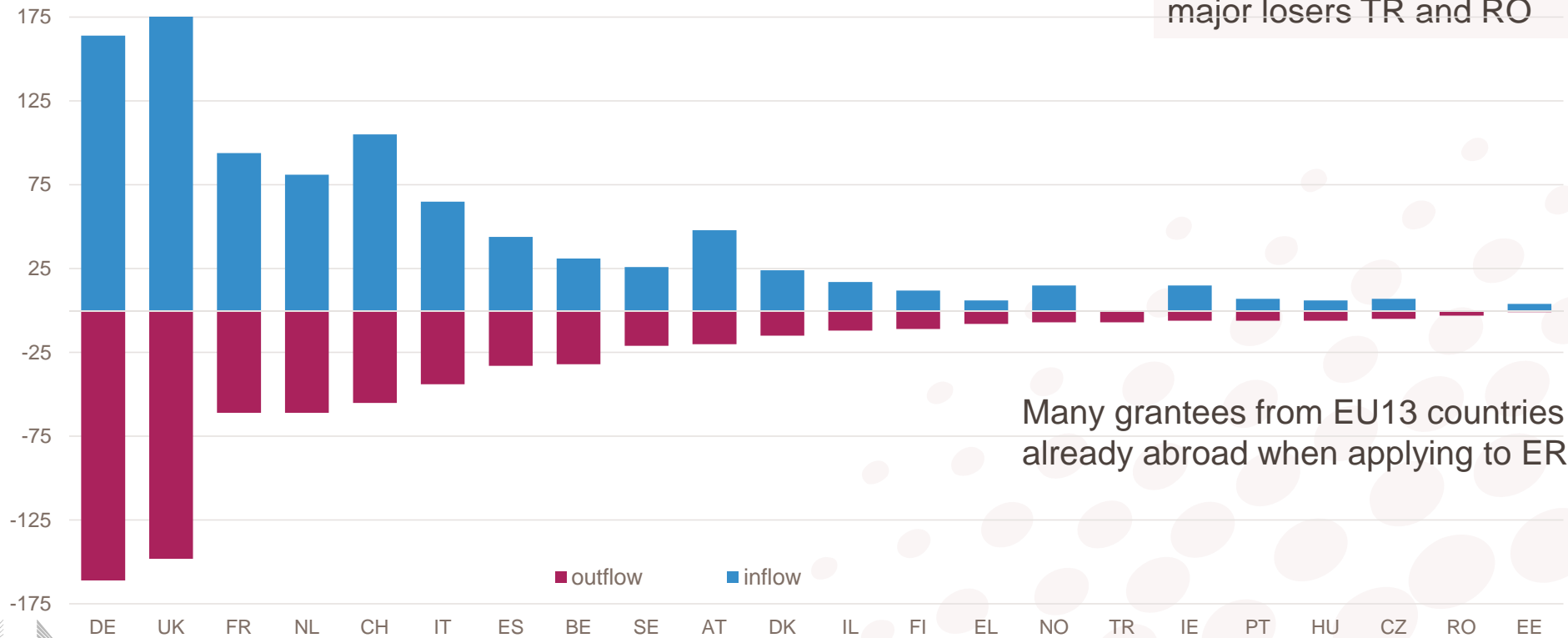


Mobility of ERC grantees (ERC main calls 2007-2018, without AdG2018)



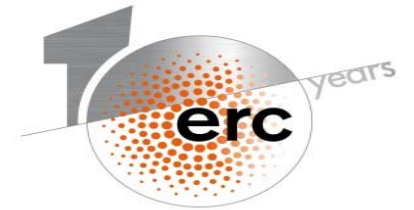
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Major winners CH and AT,
major losers TR and RO



Many grantees from EU13 countries are
already abroad when applying to ERC

Distribution of PE10 Projects by City



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Approaches towards widening European participation in ERC calls at national level



- **Bring back the most talented scientists from abroad** with attractive research funding and salaries that are prospective candidates for ERC grants
- **Focusing first on young researchers (starting/consolidator grants) is easier** and therefore meaningful but they will not come without seeing the prospect of attractive long-term career paths
- **Strengthening local support to ERC applicants and grantees:** training days, workshops, seminars, and coaching for ERC candidates, but also their supporting services; contact locals with hands-on ERC experience or directly ERCEA for help
- **Actively search for talented scientists** and encourage them to apply with strong, well prepared proposals
- **National support for unfunded Step2 A ERC applicants** at the level of the ERC grant, significant national support for Step2 B ERC applicants. Encourage them to reapply.

Visiting Fellowship Programmes



ERC promotes the efforts of national and regional authorities that set up and fund mobility programmes to allow potential ERC candidates to visit and gain experience with ERC-funded teams.

9 countries/regions are participating in the scheme:

- **Czech Republic**
- **Estonia**
- **Poland**
- **Slovenia**
- **Belgium (Flanders region)**
- **Slovak Republic**
- **Croatia**
- **Georgia (*new in 2018*)**
- **Hungary (*not participating in 2018*)**

- ***Politehnica University of Bucharest will start participating in 2019***



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Conditions and results



National funding programmes must follow the [ERC Guidelines](#):

- Duration of visits 3-6 months (*from 2019 the minimum duration will be 1 month*)
- Visiting fellows are obliged to apply for an ERC grant in specified timeframe
- Costs are covered by sending institution

Results of 2018 Call for expression of interest

- Total number of interested PIs: **554** (*724 in 2016 and 616 in 2017*)
- Host Institution countries: **31 different countries** (*UK, DE, NL, FR, ES and IT with highest number of interested PIs*)

Number of visiting researchers in 2016 and 2017 calls:

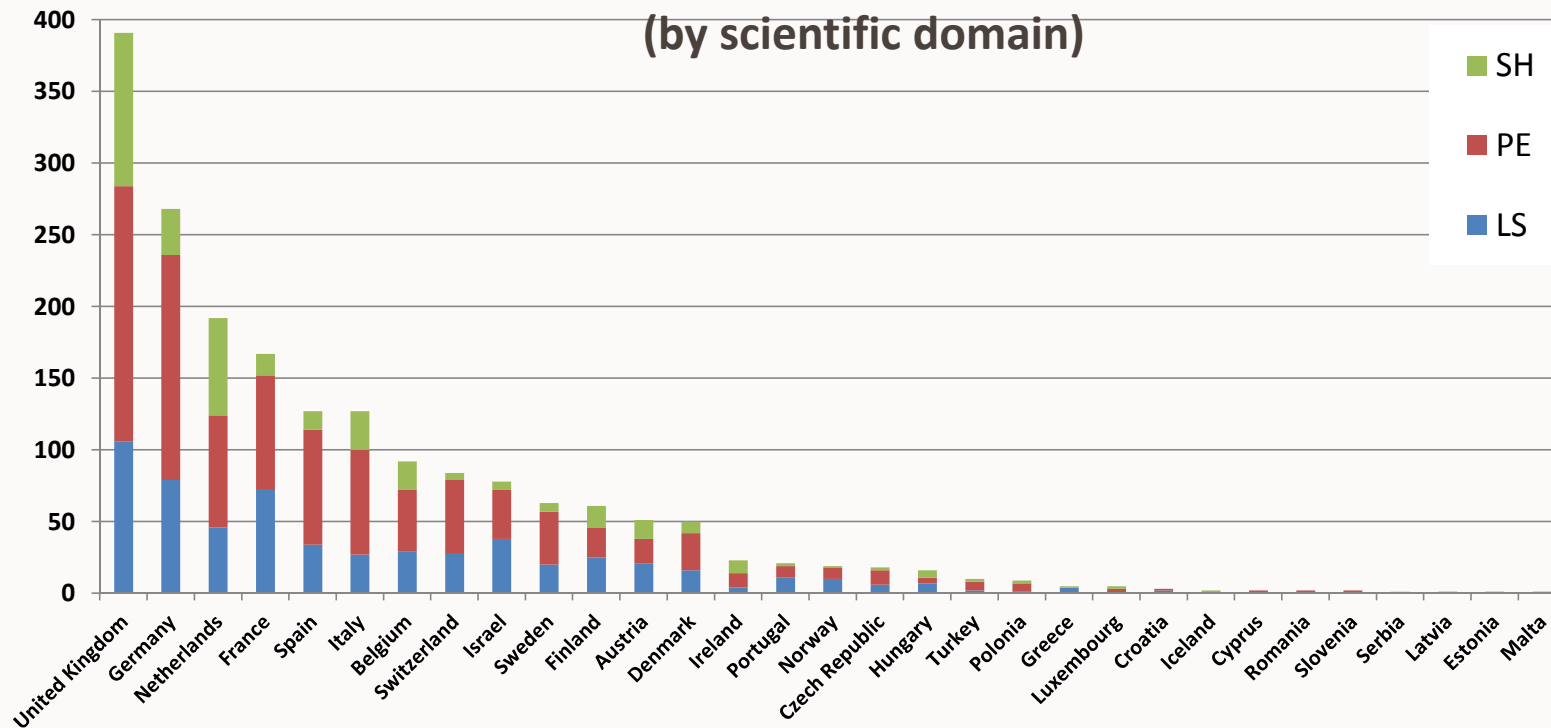
- Total number of visitors 2016= **15**: Hungary - 1; Slovenia - 7; Poland - 7
- Total number of visitors 2017= **27**: Hungary - 10; Poland – 8; Slovenia - 4; Croatia – 4; Flanders – 1
- Average duration of the visit: 4.6 months



VFP - ERC PIs Participation 2016-2018

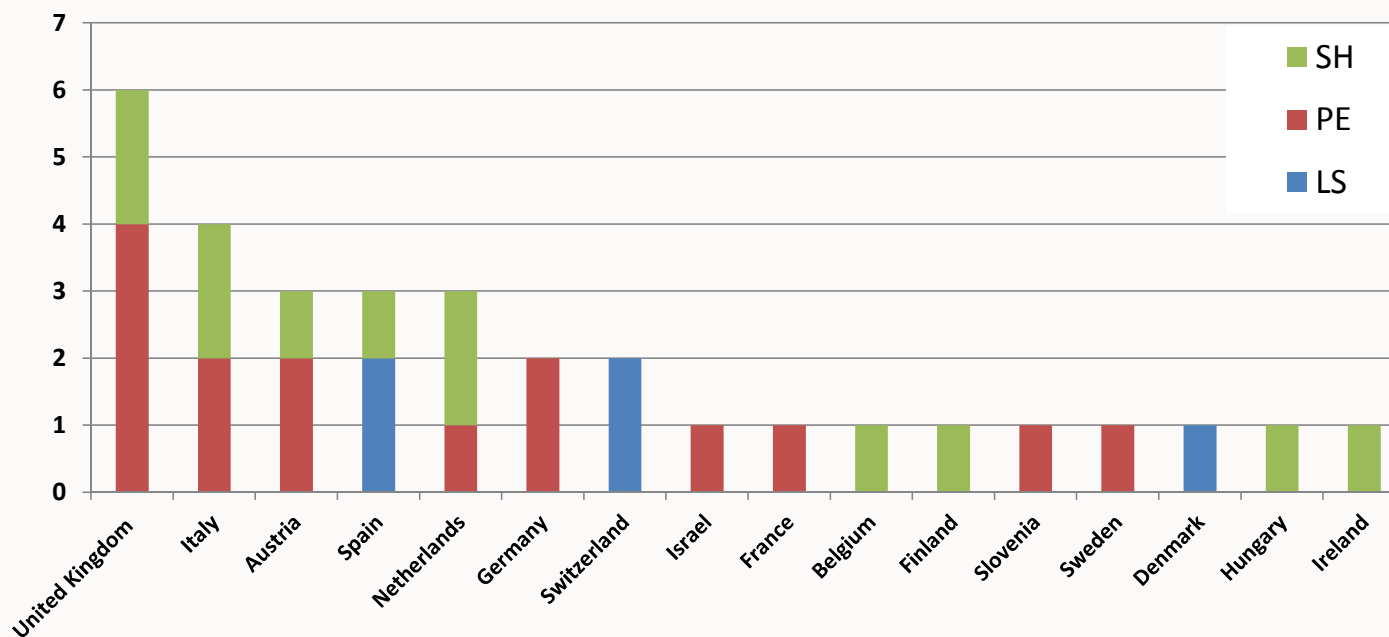


ERC grantees willing to host a researcher
(by scientific domain)



VFP - General State-of-play 2016-2017

Destination countries of visiting researchers 2016-2017 (by scientific domain)



Visiting Fellowship Programmes



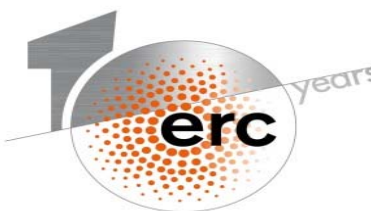
May/June 2019 – Next Call for expression of interest for
ERC PI-s

Support and information:

ERC-VISITING-FELLOWSHIP-PROGRAMMES@ec.europa.eu

- Suggestions welcome on:
 - How to encourage more women applications to ERC and more women accepting to serve on panels
 - How to increase the number of applicants and their success rates from under-represented EU13 countries
- Suggestions for EGU: allow scheduling of ERC short courses and townhalls at times where most people can attend (lunch break!!)

After More than 10 Years, a Success Story



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- Highly recognised by the research community
- Over **8 800** top researchers funded during 2007-2018
- 67% are at an early-career stage
- **77** nationalities represented
- **Highly competitive** (overall success rate tending to 10%)
- Working in over **760** different institutions in **34** countries
- 50% of grantees in 50 institutions : *“Excellence attracts excellence”*
- **Benchmarking** effect: impact on national programmes and agencies; national funding for best "runners-up"
- Efficient and fast grant management



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Implementing Arrangements



- Implementing Arrangements (IA): goal is to provide opportunities in Europe for scientists supported by non-EU funding agencies to temporarily join a research team run by an ERC grantee.



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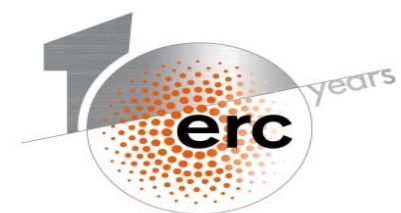
Signed Agreements 2012-2018



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- 2 new IAs signed with **Australia** and **Japan** in October 2018
- **300+** non-European researchers visited an ERC project since 2012
- **29th Nov 2018** – Last call for Expression of Interest from ERC PIs





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THANK YOU



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