



**Highlight:**

**European Commission's proposal for next EU Framework 'Horizon 2020': bid for greatly increased ERC budget**

30 November 2011

The European Commission has adopted today its proposal for the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, 'Horizon 2020', that will run from 2014 to 2020 with a proposed total budget of €80 billion.

'Horizon 2020' would be composed of three specific pillars: the European Research Council (ERC) will be part of the first pillar, "Excellent science", together with Marie Curie, Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) and research infrastructures.

The proposed budget for the ERC under Horizon 2020 is €13.2 billion. This represents a 77% increase of the total ERC budget, compared to the Seventh Research Framework Programme.

ERC President Professor Helga Nowotny said: *"The Scientific Council and I are very pleased about the Commission's proposal for the next framework programme 'Horizon 2020'. The Commission's bid for a very significant increase of the ERC budget can be seen as recognition of the outstanding success of the ERC, as evidenced by the entire scientific community, Member States and all other stakeholders. Boosting the ERC budget would allow more top rate researchers and their pioneering ideas to be supported, and especially younger researchers, provided with a long-term perspective. In these difficult times, funding science and innovation in general, and excellence and frontier research in particular, is key for economic recovery and Europe's future."*

At the press conference today, the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, said: *"Frontier research is not academic indulgence since breakthroughs come from unexpected sources. We propose doubling to over 13 billion euro our support to the spectacularly successful European Research Council, securing the best fundamental research that leads to the greatest innovations."*

The Commission proposal will be negotiated in the coming months with the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. The final decision is expected to be adopted before the end of 2013.

For further information on the Commission proposal for Horizon 2020, see [Commission Press Release](#).

More follows



## Background

The proposed ERC budget from 2014 to 2020 is €13.2 billion. Moreover, considering the estimated inflation from 2014 to 2020 and administrative costs (maximum 6% of the operational budget), the total ERC budget would amount to €15 billion.

This would mean a doubling of the current ERC budget under the Seventh Research Framework Programme (ERC budget €7.5 billion).

Set up in 2007 by the EU, the **European Research Council** 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 two core funding schemes are the 'ERC Starting Grants' for younger, early-career top researchers and the 'ERC Advanced Grants' for senior research leaders. This year, two smaller initiatives were added, namely the top-up grant 'ERC Proof of Concept' for researchers already holding an ERC grant, and the 'ERC Synergy scheme', targeting small groups of principal investigators working together on one project.

The ERC operates according to an 'investigator-driven', or 'bottom-up', approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research. Since its launch, the ERC has funded over 2,200 frontier research projects throughout Europe and has become a "benchmark" of the competitiveness of national research and innovation systems as it complements existing funding schemes at national and European levels.

The ERC is the newest, pioneering component ('Ideas' Specific Programme) of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme. It is led by the ERC Scientific Council, composed of 22 top scientists and scholars. The ERC President is Prof. Helga Nowotny and the Scientific Council's representative in Brussels is Secretary General Prof. Donald Dingwell. The ERC Executive Agency implements the 'Ideas' Specific Programme and is led by Director *ad int.* Pablo Amor.

## Links

[ERC website](#)

[European Commission Press Release](#)

[European Commission Memo](#)

[VIDEO: Announcement by Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn](#)

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