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Highlight:

ERC President to speak to research community at the Royal Irish Academy

17 November 2014

Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, President of the European Research Council (ERC), today makes a keynote address to the Irish research community at the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) in Dublin. Alongside ERC Scientific Council member Prof. Nicholas Canny, he will discuss research funding in Ireland, in particular the importance of funding basic scientific research to unlock the full potential and attractiveness of the EU research area.

The event, entitled *'Excellent Research: Ireland and the European Research Council'*, is hosted by Prof. Mary E. Daly, President of the Royal Irish Academy, and Prof. Nicholas Canny, member of the ERC Scientific Council. The opening address is made by Mr Damien English T.D., Minister of State for Skills, Research and Innovation.

Speaking about his participation at the event, Mr Damien English says, *"This is a challenging but exciting time for us all with the start of Horizon 2020. The European Research Council is a key component of Horizon 2020's Excellence Science Pillar and has a budget of €13 billion covering the years 2014 to 2020. We are beginning to see a significant growth in the number of applications for the various ERC award schemes from Ireland, and the 2014 results for ERC applications have been very positive so far. In Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Irish Research Council (IRC) work together closely to support ERC applications and provide National Contact Points for ERC schemes. SFI covers the domains of Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering and IRC covers the domains of Social Science and the Humanities. Both agencies provide information and supports for applicants. I commend those who have been successful to date in receiving ERC grants and my best wishes to all who are applying for ERC funding."*

ERC President Prof. Bourguignon says, *"In the past few years, Ireland has made significant advances in its research investment and is catching up with other well-performing EU member states such as Denmark and Austria. The country is on the right track, in particular if it continues to also fund long-term curiosity-driven research – a target to which the European Research Council is firmly committed."*

The ERC encourages the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding to support basic frontier research across all fields. To date, 34 research projects have been funded by the ERC in Irish host institutions, representing a total budget of €57 million. There are a further 25 grant holders of Irish nationality based in institutions outside Ireland.

Five ERC grant holders based in Ireland will participate in today's event and discuss the Irish research landscape. Prof. Dan Bradley, an ERC Advanced Grant holder and member of the Royal Irish Academy, will explain how ERC funding has supported his research in medical genetics.



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Other ERC grantees taking part in the discussion panel include:

- **Dr Marie-Louise Coolahan**, researching the reception of women's writing in the early modern period at the National University of Ireland, Galway
- **Dr Paolo Guasoni**, working on market frictions in mathematical finance at Dublin City University
- **Dr David Hoey**, studying bioengineering and osteoporosis-related bone fractures at the University of Limerick
- **Prof. Jenny McElwain**, researching atmospheric oxygen as a driver of plant evolution over the past 400 million years at University College Dublin

Note to the editors

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.

Under the new EU research and innovation programme *Horizon 2020*, the ERC has a substantially increased budget of over €13 billion.

The ERC consists of an independent Scientific Council and an Executive Agency. The Scientific Council, the ERC's governing body, is composed of 22 distinguished scientists and scholars who define the scientific funding strategy and methodologies, and act on behalf of the scientific community to promote creativity and innovative research in Europe. Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon has been the ERC President since 1 January 2014. The ERC Executive Agency implements the ERC component of *Horizon 2020* and is led by Director Pablo Amor.

The **Royal Irish Academy** is a publicly funded institution established for the promotion of Irish academic research. The Academy was founded by Royal Charter in 1785.

Links

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