



**European Research Council**

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**ERC President statement on reported comments by ERC Scientific Council member Sir Tim Hunt at the "Luncheon with Female Scientists and Engineers" during the World Conference of Science Journalists in Seoul, South Korea, on 8 June.**

Sir Tim Hunt has already apologised and explained that his impromptu comments were meant to be “light-hearted” and “ironic”, and that it was not his intention to demean women. In his main speech he was very supportive towards women in science and he said that he hoped there was nothing that barred women from science.

I can also add that during the time I have worked with him on the ERC Scientific Council he has only ever been a supporter of gender balance.

The ERC is very proud to have consistently monitored and been pro-active on gender issues. In order to go away from rhetoric, it has implemented a number of concrete measures to improve its record with the full support of all members of its Scientific Council. It is indeed the ERC mission to support frontier researchers across Europe, irrespective of nationality, gender or age.

The ERC's clear view is that women and men are equally able to perform frontier research at the highest level. This is the core of the ERC Gender Equality Plan, first endorsed in 2010 and revised in 2014. The plan is fully supported by the entire Scientific Council, including Sir Tim. The plan is available on the [ERC website](#).

The ERC took part in the World Conference of Science Journalists in Seoul to present frontier research of two of its female grantees – Dr Debra Laefer of University College Dublin, and Dr Jennifer Gabrys of Goldsmiths University of London, together with Sir Tim Hunt.