



European Research Council
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Press release

Fellowships launched to encourage potential ERC grantees

1 September 2016

Five countries - Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia - as well as the Belgian region of Flanders, have set up fellowship programmes to allow future European Research Council (ERC) applicants to visit research teams of existing ERC grantees. This comes in response to the ERC's [initiative](#) earlier this year and is in line with the ERC's long-standing ambition to widen participation in its competitions. The ERC has today informed some 2800 of its grantees about a call for expression of interest regarding the new fellowship programmes, encouraging them to host visitors.

The ERC Scientific Council believes that increasing the international exposure of researchers can help them develop their potential before applying for an ERC grant. In January 2016, the ERC therefore invited national and regional authorities in Europe to fund potential candidates to visit the teams of grantees. [Guidelines](#) for such schemes were also adopted.

Professor Éva Kondorosi, Chair of the ERC Scientific Council's Working Group on Widening European Participation, said: *"The fellowship programmes will help both ERC grantees and potential ERC applicants to share knowledge and further advance their research. The initiative follows the ERC Scientific Council's drive to enhance the full potential for frontier research across all of Europe. I hope more programmes like these will be set up around Europe, especially in regions performing less well in research, to offer as many researchers as possible this valuable first-hand experience in conducting top frontier research, and help them to prepare a competitive proposal for the ERC."*

The Czech Science Foundation (GA CR), the Estonian Research Council (ETAg), the National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH) in Hungary, the National Science Center (NCN) in Poland, the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS), and the Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO) in Belgium are the first to organise fellowships for such research visits and more organisations are expected to follow suit.

The programmes are open to researchers of all disciplines. Scientific excellence is the main criterion in the selection of fellows, but the ERC itself is not directly involved in this selection. A visit can last from three to six months and all costs, such as travel and salary, will be covered by the organisers of the programmes. The visiting researcher is obliged to apply for an ERC grant within a specified time after the end of the visit. The ERC's call for expression of interest to host visiting fellows has been sent to ERC grantees with 18 months or more left on their project.



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Background

The European Research Council, set up by the European Union in 2007, is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. It offers three core grant schemes: Starting Grants (up to €1.5 million each), Consolidator Grants (up to €2 million each) and Advanced Grants (up to €2.5 million each). Every year, it selects and funds ambitious and creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based in Europe. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. To date, the ERC has funded some 6,500 top researchers at various careers stages.

Whilst its only selection criterion is scientific excellence, the ERC aims to contribute to an inclusive European culture of competitiveness in science. Its Working Group on Widening European Participation focuses on increasing the participation in ERC calls of researchers from all EU countries, including those less research-performing. The Working Group not only monitor the situation, but also facilitates dialogue, networking and learning about good practice in supporting researchers to successfully apply for ERC grants.

The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the [Scientific Council](#), composed of 22 renowned scientists, and is chaired by ERC President Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. The ERC has a budget of over €13 billion for the years 2014 to 2020 and is part of the EU research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, for which European Commissioner Carlos Moedas is responsible.

More information

[Fellowship to visit ERC grantee – ERC guidelines](#)

[Information for potential applicants](#)

[ERC Scientific Council's Working Group on Widening European Participation](#)

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