



European Research Council

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Press release

European Research Council renews its commitment to open access by joining Europe PubMed Central

13 July 2012

The European Research Council (ERC) announced today that it will participate in the UK PubMed Central (UKPMC) open access repository service, joining 18 existing UK and European fundersⁱ. The ERC becomes the third European funder to join UKPMC, following Telethon Italy and the Austrian Research Fund. As a result of this participation, the existing funders have agreed that the service will be rebranded as 'Europe PubMed Central' (Europe PMC) by 1 November 2012. A key aim of this initiative is to extend the repository further and encourage other European funders of life sciences research to make the outputs of the research they fund freely available through Europe PMC.

Dr Tim Hunt, Chair of the Working Group on Open Access for the ERC's Scientific Council and winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (2001), said: "*By joining 'Europe PMC', we will enable the ERC to fully realise its open access policy and allow the research that it funds to be fully integrated into the world's premier literature service. We believe free online access to these articles is the most effective way of ensuring that the fruits of ERC projects are accessed, read and used by researchers in the future.*"

The resource is managed and developed by the European Molecular Biology Laboratory-European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) and delivery partnersⁱⁱ on behalf of the UKPMC funders. Over the past 6 years, UKPMC has grown from a simple mirror of the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) PubMed Central (PMC) database to a standalone site.ⁱⁱⁱ It provides free access to over 2 million full-text biomedical research articles and over 26 million citations from PubMed and Agricola, patents from the European Patent Office and UK clinical guidelines. Content is discoverable via an integrated full text and abstract search, and is enriched by both citation information and the application of cutting-edge text-mining approaches.

Sir Mark Walport, Director of the Wellcome Trust, commented, "*We are delighted that the ERC has agreed to join the Europe PMC service and hope this paves the way for other European funders to participate in this initiative. Quite simply, as more funders join, so more research becomes freely available and can be used without restriction to advance knowledge and its applications to benefit our societies – whether that be by academic researchers, industry, healthcare professionals or the lay public.*"

The decision of the ERC to join the expanded Europe PMC resource comes at a time when providing free access to research outputs is being championed at the highest levels within the UK and Europe. Europe PMC is well-placed to play a key role in realising these ambitions.



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European Research Council and open access

The ERC has always been a strong supporter of open access. The ERC Scientific Council's first [statement](#) on open access affirmed its commitment to make research results from ERC funded projects available in open access repositories.

In 2007, the Scientific Council adopted its [guidelines](#) on open access, stating that all peer-reviewed publications from ERC-funded research projects should be made freely available within six months of publication.

At its last plenary session on 20 June 2012, the ERC's Scientific Council re-affirmed its [open access policy](#) and strongly encouraged the use of discipline-specific repositories. The ERC budget foreseen for supporting Europe PMC in 2013 is estimated to be € 90.000.

A recent [analysis](#) undertaken by the ERC on a sample of over 600 journal articles indicates that ERC grantees are already performing well: 62 % of journal articles from ERC projects are available in open access. The share varies across research domains with figures close to 70 % in Life Sciences, 65% in Physical Sciences and Engineering and 50 % in Social Sciences and Humanities.

Next week, the European Commission will also announce policy proposals about open access as part of its efforts to complete the European Research Area.

Note to the editors

About the European Research Council ([ERC](#))

Set up in 2007 by the European Union, the ERC aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age based in the EU.

Since its launch, the ERC has funded over 2,500 researchers and their frontier research projects. The ERC operates according to an "investigator-driven", or "bottom-up", approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in all fields of research (Physical Sciences and Engineering, Life Sciences and Social Sciences and Humanities).

The ERC, which is the newest component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme, has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013. Last year, the European Commission proposed a substantial increase in the ERC's budget for 2014 to 2020 under the new framework programme ('Horizon 2020').

About the Wellcome Trust

The [Wellcome Trust](#) is a global charitable foundation dedicated to achieving extraordinary improvements in human and animal health. It supports the brightest minds in biomedical research and the medical humanities. The Trust's breadth of support includes public engagement, education and the application of research to improve health. It is independent of both political and commercial interests.



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ⁱ The UKPMC Funders' Group, led by the Wellcome Trust, is comprised of Action on Hearing Loss, Arthritis Research UK, Austrian Research Fund (FWF), Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, Breakthrough Breast Cancer, British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Chief Scientist Office (Scotland), Dunhill Medical Trust, Marie Curie Cancer Care, Medical Research Council, Motor Neurone Disease Association, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Myrovlytis Trust, National Institute for Health Research, Parkinson's UK and Telethon (Italy). See <http://ukpmc.ac.uk/Funders>

ⁱⁱ The University of Manchester ([Mimas](#) and [NacTeM](#)), and the [British Library](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ ukpmc.ac.uk