



European Research Council  
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## Highlight

### ERC visits Slovenia

6 June 2016

**The seventieth anniversary of the Slovenian National Institute of Chemistry (NIC) was an occasion for an ERC delegation, headed by ERC President Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, to visit the country's capital Ljubljana. From 5 to 6 June, they met with policy makers, including the Prime Minister, the Science Minister and the Finance Minister of Slovenia, and encouraged talented researchers to compete for ERC grants.**

During the visit, Slovenian Prime Minister Dr Miroslav Cerar underlined his government's ambition to support young talent and announced that national research and innovation funding was going to be increased, including for early-career researchers. On the ERC, the Prime Minister said: *"it is the most important promoter of development of scientific excellence in the EU"*.

ERC President Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon said: *"The fact that the highest political level was present today testifies to the scientific ambition of Slovenia, which is very promising. It has been rewarding for the ERC to engage with both the scientific community and policy makers here."*

He added; *"Excellence in science exists everywhere. For it to thrive, it's pivotal to nurture talent by providing the means, scientific freedom, the right infrastructure and a stimulating environment."*

The visit also served to reflect on how the Central and Eastern European countries, including Slovenia, can become more competitive and attractive for scientists.

Alongside Prime Minister Dr Cerar, Minister of Education, Science and Sport Dr Maja Brenčič Makovec, NIC Director Prof. Gregor Anderluh and the Slovenian Research Agency President Prof. József Györkös, the ERC President spoke at a seminar on the "Importance of the ERC for the Development of Young Scientists' Careers in Slovenia". Two Slovenian researchers, Professors Tomaž Prosen and Jernej Ule, shared their experiences and insights as ERC grantees.

The ERC delegation also visited the Jožef Stefan Institute and the University of Ljubljana, where Prof. Eva Kondorosi, Chair of the ERC Scientific Council [working group](#) on widening European participation in the ERC competitions, gave a speech. These two institutes host the three researchers who have so far been awarded ERC grants in Slovenia. The total budget of their projects is more than € 4 million. Another two Slovenians have received ERC grant to conduct their research abroad.

The visit was organised by the Brussels liaison office of the Slovenian Business and Research Association.



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## **About the ERC**

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, Consolidator and Advanced. Every year, it selects and funds the very best, 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 more than 6,000 top researchers at various stages of their careers.

The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the Scientific Council. The ERC President is 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 for Research, Innovation and Science Carlos Moedas is responsible.

## **More information**

[ERC website](#)

## **ERC press contacts**

Madeleine Drielsma  
Press and Communication adviser  
Phone: +32 (0) 2 298 76 31  
[erc-press@ec.europa.eu](mailto:erc-press@ec.europa.eu)

Marcin Mońko  
Press and Communication adviser  
Phone: +32 (0) 2 296 66 44  
[erc-press@ec.europa.eu](mailto:erc-press@ec.europa.eu)