



European Research Council

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Highlight:

Eminent scientists of the ERC's Scientific Council meet in Limassol (Cyprus)

4 October 2012

On 4 to 5 October, the governing body of the European Research Council (ERC) - its Scientific Council - meet in Limassol, Cyprus, for its next plenary session. Composed of 22 renowned scientists and scholars including two Nobel Prize winners, the Scientific Council will take stock of the current ERC grant calls and of the work of the three ERC working groups on innovation and industrial relations, on gender balance and on open access. This Scientific Council meeting, which is the first ever to be held in Cyprus, is timely with Cyprus holding the Presidency of the EU Council from 1 July to 31 December 2012.

ERC President Prof. Helga Nowotny, who will chair the plenary session, said: "*The meeting of the ERC Scientific Council in Cyprus is taking place at a propitious moment when discussions on the future of investment into research are intensifying in all EU countries. I believe that a shift in thinking is needed; even relatively small countries can claim to excellence, as long as they continue to invest in research. A pool of high calibre researchers are present in Cyprus, keen to see their country emerging as one of the next centres of scientific excellence in the Mediterranean area. Let's help them to make it happen.*"

The ERC Scientific Council's 22 members act on behalf of the whole scientific community in Europe to promote excellence and creativity in research. They set the ERC's scientific funding strategy and are appointed by the European Commission for four years, renewable once, and on the basis of a rotating system to ensure the continuity of the work of the Scientific Council. They meet about five times a year in various EU countries (see [press highlight](#) of April 2012).

On 4 October, the ERC's Scientific Council will look at the various ERC grant schemes and at their results. In the afternoon, the participants of the ERC working groups will debate on the further actions that can be envisaged in three domains: innovation and industrial relations, gender balance and open access. In the evening, they will be joined by Prof. Constantinos Christofides, the Rector of the [University of Cyprus](#) and three ERC grantees from the same university, Dr Elena Andreou, Dr Antonis Kirmizis and Prof. Marios Polycarpou.

This meeting is hosted by the [Cyprus Presidency of the EU Council](#) and the [Research Promotion Foundation](#).

Background:

Cyprus has been highly successful in the ERC schemes, in spite of the relatively small size of its research system. With a total number of five ERC grantees funded for an amount of



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€6.7 million, Cyprus is performing well. This success can be explained, amongst other things, by the very high rate of applications from researchers based in Cyprus – the equivalent of one in seven Cypriot public sector researchers have applied to the ERC for funding since 2007. This is the highest rate in the EU.

The average success rate of applicants based in Cyprus is 5% (average overall success rate to the ERC's calls is 12%).

A further four Cyprus nationals are funded by the ERC in host institutions in other EU Member States (two in the UK, one in Spain and one in Greece).

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 3,000 researchers and their frontier research projects and has become a "benchmark" of the competitiveness of national research systems complementing existing funding schemes at national and European levels. 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').

Links

[List of the 22 members of the ERC's Scientific Council](#) and [their role](#)

[Cyprus presidency of the Council of the European Union](#)

[Announcement of the ERC's Scientific Council meeting in Limassol](#)

For media questions, please contact:

Maud Scelo
Press and Communication advisor
European Research Council
T + 32 460 752 466
E Erc-press@ec.europa.eu

Madeleine Drielsma
Press and Communication advisor
European Research Council
T + 32 2 298 76 31
E Erc-press@ec.europa.eu