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Highlight

Open to the World: ERC President at Next Einstein Forum, Dakar, Senegal

10 March 2016

Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon will today speak at the *Next Einstein Forum Global Gathering* in Dakar, Senegal; his first visit to Africa as President of the European Research Council (ERC). This new forum for science aims to propel Africa into the global scientific landscape. Under the motto "ERC - Open to the World", the ERC takes the occasion to breathe new life into its original mission to make Europe attractive to the brightest minds worldwide and to encourage global scientific exchange.

On the eve of his participation in a plenary session of the Next Einstein Forum, ERC President Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, said: *"I'm very pleased and honoured to be in Dakar on the occasion of the Next Einstein Forum. I am truly impressed by the drive and excellence of the scientists I have met here, in particular the younger ones. Together with this forward-looking initiative, originally built around the African institutes for Mathematical Sciences, it bodes well for the future of first-class research in Africa. It is absolutely key that talented researchers hosted here are nurtured and that their bright ideas are brought to fruition."*

Regarding the wider global context, Prof. Bourguignon added: *"It has been and will remain important for the ERC to engage with outstanding scientists and counterparts from across the world to forge closer ties and to make the attractive ERC grants better known to ambitious researchers. The aspiration to make Europe a hotbed for top talent has been at the core of the ERC's mission since its launch in 2007. For that purpose, an international mind-set is essential, and the message is clear: the ERC is open to the world!"*

ERC President Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, a well-known mathematician, will speak in the plenary session "Developing a national science strategy including curiosity-driven science", alongside US National Science Foundation (NSF) Director France Córdova, Rwandan Minister of Education Papias Musafiri and the CEO of South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF), Molapo Qhobela, amongst others. (Session [livestreamed](#) today at 11.35-12.45 GMT)

At this first global gathering of the *Next Einstein Forum*, held from 8 to 10 March with the theme "Connecting Science to Humanity", some 500 outstanding thinkers, policy-makers, journalists, civil-society representatives, business people and entrepreneurs from around the world gather to highlight breakthrough discoveries and catalyse scientific collaboration for human development. This meeting also showcases 15 of Africa's top young scientists and



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connects them with leaders from Africa and the rest of the world. The forum, to be held every second year, was launched by the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) initiative in partnership with the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Follow "ERC – Open to the World" twitter campaign: #ERCworld

Note to the editors

The [European Research Council](#), set up by the European Union in 2007, is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year, it selects and funds the best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based in Europe. The ERC also strives to attract top scientists from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. To date, the ERC has funded nearly 6,000 top researchers at various stages of their careers. On average, each ERC grant holder employs around six team members. An estimate shows that around 18% of these team members are nationals of countries outside Europe.

The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the Scientific Council, and, since January 2014, the ERC President is Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. The ERC has a budget of over €13 billion for 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.

In order to increase its visibility overseas, in 2012, the ERC launched an international awareness-raising campaign, "ERC goes Global". With its new "ERC - Open to the World" slogan, the ERC wants to attract further attention to its funding opportunities in Europe for the brightest minds worldwide. This resonates with the ERC's mission and is also in line with one of the "three O's" launched by Commissioner Carlos Moedas; "Open to the World". To encourage global scientific exchange, the ERC already has agreements with renowned research funding agencies from outside Europe. They provide opportunities in Europe for early-career scientists supported, by these non-European funding agencies, to temporarily join research teams run by ERC grant holders. To date, funding agencies in the US, South Korea, Argentina, Japan, China, South Africa and Mexico have signed such agreements. Similar initiatives are currently under negotiation with various other countries. [More information](#)

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