



European Research Council

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Press release

13 July 2012

Young U.S.-based talents to join ERC research projects: new agreement signed by the EC and the NSF

A new initiative will provide opportunities for early-career NSF researchers in the U.S. to come to Europe to join the teams of ERC grantees. This agreement was signed today at ESOF in Dublin by NSF Director Dr Subra Suresh and the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, in the presence of ERC President Prof. Helga Nowotny.

This initiative is designed to help young top talent, based in the U.S. and pre-selected by the National Science Foundation (NSF), to spend some time in Europe, hosted as members of ERC grantees' teams. The NSF launched the initiative with a view to stimulating the mobility of these U.S. researchers, and enhancing their international profile and knowledge early on in their careers. The role of the ERC and the NSF will be to facilitate contacts between their respective researchers, who are interested in using the scheme.

At the signing ceremony Research, Innovation and Science Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn said: *"This agreement is a great addition to the strong transatlantic cooperation in the field of research, and recognition of the strength of the ERC brand just five years after its founding. This new initiative will in particular boost the circulation and exchange of talent between our two continents. This is good for global science and therefore good for all of us, as we seek to find answers to so many important questions."*

NSF Director Subra Suresh also commented: *"Connecting U.S. and European researchers with shared interests and complementary strengths will advance the frontiers of science and engineering and address societal challenges. We appreciate the European Commission's and the ERC's enthusiastic support for this significant opportunity for U.S. early career scientists and engineers to gain international experience and exposure for their research."*

To this, ERC President Helga Nowotny added: *"The ERC is very pleased about this new initiative with the NSF, which can stimulate young talent in the U.S. to gain experience in Europe. This agreement is a first, but we have indications that more countries may follow suit, and the ERC welcomes this. The recently launched Global Research Council can be the appropriate forum for such developments."*



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Background

The agreement that was signed today is in the form of an 'implementing arrangement' of the existing EU-U.S. S&T Cooperation Agreement. It will provide opportunities for U.S. scientists to be part of ERC-funded teams for six to twelve months. They will accordingly be supported by the ERC grant in the same way as any other team member. All ERC grantees will be informed about this possibility and will be able to participate on a voluntary basis.

The NSF will solicit proposals from its CAREER (Faculty Early Career Development Programme of NSF) awardees and Post-doctoral research fellows for these opportunities. Travel costs for the U.S. scientists and their families (if necessary) will be covered by the NSF and in the case of the CAREER beneficiaries of this scheme, their NSF grant will continue to run during their visit in Europe.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

The NSF is an independent federal agency that supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering. In the fiscal year (FY) 2012, its budget is \$7.0 billion. NSF funds reach all 50 U.S. states through grants to nearly 2,000 colleges, universities and other institutions. Each year, NSF receives over 50,000 competitive requests for funding, and makes about 11,000 new funding awards. NSF also awards nearly \$420 million in professional and service contracts yearly.

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. The ERC, which is the newest, pioneering 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'). The ERC operates according to an "investigator-driven", or "bottom-up", approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research. The ERC has also become a benchmark of the competitiveness of national research systems and it complements existing funding schemes at national and European levels.

The ERC is composed of an Executive Agency and a Scientific Council. The Scientific Council is made up of 22 top researchers and sets the ERC's scientific strategy. The ERC is led by President Prof. Helga Nowotny and the Scientific Council is represented in Brussels by Secretary General Prof. Donald Dingwell. The ERC Executive Agency implements the "Ideas" Specific Programme and is led by Director (ad int.) Pablo Amor.

Since its launch, the ERC has funded over 2,500 researchers and their frontier research projects throughout Europe. On average these grantees employ around six team members during their ERC project. An estimate shows that 18% of these team members are nationals from countries outside the European Research Area.

The Global Research Council is a new forum dedicated to improving international collaboration among science and engineering funding agencies. It was launched in Washington during a meeting in May this year, hosted by the NSF, and is comprised of the leaders of science agencies from around 50 nations.



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Links

[Agreement EC-NSF](#)

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