



PRESS RELEASE

4 bn Euro for Europe's most far-reaching research

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The Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) today announced the successful completion of its first round of funding and unveiled the detailed design of a new high-profile initiative which is set to become one of the most prestigious and forward-looking schemes for supporting frontier research across Europe. Following the success of this year's Starting Grant competition for younger researchers, the ERC Advanced Grant scheme will channel around 4 bn Euro over the next 6 years to the very best research projects and the most talented researchers across Europe.

To thrive in the globalised, interconnected world of tomorrow, Europe must reinforce its leading role in science and research, and make itself a highly desirable home for the best talents. The European Research Council was set up to improve Europe's position at the frontiers of research, including in new and fast-growing research fields that will be critical to the knowledge society of the future.

The Advanced Grant scheme is set to be a flagship funding programme of the ERC for the years 2008-2013, dispensing about two thirds of the ERC's total budget, which averages about 1 bn Euro per annum. It will operate alongside the already-established ERC Starting Grant scheme which is targeted at younger investigators, and which received over 9000 grant applications in its first year. The results of the first Starting Grant competition are being analysed and will be released in approximately 10 days.

Prof. Fotis Kafatos, Chairman of the ERC Scientific Council, commented:

"With the announcement of the Advanced Grant scheme, the Scientific Council has put in place the main planks of the ERC's funding strategy for the coming period. This high-profile Europe-wide programme is designed to bring forward the most ambitious, far reaching research projects without restriction on the field of study, and to support the most talented established investigators, regardless of nationality, for projects conducted in Europe. Generous funding is available but there will be very stiff competition.

In designing the programme, the Scientific Council has taken account of the experience of the first ERC call for Starting Grant proposals, particularly as regards the very high level of demand for ERC funding in the first call for proposals. We have refined the application process and the evaluation methodology and incorporated features to encourage proposals



at the right level of ambition and promise, including those that cross the boundaries between disciplines and which explore new fields.

Interested scientists will need to take into account that applications will only have a chance of succeeding if the project is outstanding and the Principal Investigator can demonstrate an outstanding track record and leadership profile in terms of originality and impact of research achievements."

Depending on the nature of the research, ERC Advanced Grants may be up to €3 500 000 for a period of 5 years. While the Starting Grant scheme aims to boost the career and performance of young investigators by supporting early scientific independence, Advanced Grants will target researchers who already have established themselves as exceptional leaders in their field. ERC grants are open to researchers of any nationality, working or planning to work in Europe, and working in any field of science, scholarship or engineering.

The selection process for these prestigious grants is based on an open competition with scientific excellence as the sole award criterion. Grants are awarded and managed according to simple procedures that maintain the focus on scientific excellence, encourage creativity and interdisciplinarity, and combine flexibility with accountability.

Background information:

- Fact Sheet on the "ERC Advanced Grant":
http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/AdG_Factsheet_2007.pdf
- ERC Work Programme 2008:
http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/wp2008_Final.pdf
- The 22 Members of the ERC Scientific Council:
<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=62>
- Previous Press Releases:
<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=26>

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