



ERC Press release

European Commissioner for Research, J. Potočnik thanks Prof. Fotis C. Kafatos for his outstanding contribution as he steps down as ERC President

22 January 2009

Fotis C. Kafatos, President of the ERC and Chairman of its Scientific Council, has announced today to Commissioner Potočnik and to the ERC Scientific Council, that he will step down from his position as from March, 1st 2010. He will continue as member of the Scientific Council. The ERC Scientific Council will elect a new President and Chairman, from among its 22 members.

In a letter addressed today to Commissioner Potočnik and to the ERC Scientific Council, he explains: " My commitment to the ERC and its Scientific Council, where I will continue to serve as a member, remains as strong as ever. However, it is now appropriate for me to focus on the continuity of the ERC, and to pass on the leadership of this outstanding organisation to another member of the Scientific Council". Prof. Kafatos also notes the considerable impact that his tenure as ERC President has had on his own scientific research.

Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research, commented that: "Throughout a long and distinguished career, Prof. Kafatos has worked tirelessly in the cause of European Science. Under his leadership the European Research Council has grown into a fully-fledged funding body, known and respected not just by European scientists but throughout the world. I am pleased that he has decided to continue as a member of the Scientific Council. I thank him for his outstanding commitment and achievements which will be the foundations for the ERC's success well into the future."

Prof. Kafatos has been the first President of the European Research Council, the body set up by the EU in 2007 to enhance "frontier research" and promote scientific discoveries in Europe.

He is a leading scientist in the field of immunogenomics and former Director-General of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), the top leading molecular biology laboratory.

José Manuel Silva Rodriguez, Director General for Research at the European Commission, said "I want to thank Prof. Kafatos for his exceptional contribution and commitment to the birth, development and success of this European scientific adventure."

Jack Metthey, Director of the European Research Council Executive Agency, said: "Fotis has been an inspiration to all of us in his leadership of the ERC. His



uncompromising determination to establish it as world-class frontier research organization will continue to guide us".

Note to the editor:

The European Research Council (ERC) is the first European Union funding body set up to support investigator-driven and excellent frontier research.

Every year the ERC selects and supports excellent, truly creative and risk-taking scientists, scholars and engineers, both Europeans and non Europeans, by means of calls for proposals funded by the 7th EU Research Framework Programme (FP7), through its "Ideas" specific programme.

Since its setting up in 2007, the ERC has supported more than 800 research projects, led either by senior top scientists ("ERC Advanced grants") or by younger, emerging research leaders ("ERC starting grants").

The total budget for the "Ideas" programme 2007-2013 is 7.510 M €.

ERC structure

The ERC consists of a Scientific Council and an Executive Agency.

The Scientific Council, presently chaired by Prof. Kafatos and composed by 22 eminent European scientists, defines the scientific strategy and methodologies.

The Executive Agency, led by Dr. Jack Metthey, manages and implements the ERC activities. The ERC Secretary General, who is the permanent representative of the ERC in Brussels, is Prof. Mas-Colell, who was Professor of Economics in Harvard, Berkeley and Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona.

Links

[Prof. Kafatos letter of resignation](#)

[Professor Fotis Kafatos cv](#)

[ERC Web site](#)

[ERC Structure and organisation](#)

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