



Press release

24 June 2010

The European Research Council celebrates the 1000th top researcher funded

Just over three years after the launch of the European Research Council (ERC), this first pan-European body for frontier research has reached a new milestone; one thousand top researchers have now been supported by the ERC to perform their innovative “blue sky” research throughout Europe. To mark the highly symbolic awarding of the thousandth ERC grant, a ceremony and media event took place today in Munich. It was attended by key personalities from the political and research scene, including the EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, ERC President Professor Helga Nowotny and German Federal Minister of Research Professor Annette Schavan, in addition to the thousandth grant winner Professor Erika von Mutius. She is an immunologist and paediatrician at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and her research aims at exploring new ways of tackling asthma and allergies.

The symbolic signing of the grant was made by Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, the Director (ad.int.) of the ERC Executive Agency Dr Jack Metthey, grant winner Professor Erika von Mutius and the President of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München Professor Bernd Huber.

In her address, Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn said "Professor von Mutius is a fantastic role model for young women and I hope that many will follow her in dedicating their work and their talent to science. I am delighted to celebrate both her success and that of the European Research Council, which has come a very long way in a very short time and is delivering excellent results for science and for Europe. Investing in top talent in frontier research is pivotal, now more than ever, if we are to boost innovation as well as the competitiveness of Europe vis-à-vis the rest of the world."

ERC President Professor Helga Nowotny stated "It is extremely pleasing that we can celebrate today a new symbolic step in the life of the European Research Council. Having by now one thousand top researchers in Europe who thrive and enthusiastically pursue their innovative ideas at the frontiers of knowledge is a big achievement that Europe can be proud of. The ERC has become an important agent of change. It benefits the European research system by setting the highest standards of



scientific excellence in universities and research institutions which, in turn, will also attract industry eager to profit from excellent people and new ideas. Thus, many new opportunities are created for society at large. On behalf of the ERC Scientific Council, I would like to congratulate Professor von Mutius and all other ERC grantees on their achievement. It is with optimism that we look forward to the next thousand ERC projects, and above all to the results of curiosity-driven research and their widely felt impact."

In her speech German Federal Minister of Research Professor Schavan said *"The ERC has revolutionized European research funding within just a few years. Today, it is definitely one of the most important new elements of the European research area. With the ERC, we have established a Europe-wide, perhaps even world-wide, competition that attracts outstanding scientists and researchers with the best ideas — ideas which are considered solely according to the criterion of scientific excellence."*

From the European Parliament, the chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy Herbert Reul highlighted that *"By means of positive spill-over effects, EU Member-states - above all those, which were not very active in the field of research up to now - shall be encouraged to invest a larger part of their gross domestic product in scientific research. The programmes of the ERC can be and are often model for national promotion of excellence."*

The ERC supports both early-career and senior top researchers of any nationality and from anywhere in the world and funds projects in any field of research. There are two calls for proposals per year and the next call will be [announced this summer](#). Prof. Erika von Mutius is one example out of many very talented ERC-funded scientists. ([Examples of other funded projects](#))

Note to the editors

The European Research Council (ERC) is the newest, pioneering component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme. The ERC has a total budget of € 7.5 billion (2007-2013). Set up in 2007 by the European Commission, the ERC aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by supporting the very best, creative researchers of any nationality working, or moving to work, in Europe.

The ERC is open to any field of research and scientific excellence is the only selection criterion in its peer reviewed grant competitions. The ERC operates according to an "investigator-driven", or "bottom-up" approach and there are no thematic priorities. The ERC funds both top senior scientists ("ERC Advanced Grants") and younger, emerging research leaders ("ERC Starting Grants").

The ERC consists of a Scientific Council, its governing body, and an Executive Agency which implements the funding activities.



More information

- Press pack (including statistics and examples of projects)
<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=525>
- 1000th ERC grantee Prof. Erika von Mutius & her research "*Where asthma bites the dust*"
http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/1000_Graantee_Erika_von_Mutius.pdf
- 1000th grantee event page
<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=519>
- ERC Website
<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm>

ERC Press contact

Madeleine Drielsma

Phone: +32 (0)2 298 76 31

Mobile: +32 (0)498 98 43 97

erc-press@ec.europa.eu