



Press release

19 October 2010

Over 400 top researchers selected in the European Research Council's third prestigious 'Starting Grant' competition

The European Research Council (ERC) is awarding some €580 million to 427 early-career top researchers in its competition for 'Starting Grants'. Worth up to €2 million each, the grants will enable them to carry out their pioneering ideas in any field of research, throughout Europe. This is the third Starting Grant call since the ERC was launched in 2007 as a flagship component of the EU's 7th Research Framework Programme.

Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn said: *"With these awards, the ERC is investing in both new projects and new talent. Excellence in the kind of cutting-edge science funded by the ERC is a prerequisite for creating an Innovation Union in Europe and ultimately for achieving the EU's "Europe 2020" objective of sustainable growth. I believe that the Commission's initiative to launch the ERC in 2007 has been fully vindicated. I hope that in the fullness of time we will see more Nobel prizes awarded to ERC-funded top talent, following ERC Starting Grant holder Konstantin Novoselov's recent Nobel!"*

ERC President Prof. Helga Nowotny commented on the outcome: *"It is very rewarding to see that also the third call for Starting Grants has been successfully concluded. This latest wave of researchers selected for their excellence, adds to the some 1,200 ERC grant winners already pursuing their ground-breaking, creative ideas throughout Europe. It is especially encouraging to see that the pool of extremely bright and talented younger researchers in Europe is far from being exhausted and that the ERC is contributing so effectively towards building the future of individual scientific careers and to the growing excellence of European research institutions."*

The estimated total budget for this call, just over €580 million, is an increase of more than 40% from last year's Starting Grant call.



The ERC competitions are targeted at supporting the best researchers of any nationality. This year, candidates of no less than 39 nationalities are among the selected and they will carry out their innovative research in universities or other research institutions situated in 21 different countries in Europe¹. The number of successful researchers coming from outside Europe in this year's Starting Grant competition doubled from last year. Of these 18 incoming scientists, 12 are Europeans returning from the US.

The ERC Executive Agency Director (*ad. int.*) Jack Metthey said: " *"Brain circulation" is an essential feature of excellence. The ERC aims at making Europe more attractive to top quality researchers from overseas, be they European nationals or non-Europeans. It is therefore gratifying to see that the ERC is getting increasingly acknowledged and known around the world.*"

The average age of the selected researchers is about 36 years and 26.5% are women, which is an increase from last year's 23%. The ERC is open to the whole spectrum of research domains and the distribution of proposals per domain is 45.7% in 'Physical Sciences and Engineering', 35.8% in 'Life Sciences' and 18.5% in 'Social Sciences and Humanities'. The number of applicants in this call totals 2873, which is a 14% increase from last year. The proposals hold a very high overall quality and the total number submitted now seems to have stabilised. The success rate has gone up to 15%.

Lists of selected researchers

In the below lists, the proposals selected for funding are shown. Some additional funds are expected to be confirmed which will enable the ERC to support a few more projects that are presently on a reserve list. The lists will subsequently be updated. Proposals placed on the reserve lists will only be published once their actual funding has been confirmed.

List of all selected researchers by country of host institution (in alphabetical order within each country group): http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ERC_StG2010Results_All_by_Country.pdf

Lists of selected researchers by domain (in alphabetical order):

- Social Sciences and Humanities: http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ERC_StG2010Results_SH.pdf
- Life Sciences: http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ERC_StG2010Results_LS.PDF
- Physical Sciences and Engineering: http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ERC_StG2010Results_PE.PDF

Statistics – Starting Grant call 2010: http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/Statistics_StG2010.pdf

¹ EU member state or "FP7 associated country"



Note to the editors

Set up in 2007 by the EU, the **European Research Council** is the first pan-European funding organisation for frontier research. It 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 also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. It funds both senior research leaders ('ERC Advanced Grants') and younger, early-career top researchers ('ERC Starting Grants'). The substantial funding is awarded based on peer review evaluation and can amount to max. €2 million for a 'Starting Grant' and €3.5 million for an 'Advanced Grant'.

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, which is the newest, pioneering component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme ('Ideas' Specific Programme), has a total budget of € 7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013. It is led by the ERC Scientific Council, composed of 22 top scientists and scholars and the ERC President is Prof Helga Nowotny. The ERC Executive Agency implements the "Ideas" Specific Programme and is led by Director (*ad. int.*) Jack Metthey.

ERC Starting Grant in brief

- For early-career top researchers of any nationality and age, with 2-12 years of experience after PhD
- Funding: up to €2 million per grant for up to 5 years.
- Calls for proposals: published annually in summer with deadlines in autumn.

ERC also supports established research leaders (with significant research achievements in the past ten years). The calls for proposals for 'Advanced Grants' are generally published in autumn with deadlines in spring.

Links

ERC Press Release on outcome second Starting Grant call (2009)

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/Press_release_StG-2_results.pdf

Statistics - second Starting Grant call (2009)

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/statistics_STG-2_outcome.pdf

Some striking ERC-funded projects

<http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/PROJECTS-EN-LD.pdf>

Press release on Nobel Prize to ERC grantee Novoselov:

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/Press_Release_Nobel_Prize_2010_ERC_Grantee.pdf

ERC website

<http://erc.europa.eu>

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