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Highlight:

New initiative launched to encourage Chinese top researchers to join ERC teams in Europe

29 June 2015

A new initiative was launched today to facilitate for young Chinese researchers to come to Europe on scientific visits, joining ERC-funded teams. In the context of the 2nd EU-China Innovation Cooperation [Dialogue](#) that took place around the EU-China [Summit](#), the agreement was signed in Brussels by European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas and the Chinese Minister of Science and Technology Wan Gang, in the presence of ERC President Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon and Liu Congqiang, Vice President of National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC).

The ERC/NSFC initiative - the fifth in a string of similar agreements with non-European counterparts - is open to active holders of NSFC grants. They can undertake single (6-12 months) and long-term or multiple short term research visits (e.g. for joint experiments), becoming part of teams led by ERC grant holders in Europe.

On this occasion, ERC President Jean-Pierre Bourguignon said: *"We are pleased to see today the quick conclusion of an agreement to further facilitate scientific exchange at top level. It resonates with the ERC's mission to make Europe more attractive to the brightest minds and our wish to contribute to more brain circulation. China is not only a cradle of learning since ancient times, but it is also rapidly developing into a power house for science and technology. This initiative will make it easier for ERC-funded teams in Europe to host Chinese talented scientists, who in turn will gain valuable experience abroad. The cross-fertilisation of ideas and knowledge exchange are key to progress and inherent to first-rate science."*

Background

The joint initiative launched today is in the form of an 'Implementing Arrangement' under the umbrella of the Science & Technology Agreement between the EU and the People's Republic of China. Chinese researchers who will come to Europe on these scientific visits will continue to receive remuneration from NSFC.

The implementation of the initiative is foreseen for autumn 2015, with the first visits of Chinese researchers to ERC-funded research teams expected in the summer of 2016.

The first initiative of this kind was signed in July 2012 with the US (National Science Foundation, NSF) to provide opportunities for NSF researchers to join ERC-funded teams. This was followed by similar agreements with South Korea (National Research Foundation of Korea, NRF) in November 2013,



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Argentina (National Scientific Technical Research Council, CONICET) in March 2015 and Japan (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) in May 2015.

The **National Natural Science Foundation** of China (NSFC) administers the National Natural Sciences Fund from the Central Government. NSCF works under a rigorous and objective merit-review system to fulfil its mission of supporting basic research, fostering talented researchers, developing international cooperation and promoting socioeconomic development.

Set up by the European Union in 2007, the **European Research Council** is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year, it selects and funds the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run five-year-projects based in Europe. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. To date, the ERC has funded some 5,000 top researchers at various stages of their careers. Of these, 12 are Chinese researchers based in institutions across Europe. On average, ERC grantees employ around six team members during their ERC project. An estimate shows that some 18% of these team members are nationals from countries outside Europe.

The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the Scientific Council, and, since January 2014, the ERC President is Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. The ERC has a budget of over €13 billion and is part of the EU research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, for which European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Carlos Moedas is responsible.

For more information

[ERC website](#)

[Horizon 2020](#)

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