



European Research Council  
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## Press release

16 June 2015

### ERC celebrates 5,000<sup>th</sup> top researcher funded

**Eight years after its launch, the European Research Council (ERC) is celebrating a significant milestone: the funding of its 5,000<sup>th</sup> researcher. To mark this occasion, a debate in the European Parliament and a symbolic awarding of the grant will take place today (16 June) in Brussels.**

The 5000th grantee, Dr Iva Tolić, is a leading Croatian cell biophysicist. An ERC Consolidator Grant will allow her to study the forces acting on the chromosomes during cell division. Her research could be critical for the development of new therapies against cancer. Dr Tolić will carry out her project at the Ruđer Bošković Institute in Zagreb. After receiving the news, she commented: *"This ERC grant will make a big difference to me professionally. It will allow me to establish my new lab in Croatia, hire six team members and buy a state-of-the-art microscope. For the next five years, I will be able to focus purely on my research. I am very happy to be the 5000<sup>th</sup> ERC grantee."*

The celebration of the 5000<sup>th</sup> ERC grantee will take place today in Brussels through a series of events. Invited by the **European Parliament (EP)**, the **ERC will take part in an exchange of views in the EP's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) at 17.00** (JAN Building, room 4Q2), where ERC President Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon will address the Committee. The 5000<sup>th</sup> grantee, Dr Iva Tolić, as well as another ERC grantee, Prof. Nicola Pugno, will highlight what the ERC funding means for researchers. Watch it on [Europarl TV](#).

The ERC will also be present with a **booth in the European Parliament from 15 to 17 June** (Spinelli building, Forum area, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor), where ERC-funded research will be showcased. There will be a **photo opportunity at the booth today at 14.00 with the EP ITRE Committee Chair, Jerzy Buzek, ERC President Jean-Pierre Bourguignon and the ERC-funded robot [Poppy](#)**.

In addition, a festive **grant signing ceremony** will take place this evening, with high-level speakers, as well as ERC grantees.

On this occasion, **Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas**, who will speak at the signing ceremony, said: *"I am honoured and proud to take part in the celebration of this milestone with the ERC, an organisation open to top talent from around the world, regardless of nationality, gender and age. The ERC is the best example that investing in excellent scientists pays off, as their research is crucial for boosting innovation, stimulating the economy and improving our*



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*daily lives. Congratulations to the grantee Iva Tolić; a shining example of a bright researcher whose project holds promises in the field of cancer research."*

**ITRE Committee Chair Jerzy Buzek** stated: *"It is indeed very encouraging to meet the 5000th ERC funded researcher and hear her experiences on what this grant means to her. The ITRE committee has worked very hard to secure the money earmarked for researchers, both via the European Research Council and other parts of Horizon 2020. I hope this grant will allow Dr Tolić to focus completely on her research project at the Ruđer Bošković Institute. EU's future depends on researchers like herself."*

**ERC President Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon** commented: *"With this symbolic 5000th grant, the ERC is marking what it has achieved so far. Looking to the future, the ERC's mission will remain unchanged - funding frontier research ideas coming from scientists selected solely on scientific quality. But the ERC also has challenges ahead: we wish to see more ERC-funded researches in the newer EU Members States and more female grantees. The ERC must contribute even more decisively to making Europe a magnet for top talent."*

#### **Note to the editors**

Set up by the European Commission 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, regardless of nationality, gender 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.

The ERC consists of an independent Scientific Council and an Executive Agency. The Scientific Council, the ERC's independent governing body, is composed of 22 distinguished scientists and scholars, including the ERC President. They define the scientific funding strategy and methodologies, and act on behalf of the scientific community in Europe to promote creativity and innovative research. Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon is the ERC President since January 2014. The ERC Executive Agency implements the ERC strategy and is led by Director Pablo Amor. 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, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas is responsible.

#### **Links**

[ERC website](#)

[The 5000<sup>th</sup> grantee milestone](#)

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