



Press Release

ERC Scientific Council publishes interim results of first Starting Grant competition

1 October 2007

Today the ERC Scientific Council released preliminary statistical information on the applications made to the first ERC Starting Grant competition. The Starting Grants aim to support investigators in any field of research, two to nine years after their PhD, who have the potential to become exceptional independent research leaders.

The preliminary statistical analysis concerns the full set of submitted applications and those which were successful in the first stage peer review. This analysis has been carried out against a number of variables including the subject matter (three domains – life sciences, physical sciences and engineering, social sciences and humanities), the profile of the Principal Investigator (age, gender and time after PhD) and the location of the host institution. Information is also provided on the peer reviewers.

Prof Fotis Kafatos, ERC President and Chairman of the Scientific Council said:

"Following the second stage deadline, we are releasing this statistical information in the interests of transparency. At the half-way stage in the evaluation of proposals, the preliminary and interim nature of the data and associated analysis must however be stressed. Moreover, at the start-up of the ERC and at a time at which we are operating only with a very limited budget, this very first call for proposals cannot be taken as representative.

I am very encouraged by the sheer breadth of interest in the ERC, the diversity of the applications for example in terms of the scientific objectives, the Principal Investigators and the host institutions. Patterns in the data across the different research domains and the various geographical parameters are very intriguing, particularly when weighted with



population and research expenditure, although they cannot easily be interpreted at this stage. Above all, this early analysis already shows that the ERC is in a unique position to provide strategically valuable benchmarks to the research community, national and regional actors and other stakeholders on frontier research in Europe."

Of the 9167 applications submitted, 8794 were peer reviewed (the remainder being either judged ineligible or withdrawn by the applicant) and 559 applicants were invited to make a second-stage submission to the deadline of 17 September 2007.

The Starting Grant scheme targets researchers, two to nine years after their PhD, who have the potential to become independent research leaders in any field of research. The grants amount to between €100,000 and €400,000 per year for a period of up to five years. Nearly €290 million have been allocated to this call. With applications averaging just above €1 million, this should allow more than 250 grants to be financed.

The independent peer review evaluation process involves 20 Panels of senior scientists supported by additional specialist evaluators and referees. All Panel members and referees were selected by the Scientific Council. Applications were evaluated solely on the basis of excellence, considering both the achievements and potential of the Principal Investigator and the quality of the proposed research project.

The statistics are available on the ERC website:

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/erc-stg-statistics-stage1-20071001_en.pdf

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27 February 2007, [Berlin Statement of Scientific Council on ERC Starting Grants](#)

26 April 2007, [Impressive demand for first European Research Council Grants](#)

26 July 2007, [ERC Starting Grants - first stage evaluation process concluded](#)