

# **Scientific Council of the European Research Council**

## **Press Statement – 31 May 2006**

The ERC Scientific Council met for its 4<sup>th</sup> meeting on 29 and 30 May in Copenhagen. The discussion focussed in particular on the organisation of the peer review evaluation process for the ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grants, which will be the subject of the first call for proposals, to be launched immediately after the adoption of the seventh Framework Programme, expected to take place in late 2006.

As already announced, the peer review evaluation will take place in two stages. At the first stage, applicants will submit a concise statement of the objectives, methodology and background of the proposed research project as well as information on the Principal Investigator and team. The evaluation will be done solely on the basis of scientific excellence. At the first stage, proposal evaluations will rely primarily on the groundbreaking nature of the research to be conducted and the quality and potential of the applicant.

Successful applicants at the first stage will be invited (within a relatively limited period of approximately 4-6 weeks) to update their proposal, with further details on the project and its management, for the second stage evaluation. At that stage, the panel will make a final decision taking account of external referee reports on the proposal. The Scientific Council considers that, for this scheme, interviews with the Principal Investigators will provide valuable additional information on the potential of starting investigators to take the important step to become high flying research leaders in their own right.

The Scientific Council came to preliminary conclusions on the organisation of the peer review panels, which together will cover the entire spectrum of research areas addressed by the ERC. In the near future it intends to consult relevant organisations in Europe, including national funding agencies, in order to identify possible candidates for panel chairs and panel membership. The latter will be selected for their own achievements and reputation as high level researchers as well as their recognised commitment and experience in advancing the next generation of researchers.

Further information is available on the website of the ERC Scientific Council at <http://erc.europa.eu>