



## ERC Update

10 December 2010

### FP7 mid-term report praises ERC's achievements

**An expert group tasked with the interim evaluation of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7) recently delivered its final report, in which the achievements of the ERC are praised; "Despite being a new, and thus untried, instrument, the European Research Council (ERC) has manifestly succeeded in attracting and funding world-class research and is playing an important role in anchoring research talent."**

The expert group, composed of nine experts, was chaired by Rolf Annerberg, Director General of the Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning. It sees the arrival of the ERC as a significant new direction in FP7 and mentions that this new funding body is also highlighted in the context of the EU's Innovation Union, which called for its reinforcement. The FP7 included "for the first time a Europe-wide mechanism for funding of frontier research, through which one of the key weaknesses of the European Research Area could be addressed".

As the first European funding body set up to support investigator-driven frontier research, the ERC encourages top scientists from all over the world to compete for the Starting Grants (early career) or the Advanced Grants (senior), provided they will be based in a European host institution. Excellence is the sole criterion in its peer-reviewed grant competitions, open to all fields of research. The ERC's bottom-up approach, meaning that it is the researcher who defines the field of study, is applauded by the expert panel. In the experts' opinion, the ERC represents a new interpretation of "European added value".

The report also mentions in positive terms the ERC's organisation and highlights that it is made up of an independent Scientific Council responsible for academic standards, and an implementing body, the Executive Agency, which acts under the Commission's control whilst being scientifically and operationally autonomous. The fact that the ERC requires the research work to be undertaken in Europe "provides opportunities to attract world class non-EU researchers and provides a magnet for world-class European researchers working in the US and elsewhere to come back", states the document.



The expert panel concludes by commending the success of the ERC, "which has rapidly gained recognition from the research community, as well as policy makers throughout Europe."

The FP7 covers the period 2007-2013, with a budget of over 50 Billion Euros. This mid-term report will feed the preparation of the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, due to start in 2014.

Full document:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/evaluations/pdf/archive/other\\_reports\\_studies\\_and\\_documents/fp7\\_interim\\_evaluation\\_expert\\_group\\_report.pdf#view=fit&pagedmode=none](http://ec.europa.eu/research/evaluations/pdf/archive/other_reports_studies_and_documents/fp7_interim_evaluation_expert_group_report.pdf#view=fit&pagedmode=none)