



Press Update

27 May 2011

Support to the ERC in the European Parliament

An exchange of views between the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) took place on Wednesday 25th of May.

In her presentation, ERC President **Prof. Helga Nowotny** stated that "there is still room at the top", making the case for a larger budget for the ERC and for the next EU framework for research and innovation. She pointed to the "undiminished demand" from researchers and "relatively low success rate" in the ERC competitions so far, 13.8%. Furthermore, she highlighted the need to attract more top researchers from outside Europe as one of the ERC's remaining challenges. The President also underlined the "trust the ERC gives to individual researchers, who know best where the frontiers of science lie" and added that "the ERC stands for excellence in frontier research, and without it there would be no future innovations or scientific breakthroughs."

The Chairman of the ITRE Committee, **MEP Herbert Reul**, expressed his full support to the ERC and said: "Europe will only be taken seriously if we increase the budget for research. The prerequisite for economic growth, welfare and jobs is that we are good tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. This is why we have to invest in research, especially in times of economic crisis."

Framework Programme Director, responsible for Interinstitutional relations in DG Research and Innovation, **Jack Metthey**, expressed the Commission's solid support to the ERC: "The ERC is recognised as a full success of FP7", and acknowledged the importance given by the Commission to the [ERC Contribution to the consultation on a Common Strategic Framework](#).



ERC Executive Agency Director *Ad Interim*, **Pablo Amor**, highlighted that the ERC stands for excellence also when it comes to its implementation through its executive agency and mentioned its low administrative expenses (only 2.5% of the total budget).

One of the almost 2000 ERC grant holders, top researcher **Prof. Hannah Monyer**, whose project focuses on memory and neurological diseases, explained that the most innovative aspect of the ERC Grant is that it offers longer term funding, allowing the hiring of several qualified team members, and that it encourages excellence and risky projects with high potential.

A debate followed with the participation of representatives from various political groups showing general positive views on the ERC as a success story. The low performance of some countries, including some of the newer Member States was mentioned. Prof. Nowotny stressed that raising the number of ERC successful candidates from these countries is one of the aims of the ERC, even if excellence will remain the sole selection criterion.

It should be noted in this context that the ERC is undertaking awareness raising campaigns in some of these countries this year.

Links

[Parliamentary ITRE Committee Meeting Video](#)
[Interviews conducted by Europe by Satellite with MEP Mr. Herbert Reul, Chairman of the ITRE Committee, Prof. Hannah Monyer, ERC Advanced Grantee and ERC President Prof. Helga Nowotny](#)
[ERC Conference in Budapest](#)

ERC Press Contacts

Madeleine Drielsma (Communication adviser, Press)
Tel: +32 (0)2 298 76 31, Fax: +32 (0)2 299 3173
erc-press@ec.europa.eu

Maria Sanchez (Trainee)
Tel: +32 (0)2 297 87 20, Fax: +32 (0)2 299 3173
erc-press@ec.europa.eu