

**Highlight:****ERC President Helga Nowotny at the *Excellence 2012* conference in Denmark**

17 April 2012

European Research Council (ERC) President Prof. Helga Nowotny will participate in the conference *Excellence 2012 "Excellence revisited – the Value of Excellence"* from 18 to 20 April 2012 at Aarhus University, Denmark. As a keynote speaker, she will present the ERC's merits and advantages during a session on public and private foundations' role in promoting excellence in science (Thursday 19 April, 15.30-17.00). Prof. Nowotny will also take part in the conference's summing up and the handover of the [conference declaration](#) with the Danish Minister for Science, Innovation and Higher Education Morten Østergaard and the Rector of Aarhus University Prof. Lauritz B. Holm-Nielsen (Friday 20 April, 10.30-12.00). Ahead of the adoption of the EU's next Research and Innovation Framework Programme 'Horizon 2020', this declaration will promote a fertile environment for excellence in research, education and innovation.

The conference is one of the major research events organised by the current Danish Presidency of the European Union. The aim is that policy-makers, scientists and university representatives discuss ways in which Europe can stimulate excellent research that can efficiently translate into innovative solutions.

"Excellence in science is the ultimate goal every researcher aspires to obtain", says ERC President Prof. Helga Nowotny. "The ERC's mission is to find and fund the best researchers through competition at the global level who will conduct their frontier research projects in Europe. The ERC is thus setting an example: encouraging researchers, their host institutions and national funding systems to let excellence emerge and to cultivate it. But excellence itself is multidimensional. It fosters innovative new thinking, experimentation and the discovery of new solutions. It encourages variety and often flourishes at the interface of established disciplines and practices. In this respect, it is similar to innovation. A thorough debate on excellence provides a good starting point for linking frontier research and innovation, and for enabling productive and multiple exchanges between them".

ERC grantees

Several ERC grantees will attend the conference. Since 2007, 17 ERC grants have been awarded to researchers at Aarhus University. This represents around a third of ERC grants in Denmark. A total of 46 ERC grant holders are based in Danish Host Institutions.

Videos illustrating three outstanding ERC projects ([DIAG-CANCER](#), [HFPSL](#), [COLLMOT](#)) will also be broadcast during the event. They showcase ERC grantees working in different countries on various topics: establishing ways to diagnose cancer by testing exhaled breath, analysing the French political science lexicon and studying collective behaviour.

Friday 20 April around 12.15, Aarhus University, Lakeside Lecture Theatres:

After the hand-over of the declaration, an informal **door-step press meeting** will take place with ERC President Prof. Helga Nowotny, Danish Minister for Science, Innovation and Higher Education Morten Østergaard and the Rector of Aarhus University Prof. Lauritz B. Holm-Nielsen.

Links

[Website and programme of the conference *Excellence 2012*](#)

[Expert sources for journalists – including **ERC grant winners working at Aarhus University**](#)

[Videos \(see in particular the last three videos on the page illustrating outstanding ERC projects\)](#)

[Press coverage of the conference](#)

To register to the event and for any interviews with keynote speakers and contributors, please contact:

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