



European Research Council
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Press release

26 September 2013

New ERC Advanced Grant results: Over €660 million to 284 top researchers

In its sixth and last Advanced Grant competition under the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7), the European Research Council (ERC) is awarding over €660 million to 284 senior research leaders. They will carry out their research in 18 different countries across the European Research Area¹. With up to €3.5 million per grant, the prestigious funding will enable them to pursue their most ground-breaking ideas together with their teams. The next Advanced Grants call will fall under the 'excellence pillar' of the new Framework Programme 'Horizon 2020'.

The researchers selected will perform their frontier research on a wide range of topics. One project, for instance, explores the limits of life on Mars. Other projects deal with major health issues such as developing a virus to kill cancer cells, understanding the molecular mechanisms behind Alzheimer's disease, or using photonics to restore vision in patients with cataracts. Societal challenges are also addressed, such as ageing populations, and inequality in capitalist societies. (Read more about the [project examples](#))

European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn said: *"The ERC funds researchers who are at the top of their game, and we need this talent in Europe. Their creativity and hard work creates knowledge that is valuable in itself, but that often also has a positive impact on our society and economy. That is why the ERC budget will receive a major funding boost under Horizon 2020."*

ERC President Professor Helga Nowotny said: *With this last competition for ERC Advanced Grants of the current framework programme, it is a good moment to take stock of the past seven years. What started as an eager and long-standing demand from the research community, took shape in 2007 as the first pan-European funding body for excellent frontier research. Since the first funding rounds for outstanding talent, the ERC has grown remarkably and invigorated the entire research scene in Europe. At the backbone of its*

¹ The 28 EU Member States and the "FP7 associated countries" (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey)



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success lies in its peer review evaluation system - I dare say the most international in the world. With this last round of Advanced Grants, the ERC has funded nearly 1,700 established research leaders in more than 350 Host institutions across 28 countries in Europe. In the next programme Horizon 2020, the ERC's core funding schemes will continue thanks to the planned increased overall ERC budget."

In this Advanced Grant competition, just over 2,400 applications were submitted to the ERC, which is a slight increase (4.5%) from last year. The overall success rate lies at nearly 12%.

The share of selected women in this round of grants is just over 13% and the average age of researchers is 53 years old. In terms of domain distribution, 45% of successful proposals were in the 'Physical Science and Engineering' domain, 36% in 'Life Sciences', and 18% in 'Social Sciences and Humanities'. The grantees were selected through peer review evaluation by 25 panels composed of renowned scientists from around the world.

The ERC grants target top researchers of any nationality who are based in, or willing to move to, the European Research Area (ERA). In this call, the successful candidates are of 27 different nationalities, with British, German, French, Dutch and Italian researchers being the most numerous. They are based in some 150 institutions in 18 different ERA countries. As the largest EU Member-States, the UK, Germany and France host the highest absolute number of selected researchers. However, in relation to population size, the Netherlands, UK, Finland and Denmark (of the EU countries), and Switzerland and Israel (of the countries associated with the EU research programme), host the greatest number of successful candidates in this call. (For further information, see [statistics](#).)

The number of researchers already holding ERC grants that are now coming to an end, and who are applying for a second grant, was larger than ever before: nearly 80 applied and around 30 were finally selected to receive an Advanced Grant.

Thanks to the ERC funding, the selected scientists in this call will be able to build research teams, engaging an estimated 1,200 postdocs and PhD students as ERC team members. The ERC thereby also contributes to supporting a new generation of top researchers in Europe.



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ERC Advanced Grants call 2013:

[LIST of all selected researchers by country](#) of host institution (alphabetical order within each country group)

Lists of selected researchers by domain (in alphabetical order):

- [Physical Sciences and Engineering](#)
- [Life Sciences](#)
- [Social Sciences and Humanities](#)

[STATISTICS](#) (indicative)

[DISCOVER MORE PROJECTS](#) in this call

Background

Set up in 2007 by the EU, the **European Research Council** is the first pan-European funding organisation for frontier research. It aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. It funds young, early-career top researchers ('ERC Starting grants'), already independent excellent scientists ('ERC Consolidator Grants'), and senior research leaders ('ERC Advanced Grants'). The substantial funding is awarded based on peer review evaluation and can amount to maximum €2 million for a Starting Grant, €2.75 million for a Consolidator Grant and €3.5 million for an Advanced Grant.

Operating according to an 'investigator-driven', or 'bottom-up', approach, the ERC allows researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research, without thematic priorities. The ERC, a pioneering component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme ('Ideas' Specific Programme), has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013. Its budget will increase by 70% under the new framework programme 'Horizon 2020' (2014-2020). Research institutions hosting ERC grantees must be situated within the European Research Area (ERA), which comprises the 28 EU Member States and 13 countries associated to the FP7. These associated countries contribute to the ERC budget every year.

The ERC is led by the ERC Scientific Council, composed of 22 top scientists and scholars. Professor Helga Nowotny is the ERC President. The ERC Executive Agency implements the 'Ideas' Specific Programme and is led by Director Pablo Amor.



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ERC Advanced Grant in brief

- For well-established top researchers of any nationality/age, scientifically independent and with a recent research track-record and profile which identifies them as leaders in their respective field(s)
- Based on a simple approach : 1 researcher with his/her team, 1 host institution, 1 project, 1 selection criterion: excellence
- Host institution should be based in the European Research Area. This can be the institution where the researcher is already working or a new one. The Host institution can be changed in the course of the project if the researcher so wishes (“portability of the grant”)
- No consortia or co-funding are requested
- Funding: up to €3.5 million per grant
- Calls for proposals: published annually. For updated information on upcoming calls see [here](#).

For more information

[ERC Press Release on outcome of the fifth Advanced Grant call](#) (January 2012)

[Striking ERC-funded projects](#)

[ERC website](#)

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