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Press release

ERC Starting Grants: €485 million in grants to 325 top researchers across Europe

8 September 2016

The European Research Council (ERC) has announced today the awarding of its Starting Grants to 325 early-career researchers throughout Europe. The funding, worth in total €485 million and up to €1.5 million per grant, will enable them to set up their own research teams and pursue ground-breaking ideas.

The new grantees will work on a wide range of topics, such as improving effectiveness of chemotherapy in cancer treatment, developing new sustainable ways of producing hydrogen fuel, and exploring citizenship law to better manage migration and uphold human rights. The funded research covers all disciplines: physical sciences and engineering, life sciences, and social science and humanities. See more [examples of funded research](#).

The grants are awarded under the 'excellent science' pillar of Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation programme.

On this occasion, Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"Through the ERC Starting Grants, the EU attracts young research talent and keeps it in Europe. With the EU backing these grantees will be able to pursue their best ideas, but also create quality jobs for more research staff who wish to work on the frontiers of science. Ultimately they will contribute to creating the most valuable resource Europe has: human capital."*

The President of the ERC, Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, said: *"With this new round of funding the ERC backs another 325 bright young minds to bring their most ambitious ideas to life. The ERC believes in supporting young talent - indeed two thirds of its funding goes to early-career researchers contributing to the future of Europe in terms of science and more broadly."*

He added: *"It is pivotal to keep scientific quality as the one and only selection criterion, and to trust researchers to choose significant topics, without imposing any demands on what to be explored. Giving top researchers free reign to follow their scientific curiosity opens the way to real breakthroughs as a recent independent study found: as much as 71% of the first completed ERC projects led to breakthroughs or major scientific advances. This speaks volumes about the relevance to fund bottom-up frontier research – it creates new knowledge and offers new paths for economic growth."*



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ERC grants are awarded to researchers of any nationality based in, or willing to move to, Europe. In this year's competition, researchers of 42 nationalities received the funding. They will be hosted in 23 countries across Europe, with Germany (61), the United Kingdom (59) and France (46) as top locations. The ERC received 2935 proposals of which around 11% was funded.

The results again show the high level of mobility of top scientists: in the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Denmark, more than half of the new grantees are not nationals of the host country. Also, 15 European researchers are returning to Europe from the United States and Canada to work on their ERC-funded projects. Thirty eight grantees are non-European nationals, based across Europe. Around 30% of grantees are women.

These Starting Grants will enable the selected researchers to build their own teams, potentially engaging more than 1,000 postdocs and PhD students as ERC team members. The funding therefore contributes to supporting a new generation of top researchers in Europe.

[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 – ERC Starting Grants 2016](#)

[Examples of funded research](#)

Note to the editors

ERC Starting Grants are awarded to researchers of any nationality with two to seven years of experience since completion of the PhD (or equivalent degree) and a scientific track record showing great promise. The research must be conducted in a public or private research organisation located in one of the EU Member States or Associated Countries. The funding (maximum €1.5 million per grant) is provided over up to five years. Two thirds of the ERC budget is earmarked for the early-career researchers – the Starting Grant and Consolidator Grant schemes - and calls for proposals are published once a year for each scheme.

The European Research Council, set up by the European Union in 2007, is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year, it selects and funds the very best, creative



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researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based in Europe. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. To date, the ERC has funded more than 6,500 top researchers at various careers stages.

The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the Scientific Council, and, since January 2014, the ERC President is Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. The ERC has a budget of over €13 billion for the years 2014 to 2020 and is part of the EU research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, for which European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Carlos Moedas is responsible.

The ERC is considered a true success story for Europe and is recognised around the world. The US National Science Foundation, Japan's Society for the Promotion of Science, China's National Natural Science Foundation and other key global funding organisations and science ministries signed [agreements](#) with the European Commission to enable their young researchers to temporarily join ERC projects in Europe. Also several EU countries set up [fellowship schemes](#) to sponsor future applicants' visits to ERC-funded research teams giving them a chance to improve their grant applications.

More information

[ERC website](#)

[Horizon 2020](#)

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