



European Research Council
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Press release

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Blue sky science: EU backs 328 early-career top researchers with €485 million

The European Research Council (ERC) has selected 328 first-class scientists to receive its prestigious Starting Grants, worth up to €2 million each. This first Starting Grant competition under the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, and the seventh to date, awards €485 million to early-career talent to develop their ambitious high-risk, high-gain research projects in any field.

The projects selected cover a wide array of topics, including wearable electronic textiles powered by body heat, detection of bacteria by smell, 'toxic expertise' in the petrochemical industry, the origins of human rationality, combatting cancer related inflammation, and optimising user interface design. Read about some of the selected projects [here](#).

Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Carlos Moedas said: *"To create tomorrow's innovation and growth, cutting-edge research is a must. With its Starting Grants, the European Research Council nurtures the next generation of excellent scientists allowing them to follow their scientific curiosity and take risks. To be at the forefront, Europe needs this gutsy mindset, and to invest in young talent."*

ERC President Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon commented: *"The ERC is serious about young talent; with two thirds of the overall ERC budget invested in bright young minds, they are empowered early in their careers and given the scientific freedom to pursue their most creative ideas. This helps much talent stay in Europe and sparks breakthroughs that benefit all. For the future, it is key that they be given appropriate career prospects. This Starting Grants call - the first under Horizon 2020 - brings the number of emerging research leaders funded in Europe up to almost 3,000 since the ERC launch."*

He added: *"I am encouraged to see the share of female grantees increase; it is going in the right direction. Europe must nurture all its scientific talent, and for that purpose must pay special attention to improving the gender balance."*



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This call attracted 3,273 applications and the overall success rate rose to around 10% (from last year's 9%). This year, the share of successful female applicants increased to 33%, from 30% last year. The success rate (grantees/applicants) of the female applicants is this time virtually equal to the male applicants.

In this call, grants are awarded to researchers of 38 nationalities, hosted in 180 different institutions throughout Europe. In terms of host institutions, Germany (70 grants) and the UK (55 grants) are in the lead, followed by France (43) and the Netherlands (34). Researchers are also hosted in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey, along with one project in CERN in Switzerland.

Around 40 of the researchers are of non-European nationality; for instance North and South Americans, Asians, Australians, New Zealanders and Russians are amongst the grantees. Many of them were already based in Europe. Also, 18 researchers are coming to Europe to carry out their ERC-funded projects, including 13 returning Europeans, as well as scientists moving to Europe from Australia and North America. This is in line with the ERC mission to attract more excellent researchers to Europe.

Lists of selected researchers

The lists below show the proposals selected for funding. Around 50 more researchers will receive grants when an additional €64 million will become available. (to be announced in January 2015)

[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](#) – Starting Grants call (indicative)

[DISCOVER MORE PROJECTS](#) in this Starting Grants call



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Note to the editors

143 of the grantees are in the domain 'Physical Sciences and Engineering', 124 in 'Life Sciences' and 61 in 'Social Sciences and Humanities'. The average age of selected researchers is about 35 years. The funding will allow these Starting grantees to build their own research teams, engaging in total over 1,400 postdocs and PhD students as their team members. The ERC thereby contributes to supporting a new generation of top researchers in Europe.

The next ERC Starting Grant call is now open with a deadline for all domains on 3 February 2015.

ERC Starting Grants are awarded to researchers of any nationality with 2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD (or equivalent degree) and a scientific track record showing great promise. 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 of €2 million per grant), is provided over up to five years. Two thirds of the ERC budget is earmarked for the Starting Grants and Consolidator Grants schemes and calls for proposals are published once a year.

Set up in 2007 by the EU, the European Research Council (ERC) is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year, it selects and funds the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run five year 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 4,500 top researchers at a variety of stages in their careers.

Under the new EU research and innovation programme Horizon 2020, the ERC has a substantially increased budget of over €13 billion.

The ERC consists of an independent governing body, the Scientific Council, and an implementing body, the Executive Agency. The ERC President is Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon.

For more information:

[ERC 2013 Starting Grant results](#)

[ERC website](#)

[Horizon 2020](#)

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