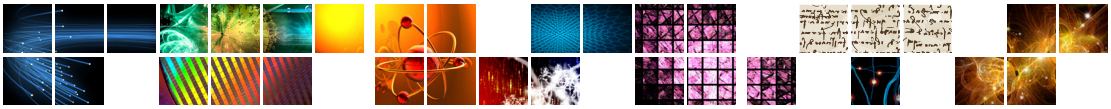
Established by the European Commission

ideas

Newsletter of the European Research Council



Widening Participation
Rendezvous in Vienna with top talent

Going Global
Collaboration across the Atlantic

Innovation in the spotlight

What's new
The ERC Scientific Council at work

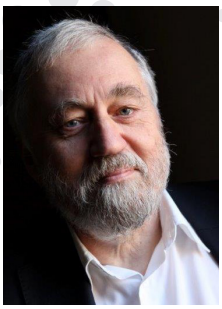
A glimpse into the ERC Executive Agency

Focus on
Ireland

Next calls
Towards 'Horizon 2020'

To subscribe please click here.

Editorial by Pavel Exner



Facing new challenges

Less than a month ago, the ERC turned six. The novice has become a funding body held in high esteem by the scientific community both in Europe and further afield. But, we are still in the formative years and we for sure cannot complain about too much routine work. It is my hope for the future that the ERC will gradually become a big, well-oiled machine, rock-solid and certainly independent of political winds.

This year brings important new challenges for the ERC Scientific Council, including a safe passage to the next framework programme. We have to ensure that the system will continue to function smoothly under changed conditions and a new budget; the final adoption of which will hopefully not be too delayed. Also, the Scientific Council itself will have to adjust; with a third of its members recently replaced, we have to renew our standing committees and working groups, and to make sure there is no gap in their work.

On the other hand, some aspects of our activities have a long-term character. One of the main points is our commitment to identify and support all the sources of talent. Some of our actions to reach this goal are reflected in this issue of the Newsletter; namely our "ERC goes Global" campaign and the "Widening Participation" event in Vienna.

The latter deserves a few extra words. There is no need to reiterate the fact that the ERC differs from the rest of the seventh EU framework programme. With a bottom-up approach, the ERC selects the best scientists with the best ideas on the sole criterion of excellence. Europe has other means to deal with large differences in scientific productivity across the continent.

At the same time, excellence can be found everywhere. The Scientific Council has repeatedly stated its intention to uncover more of Europe's resources, hidden so far due to a lack of tradition or inadequate research infrastructure. The main responsibility for increasing the number of successful candidates from countries with a weaker participation rate in ERC calls lies predominantly with the local and national levels. That said, we are happy to collaborate with them in working out measures to take us towards this goal. One of the most important duties of the Scientific Council is to remain an ambassador of excellent science in every corner of Europe.

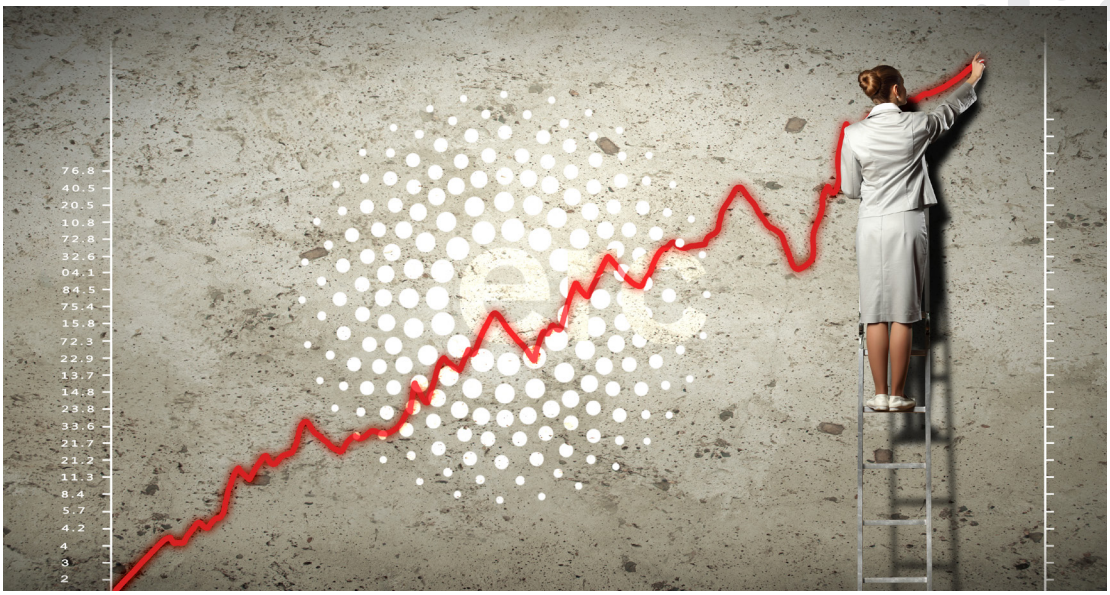
Enjoy the reading.

Pavel Exner, ERC Vice-President

In this issue

Widening Participation

Rendezvous in Vienna with top talent from Central and Eastern Europe



As alluded to in the editorial of this newsletter, the ERC Scientific Council is very concerned with the low participation of some countries in ERC competitions. Without departing from its golden principle of funding excellence alone, the ERC hopes to see more talent from Central and Eastern Europe take part in its funding schemes.

To contribute to a truly inclusive European culture of competition in science, a Scientific Council Working Group was created to monitor Europe-wide participation in ERC calls. In this regard, the ERC encourages Central and Eastern European countries to nurture their talent and invest more in research. It is also vital to raise awareness about the ERC schemes, and what these grants can offer scientists from this region. In order to inform the research community, encourage participation and find undiscovered talent, the ERC has held events in a number of these countries over the past few years (in Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, amongst others).

This was the main motivation for the "Widening participation" event that took place in Vienna, Austria, on 28 February and 1 March. As a pilot initiative, this meeting aimed to facilitate debate and interaction amongst ERC grantees and young scientists from Central and Eastern Europe, gathering around 80 researchers from various EU countries and scientific disciplines. The event was jointly organised by the ERC, the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (IST), the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research, and the Representation of the European Commission in Vienna.

Participants had the opportunity to attend presentations and discussions illustrating ERC activities, as well as exchange best practices. A part of the event was devoted to inspiring lectures about some of the achievements of ERC grantees - both junior and senior - in all domains. The scientists also had the chance to engage in discussions with Scientific Council members and ERC Executive Agency representatives. The ERC intends to continue with similar events in the future, and will proceed with reflecting on measures to stimulate more top talent from these countries to participate in ERC competitions.

See ERC announcement

Innovation

Frontier research - a key ingredient for a more innovative climate in Europe

Excellent, 'blue sky' science remains a prerequisite for achieving Europe's long-term goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The ERC's mission is to find and fund such ground-breaking science that pushes the frontiers of knowledge. Investing in frontier research leads to tremendous benefits; both for the economy and society at large.

Becoming a world-class science performer - by reinforcing its knowledge base and promoting excellence - is the only way Europe can turn innovative ideas into products and services, resulting in growth and jobs. Frontier research, seen as a building block for innovation, can originate from different motivations. A researcher may be interested in the deep understanding of a phenomenon out of pure curiosity. Or, a scientist may be fully aware of industry needs and societal challenges, and can be inspired to undertake fundamental research to realise technological breakthroughs in response to this.

Science is a major contributor to industrial innovation, but scientific knowledge has some characteristics which make the private sector generally under-invest in it. Its results are too unpredictable in terms of returns for private stakeholders. Public sector investment in frontier research therefore becomes very important; risks are certainly large, but so are the rewards.

The ERC funds research that can be expected to lead to innovations which, when successfully applied, can generate major socio-economic benefits for Europe. The ERC also contributes to increasing the number of extremely well trained and highly qualified graduates, who thrive in centres of excellence. Therefore, the ERC also feeds into the EU's **'Innovation Union'**. The EU's next funding framework for research, 'Horizon 2020', currently under way, will give further impetus to financial and policy instruments that spur innovation.

Besides supporting innovative research through its main grant schemes, the ERC provides targeted top-up funding through its **'Proof of Concept'** grants. Worth up to €150,000 each, these grants are open to ERC grantees for bridging the gap between their research and marketable innovation. Since this small but effective scheme was first introduced in 2011, two 'Proof of Concept' calls have been completed with a total budget of €10 million per call, helping 111 ERC grantees to bring their research closer to market. In **the latest call**, concluded last month, 60 researchers were awarded grants.

To highlight industrial applications of ERC-funded research, 11 top researchers, who hold Proof of Concept grants, pitched their ideas to R&D executives and venture capitalists at a **Science|Business event** in Brussels last month. This event emphasised the potential of European science, if researchers and industry can overcome challenges and work closer together. It also served as a forum for providing vital starting points to bring 'blue-sky' research to market.

The ERC at Davos

For the first time, the ERC was present at the World Economic Forum in Davos; the well-known platform for leaders to discuss pressing global issues. The ERC sought to stimulate debate on the importance of innovative research, and added a scientific perspective by highlighting current trends in science. In a dedicated ERC session, the ERC delegation - President Helga Nowotny and Nobel laureates Tim Hunt, Serge Haroche, Jules Hoffmann, and ERC panel chair Viola Vogel - brainstormed about new technologies and discoveries that will impact society in wide-ranging areas.

Research in the spotlight

Exploring innovation potential of ERC projects

The "Proof of Concept" (PoC) grant allows ERC grantees to explore the innovation potential of their frontier research project and take it closer to market. The over 100 projects funded so far cover a range of scientific topics; three of them are featured here.

Personalised gene therapy to treat Parkinson's disease

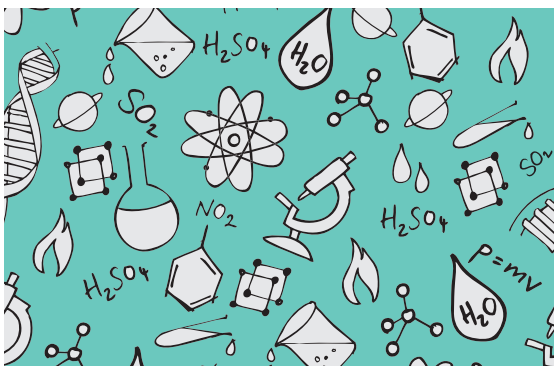
Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disease. With his ERC Starting grant, **Dr Deniz Kirik**, Lund University (Sweden), aims to understand the mechanisms of the disease, by studying neuropathology and progressive cell death in the neuronal systems of laboratory animals, similar to those observed in patients with neurodegenerative diseases. His research group develops new treatments implementing advanced gene therapy techniques. The idea is to reverse the disease symptoms or to replace lost functions by introducing small and harmless recombinant viruses into brain cells. Dr Kirik follows the progression of the disease and effects of treatments in the brain with new in vivo imaging technologies. The PoC grant will allow his team to find solutions to tune the gene therapy product to meet patients' individual needs, i.e. to personalise treatment. In particular, Dr Kirik aims to develop a regulatable gene delivery system for patients with Parkinson's disease, and investigate its further commercialisation.

Providing a centimetre-accurate indoor location service

In recent years, WiFi networks have increasingly grown in popularity with handheld smartphones tablets and laptops becoming a part of our everyday lives. **Dr Kyle Jamieson**, University College London, was awarded an ERC Starting grant, and is now working on ways of improving localisation services such as the Global Positioning System (GPS) which often fail to work indoors. Thanks to a PoC grant, his team is investigating the marketability of an indoor location system called SmartTap, which makes wireless localisation more robust in buildings such as retail stores. His objective is to reach centimetre-level indoor localisation accuracy with millisecond responsiveness, far better than what existing solutions offer. Concrete applications could prove useful for augmented reality, advertising and in-building navigation. His research team also looks at the development of 'chaotic' (i.e. unplanned) wireless networks and solutions to improve Internet wireless access. Part of his research is about mitigating unpredictable interferences resulting from the great number of wireless access points set up in densely populated areas.

People with disabilities; pioneers of architectural innovation

Architects often associate disability with access legislation, rarely with creativity. Based at KU Leuven (Belgium), ERC grantee **Prof. Ann Heylighen** wants to reverse this perspective; disability can be a valuable source of innovation in architectural design and a great opportunity for dialogue. Through their bodily interaction with the environment, people with disabilities are able to detect obstacles and appreciate spatial qualities that architects are not attuned to. Selected for a PoC grant, Prof. Heylighen envisages to enable disabled people to "rent out" their spatial experience to inform architects' design process. This service – in line with the concept of social innovation – will help in designing more inclusive buildings (e.g. museums, shops, restaurants), respectful of the diversity in people's abilities and conditions. This will become even more important as the population ages and the number of Europeans experiencing some form of disability is expected to increase. The project, which originates in the research she conducted with her ERC Starting grant, will also empower disabled people and could strengthen their position in the labour market.



Interview with

Prof. Patrick Couvreur - Nanomedicines hold promise against cancer

© Allart/REA

Prof. Patrick Couvreur has a vital academic presence in the field of nanomedicines. In the 1970s, he was amongst the first scientists to think about developing biodegradable nanoparticles to treat cancers. At that time, he was nicknamed by his fellow scientists as the 'apothecary with his small tablets'. Since then, he met Peter Speiser, a Swiss pioneer in nanoparticles, and demonstrated that nanoparticles can be used as carriers for delivering drugs into cells. He then developed the first injectable and biodegradable nanoparticles for humans which were able to reduce the activity of hepatic cancerous cells, and to overcome their resistance to drugs when loaded with an anti-cancer agent (now in phase III of clinical trials). He has also worked with the research team of 1974 Nobel laureate in Medicine or Physiology Prof. De Duve, created several start-ups and won an ERC Advanced grant in 2009.

What is your ERC project about?

I work in the field of nanomedicines, and more precisely investigate how to use nanotechnologies to improve the delivery of drugs to targeted diseased cells. I received an ERC grant in 2009 for developing a new generation of natural and biocompatible carriers, called "terpenoids" that can chemically be assembled with drugs and form a new generation of nanoparticles. This project is innovative as it uses "squalene", a natural lipid molecule found in shark liver oil, vegetal oils or in human skin for instance, to link "terpenoids" with drugs. Our goal is also to enhance the drug-loading while preventing its side-effects, and to better control its delivery into the body since a fraction of the drug is always released before reaching its target. By combining physico-chemistry, cellular and molecular biology and pharmacology, we hope to improve the treatment of cancers and severe infectious or metabolic diseases; especially when these are resistant to current therapies.

Can you tell us more about your commercialisation strategy?

I have always felt that research should bring societal benefits. As a pharmacist, my objective is to cure patients, hence my efforts towards bridging science and industry. I have set up several start-ups in France, including one which entered the stock market in 2005, because I believe that basic research can translate into industrial innovations.

What could inspire researchers to apply for an ERC grant?

The ERC grant proved essential for maintaining the quality of my fundamental research. In my "TERNANOMED" project, I demonstrated for instance that nanoparticles can overcome drug-resistance of pancreatic cancers, for which survival rates are very low. My CNRS Medal of Innovation 2012 is also a spin-off effect of my ERC grant. But more importantly, I am very proud to see that the PhD and post-doctoral students who worked in my team could find jobs in the field of R&D, within pharmaceutical companies or laboratories. This is important if we wish to develop new products, as well as to promote Europe's growth and competitiveness.

For more about Prof. Couvreur's research, watch this video (in French)

Going Global

Collaboration across the Atlantic

The agreement between the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and the ERC - which provides opportunities for early-career NSF researchers to join ERC-funded teams in Europe - has progressed since last year. This initiative seems to resonate with ERC grantees; many of whom have expressed a keen interest in hosting top talent from across the Atlantic. This progress was highlighted during the annual meeting of the American Association of the Advancement of Science (AAAS) this year, where both the NSF and the ERC were present.

After the signing of the NSF-ERC agreement in July 2012, an expression of interest has now shown that some 760 ERC grantees are willing to host NSF scientists in their teams. With this encouraging news, the NSF in parallel launched a call for an expression of interest amongst its researchers. Currently, a matching between ERC grantees and NSF researchers is taking place in order to facilitate this academic exchange.

The leaders of the two research funding organisations spoke about this exciting collaboration during a press briefing held at the AAAS meeting, which this year took place in snow-clad Boston, Massachusetts. NSF Director Subra Suresh expressed his delight with the "*extremely positive response from the European research community*". He added that both the US and Europe will profit "*from having our best and brightest working together on international opportunities that have enormous potential for discovery and innovation, while establishing a strong foundation for future collaborations*". ERC President Helga Nowotny concurred with him, and added that it is a win-win situation as "*ERC grantees will benefit from a new influx of talented NSF researchers, who in turn will gain further experience with leading scientists and their ERC teams in Europe.*"

The agreement is the first of its kind, but the ERC hopes that it will be developed further and that other global collaborations will follow. According to Prof. Nowotny, it will stimulate 'brain circulation' and international scientific exchanges.

Read more

The ERC at AAAS 2013 in Boston

In addition to the ERC-NSF press briefing, an ERC scientific session 'Converging on Climate Change' took place moderated by Prof. Nowotny. The three engaging speakers - ERC Starting grantees Brian Chase, Maja Schlüter and Siwan Davies - showed how a global challenge like climate change can be tackled from different perspectives; by employing unique approaches to data collection, novel theoretical frameworks, and above all the curiosity to push the boundaries of knowledge. At the topical panel on 'European Science Policy on the move', President Nowotny spoke alongside Robert-Jan Smits, DG for R&I; Prof. Anne Glover, Commission Chief Scientific Advisor; and Paul Boyle, Head of Science Europe. Together with Marie Skłodowska-Curie and EURAXESS Links, the ERC also held a workshop on funding in Europe for early-career top researchers.

What's new

The ERC Scientific Council at Work

© Marie Roberti

As the independent decision-making body of the ERC, the Scientific Council (ScC) sets the ERC's research funding strategy. Composed of 22 eminent scientists and scholars, including one Nobel Prize winner, it acts on behalf of the academic community in Europe to promote innovativeness and creativity in research. Its Chair is also the ERC President; currently Prof. Helga Nowotny (since March 2010). The Vice Chairs, and ERC Vice Presidents alike, are Prof. Carl-Henrik Heldin and Prof. Pavel Exner. The ScC's permanent representative in Brussels is the ERC Secretary General, Prof. Donald Dingwell. As of January 2014, the roles of the President and the Secretary General will be merged, and the ERC will have a permanent Brussels-based President.

The members of the Scientific Council are appointed by the European Commission on recommendation of an independent Identification Committee. With a partial renewal completed in February this year, new members have just joined the ScC. (see press release).

The Scientific Council meets up to five times a year - in Brussels, and elsewhere in Europe - to debate and decide on strategic issues pertaining to the ERC. Its work is also organised by topic under five Working Groups and two Standing Committees. The Working Groups make recommendations to the ScC, while the Standing Committees take decisions that are subsequently endorsed by the ScC. These constellations have recently been renewed, in terms of membership, organisation and scope.

We hereby give you some insight into their current structure, and thereby where the ERC's priorities lie.

Working Group (WG) on Widening Participation

Chair: *Prof. Alain Peyraube*

As the name implies, this WG focuses on the issue of widening the participation in the ERC's funding schemes, both from overseas and from countries within Europe performing less well in the calls. It also handles the ERC's Internationalisation strategy, of which the 'ERC Goes Global' awareness-raising campaign is an integral part.

WG on Data Analysis and Key Performance Indicators

Chair: *Prof. Dr. Reinhilde Veugelers*

Monitoring the outcome of the ERC peer review and funding via structured data analysis is the focal point of this newly established WG.

WG on Open Access

Chair: *Prof. Nicholas Canny*

The ScC members in this Working Group deal with the ERC's Open Access strategy and its implementation.

WG on Gender Balance

Chair: *Prof. Isabelle Vernos*

The key objective of this WG is to closely monitor gender-balance in the ERC evaluation process, as well as to design and follow up on gender-analysis studies and to promote ERC grants to potential female applicants.

WG on Innovation and Relations with Industry

Chair: *Prof. Sierd Cloetingh*

This WG has the chief task of building and monitoring relations with industry, as well as furthering contributions of ERC-funded projects to the European innovation cycle.

Standing Committee (SC) on Panels

Chair: *Prof. Carl-Henrik Heldin*

This SC's main work revolves around all aspects related to the ERC peer review system, and its panel members and reviewers for the evaluation process.

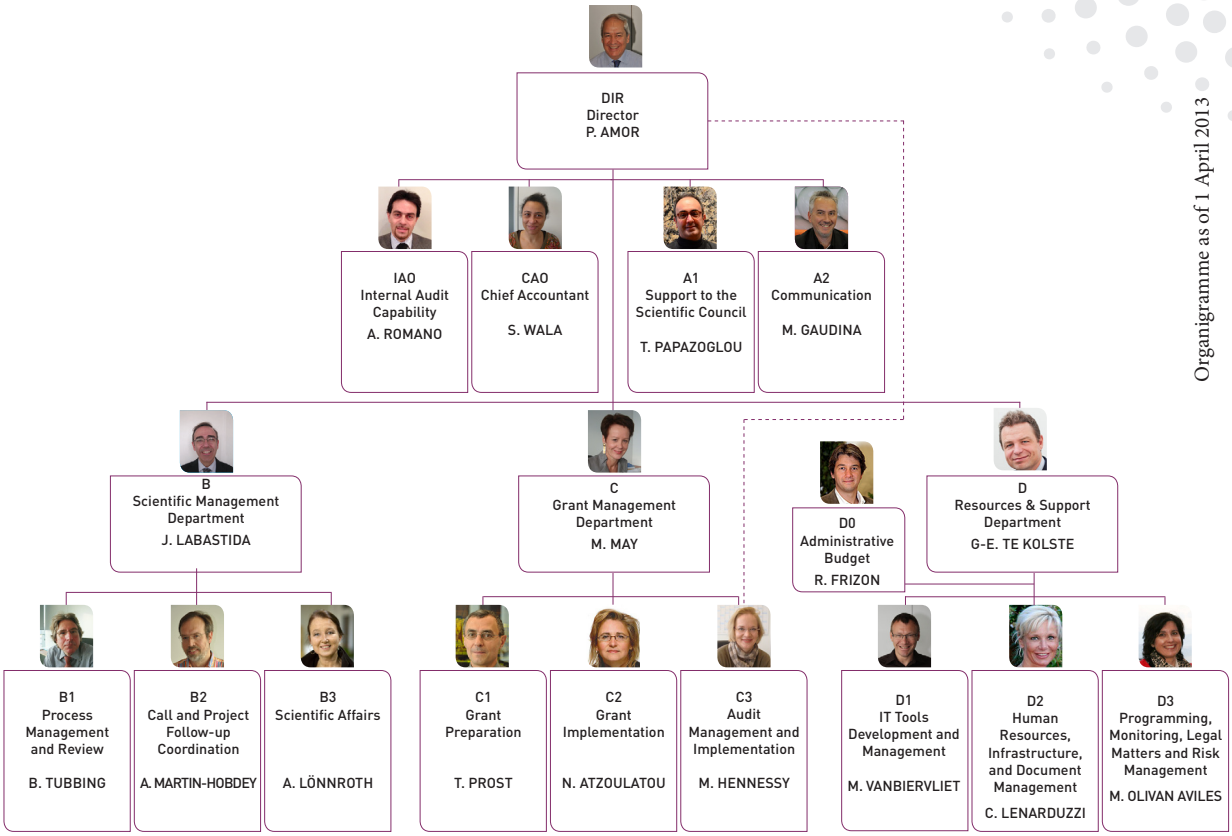
SC on Conflict of Interests, Scientific Misconduct and Ethics

Chair: *Prof. Pavel Exner*

This SC works on matters related to conflict of interest, fraud and ethical aspects; pertaining to ERC competences.

What's new

A glimpse into the ERC Executive Agency



Organigramme as of 1 April 2013

Alongside the ERC Scientific Council, the ERC has an Executive Agency (ERCEA), which is based in Brussels. The Agency implements the ERC's strategy as set by the Scientific Council, and is in charge of day-to-day grant administration, handling of peer review evaluation, communication activities, and more. Being administratively independent, its operations are overseen by the ERCEA Steering Committee.

The Agency works according to the principles of lean and efficient management, and only 2.35% of the ERC's budget is dedicated to administrative purposes. At present, the ERCEA has around 380 staff members, holding 25 different nationalities. Of these, over 60 have a PhD qualification, and generally work as Scientific Officers in the Scientific Management Department.

The Director of the ERC Executive Agency is **Pablo Amor**, who was formally appointed in August last year. He has already led the agency on an *ad interim* basis since January 2011. The Agency's Scientific Management Department is headed by **Dr Jose Labastida** since February 2011. **Mechtild May** was appointed Head of Department for Grant Management at the end of 2012, a position which she already held *ad interim* for two years. **Georges-Eric te Kolsté** was appointed as the new Head of Department for Resources and Support at the end of last year, before which he was a Head of Unit in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Informatics.

Focus on Ireland

High expectations on the horizon

Ireland holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of this year, which is a crucial period for finalising the next EU budget for 2014 to 2020. Part of this budget is the new EU Framework Programme 'Horizon 2020', which will take over when the current Framework Programme (FP7) comes to a close at the end of 2013. Researchers based in Ireland have been successful under FP7, but "could do better" in the ERC calls, as ERC President Helga Nowotny said in July 2012. This is starting to happen now.

Irish host institutions have been awarded 29 ERC grants to date. To further encourage excellent Irish research, the **Science Foundation Ireland** (SFI) has recently launched two programmes. The SFI *ERC Support Programme* provides additional funding to the host institution of any ERC grantee. It is intended to increase interest in applying to the ERC calls, and to provide additional support to those who were found worthy of receiving a grant. SFI also runs the ERC Development Programme, which supports applicants to the ERC Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grants, who were deemed fundable at Step 2 of the evaluation process, but were unfunded due to insufficient ERC funds. This SFI grant may either support a rapid resubmission to an ERC call or improve aspects of the researcher's idea to increase chances of success of a future submission.

The **Irish Research Council** runs the *SSH ERC Support Programme*, which provides funding to assist ERC grantees to develop the potential and contribution of Irish researchers in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences; through the creation of research capacity, networks and enhanced links with other Irish institutions.

© www.shutterstock.com

Irish involvement in the ERC

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn is the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science since 2009 and a strong supporter of the ERC.

Prof. Nicholas Canny is a member of the ERC's Scientific Council that represents the European research community. Prof. Canny was founding Director of the Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and is a former President of the Royal Irish Academy.

Prof. James Heckman (University College Dublin), American Nobel Prize winning economist from the University of Chicago, was awarded an ERC Advanced Grant 2010.

29 Irish scientists are serving as ERC panel members, remote referees or external experts in charge of the evaluation of proposals and the selection of grantees.

Prof. Luke Drury, director of the School of Cosmic Physics at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) and president of the Royal Irish Academy, sits on one of the ERC evaluation panels. Read an extract of one of his articles in The Irish Times.

Some questions to Dr Graeme A. Horley, the ERC National Contact Point in Ireland

What is your role and mission as a National Contact Point (NCP) in Ireland?

My primary role as an NCP is to give advice about upcoming ERC schemes and to provide important information to the Irish research community, such that we encourage more Irish-based investigators to apply to ERC calls. In addition, I coordinate two Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) programmes that directly align with the ERC – one provides additional support to ERC grant winners, while the other allows ERC applicants who almost secured funding to improve their chances of success in a future application. Feedback on draft applications is given and mock interviews are also organised.

What is the general perception of the ERC amongst Irish researchers?

The ERC schemes are seen as highly competitive and prestigious. There has also been an opinion held (inaccurately!) by some that it is too difficult or administratively challenging to apply to the ERC. Perhaps because of this view, the rate of application from Ireland has not been as high as that of some EU Member States. However, there is now a growing appreciation that, as part of the overall national research ecosystem, Irish researchers should be competing for and securing ERC grants, and that a diversification of funding from various sources is both positive and essential. We must continue to convince our research community that applying to ERC schemes is not only a means to obtain significant funding, but is also a viable route that should confidently be approached.

How are Irish researchers performing in ERC calls? Can anything be improved?

Ireland has exhibited a reasonably strong performance in early-career schemes, with 22 Starting Grants won to date – this is a level commensurate with Ireland's size and economic investment in research and higher education. Two of the grant holders have also obtained Proof of Concept funding. Our record in the Advanced Grant scheme is perhaps not as strong, for reasons alluded to above. Performance will only improve by ensuring that applicants have the necessary support (both financial and administrative) to produce the best possible applications, and by affirming that Advanced Grants are not only highly prestigious, but are essential complements to national funding. An improved support structure has been put in place by SFI and its partners, and it is evident that changes in perception are occurring, which leads us to expect improved future performance across all schemes.

What is the role of the ERC in advancing frontier research in Ireland?

The ERC has a vital role to play in Ireland for continued support of fundamental research across all disciplines. Ireland has undertaken a prioritisation exercise, which mandates that the majority of the Irish research budget will be directed within a number of specific areas of national benefit. Although these areas cover the full spectrum of research (from basic to applied), the ERC provides a crucial complementary mechanism that allows outstanding Irish researchers to continue to carry out large-scale frontier research projects.

ERC grants and Ireland

> 29 ERC grantees are based in Irish Host institutions.

> 22 have been awarded a Starting grant and 7 have received an Advanced grant; representing a total funding of around € 47 million.

> 13 projects are in the field of Physical Sciences & Engineering, 9 in Life Science, and 7 in Social Sciences & Humanities.

> 2 ERC grantees based in Ireland have also received the top-up ERC "Proof of Concept" grant.

> There are 16 Irish ERC grantees based outside Ireland.

The complete list of signed projects in Ireland can be found on the ERC website.

Did you miss this?

ERC celebrates 3000th grant

The three thousandth ERC grant was awarded to Prof. Christian Keysers who conducts innovative research on empathy and the brain. To mark this milestone, a ceremony was held at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam early this year. Prominent personalities from politics and research attended, including the Commission's Director-General for Research and Innovation, Robert-Jan Smits.

To find out more click here

€680 million goes to top talent

In its latest competition for the Advanced Grants, the ERC has awarding €680 million to just over 300 senior researchers based in 24 different countries across Europe. With up to €2.5 million per project, the funding allows these scientists, together with their teams, to pursue their ground-breaking ideas at the frontiers of knowledge.

To find out more click here

© Alexander Tromp - KNAW

© www.shutterstock.com

© www.shutterstock.com

© www.shutterstock.com

ERC grantees win prestigious prizes

Peter Zoller and Juan Ignacio Cirac were awarded the 2013 Wolf Prize in Physics. Prof. Zoller received an ERC Synergy grant in 2012 to pursue research on ultracold quantum matter. The Crafoord Prize in polyarthritis was awarded to Peter K. Gregersen, Lars Klareskog and Robert J. Winchester. Prof. Klareskog holds both an ERC Advanced grantee and a 'Proof of Concept' grant to develop new treatments for polyarthritis.

To find out more click here

Search for next ERC President under way

As the mandate of current President Helga Nowotny comes to a close at the end of this year, a committee is currently conducting the search for the next ERC president. Led by Lord Sainsbury of Turville (Cambridge University), the committee is composed of seven experts, appointed by the European Commission. After an open consultation, the committee will make recommendations to the Commission for appointing the successor. The next president is to take up duty from January 2014.

To find out more click here

Next calls

Towards 'Horizon 2020'

As the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7) will finish at the end of this year, the last ERC calls within FP7 are now closed. The new programme for 2014 to 2020, 'Horizon 2020', will take over from FP7. Under this funding programme, which is still under negotiation, the ERC will be part of the 'Excellent science' pillar.

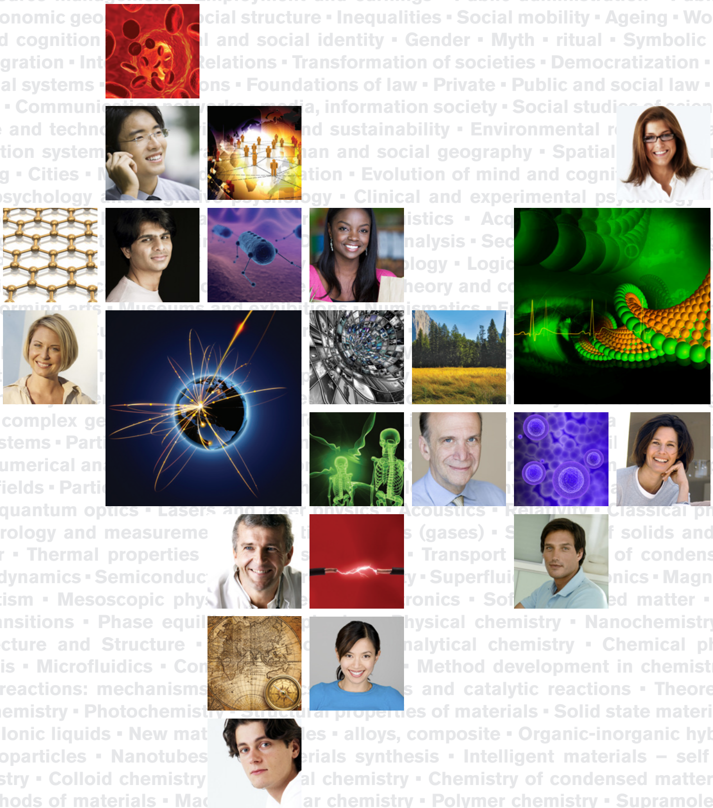
In order to support a significant budget for Horizon 2020, in these last months the research community and other actors made their voices heard to EU leaders: 44 Nobel laureates and six Fields medallists signed an open letter published in leading European newspapers; a petition with the same appeal was launched by young scientists and signed by over 153,000 people. More recently the ERC and the European Roundtable for Industrialists (ERT), representing around 50 European industrial leaders, also signed a joint letter warning leaders against decreased investment in R&I.

The final decision on 'Horizon 2020' is expected in the coming months, and will also depend on the total EU budget for 2014 to 2020 (the 'Multiannual Financial Framework'), which is not yet adopted by the EU leaders and the European Parliament. Read more here.

Due to the transition between two different framework programmes, delays for the next ERC calls for proposals are possible. Information on this is published on the ERC website and will continually be updated.

ERC upcoming events

6-10 April 2013	American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2013	Washington DC, USA	ERC presentation
11 April 2013	Destination Europe	Washington DC, USA	ERC presentation
7-12 April 2013	European Geosciences Union General Assembly 2013 (EGU)	Vienna, Austria	ERC stand, with flash information sessions
14 May 2013	Month of the Brain	Brussels, Belgium	Participation of ERC grantees
14 May 2013	NIH Career Fair	Bethesda, Maryland, USA	ERC presentation
17-19 June 2013	ERC Scientific Council plenary meeting	Bratislava, Slovakia	In conjunction with the plenary session, an ERC public event will take place



Thanks to:
Patrick Couvreur, Graeme Horley, Ria Sen, Marie Frenay,
Roxanne Koenis, Laura Pontiggia, Severina Shopova

For comments:
erc-info@ec.europa.eu

European Research Council Executive Agency
16 Place Charles Rogier
BE-1210 Brussels
Belgium

ideas is a quarterly electronic newsletter published by the European Research Council.

The newsletter is available in English. Subscription is free. You can subscribe online by clicking here.

Next issue: June 2013

ERC National Contact Point in your country, click here.

To receive ERC News Alerts, click here.

EuropeanResearchCouncil @ERC_Research

European Commission

BRINGING GREAT IDEAS **TO LIFE**
http://erc.europa.eu

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission