



European Research Council
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Press release

12 March 2015

ERC Consolidator Grants: 372 top researchers funded with €713 million to pursue their best ideas

The European Research Council (ERC) is today announcing the 372 winners of its second Consolidator Grant competition. These excellent mid-career scientists are awarded a total of €713 million, as part of the European Union Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020. Grants are worth up to €2.75 million each, with an average of €1.91 million per grant. The funding will enable them to consolidate their research teams and to develop their most innovative ideas.

The researchers selected in this call will, for example, analyse the causes of harmful behaviour in teenagers; resolve puzzles about the nature of autism and dyslexia; and go beyond Einstein's theory to bring about a revolution in our understanding of gravity and the dark universe. ([Read more.](#))

On this occasion Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"With every project of this calibre, we're making Europe the laboratory of the world. Our most extraordinary and creative researchers benefit from EU funding and, in turn, Europe benefits every day from its investment in knowledge and people"*.

The President of the ERC, Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, commented: *"These Consolidator Grants awarded to 372 research leaders, still in an early stage of their career, will also back some 1,500 postdocs and PhD students as team members. This is one more way in which the ERC is fostering the next generation of bright research talent, and thereby the human basis for Europe's competitiveness that conditions its economic growth."* He added: *"It's encouraging to see that the share of female grantees has increased significantly"*.

The share of female grantees in this call was 28%, an increase from the 2013 Consolidator Grant competition (24%). Furthermore, female applicants were slightly more successful than male applicants (the success rate for women was 15.2% and for men 14.9%). Overall, 15% of applicants in this competition were successful.



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The ERC grants are targeted at top researchers of any nationality based in, or willing to move to Europe. In this call, researchers of 38 different nationalities are amongst the grantees. The highest number of grants goes to German (69 grants) and French (44) scientists, followed by British (37), Spanish (33), Italian (29), Dutch (21) and Belgian (16) researchers. ([See statistics](#)).

Amongst the grantees, there are also over 30 non-Europeans (Australia, Canada, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Peru, Russia and USA).

All grantees will conduct their research in host institutions in 24 European countries, with eleven of them hosting five grantees or more. In terms of geographical location, the UK (86 grants), Germany (66), France (53), Spain (32) and the Netherlands (32) are in the lead. Researchers are also based in Italy (16), Belgium (13), Israel (12), Denmark (9), Portugal (9), Sweden (9), Austria (6), Ireland (6), Hungary (5), the Czech Republic (4), Norway (4), Finland (3), Cyprus (1) and Greece (1).

This time, eight Czech researchers are amongst the winners (four based in Czech Republic and four elsewhere), which is the highest number in all ERC competitions for this country to date. Croatia, Estonia, Iceland, Luxembourg and Romania will for the first time host one Consolidator grantee each.

[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](#) - Consolidator Grant call (indicative)

[DISCOVER MORE PROJECTS](#) in this Consolidator Grant call



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Background

Set up in 2007 by the European Commission, the European Research Council (ERC) is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. It is considered the "Champions' League of science" as every year it selects and funds the very best individual scientists to run five-year projects in Europe. Competitions are open to researchers of any nationality, age or scientific area, including Humanities and Social Sciences, hosted in a university or research centre based in the EU or in one of the countries associated to Horizon 2020. The applications are evaluated and selected after a peer-review process involving every year hundreds of renowned scientists coming from all over the world. Scientific excellence is the only selection criterion.

The ERC operates according to an "investigator-driven" (or "bottom-up") approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research, without thematic priorities. From 2007 to 2013, under the seventh EU's Research Framework Programme (FP7), the ERC's budget was €7.5 billion. Under the first pillar ("Excellent science") of the new EU Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), Horizon 2020, the ERC has a budget of over €13 billion.

To date, the ERC has funded more than 4,500 top researchers at a variety of stages in their careers and has supported over 26,000 team members, including nearly 7,000 doctoral students and about 10,000 postdoctoral researchers, who can benefit from cutting-edge research training opportunities. By offering them funding, autonomy and prestige, the ERC contributes to the development of a new generation of top researchers in Europe, who are competitive at a global level.

More than 30,000 articles featuring ERC projects have been published to date in international scientific journals. Also, the ERC is changing the scientific landscape in Europe as several countries are reforming their funding agencies or policies on the basis of the ERC approach.

The ERC consists of an independent governing body, the Scientific Council, and an implementing body, the Executive Agency. Since January 2014, the ERC President is Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon.

The ERC Consolidator Grant in brief

- For top researchers of any nationality and age, with over 7 and up to 12 years of experience after PhD, and a scientific track record showing great promise.
- Based on a simple approach: 1 researcher, 1 host institution, 1 project, 1 selection criterion: excellence.
- Host institution should be based in the European Research Area (EU Member States plus countries associated with the EU research programme). No consortia. No co-funding is required.
- Funding: up to €2.75 million per grant for up to 5 years.
- Calls for proposals: published annually. The 2015 ERC Consolidator Grant call is open until today 12 March 2015. (Updated information on [upcoming calls](#).)

The funding scheme Consolidator Grant was introduced in 2012. Previously, researchers with 7 to 12 years of experience after their PhD were eligible for the Starting Grant scheme. Due to sharply increasing numbers of applications, in 2012 the Starting Grant scheme was split into two: Starting Grant (2 to 7 years of experience after PhD) and the Consolidator Grant (7 to 12 years of experience after PhD).



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In this call, there were 2,528 applicants all in all, compared with 3,673 in the first Consolidator Grant competition. This reduction is likely to be related to the stricter [re-submission rules](#) (read p.19) for applicants, introduced last year to avoid over-subscription in ERC calls.

Around 48% of grantees are in the domain 'Physical Sciences and Engineering', about 31% in 'Life Sciences' and almost 21% in 'Social Sciences and Humanities'. The division of the budget amongst these three domains was for the first time determined on the basis of the number of applicants, and not decided beforehand by the ERC Scientific Council. The average age of the selected researchers is 39.

For more information

[ERC website](#)

[Striking ERC-funded projects](#)

[The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020](#)

[The European Research Area](#)

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