The European Research Council in a nutshell

- The European Research Council (ERC) is the first pan-European funding body supporting the best frontier research in Europe. 

- The ERC was created by the European Commission in February 2007. It is the newest, pioneering component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7), and it implements the 'Ideas' specific programme. The ERC has a total budget of € 7.5 billion (2007-2013). In November 2011, the Commission proposed a major increase of the ERC budget, to over € 13 billion, under the next Framework Programme ‘Horizon 2020’ (2014-2020).

- The ERC aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by supporting the very best scientists, scholars and engineers in any field of research. Through Europe-wide, peer-reviewed competitions - with excellence as sole selection criterion - it funds the brightest ideas at the frontiers of knowledge. There are neither thematic priorities, nor geographical quotas.

- The ERC competitions are open to top researchers from anywhere in the world, provided they spend at least half of their research time in Europe.

- Being 'investigator-driven', or 'bottom-up', in nature, the ERC approach allows researchers to identify new opportunities and directions in all fields of research, rather than being led by pre-set priorities. By challenging excellent scientists, the ERC expects that its grants will help to bring about new and unpredictable scientific and technological discoveries - the kind that can form the basis of new industries, markets, and broader social innovations of the future.

- The ERC has three core grant schemes: 'ERC Starting Grants', targeted at early-career, emerging research leaders, 'ERC Consolidator Grants', aimed at already independent excellent researchers, and 'ERC Advanced Grants', supporting already established top researchers. Since its launch, the ERC has funded over 2,700 projects throughout Europe.

- Two additional funding initiatives with a very limited budget exist since 2011: (i) For exceptional proposals, the 'ERC Synergy Grants' were introduced on a pilot basis to support a few small groups of researchers working together on the same project; (ii) 'ERC Proof of Concept' funding is open only to ERC grantees in order for them to establish the innovation potential of ideas arising from their ERC-funded frontier research projects.

- Each ERC grantee employs on average six additional team members, which contributes to the training of a new generation of excellent scientists. By the end of FP7, it is estimated that the ERC will have funded over 4,000 grantees, and will also have supported over 24,000 people, including nearly 6,000 doctoral students and more than 8,000 postdocs.

- In addition to being a funding organisation, the ERC aims to strengthen and shape the European research system and it already has an impact on the European Research Area. The ERC is helping to create international benchmarks and to trigger new thinking about research management and science policy at a national level. Ultimately, the ERC aims to make the European research base more prepared to respond to the needs of a knowledge-based society and provide Europe with the capabilities to meet global challenges.

- The ERC consists of a Scientific Council, its governing body, which sets the ERC's scientific strategy, and an Executive Agency, in charge of its implementation.

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1 In the EU or the FP7 associated countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey)
ERC Milestones

March 2004 European Council agrees on the need for a dedicate European funding scheme for excellent basic research
April 2005 European Commission proposes the creation of an ERC, funded through the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7)
Oct 2005 ERC Scientific Council meets for the first time
Feb 2007 ERC is formally established and launched
April 2007 First ERC call for proposals
July 2009 ERC Executive Agency becomes autonomous
July 2009 Review of the ERC concluded by an independent expert panel
June 2010 ERC has funded 1000 top researchers
March 2011 Introduction of the ERC Proof of Concept funding scheme and its first call
July 2011 Announcement of the new ERC Synergy funding scheme
Task Force conclusions on the future of the ERC
Feb 2012 ERC celebrates its fifth anniversary

Facts and Figures

- Location: Brussels, Belgium
- Established: 2 February 2007
- Budget: € 7.5 billion (2007-2013)
- Budget year 2012: € 1.75 billion
- Grant sizes:
  - Starting Grants up to € 2 million per grant
  - Consolidator Grants up to € 2.75 million per grant
  - Advanced Grants up to € 3.5 million per grant
  - Proof of Concept up to € 150 000 per grant
  - Synergy Grants up to € 15 million per grant
- Number of submissions since ERC launch: over 31,000
- Number of Starting and Advanced Grants' calls since ERC launch: 9 completed and 3 ongoing

Who is Who

ERC President: 
Prof. Helga Nowotny

ERC Secretary-General: 
Prof. Donald B. Dingwell

ERC Vice-Presidents: 
Prof. Pavel Exner
Prof. Carl-Henrik Heldin

ERC Executive Agency Director: 
Pablo Amor

Former ERC President (Feb 2007 - March 2010): Prof. Fotis Kafatos
Former ERC Secretary-General (Feb 2007 - July 2009): Prof. Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker
Former ERC Secretary-General (July 2009 - Sept 2010): Prof. Andreu Mas-Colell
Former ERC Executive Agency Director ad int.: Jack Metthey

Members of the ERC Scientific Council

For more information, visit the ERC website at: http://erc.europa.eu
Follow us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/ERC_Research
Follow us on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/EuropeanResearchCouncil
ERC grantees by country of Host Institution*
(*) current host institution; data as of 03/05/2012

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AdG = Advanced Grant  
StG = Starting grant
ERC grantees by nationality (as declared by the grantee)

Nationality

EU

Association countries

Other countries

Number of Principal Investigators

Total StG 2007 - 2011
Total AdG 2008 - 2011

ERC 2011: StG 1467, AdG 1099
Grantees by Host Institutions (and their nationalities)*
(*) first legal signatories of the grant agreement; data as of January 2012

ERC Starting grant calls 2007 – 2011
ERC Advanced grant calls 2008 – 2011

Grantees moving to the country
("ERA" & "non-ERA" nationals)

Grantees staying in the country:
"Non-ERA" nationals

Grantees staying in the country:
other "ERA" nationals

Grantees staying in the country:
nationals of that country

UK DE FR NL CH IT ES IL SE BE AT DK FI HU NO EL IE PT PL CZ CY BG EE TR IS
Locations of grantees across the EU and associate countries (*)
(*) first legal signatories of the grant agreement; data as of 03/05/2012

ERC Starting grant calls 2007 – 2011
ERC Advanced grant calls 2008 – 2011