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ERC Starting Grants: 400 bright minds awarded over €628 million

Under embargo until 12:00 noon CEST on 5 September 2023. The links in the press release will only be active after this date.

The European Research Council (ERC) has announced the awarding of 400 Starting Grants to young scientists and scholars across Europe. The grants - totalling €628 million - support cutting-edge research in a wide range of fields, from medicine and physics to social sciences and humanities. They will help researchers at the beginning of their careers to launch their own projects, form their teams and pursue their best ideas.

This funding, part of the EU's Horizon Europe programme, will be invested in scientific projects spanning all disciplines of research. For example, a geochemist in the Netherlands will study Venus' atmosphere to better understand habitability beyond Earth; a computer scientist in Germany seeks to make virtual reality more inclusive to physically disabled people; a geneticist in the UK aims to analyse parasites that cause malaria; and a researcher in Israel is set to investigate how algorithms are used at work to supervise employees.

ERC President Professor Maria Leptin said: "It is part of our mission to give early-career talent the independence to pursue ambitious curiosity-driven research that can shape our future. In this latest round of Starting Grants, we saw one of the highest shares of female grantees to date, which I hope will continue to rise. Congratulations to all winners and good luck on your path to discovery."

Successful applicants of this call will carry out their projects at universities and research centres in 24 countries in Europe, with the highest number of projects hosted in Germany (87 grants), France (50), Netherlands (44) and the UK (32). They come from Europe and beyond, with 44 nationalities being represented, notably Germans (66 researchers), Italians (57), French (32), British (24). Fourteen Europeans who are currently based in the US will carry out their ERC-funded projects in Europe.

This competition attracted over 2,696 proposals, which were reviewed by panels of renowned researchers from around the world. The overall success rate was 14.8%. The grants are expected to create more than 2,600 jobs for postdoctoral fellows, PhD students and other staff at the host institutions.

Female researchers were awarded some 43% of grants, an increase from 39% in 2022. The Starting Grants calls have attracted more than 58,000 submissions since 2007. During this time, the number of proposals submitted by women has increased from around 30% to more than 40%. [See more statistics.](#)

The statistics and final list of successful candidates are provisional. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom allows for



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associating the UK to the current EU research and innovation funding programme, Horizon Europe, subject to the adoption of a Protocol. As this Protocol has not been adopted so far, the UK is still considered “non-associated” to Horizon Europe. Therefore, the successful proposals of applicants based in a country in the process of associating to Horizon Europe will be eligible for funding only if the relevant Horizon Europe association agreement applies by the time of the signature of the grant agreement. However, successful applicants from UK host institutions can still be funded, provided that they move to a host institution in an eligible country.

About the ERC

The ERC, set up by the European Union in 2007, is the premier European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. It funds creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based across Europe. The ERC offers four core grant schemes: Starting Grants, Consolidator Grants, Advanced Grants and Synergy Grants. With its additional Proof of Concept Grant scheme, the ERC helps grantees to bridge the gap between their pioneering research and early phases of its commercialisation. The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the Scientific Council. Since November 2021, Maria Leptin is the President of the ERC. The overall ERC budget from 2021 to 2027 is more than €16 billion, as part of the Horizon Europe programme, currently under the responsibility of European Commission Executive Vice President Margarete Vestager.

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More info

[Examples of projects to be funded](#)

[Statistics](#)

[List of all selected researchers](#)

Lists of selected researchers by domain:

- [Physical Sciences and Engineering](#)
- [Life Sciences](#)
- [Social Sciences and Humanities](#)



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