

# The European Research Council

ERC in Horizon Europe:  
some novelties in WP 2024  
and 'widening' initiatives

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ERC Executive Agency

Webinar for Slovenia 15/6/2023



**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

# ERC mission

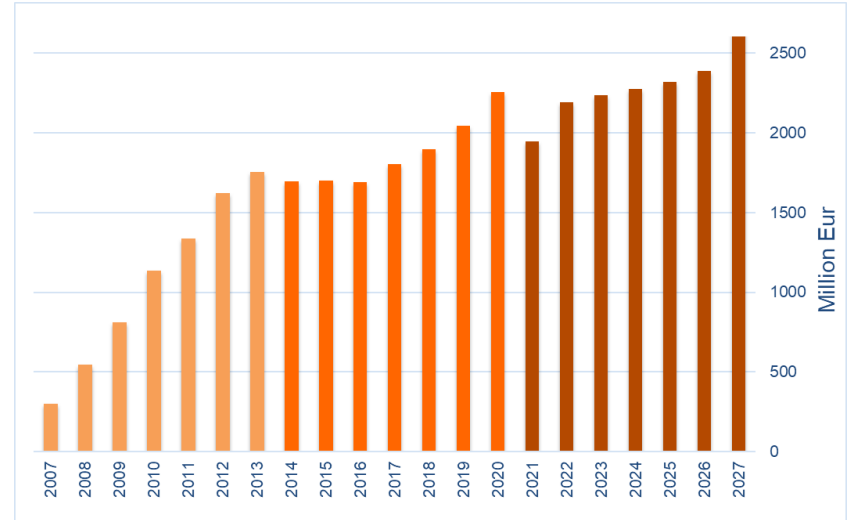
Established by the EU in 2007 “to reinforce excellence, dynamism and creativity in European research”, ERC supports excellence in frontier research through a bottom-up, individual-based, pan-European competition.

## Budget

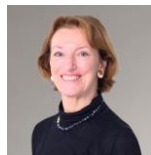
€ 16 billion (2021-2027) – 2.3 billion €/year  
€ 13 billion (2014-2020) - 1.9 billion €/year  
€ 7.5 billion (2007-2013) - 1.1 billion €/year

## Scientific freedom

- Scientific excellence as the sole criterion
- Support to the individual scientist – *no consortia!*
- No predetermined subjects – “*bottom-up*”
- Support for frontier research in all fields of science and humanities
- International peer-review



# ERC Scientific Council



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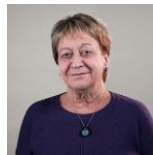
Liselotte HØJGAARD  
(Medicine)



Dirk INZÉ  
(Plant Biology)



László LOVÁSZ  
(Mathematics)



Chryssa KOUVELIOTOU  
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Giovanni SARTOR  
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(Materials Theory)



Alice VALKÁROVÁ  
(Physics)



Milena ŽIC FUCHS  
(Linguistics)



# ERC structure

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## The ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure - ERC Executive Agency

- Executes annual work programme as established by the Scientific Council
- Implements calls for proposals and provides information and support to applicants
- Organises peer review evaluation
- Establishes and manages grant agreements
- Administers scientific and financial aspects and follow-up of grant agreements
- Carries out communications activities and ensures information dissemination to ERC stakeholders



# ERC in figures



Over **13,000**  
top researchers funded since  
the ERC creation in 2007



Over **90,000**  
researchers and other professionals  
employed in ERC research teams



Over **2,400**  
patents and other IPR applications  
generated by ERC funding



Over **400**  
start-ups identified as founded  
or co-founded by ERC grantees



Over **220,000**  
articles from ERC projects published  
in scientific journals



Over **900** research institutions hosting  
ERC grantees – universities, public or  
private research centres in the EU or  
Associated Countries



**89**  
nationalities of  
grant holders



**12** Nobel Prizes, **6** Fields Medals, **11** Wolf Prizes  
and other prizes awarded to ERC grantees

# ERC-funded projects by country of Host Institution

21 ERC main grants  
based in **Slovenia**

Total value over 40 million  
euro

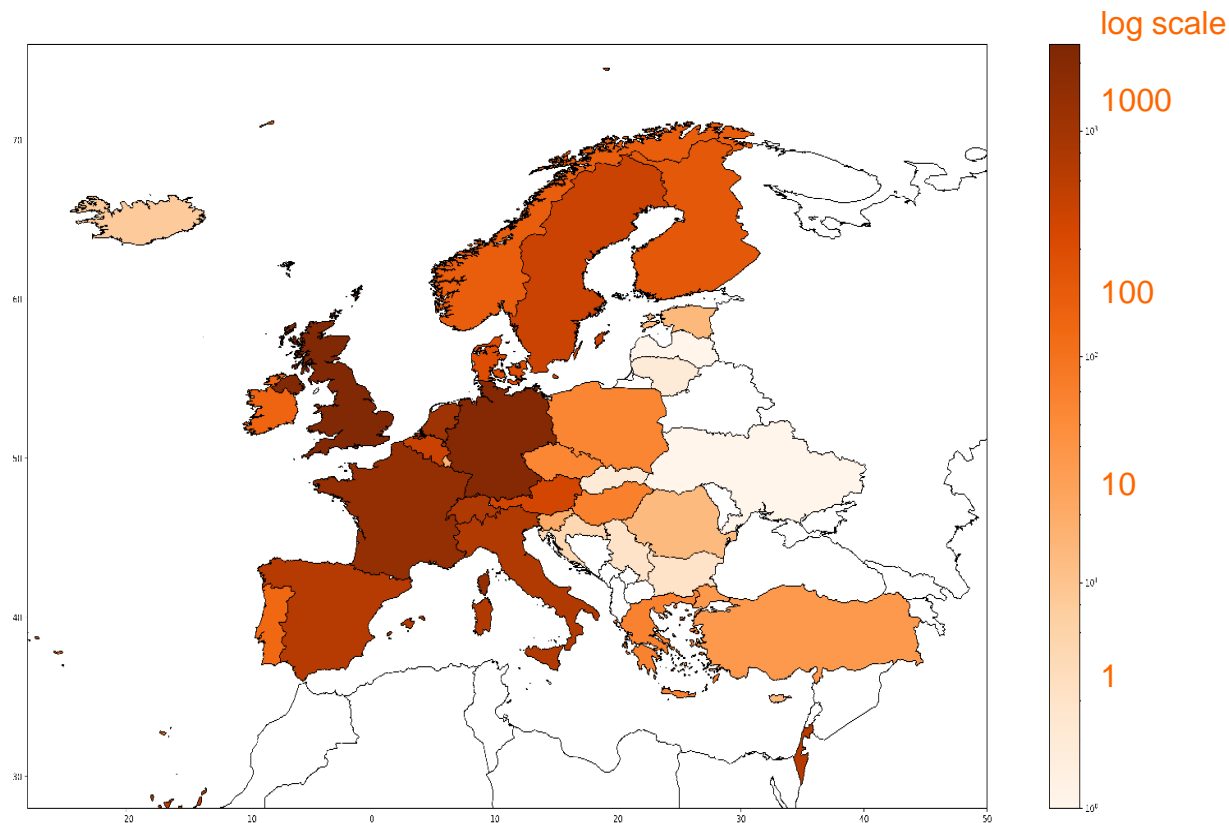
Success rate:

1% in FP7

5% in H2020

8% in Horizon Europe

Host countries as of  
28/03/2023



# ERC grant schemes

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## Starting Grants

starters (2-7 years after PhD) up to € 1.5 Mio  
for 5 years



## Consolidator Grants

Consolidators (7-12 years after PhD) up to € 2 Mio  
for 5 years



## Advanced Grants

track-record of significant research achievements in the  
last 10 years up to € 2.5 Mio  
for 5 years



## Synergy Grants

2 – 4 Principal Investigators up to € 10.0 Mio for 6  
years  
1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated  
Countries



## Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation  
lump sum €150,000 for ERC grant holders

# Why to apply for ERC grant?

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ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility to:

- work on a research topic of own choice
- gain financial autonomy for five years
- negotiate the best conditions of work with the host institution
- attract excellent team members and collaborators from anywhere in the world
- move with the grant to any place in Europe if desired (“portability of grants”)
- win additional funding



## Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

### Excellence of the Research Project

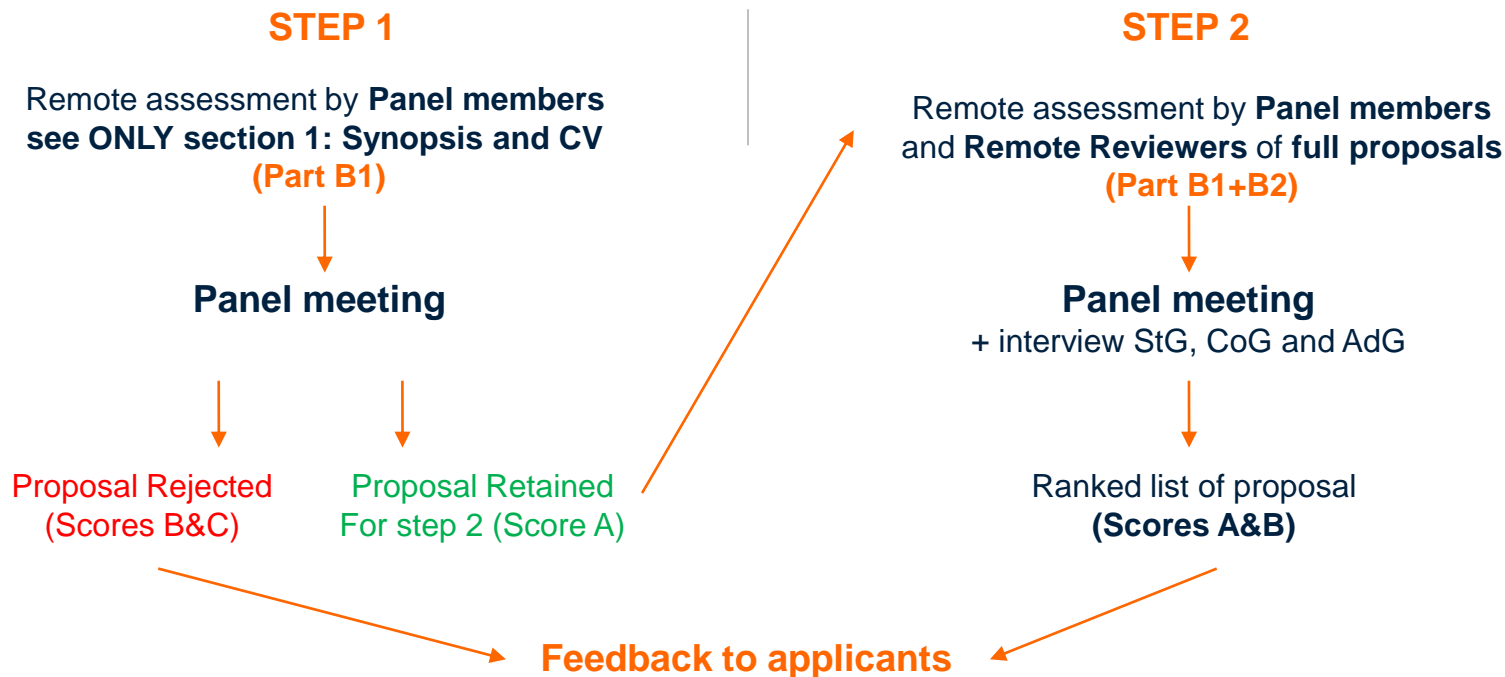
- Ground breaking nature
- Scientific impact
- Scientific Approach

### Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Commitment

# Evaluation: process

For individuals calls: a single submission but a two-step evaluation



# Evaluation panel structure (2024)

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## Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering



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## Physical Sciences & Engineering

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

## Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts (new in WP 2024)

# Novelties in the ERC Work Programme 2024 (I)

## Research assessment

### Focus on the research project



- ERC panels will primarily evaluate the ground-breaking nature, ambition, and feasibility of the project.
- They will also evaluate the intellectual capacity, creativity, and commitment of the applicant, with a focus on the extent to which she/he has the excellence and required scientific expertise to successfully execute the proposed project.

### Broad assessment of the applicant



- Curriculum Vitae and Track Record: one document, structured
- Up to 10 research outputs that demonstrate how the applicant has advanced knowledge
- Selected examples of significant peer recognition
- Noteworthy contributions to the research community, career breaks or unusual career paths. These will not in themselves be evaluated but are important to provide context.

# Novelties in the ERC Work Programme 2024 (II)

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## Evaluation procedure



- At most 44 proposals to step 2
- Proposals scored A at step 1 but not taken to interview may be re-submitted the following year.

## Lump-sum funding for Advanced grants



- 2024 Advanced grants: awarded as a **single lump sum**
- Final payment will be based on the work carried out and reported, irrespective of the “successful” outcome of the project activities.
- Additional funding (equipment, access to research facilities) remains available and will be made part of the lump sum.
- Portability of grant maintained.

# Calendar WP 2024 (tbc)

	Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant	Advanced Grant	Synergy Grant	Proof of Concept Grant
Call opens	11/07/2023	12/09/2023	29/05/2024	12/07/2023	16/11/2023
Deadline to submit applications	24/10/2023	12/12/2023	29/08/2024	08/11/2023	14/03/2024
					17/09/2024
Budget	€601m	€584m	€578m	€400m	€30m

# ERC Widening initiatives: Objectives

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- To capitalise on the full European potential for frontier research without departing from the ERC's principle of excellence
- Contribute to a truly inclusive European culture of competitiveness in science
- Strengthen participation in ERC calls by researchers from less research-performing regions
- Facilitate policy dialogue with relevant stakeholders to promote national and local support to promising scientists in less research-performing regions

# How: Concrete Measures

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- Continuously monitoring the participation to the ERC calls and success rates
- Guaranteeing a fair evaluation processes
- Raising awareness on ERC among potential applicants and host institutions
- Providing recommendations to national policy-makers, such as:
  - ✓ support ERC finalists with national funding
  - ✓ support ERC applicants improve their proposals
  - ✓ make participation in ERC calls a component in national evaluations
  - ✓ ensure a fair and competitive academic environment



# ERC Visiting Fellowship Programmes (VFP)

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ERC promotes the efforts of national and regional authorities that set up and fund mobility programmes to allow potential ERC candidates to visit and gain experience with ERC-funded teams

- Duration of visits 1-6 months (*up to 2019 the minimum duration was 3 month*)
- Visiting fellows commit to apply for an ERC grant in specified timeframe
- Visiting fellows need to have a letter of support of the proposed host researcher and institution when applying
- National/regional funding agencies cover the travel and salary costs of the fellows for the duration of the visit
- <https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/additional-opportunities#Visiting%20Research%20Fellowships>

## Slovenia:

18 researchers visited ERC teams

15 applied to ERC calls

2 won an ERC grant

# ERC Mentoring Initiative

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- Some national programmes lack access to international expertise to mentor ERC applicants
- To address the problem, ERC identifies a pool of mentors among its grantees and former evaluators, available to provide training, scientific feedback, and other forms of mentoring to ERC applicants in less performing countries
- How: ERC launches yearly calls for interest among its grantees and former evaluators. The list is provided to target countries via the National Contact Points. The local offices in charge of the national/regional support programme should coordinate their participation in the ERC Mentoring Initiative with the [National Contact Points](#).
- Will Slovenia participate?.

<https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/additional-opportunities#ERC-Mentoring-Initiative>

# Where can you find more information?

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## Videos - ERC Classes

- What to consider before applying
- How to fill in the application
- The interview
- How the evaluation works.

[Click here to watch!](#)

On WP 2024 see:

[Evaluation of ERC grant proposals: what to expect in 2024 | ERC \(europa.eu\)](#)

# Thank You!

More information: [erc.europa.eu](https://erc.europa.eu)



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