

# The European Research Council

Funding Frontier Research

Maria Leptin  
ERC President

Ljubljana, 8 June 2023



**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

# ERC mission

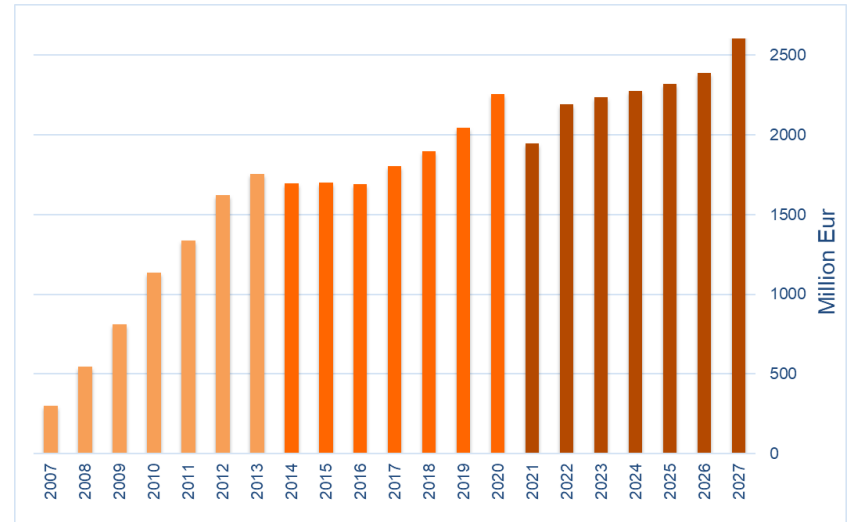
Established by the EU in 2007 “to reinforce excellence, dynamism and creativity in European research”, ERC supports excellence in frontier research through a bottom-up, individual-based, pan-European competition.

## Budget

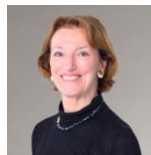
- € 16 billion (2021-2027) – 2.3 billion €/year
- € 13 billion (2014-2020) - 1.9 billion €/year
- € 7.5 billion (2007-2013) - 1.1 billion €/year

## 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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(Linguistics)



# ERC in figures



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



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



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



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



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



**89**  
nationalities of  
grant holders



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



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



# In the top league of funders in the world

*"The ERC had the highest category normalised citation impact, the highest percentage of papers in the world's top 1% and the highest percentage of papers involving international co-authorship of the 50 funders most frequently acknowledged by authors in the Web of Science between 2007 and 2016."*

(Clarivate Analytics –  
"The European Research Council – The first 10 years")



Table 2. The 50 most frequently acknowledged funders in the Web of Science sorted by category normalised citation impact, 2007-16\*

Name	Papers	Category normalized citation impact	Percentage top 1% papers	Percentage internationally collaborative papers
European Research Council (ERC)	40,422	2.46	4.84%	59.24%
Wellcome Trust	41,040	2.10	3.60%	55.62%
United States Department of Energy (DOE)	123,864	2.09	3.92%	39.39%
NIH National Cancer Institute (NCI)	55,496	2.08	3.68%	29.69%
Medical Research Council UK	38,442	2.08	3.76%	48.81%
NIH National Heart Lung & Blood Institute (NHLBI)	30,092	1.95	3.27%	28.81%
Swiss National Science Foundation	50,598	1.90	3.01%	59.03%
Federal Ministry of Education & Research (BMBF)	43,462	1.75	2.68%	48.12%
National Institutes of Health (NIH) – USA <sup>†</sup>	617,950	1.73	2.61%	28.37%
National Science Foundation (NSF)	380,893	1.73	2.76%	36.36%
National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia	40,898	1.70	2.31%	42.24%
Australian Research Council	65,631	1.65	2.26%	50.65%
French National Research Agency	41,385	1.62	2.04%	47.65%
Ministry of Science and Technology, China	32,098	1.61	2.49%	28.98%
Swedish Research Council	41,161	1.60	2.09%	57.87%
Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)	60,697	1.58	2.07%	43.01%

# Impact beyond science

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- 44% of ERC grants generated research subsequently cited in patent applications
- Proportion by domain:
  - Life sciences 61%
  - Physical sciences and engineering 46%
  - Social sciences and humanities 7%
- predominance in: biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, computer technology, organic fine chemistry, measurement, and semiconductors
- 11% of ERC grantees created companies or transferred results of their research to pre-existing companies

[https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-01/Assessing\\_the\\_Influence\\_ERC-funded\\_Research\\_Patented\\_Inventions.pdf](https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-01/Assessing_the_Influence_ERC-funded_Research_Patented_Inventions.pdf)



# Novelties in the ERC Work Programme 2024 (I)

## Research assessment

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### 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.



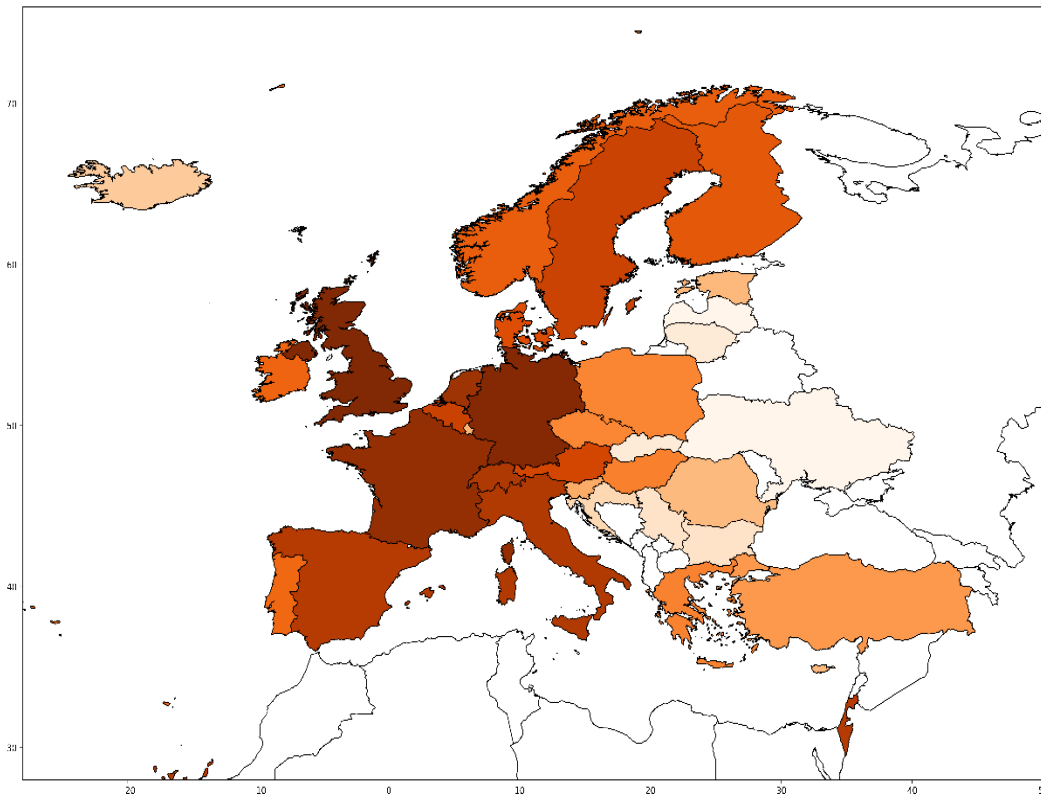
# ERC-funded projects by country of Host Institution

21 ERC main grants  
based in Slovenia

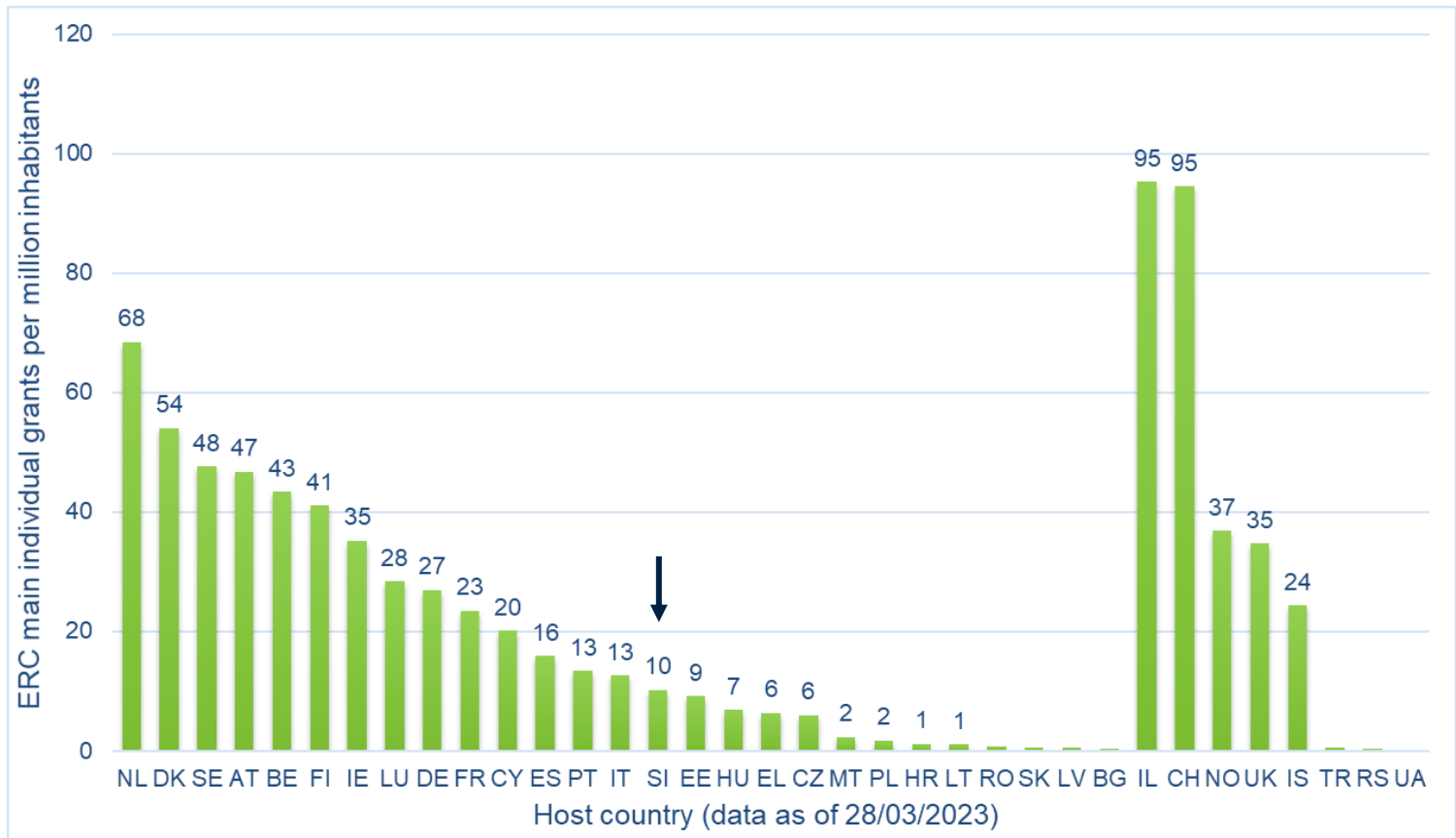
Total value over 40  
million euro

Success rate:  
1% in FP7  
5% in H2020  
8% in Horizon Europe

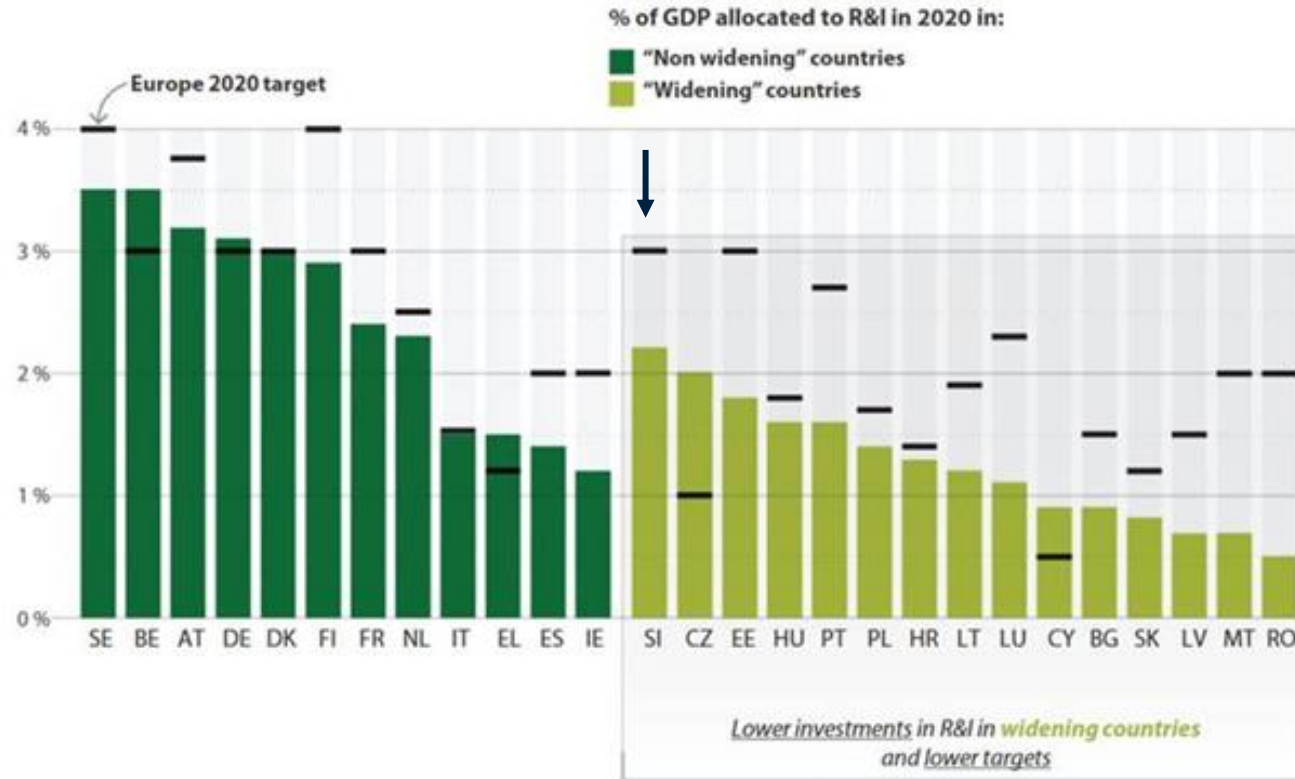
Host countries as of  
28/03/2023



# ERC main grants per population

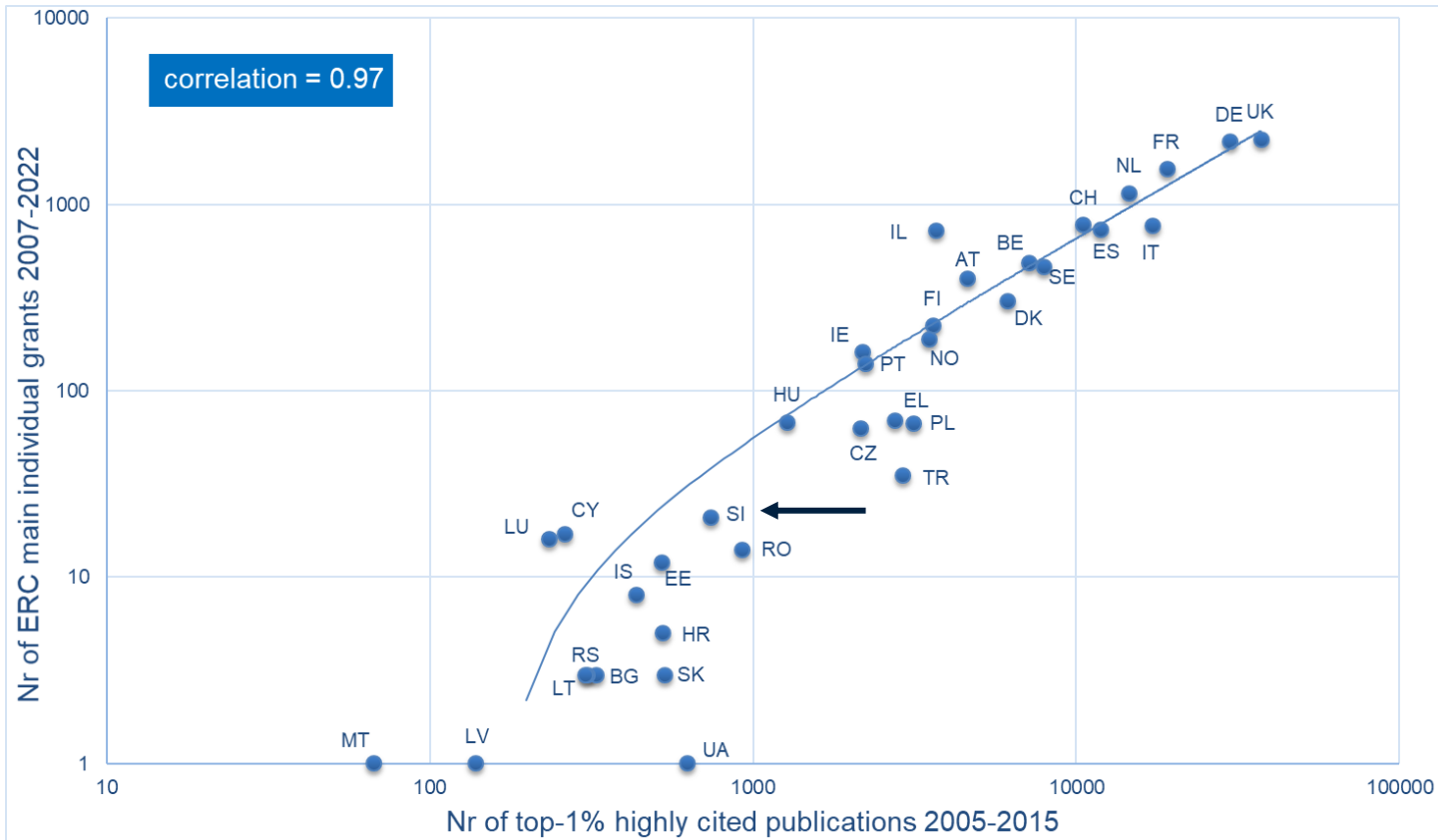


# % of GDP allocated to R&I in 2020 (EU countries)



Source: ECA, based on Eurostat data for actual figures, Europe 2020 Strategy for targets.

# ERC main grants versus top publications



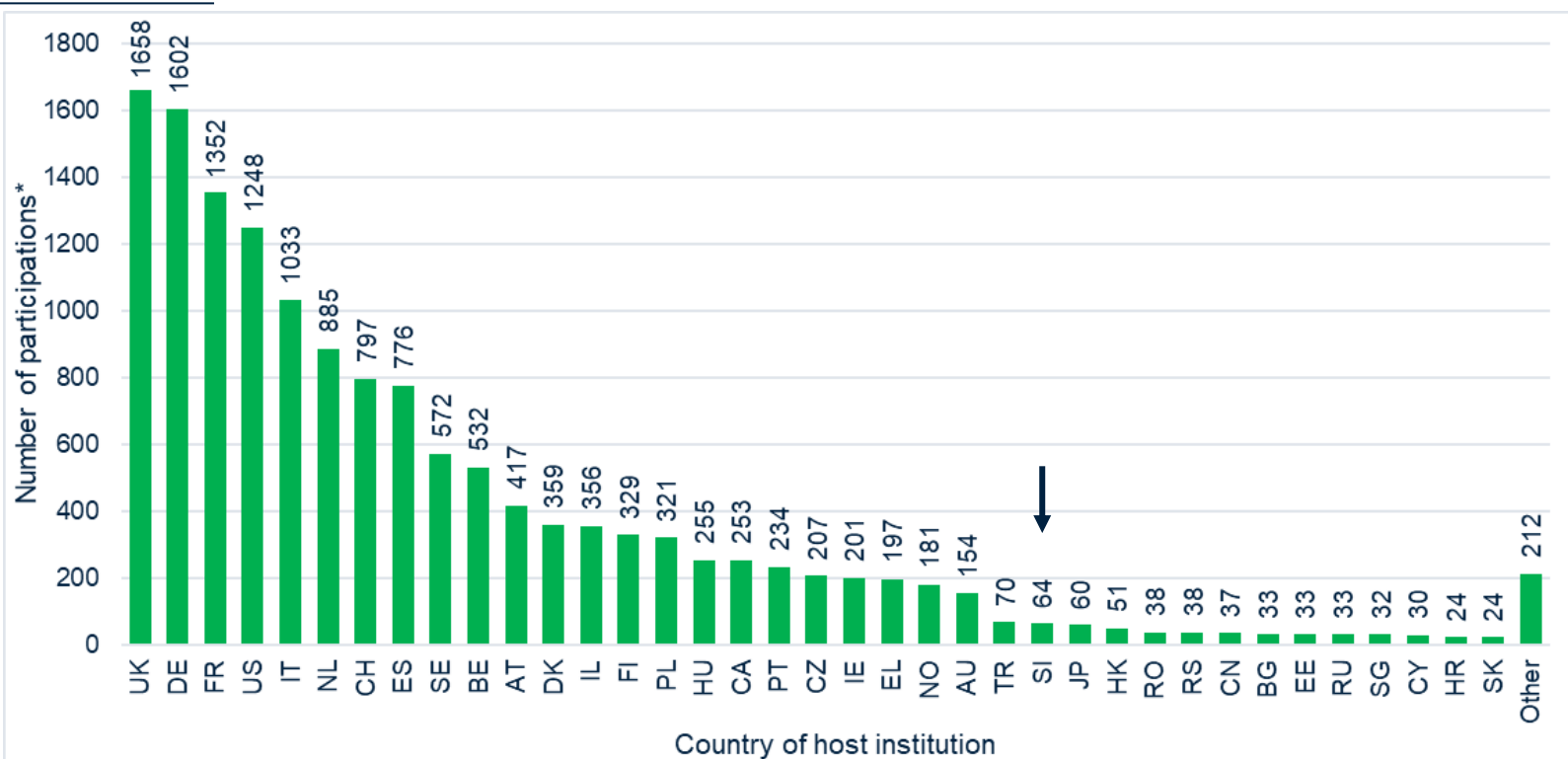
# Summary of ERC grants in Slovenia

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Host Institution (data as of 28/03/2023)	StG	CoG	AdG	Total	PoC	Synergy grantees
University of Ljubljana	3	1	5	9	1	1
Jozef Stefan Institute	3		3	6	2	
National Institute of Chemistry	1		3	4	2	
InnoRenew CoE Izola		1		1		
Science and Research Centre Koper (ZRS Koper)			1	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

- In addition, 10 nationals of Slovenia are based with their ERC main grants abroad (all of them already abroad at the time of application).

# ERC panel members by country of host institution



\* Number of instances that experts based in a certain country contributed to the ERC peer review (based on the ERC calls StG, CoG, AdG and SyG 2007-2022) – total number of participations:14,698

# ERC measures for widening European participation

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## ERC Visiting Fellowship Programmes

- for potential ERC applicants to visit and gain experience with ERC-funded teams
- duration of the visits: 1-6 months
- visiting fellows must apply for an ERC grant in a specified timeframe
- national/regional agencies cover the travel and salary costs of the fellows for the duration of the visit

Slovenia:

18 researchers visited ERC teams

15 applied to ERC calls

2 won an ERC grant

## ERC Mentoring Initiative

- ERC Grantees and former expert evaluators to provide training, scientific feedback, and other forms of mentoring to ERC applicants
- Yearly calls for interest among its grantees and former expert evaluators => list provided to target countries via the National Contact Points (NCPs)



# Thank You!

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



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