

The European Research Council



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**ERC: an opportunity for
researchers in Europe and Georgia**

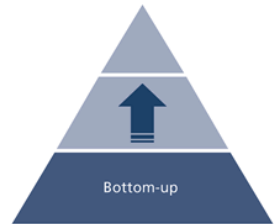
**EU H2020 Association Workshop
Tbilisi, 31 May 2016**

**Alice Rajewsky
ERC Executive Agency
Head of Sector Humanities**

What is ERC?

The ERC supports excellence in frontier research through a bottom-up, individual-based, pan-European competition

Budget: € 13 billion (2014-2020) - 1.9 billion €/year
€ 7.5 billion (2007-2013) - 1.1 billion €/year



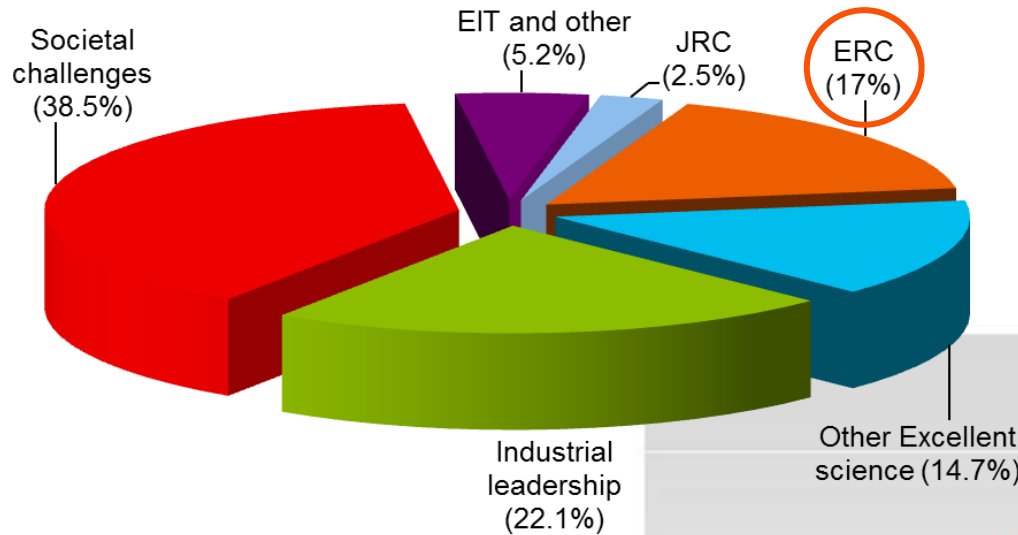
Legislation

- Scientific governance: independent Scientific Council with 22 members including the ERC President; full authority over funding strategy
- Support by the ERC Executive Agency (autonomous)
- Excellence as the only criterion

Strategy

- Support for the individual scientist – no networks!
- Global peer-review
- No predetermined subjects (bottom-up)
- Support of frontier research in all fields of science and humanities

ERC Horizon 2020 Budget



**ERC Budget
€ 13 billion**



ERC Grant Schemes

Starting Grants

starters
(2-7 years after PhD)
up to € 2.0 Mio
for 5 years

Consolidator Grants

consolidators
(7-12 years after PhD)
up to € 2.75 Mio
for 5 years

Advanced Grants

track-record of
significant research
achievements in the
last 10 years
up to € 3.5 Mio
for 5 years

Proof-of-Concept

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

Creative Freedom to Individual Grantee



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ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility

- to work on a research topic of **own choice**, with a team of **own choice**
- to gain true **financial autonomy** for 5 years
- to negotiate with the host institution the **best conditions** of work
- to attract **top team members** (EU and non-EU) **and collaborators**
- to move with the grant to any place in Europe/associated countries (**portability of grants**)
- **to attract additional funding and gain recognition**; ERC is a quality label

ERC evaluation criterion



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- **Excellence** of the Research Project
 - ✓ Ground breaking nature
 - ✓ Potential impact on the field
 - ✓ Scientific Approach

- **Excellence** of the Principal Investigator
 - ✓ Intellectual capacity
 - ✓ Creativity
 - ✓ Commitment

Evaluation Panel Structure (2016 calls)



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Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry
- LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology
- LS3 Cellular and Developmental Biology
- LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology
- LS5 Neurosciences and Neural Disorders
- LS6 Immunity and Infection
- LS7 Diagnostic Tools, Therapies and Public Health
- LS8 Evolutionary, Population and Environmental Biology
- LS9 Applied Life Sciences and Non-Medical Biotechnology

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 Process Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science

Social Sciences and Humanities

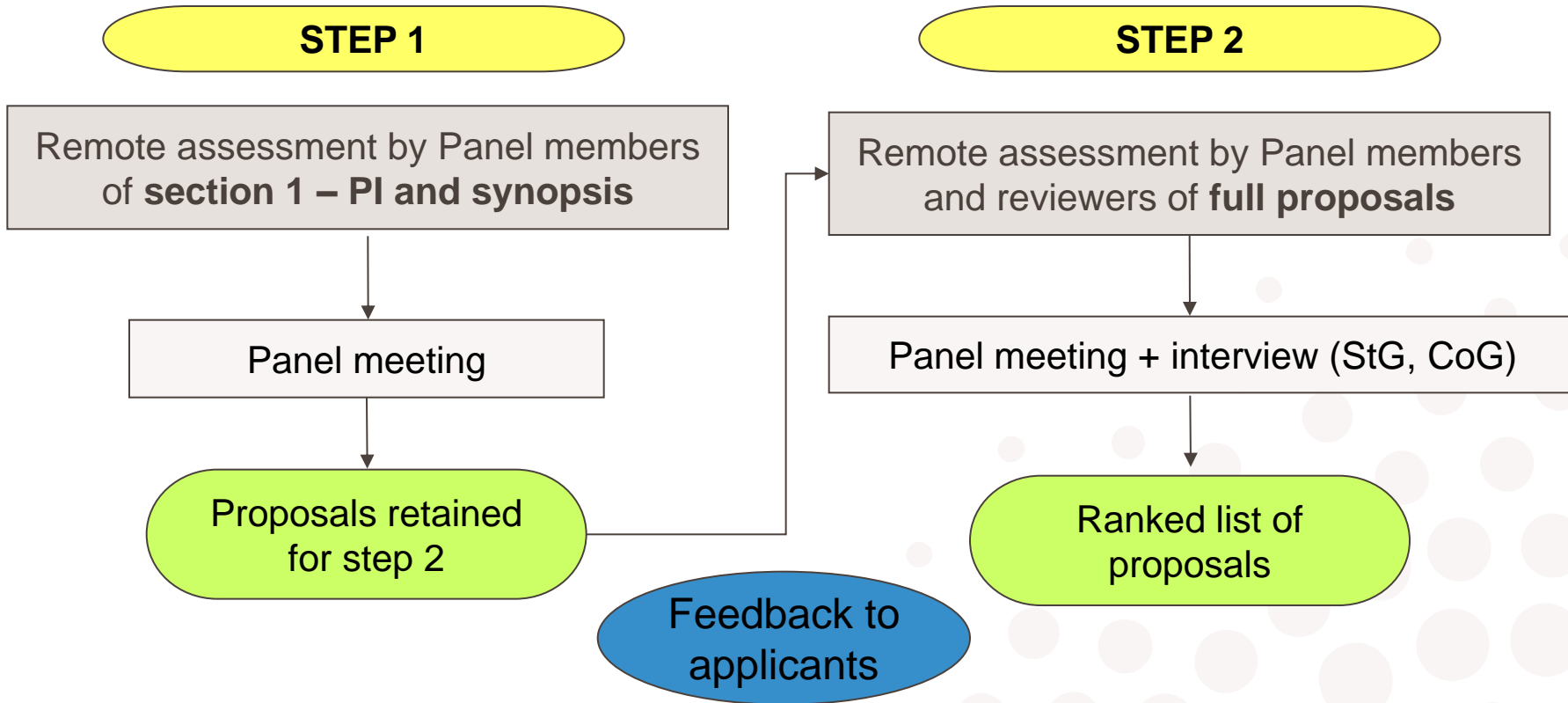
- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Values, Environment and Space
- SH3 The Social World, Diversity, Population
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Cultures and Cultural Production
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past

ERC Evaluation process



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- Balance between generalist + specialized reviews
- Appropriate treatment of interdisciplinary proposals

After 9 Years



Scientific breakthroughs

70%

of completed projects led to key scientific advancements



Key figures

6,000

projects funded

40,000

researchers and experts employed in ERC teams

€10 billion



Scientific impact

95,000

articles in top scientific journals



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Funding top talent
from anywhere
in the world



Supporting young talent

64%

of grants for early-career researchers



ERC as a model in Member States

15

EU countries set up ERC-like structures/funding schemes



Prestigious prizes including

5

Nobel Prizes

5

Wolf Prizes

3

Field Medals



Horizon 2020
European Union Funding
for Research & Innovation

International Researchers



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Researchers from anywhere in the world can apply for ERC grants

(any nationality, any age, any current place of work)

ERC offers flexibility and support:

- Additional “start-up” funding for scientists moving to Europe and countries associated to H2020 – **like Georgia**
- Grantee can keep affiliation with home institute outside Europe
'brain circulation' rather than 'brain drain'
- Team members can be based outside Europe/associated countries
- Grant is portable across Europe/associated countries
- Some European countries/host institutions offer top-up funds

32 Non-ERA Nationalities (PIs)

Almost 8% of all ERC grants to principal investigators of non-ERA nationality

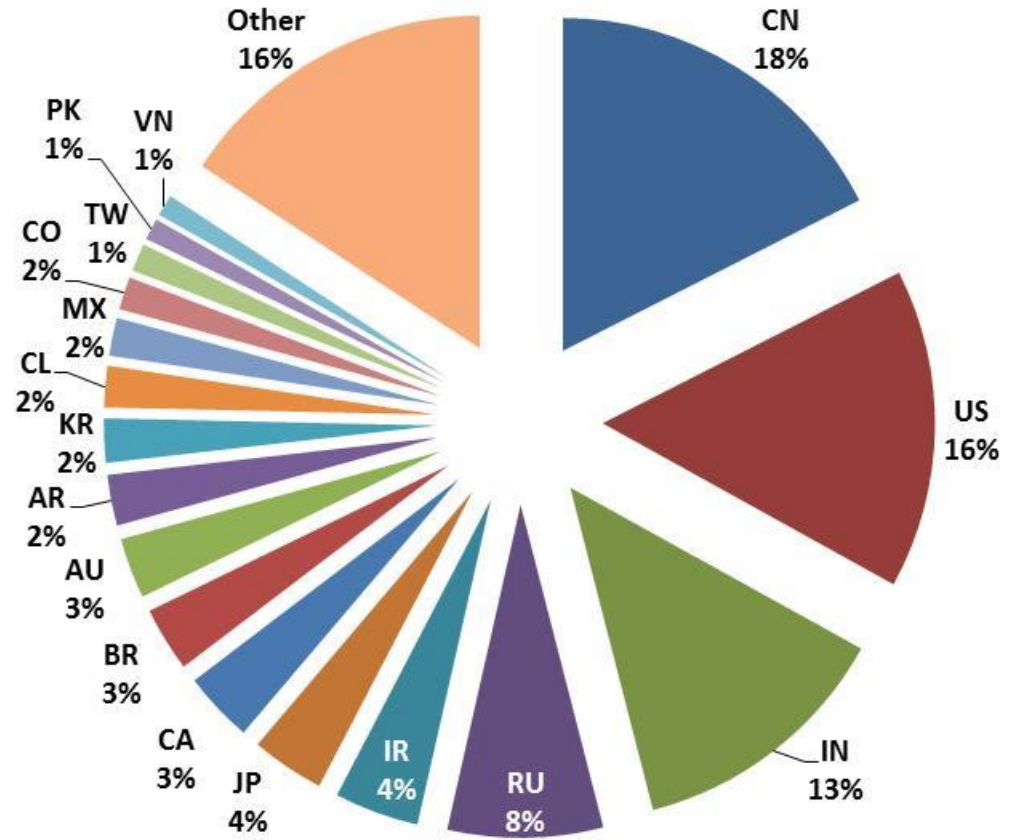
Non-ERA Principal Investigators	Starting and Consolidator grants	Advanced grants	Total grants
USA	121	78	199
Canada	43	9	52
Russia	29	8	37
Australia	29	4	33
India	31	2	33
Japan	18	1	19
China	16	0	16
New Zealand	9	4	13
Argentina	9	0	9
Other	42	7	49
Total	347	113	460

Attracting Researchers to Europe

Nationality of ERC project teams (PIs not included)
Analysis of 1,901 Starting and Advanced Grants

EU: 71%
Assoc. Countries: 10%
non-ERA: 17%
unknown: 2%

+ 6,500 non-ERA team members most from China, US, India, and Russia



Implementing arrangements

Key Facts



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- Opportunity for researchers based outside Europe and supported by foreign agencies to visit ERC research teams.
- The foreign researchers must be **excellent** (already receiving competitive funding)
- The **foreign scientist** is the one taking the **initiative** in the "*matchmaking*" (it is not the ERC/the ERC PI/the foreign agency...)
- The **ERC does not intervene** in the selection of the visitors.
- Cost of the visit are covered by the foreign agency and the grant of the receiving PI.

- USA (2012)
- Republic of Korea (2013)
- Argentina (2015)
- China (2015)
- Japan (2015)
- South Africa (2015)
- Mexico (2015)

**Expected next ERC call
for expression of
interest:**

October 2016

How to prepare an ERC proposal?

- Have a bright, original and exciting idea
- Design a project and team structure to implement the idea
- Be ambitious – "think big"...but demonstrate feasibility
- Write proposal for generalists *and* specialists
- Choose the best location for your project
- Practice for the interview at step 2 (StG, CoG)
- Read carefully the "Information for Applicants"

Testimonial



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Professor Georgi Dvali

Born in Tbilisi, PhD: Tbilisi State University

Professor of Physics at New York University and at Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, Germany;
Director at Max Planck Institute for Physics

Awarded an ERC Advanced Grant in 2013:

"UV-Completion through Bose-Einstein-Condensation: A Quantum Model for Black Holes"

1,2 Mio € over 5 years, start date 1 February 2014
Host institution: LMU Munich, Germany

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Thank you for your attention!

alice-xenia.rajewsky@ec.europa.eu