

The European Research Council

ERC funding opportunities in Horizon Europe

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European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

WHAT IS THE ERC ?

ERC Is Different

Scientific Governance

- Independent Scientific Council with 22 members including the ERC President; full authority over funding strategy
- Support by a Dedicated Implementation Structure (ERC Executive Agency)

Scientific Freedom

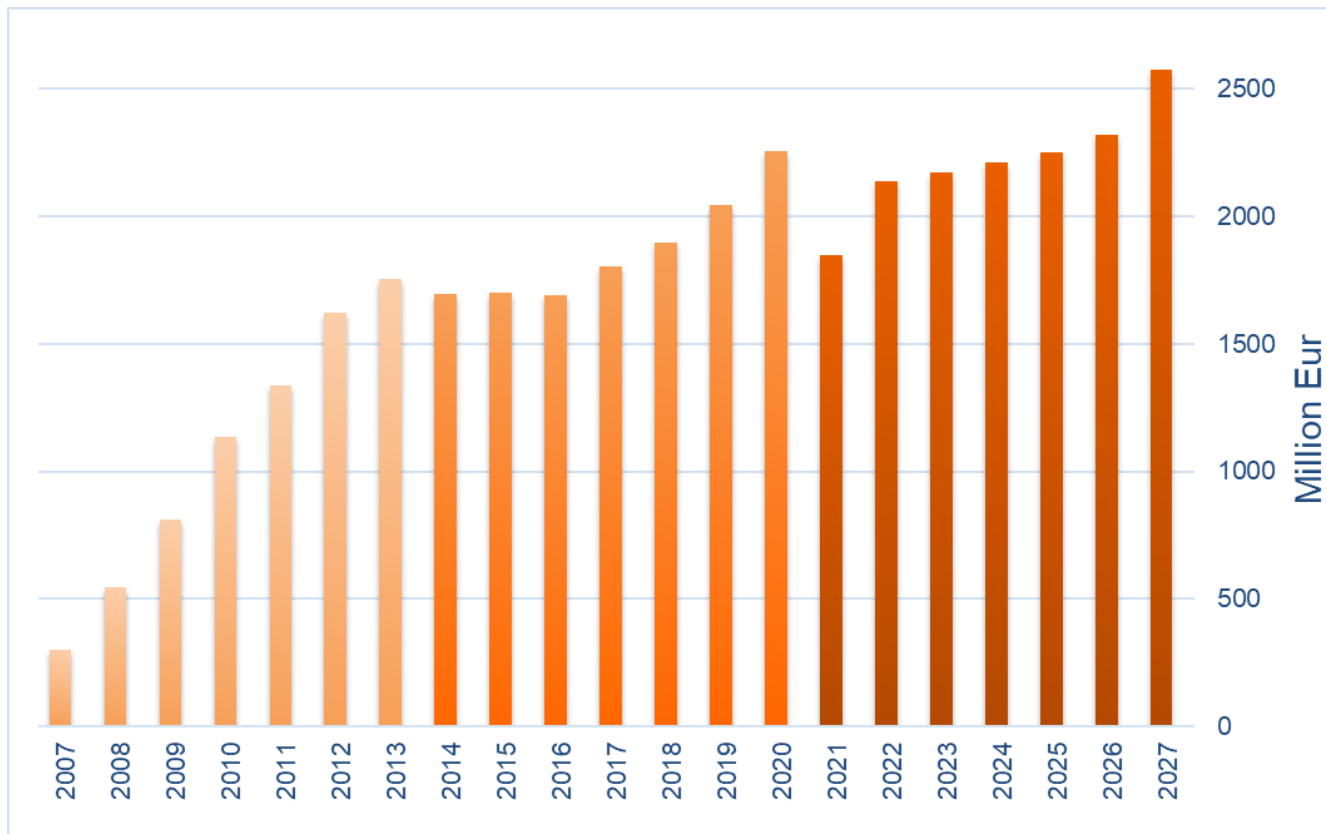
- Scientific excellence as the only criterion
- Support to the individual scientist – no consortia!
- No predetermined subjects (bottom-up)
- Support to frontier research in all fields of science and humanities
- International peer-review



ERC in Horizon Europe



ERC Budget



ERC Structure



The European Commission

- Provides financing through the EU framework programmes
- Guarantees autonomy of the ERC
- Assures the integrity and accountability of the ERC
- Adopts annual work programmes as established by the Scientific Council

The ERC Scientific Council

- 21 prominent researchers proposed by an independent identification committee
- President appointed following recommendation of an independent committee
- Appointed by the Commission (4 years, renewable once)
- Establishes overall scientific strategy; annual work programmes (incl. calls for proposals, evaluation criteria); peer review methodology; selection and accreditation of experts
- Controls quality of operations and management
- Ensures communication with the scientific community



ERC Scientific Council Members



Prof. Maria
LEPTIN
(Biology)
ERC President



Prof. Eveline
CRONE
(Psychology)
Vice-President



Prof. Andrzej
JAJSZCZYK
(Electronics and Communication Engineering)
Vice-President



Prof. Nektarios
TAVERNARAKIS
(Molecular Systems Biology)
Vice-President



Prof. Geneviève
ALMOUZNI
(Biology)



Prof. Paola
BOVOLENTA
(Neurobiology)



Prof. Ben
FERINGA
(Organic Chemistry)



Prof. Mercedes
GARCÍA-ARENAL
(History)



Prof. Gerd
GIGERENZER
(Psychology)



Prof. Liselotte
HØJGAARD
(Medicine)



Prof. Dirk
INZÉ
(Plant Biology)



Prof. Eystein
JANSEN
(Earth Science)



Prof. Chryssa
KOUVELIOTOU
(High-Energy Astrophysics)



Prof. László
LOVÁSZ
(Mathematics)



Prof. Kurt
MEHLHORN
(Computer Science)



Prof. Nicola
SPALDIN
(Materials Theory)



Prof. Giovanni
SARTOR
(Law)



Prof. Jesper
SVEJSTRUP
(Biology)



Prof. Alice
VALKÁROVÁ
(Physics)



Prof. Milena
ŽIĆ FUCHS
(Linguistics)



ERC Structure

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 Grant Schemes



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/AC



Proof-of-Concept

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

Creative Freedom to Individual Grantee

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 if necessary (**portability of grants**)
- **to attract additional funding and gain recognition**; ERC is a quality label

Evaluation Panel Structure (2021-2023)

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cellular, Developmental and Regenerative Biology
- 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

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
- PE11 Materials Engineering

Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Diversity
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Cultures and Cultural Production
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space



How are the ERC proposal evaluated ?

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

STEP 1

Remote assessment by **Panel members**
see **ONLY** section 1: Synopsis and CV
(Part B1)

Panel meeting

Proposal **Rejected**
(Scores B&C)

Proposal **Retained**
For step 2 (Score A)

STEP 2

Remote assessment by **Panel members**
and **Remote Reviewers** of full proposals
(Part B1+B2)

Panel meeting
+ interview StG, CoG and AdG

Ranked list of proposal
(Scores A&B)

Feedback to applicants

Scientific Quality
is the sole
evaluation criterion

Typical reasons for rejection

Research Project

- Scope: Too narrow vs too broad/unfocussed
- Incremental research
- Collaborative project, several PIs
- Work plan not detailed enough/unclear
- Insufficient risk management

Principle Investigator (PI)

- Insufficient track-record
- Insufficient (potential for) independence

Contrary to what You May Think

- ERC funds "frontier research", including applied research
- The budget is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand
- The panel descriptors do not represent ERC scientific priorities
- The success rates are virtually flat across the eligibility window (StG, CoG)
- The publication record is not decisive in selection decisions
- The Host Institution is not an evaluation criterion



ERC in Figures: After 15 Years, a Success Story



Over **11,000**
top researchers funded since
the ERC creation in 2007



Over **200,000**
articles from ERC projects published
in scientific journals



Over **80,000**
researchers and other professionals
employed in ERC research teams



Over **890** research institutions hosting
ERC grantees – universities, public or
private research centres in the EU or
Associated Countries



Over **2,200**
patents and other IPR applications
generated by ERC funding



87
nationalities of
grant holders



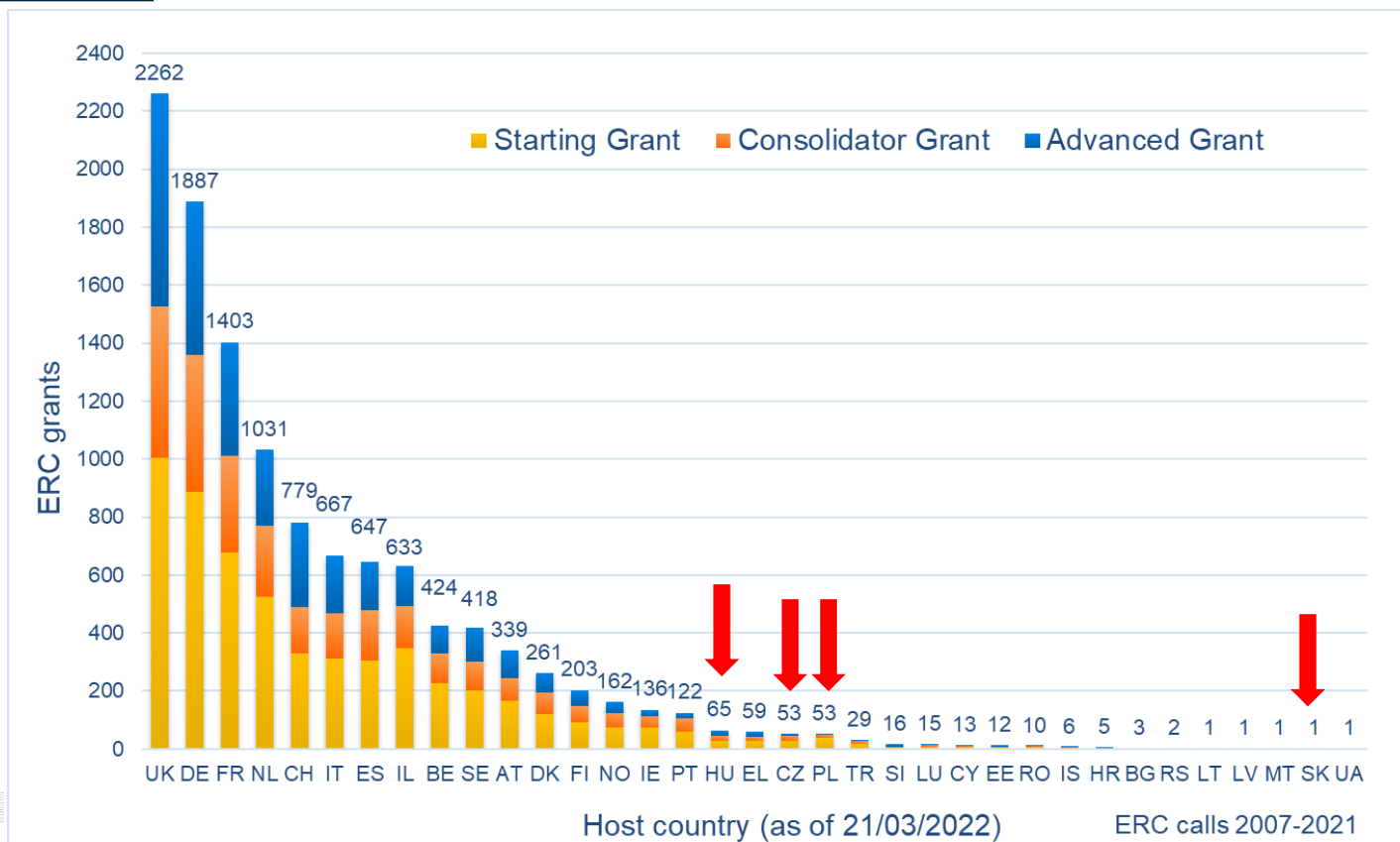
Over **400**
start-ups identified as founded
or co-founded by ERC grantees



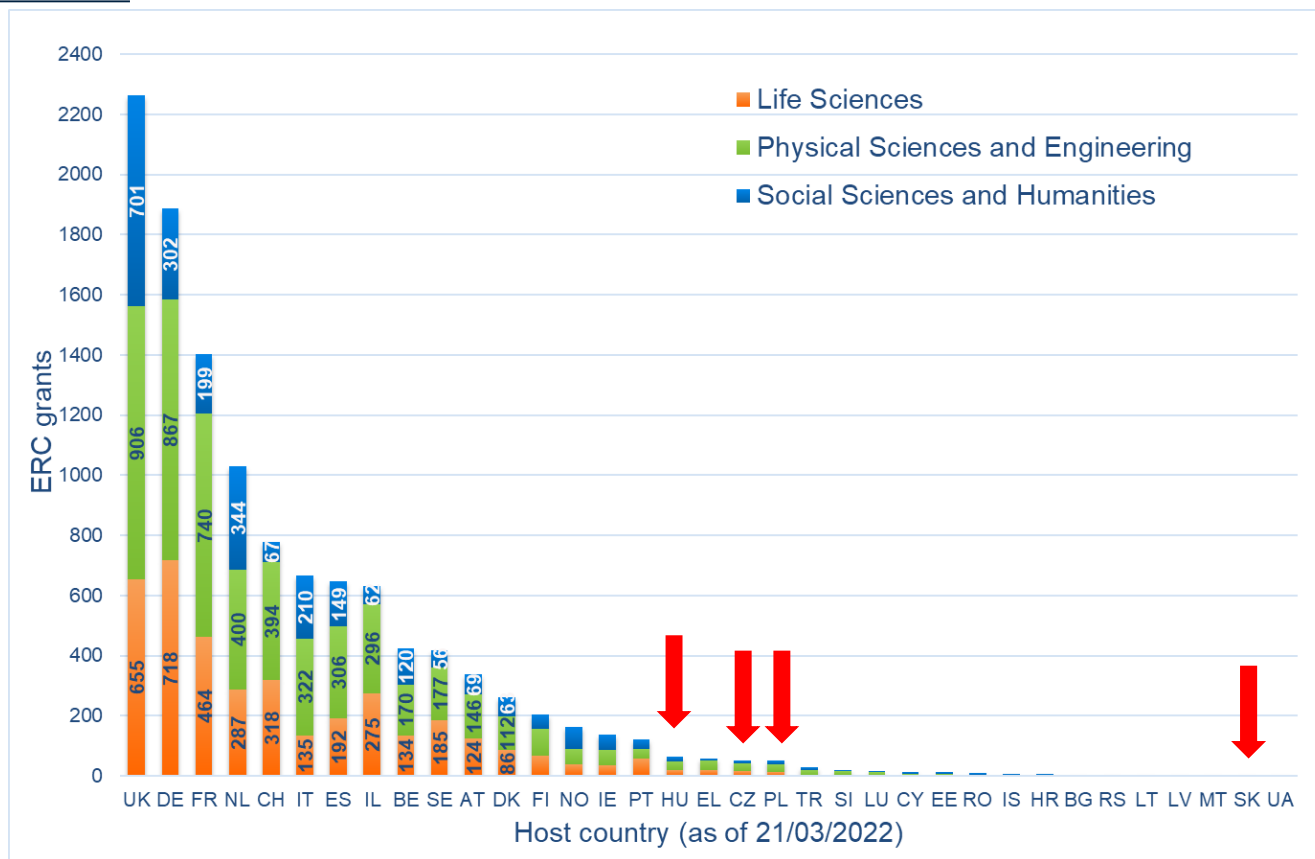
9 Nobel Prizes, **4** Fields Medals, **11** Wolf Prizes
and other prizes awarded to ERC grantees

ERC STATISTICS

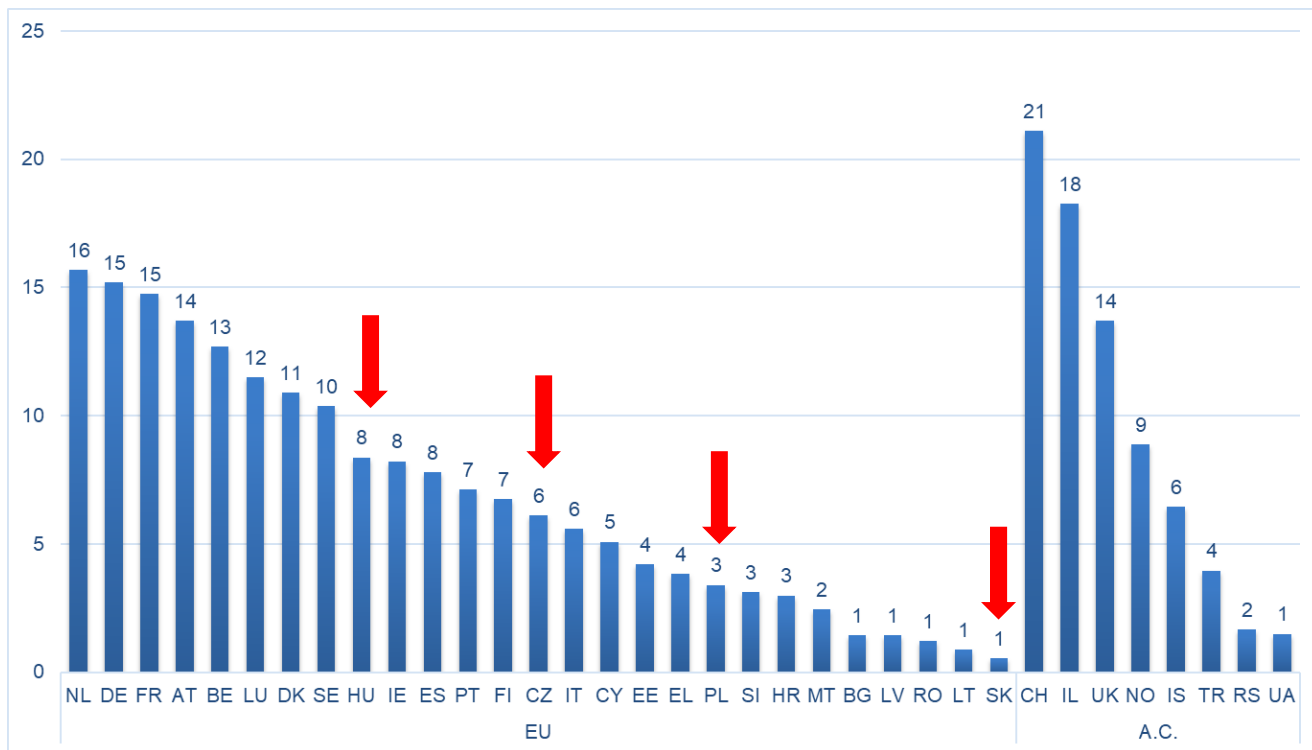
ERC Funded Projects by Country of HI



ERC Funded Projects by Domain

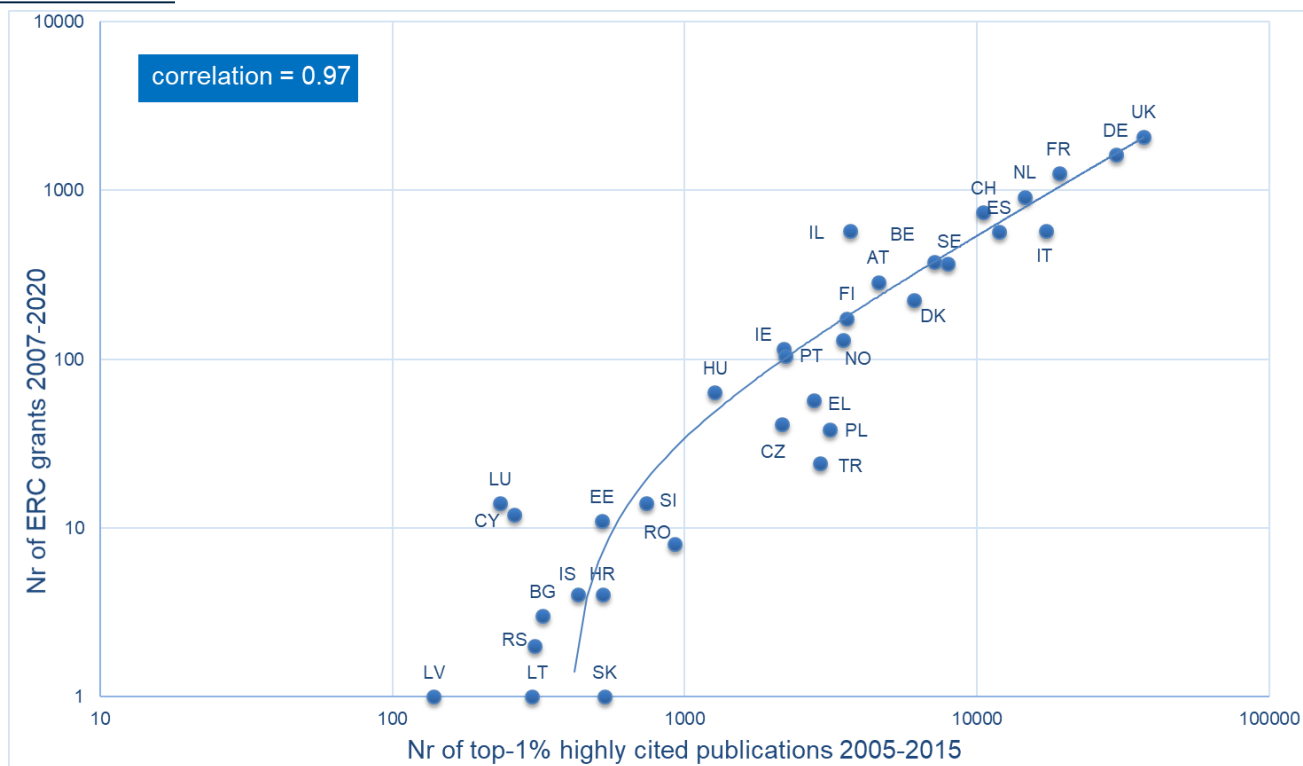


Success Rate by Country of HI



Success rate (2007-2021)

ERC Grants versus Top Publications

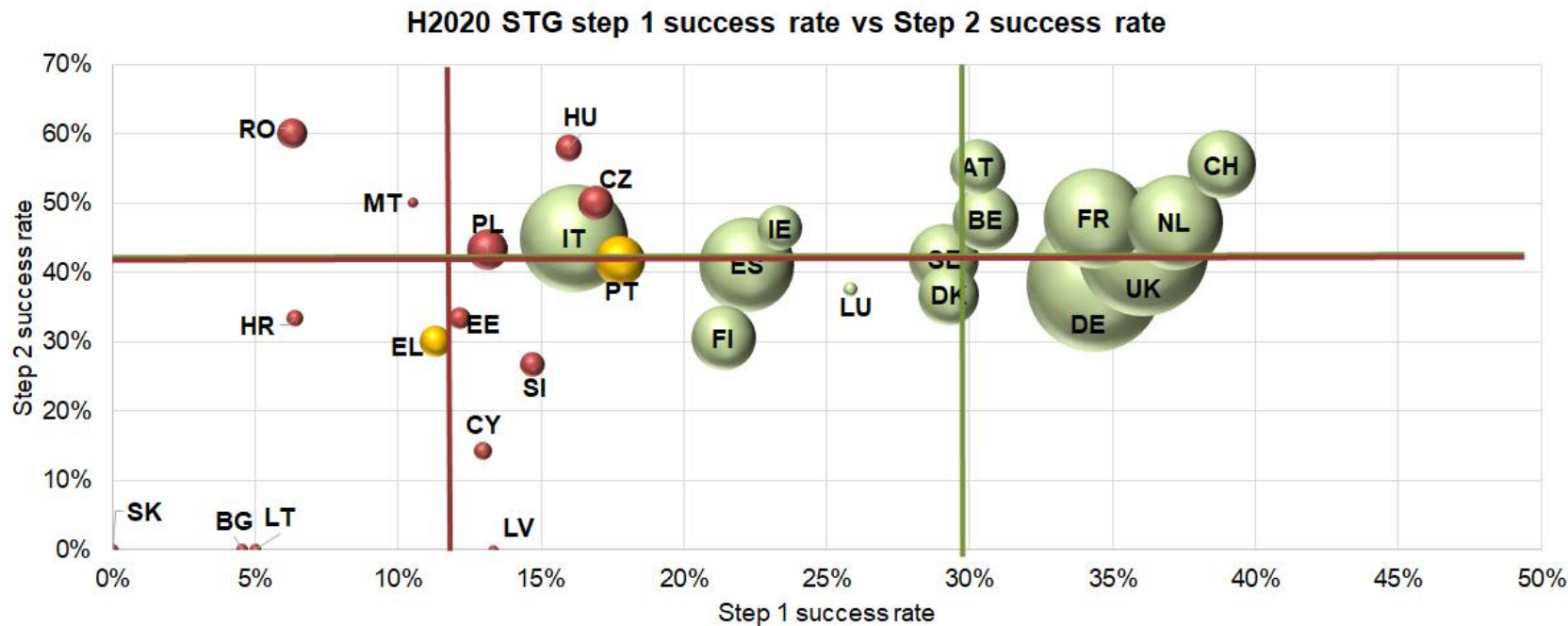


ERC Grants versus GERD



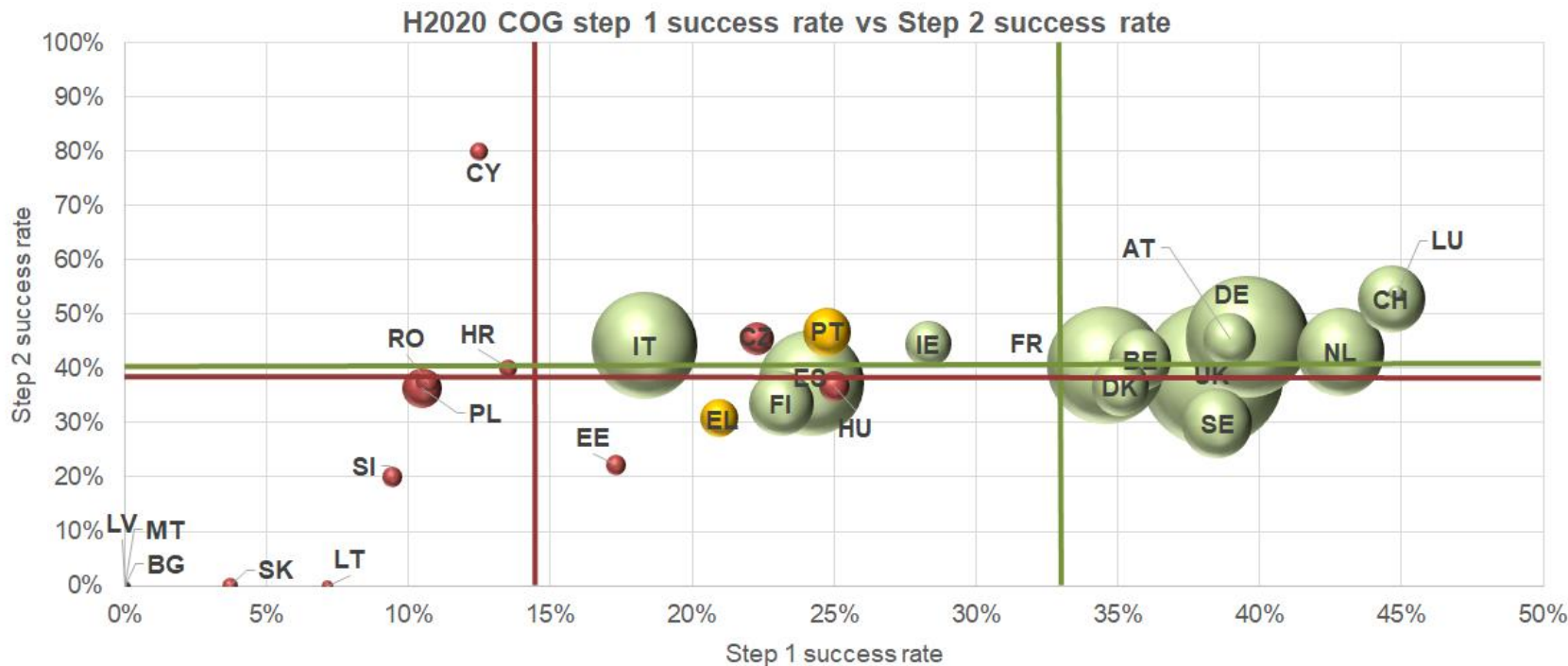
H2020 Success rates for all Member States and CH - STG

	Step 1 SR	Step 2 SR
EU13	12.28%	42.86%
EU15	29.62%	42.94%



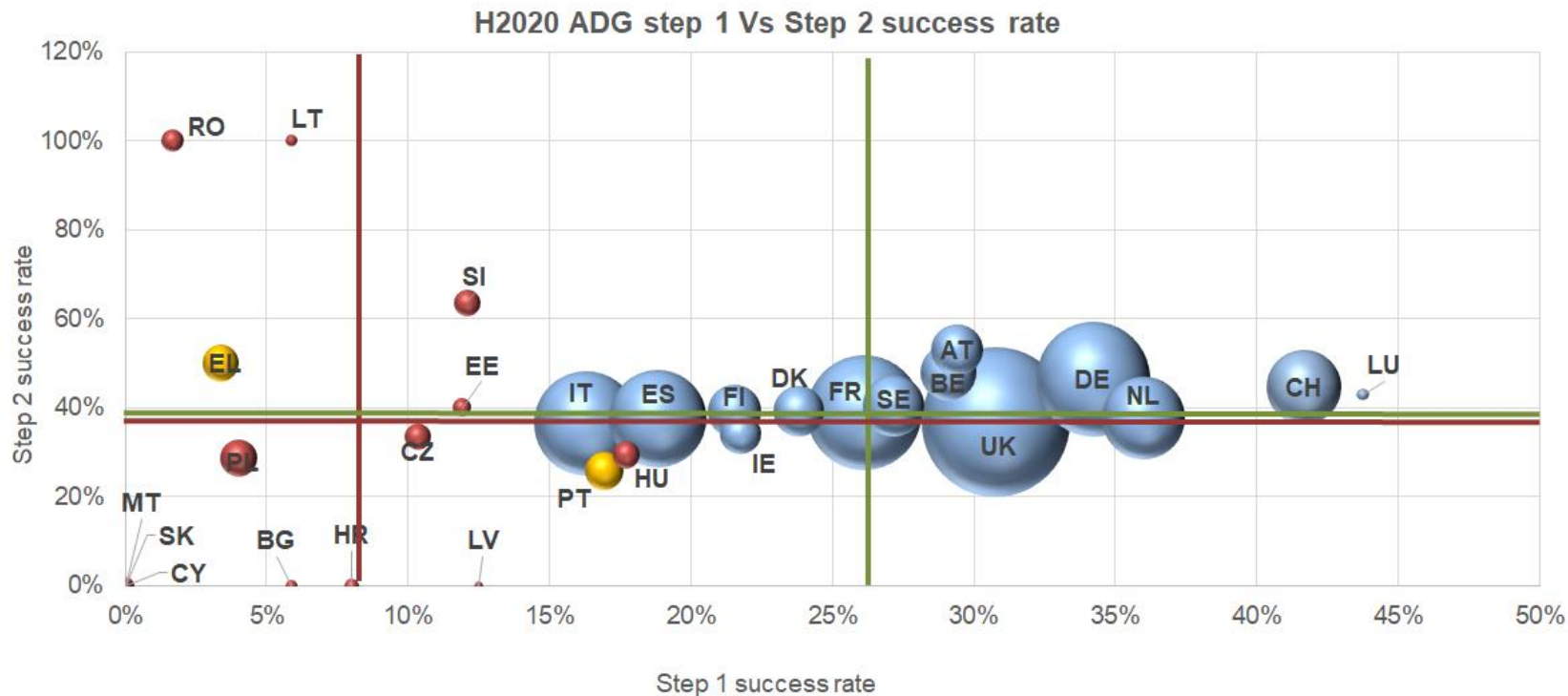
H2020 Success rates for all Member States and CH - CoG

	Step 1 SR	Step 2 SR
EU13	14.75%	38.66%
EU15	33.17%	40.68%



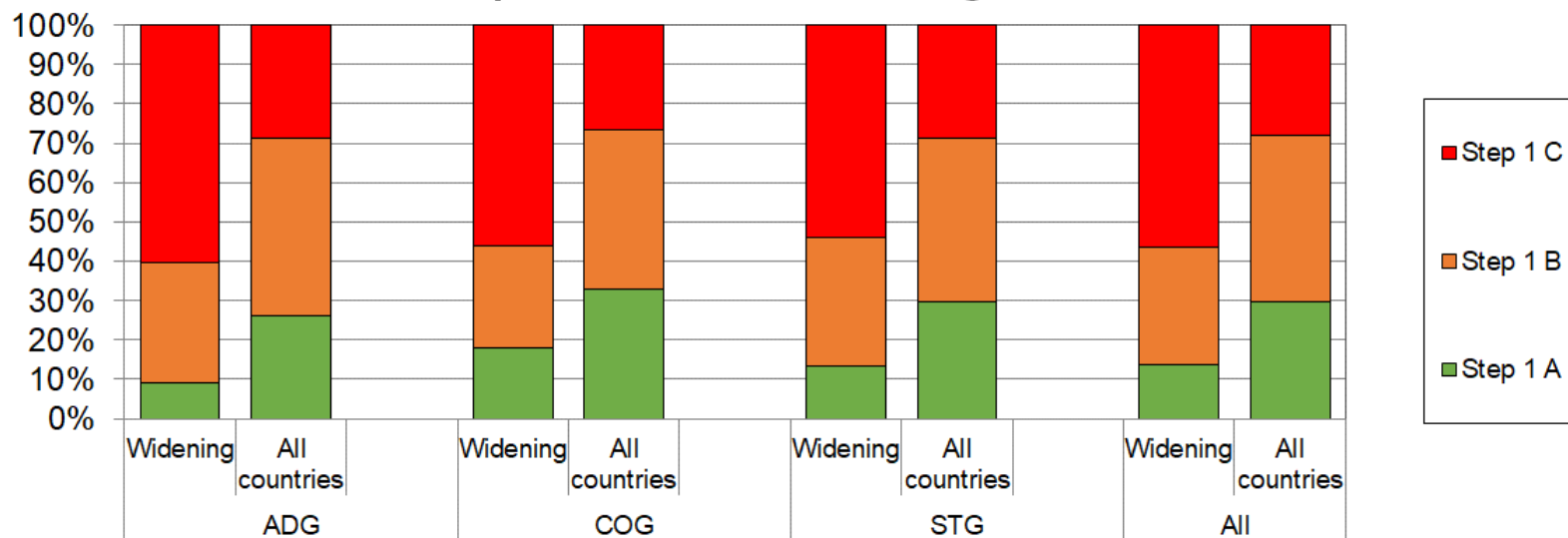
H2020 Success rates for all Member States and CH - AdG

	Step 1 SR	Step 2 SR
EU13	8.22%	38.18%
EU15	26.72%	39.90%



H2020 Step 1 results from widening countries

H2020 Step 1 results of Widening and all countries



ERC Widening Participation Policies

Objectives

- 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: Inspiring Reform

- More than 15 countries introduced initiatives to finance their best unfunded ERC applicants.
- A number of countries established funding schemes inspired to the ERC model.
- Ex: In Poland the National Science Centre (NCN) has been set up in 2010 to fund basic research, with ERC as an explicit model



How: Concrete Measures

- Continuously monitoring the participation to the ERC calls and the success rates
- Guaranteeing a fair evaluation processes in view of optimal inclusiveness
- 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 an essential component in national evaluations
 - ✓ ensure a truly and competitive academic environment

ERC Visiting Fellowship Programmes (VFP)

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

VFP in few points:

- 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

ERC VFP participation

9 countries/regions participate in the scheme as of today:

- Czech Republic (not participating since 2021)
- Estonia
- Poland (not participating since 2020)
- Slovenia
- Belgium (Flanders region)
- Slovak Republic - SAS & Pavol Jozef Safarik University in Kosice – UPJS (since 2020)
- Croatia
- Georgia (new in 2018)
- Hungary (not participating since 2018)
- Politehnica University of Bucharest (new in 2019)
- Republic of Serbia (new in 2020)
- Italy – CNR (new in 2021) & University of Venice - Ca' Foscari (will join in 2022)

VFP: Interested ERC Grantees and Number of Visits

Number of ERC grantees willing to host EU research visitors

724

2016

15
(HU, SI, PL)

616

2017

27
(HU, PL, SI, HR,
Flanders)

554

2018

14
(PL, SK, SI,
Flanders, HR)

721

2019

14*
(PL, SI, HR, GE, SK)
*some visits have been
canceled/postponed because of
pandemics

1085

2020

2020 -2021 calls are experiencing delays
and/or cancellation because of pandemics

829

2021

Number of visiting researchers

VFP: Interested ERC Grantees and Number of Visits

Number of Visiting Fellowships by Country of Scheme					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Croatia		4	1	2	7
Flanders		1	2		3
Georgia				3	3
Hungary	1	10			11
Poland	7	8	5	4	24
Slovak Republic			4	2	6
Slovenia	7	4	2	3	16
Total	15	27	14	14	70

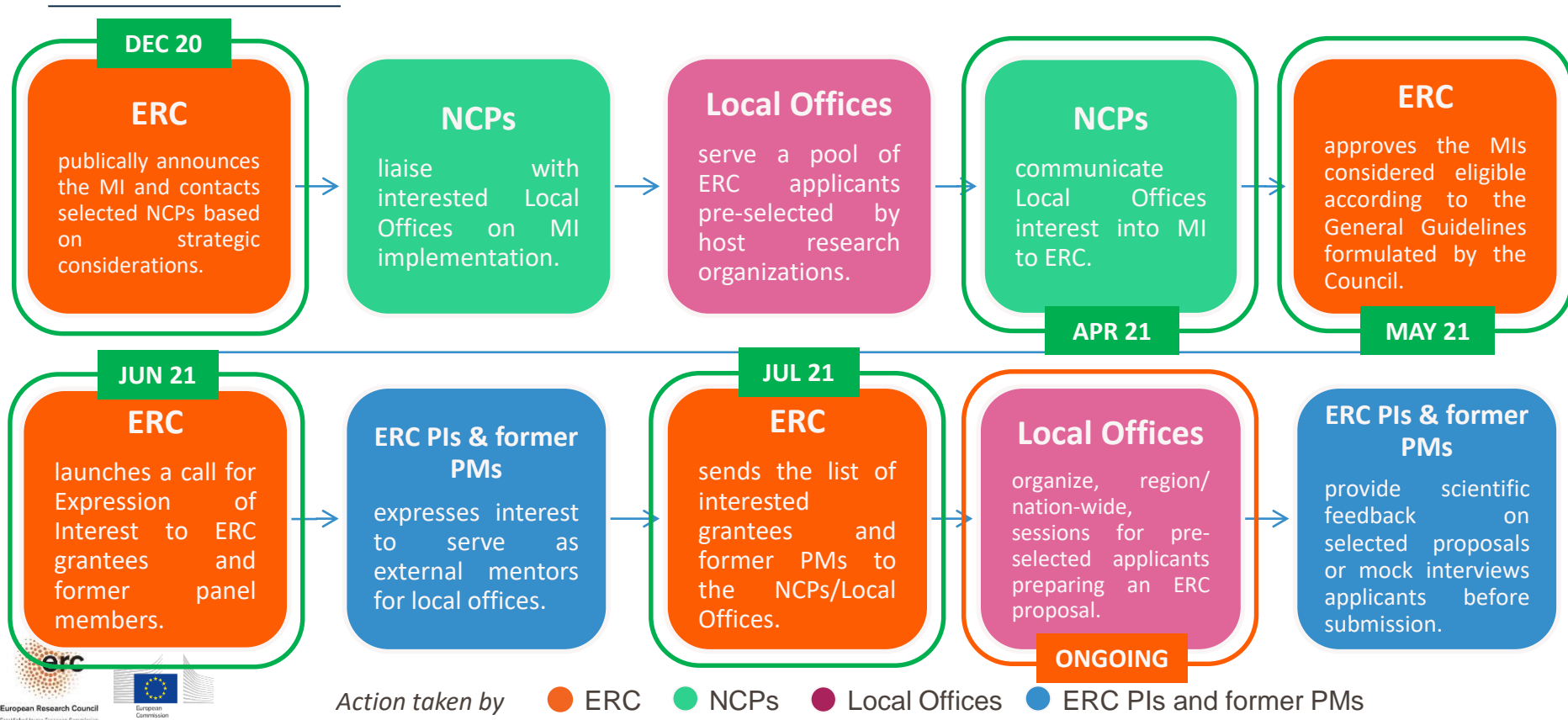
VP Fellows Participation in ERC calls

- **58 visiting fellows** have submitted **61 proposals** for an ERC grant after the VFP:
 - 36 (59%) to STG
 - 18 (30%) to COG
 - 7 (11%) to ADG
- **8 visiting fellows (13%) were funded** with ERC grants:
 - 4 in PE (PE4, PE8)
 - 3 in SH (SH3, SH5)
 - 1 in LS (LS8)
- **6 of the funded projects are located in EU-13 countries** (SI and PL), 2 of the awarded fellows changed HI (BE->UK, HR->IT)
- The **success rate of VFP fellows is higher than Widening countries**, in particular for STG
- 16% and 20% of STG ERC grantees 2018-2021 for PL and SI were VFP fellows

ERC Mentoring Initiative -1

- ERC wishes to contribute to national programmes that support ERC applicants in less performing countries
- These national programmes often 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

ERC Mentoring Initiative -2



ERC Mentoring Initiative -3

Participants in 2021:

- Cyprus (Research and Innovation Foundation; coordinates NCPs)
- Czech Republic (Czech National Expert Group; closely cooperates with the NCP)
- Estonia (The Estonian Research Council; plays the role of the NCP)
- Hungary (Hungarian Academy of Sciences; hosts NCP)
- Italy (Italian National Research Council; will operate through NCPs)
- Malta (Malta Council for Science and Technology; plays the role of the NCP)
- Poland (NCP through NCBR, NCN, and FNP)
- Slovakia (Horizon National Office in Slovakia)
- Turkey (TUBITAK; plays the role of the NCP)

ERC Mentoring Initiative - 4

Preliminary results:

- **750** ERC grantees and former panel members expressed their interest in becoming mentors
- ERCEA sent the list of potential mentors to National Contact Points in the nine countries
- National offices identified prospective ERC applicants and are now organizing mentoring activities

Supporting features & actions

- **Visiting Research Fellowships:** a number of European countries fund research visits to established ERC projects in order to develop researchers' potential before they apply for their first ERC grant.
- **Mentoring Initiative:** helps identifying international experts to provide coaching and advice.
- **Dual affiliation is possible:** ERC grantees are required to spend 50% of their time in Europe, no need to burn bridges.
- **Additional max. 1M EUR extra funding/PI** to cover 'start-up' costs, regardless of the call (except POC).
- **Jobs in ERC teams**

Thank You!

More information: erc.europa.eu

National Contact Point: erc.europa.eu/national-contact-points

Sign up for news alerts: erc.europa.eu/keep-updated-erc

Funding & Tender Opportunities: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

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