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## Press release

### ERC announces 34 new Synergy Grants

Several winning projects tap into international talent in Americas, Asia and Australia

**EMBARGO UNTIL 5 November 2020 12:00 (noon) CET**

Thirty-four research groups will receive EUR 350 million in total to address some of the world's most formidable research problems spanning multiple scientific disciplines. More than 440 proposals were submitted in this Synergy Grant call, making it one of the most competitive in ERC history. The funding helps groups of two to four outstanding researchers bring together complementary skills, knowledge and resources in one ambitious project. The ERC Synergy Grant scheme is part of the EU's research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020.

On this occasion, Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"The selected projects are excellent examples of bold scientific thinking. Many of these endeavours will tackle pressing issues in specific areas such as health, the environment and climate. Others will push the frontiers of knowledge, creating new opportunities in ways that we cannot fully predict today. I'm proud that the EU, while taking firm action to tackle the immediate challenges posed by the coronavirus crisis, is also continuing to invest in our long-term future by supporting these exceptional researchers. By taking the long view, we are strengthening Europe's position as a global research powerhouse."*

The President of the ERC, Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, commented: *"The ERC Scientific Council devised the Synergy Grants to offer a space where ambitious researchers could join forces to tackle multifaceted scientific challenges. Each of the new teams is aiming at nothing less than an important breakthrough. I am especially glad to see that so many European laureates look further afield to involve top scientists and scholars working in North and South America, Australia and Japan. Not only can this enrich ERC-funded projects, but it also gives a new dimension to global research cooperation involving European teams."*

The research selected for funding covers a wide range of scientific domains. One group based in Germany, France and USA aims to uncover the mysteries of our brain's immune system. Another group working from Ireland, Portugal and the UK will investigate the unknown past of human interactions with the oceans. And the goal of four scientists in Poland, France and Chile is to elucidate the fundamental questions about the Universe by improving how we measure astronomic distances.

The 34 projects involve 116 researchers who will carry out their projects at 86 universities and research centres in 22 countries across Europe and beyond. The most common locations are



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Germany (involved in 18 projects), France (13) and the UK (8). Ten research groups will include one researcher working in the USA, Canada, Chile, Japan or Australia.

The grants, each worth around 10 million euro, will help create some 1,000 jobs for postdoctoral fellows, PhD students, and other staff in the grantees' research teams.

List of all selected proposals [Link will not be live until 5/11/20 at 12.00 CET](#)  
Examples of funded research [Link will not be live until 5/11/20 at 12.00 CET](#)

## About the ERC

The European Research Council, set up by the European Union in 2007, is the premiere European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year, it selects and funds the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based in Europe. The ERC offers four core grant schemes: Starting, Consolidator, Advanced 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.

To date, the ERC has funded over 9,500 top researchers at various stages of their careers, and over 50,000 postdoctoral fellows, PhD students and other staff working in their research teams. The ERC strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. Key global research funding bodies, in the United States, China, Japan, Brazil and other countries, have concluded special agreements to provide their researchers with opportunities to temporarily join ERC grantees' teams.

The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the Scientific Council. The ERC interim President is Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. The overall ERC budget from 2014 to 2020 is more than €13 billion, as part of the Horizon 2020 programme, for which the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel is responsible.

## More information

[ERC website](#)  
[Horizon 2020](#)

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