

Research RTD, 7th EC Framework Programme 2007-2013: specific programme "Ideas", frontier research

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This Annual Report of the Commission, drawn up in co-operation with the European Research Council (ERC) Scientific Council and the ERC Executive Agency, presents the **Commission's assessment of the ERC's operations and the achievement of its objectives in 2012**. Its main conclusions are as follows:

- The year 2012 saw **several significant developments** for the ERC. It was marked by the ERC's fifth anniversary celebration, the launch of the "ERC goes Global" campaign, the first international agreement with the US National Science Foundation, an ERC Principal Investigator winning the Nobel Prize for physics, and ERC grantees participating in the Summer Davos meeting. By the end of 2012, the ERC had completed **ten calls for proposals for the Starting and Advanced Grants, two calls for the Proof of Concept and one for the Synergy Grants**. The competitions yielded a **total of over 34 000 proposals** out of which more than 3 500 have been selected for funding through a rigorous peer review.

- The year **2013 is eagerly awaited** for the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council on the Commission's proposals for [Horizon 2020](#), including an anticipated increase of funding for the ERC. Boosting the ERC budget will allow more top researchers and their pioneering ideas to be supported, and especially younger researchers to be provided with a long-term perspective.

Two further developments are foreseen in 2013:

- since 2010, the Starting Grant has been "streamed" to allow applicants to be compared with researchers of a similar level. In general, "Starters" (from 2 and up to 7 years from their PhD award) are still in the process of setting up their own research group, while "Consolidators" (from 7 up to 12 years from their PhD award) are very often already working with their own group, but need to consolidate. As a development from this practice, and in response to the rapidly rising number of applications for Starting Grants, the Scientific Council will introduce **two separate calls in the 2013 Work Programme**;
- in line with the recommendations of the ERC Task Force, incorporated in its proposals for Horizon 2020, the Commission has set up a **high level independent search committee** for the next ERC President. Under Horizon 2020, the ERC President will also ensure the tasks of the ERC Secretary General, will be based in Brussels and devote most of her/his time to ERC activities. The search committee, chaired by Lord Sainsbury of Turville, is expected to report to the Commission in time for the appointment of the next ERC President upon the entry into force of Horizon 2020.