



ERC Starting Grants – first stage evaluation process concluded

26 July 2007

The European Research Council (ERC) has just concluded the first stage of the evaluation of the Starting Grants. Out of the 9 167 proposals submitted for these grants, 559 have now been selected for the second stage of the peer review evaluation process.

Last week, the successful candidates received letters of acceptance from the ERC and were invited to submit their full proposals by 17 September 2007. The final conclusion of the selection process, which will also involve individual interviews, is foreseen for the end of this year. It is currently estimated that a little less than half of the 559 candidates will be rewarded a grant.

Some details regarding the group selected for the second stage of the evaluation process are now available.

The ERC grants are open to any nationality, as long as their host institution is based in the EU or in an associated country. Researchers with a third country nationality amount to around 7% of the selected applicants. EU nationals make up 85%, whereas 8% constitute nationals of an associated country.

The ERC Starting Grants managed to attract researchers currently based outside the EU and its associated countries. This group constitutes 4% of the selected candidates. The majority of these are Europeans willing to move back to Europe, whilst just under 1% of the 559 represents researchers of a third country nationality not yet living in Europe. Regarding host institutions the vast majority of them (89%) are based in the EU and the remaining 11% are situated in an associated county.

Of the selected candidates, 87% have four to nine years of experience after completion of their PhD, and their average age is around 36 years. The distribution of the 559 selected applicants over the three domains is 45% in "Physics, Mathematics and Engineering", 37% in "Life Sciences" and 18% in "Social Sciences and Humanities".



At this stage, the gender distribution is 24% female applicants and 76% male. However, this ratio differs largely between the various domains, with a considerably higher number of women selected in the area of "Social Sciences and Humanities" (44%), as opposed to the domains "Life Sciences" (21%) and "Physics, Mathematics and Engineering" (18%).

The President of the ERC, Professor Fotis Kafatos, is very pleased and says "*The first stage of the peer review evaluation process went very well in spite of the overwhelming response to the first call. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the peer reviewers and the ERC staff for their dedicated work.*". He also points out that "*..considering that merely 559 of the impressive number of proposals have been invited to the second stage, it is inevitable that many good candidates will be disappointed not to go through..*". Those (PIs and host institutions) not retained for the second stage will be informed in the beginning of August on the outcome of the evaluation, including a complete report with the comments of individual evaluators and the panel conclusions.



Tables showing distribution of nationalities of applicants and countries of the host institutions invited to the second stage of the evaluation process. The countries are divided into the following groups: founding EC Member States, Member States acceding to the EC/EU between 1973 and 1995, Member States acceding to the EU between 2004 and 2007, countries associated to the Seventh Research Framework Programme and finally, countries not belonging to the EU or its associated countries (third countries).

Nationality by country groups	Number	Percent
Founding Member States (BE, DE, FR, IT, LU, NL)	293	53%
Member States joining the EC/EU 1973-1995 (AT, DK, EL, ES, FI, IE, PT, SE, UK)	152	27%
Member States joining the EU 2004-2007 (BG, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LT, LV, MT, PL, RO, SI, SK)	30	5%
Associated countries (CH, CS, HR, IL, IS, MK, NO, RS, TR)	47	8%
Third countries	37	7%
Total	559	100%

Host institution by country groups	Number	Percent
Founding Member States (BE, DE, FR, IT, LU, NL)	275	49%
Member States joining the EC/EU 1973-1995 (AT, DK, EL, ES, FI, IE, PT, SE, UK)	204	36%
Member States joining the EU 2004-2007 (BG, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LT, LV, MT, PL, RO, SI, SK)	21	4%
Associated countries (CH, CS, HR, IL, IS, MK, NO, RS, TR)	59	11%
Total	559	100%