

The European Research Council : means to promote more equity in scientific research



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ERC and Gender

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21st Gender Summit - Europe
April 2021

ERC and Gender Issues

Adopting a Gender Equality Plan



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ERC aims at taking into account and confronting structural gender differences to fulfil its mission to **support excellent frontier researchers** across Europe: irrespective of nationality, gender or age.

The ERC Scientific Council adopted the **ERC Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027** for the duration of the Horizon Europe Programme > coming soon online

https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/content/pages/pdf/ERC_ScC_Gender_Equality_Plan_2014-2020.pdf

The Scientific Council **Gender Issues Working Group** will pursue the Plan's objectives

The Gender Issues Working Group is a permanent structure under the ERC Scientific Council. Created in July 2008, it does monitor gender equality throughout the entire ERC process.



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ERC Gender Equality plan 2021-2027

Main objectives



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- ✓ **Raise awareness** about the ERC gender policy among potential applicants;
- ✓ **Improve gender balance** among researchers submitting ERC proposals;
- ✓ **Raise awareness** about **gender balance benefits** among researchers in **ERC teams**;
- ✓ Continuously **identify** and **remove any potential gender bias** in ERC evaluations;
- ✓ **Monitor differences** in **gender specific careers/academic posts**, following ERC grants;
- ✓ **Embed gender awareness** in all ERC processes (from evaluation up to granting);
- ✓ Strive for **gender balance** among **ERC peer reviewers**;



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ERC Gender Equality plan 2021-2027

Implementation: Awareness and submission rates

Goal: *Increase awareness about ERC and encourage top researchers of underrepresented gender to apply*



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Publish the ERC gender equality plan on the web and continue:

- **Monitoring submission rates** of women and men by country, research domain and panel;
- Taking active part in **gender equality networks and workshops**;
- **Making visits** to scientific meetings/workshops on gender topics, inform about open ERC calls;
- **Including gender statistics** and ERC's work to achieve gender balance in all general ERC presentations;
- **Including successful grantees of both genders** as role models in communication activities, brochures, posters, videos, etc.;
- **Raising awareness** about sex and gender dimension in the design of research projects;
- **New - Identifying ambassadors** in various countries and research domains to encourage more applications to ERC grants from underrepresented groups of researchers.



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ERC Gender Equality plan 2021-2027

Implementation: Evaluation processes and granting 1/2

Goal: *a gender fair evaluation process, ensure that the best researchers get funded irrespective of gender*



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- **Ensure that eligibility and evaluation criteria** are designed to encompass the situation of both women and men in research;
- Continue **monitoring success rates** and granted amounts for women and men, publish gender statistics from ERC evaluations in long term time series and by ERC domain;
- **Sensitise ERCEA staff, ERC panel members and external reviewers** to gender issues;
- **Raise gender awareness during briefings** of the ERC panel chairs at the beginning of the evaluation panel meetings;
- **Raise awareness about implicit bias** in the evaluation process;
- **Include reference** to the ERC Scientific Council Gender Equality Plan in the ERC Guide for Peer Reviewers;



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Implementation: Evaluation processes and granting 2/2



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- **Continue collecting and analysing gender data** on PhD students/post docs/other researchers funded through ERC grants;
- **Address gender-related topics** during visits to Principal Investigators in the course of their project;
- **Address gender-related topics** during visits to Host Institutions (e.g. child care, moving with a family) and highlight good practice and 'role model' host institutions;
- **Analyse long term effects** of the ERC presence and practice on gender structures in research careers and academic posts;
- **Encourage the collection of gender data** in different countries and institutions so as to better define the existing pool of researchers and its evolution in time.



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Implementation: Gender balance among ERC peer reviewers



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Goal: *Achieve as much gender balance as possible in ERC evaluation panels, also among panel chairs*

panel members, panel chairs and external referees

- **Set up panel specific goals** for gender balance, based on information from relevant scientific communities and/or the ERC pool of applicants

(N.B: The pool of ERC applicants may not necessarily reflect the actual proportionalities of women and men in each and every scientific community; however it yields panel specific reference points);
- **Monitor the gender balance** of each ERC panel.



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ERC Gender Actions for underrepresented sex 1/2

Actions implemented in the ERC Work Programmes



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- 2007** Eligibility extensions by 12 months per child born after PhD
- 2010** Eligibility extensions by 18 months per child born **before or after PhD**;
- 2013** **Scientific leadership potential** (self-evaluation) section **removed**
Order of Evaluation criteria reversed now: 1. Project , 2. PI track-record
- 2014** **Model CV template** included in application forms
- 2015** **No limit to eligibility extension** (before this was limited to 4,5 years => 4th child was out).
Care of sick relative now a reason for extension of the eligibility;
Track-record focus on 5/10 publications

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ERC actions for underrepresented sex 2/2

Actions implemented in the ERC Work Programmes



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- 2016** Awareness raising of evaluators on **unconscious bias** (video and slides);
- 2017** Activities promoting **equal opportunities** or **gender balance** are **eligible costs** clearly stated in the Work Programme;
- 2018** **Unconscious Bias training for ERCEA scientific officers and Management;**
- 2019** **ScC members awareness session** on unconscious bias: interactive presentation on unconscious bias with concrete examples of situations that panel members may be confronted with and how to deal with them;



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ERC other gender actions 1/2

ERC Workshop



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2020 ERC Workshop on sex and gender dimension in frontier research: Virtual 16 Nov 2020

- 5 Sessions:
 - ✓ Introductory session with keynote speech by Pr. Sabine Oertl-Prigione
 - ✓ Gender in medicine and medical care;
 - ✓ Gender, demographics and behaviour;
 - ✓ Gender and fairness in the digital society;
 - ✓ Policy dialogue
- Over **800** participants overall
(83% from EU countries and 125 from seven of the H2020 associated countries)
- **More details here:** <https://erc.europa.eu/event/sex-and-gender-dimension-frontier-research>



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Other ERC gender actions 2/2

External Studies on Gender-related issues



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- **The ERCAREER study (2012-2014):**
analysed patterns, differences and similarities in the career paths of ERC grantees for women and men
- **The gendERC study (2014-2016):**
explored potential gender bias in ERC evaluation and grant allocation process



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ERC gender data on applicants and grantees

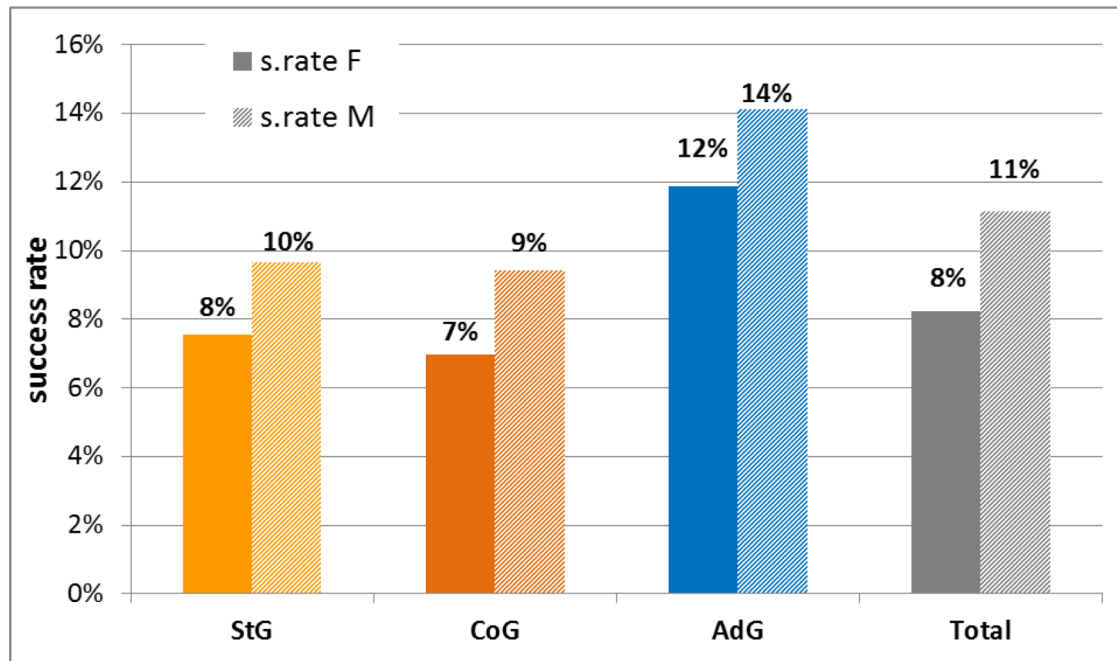
Success Rate by Type of Call

A significant improvement in H2020 for all calls !

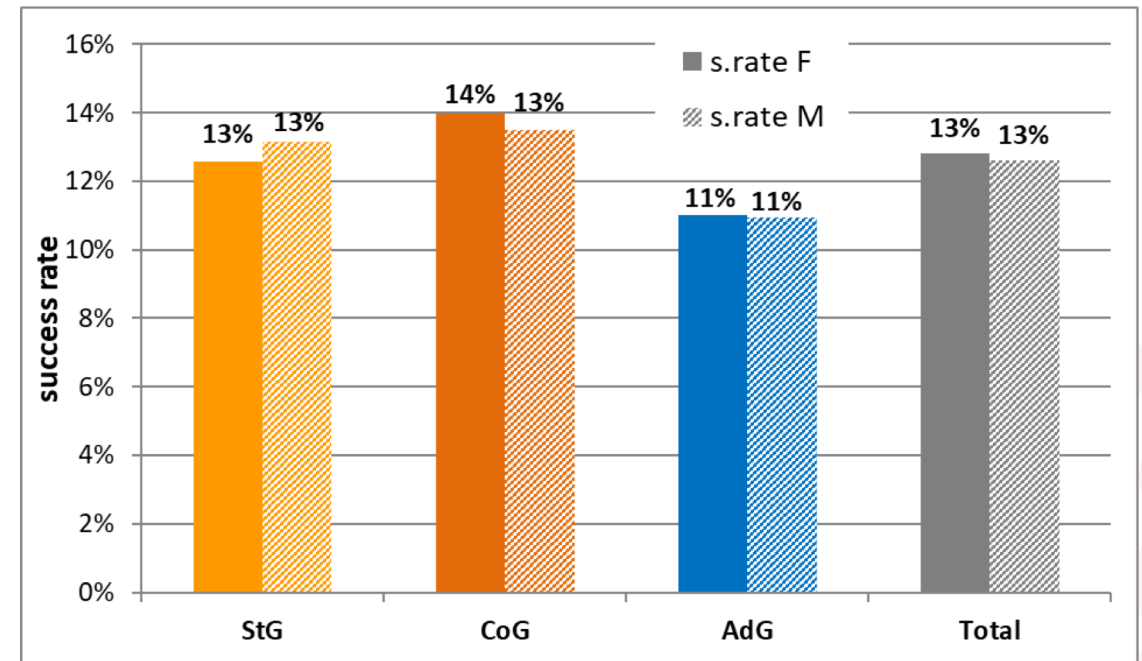


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ERC Calls 2007-2013



H2020 (2014-2020)



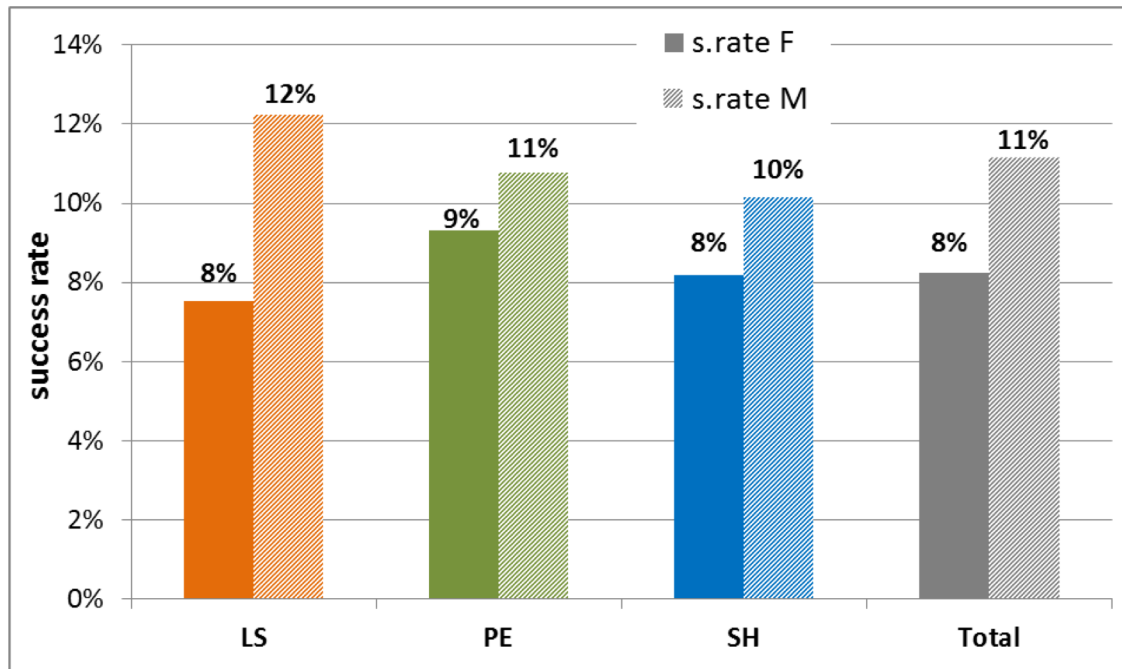
Success Rate by Domain

A significant improvement in H2020 in all areas !

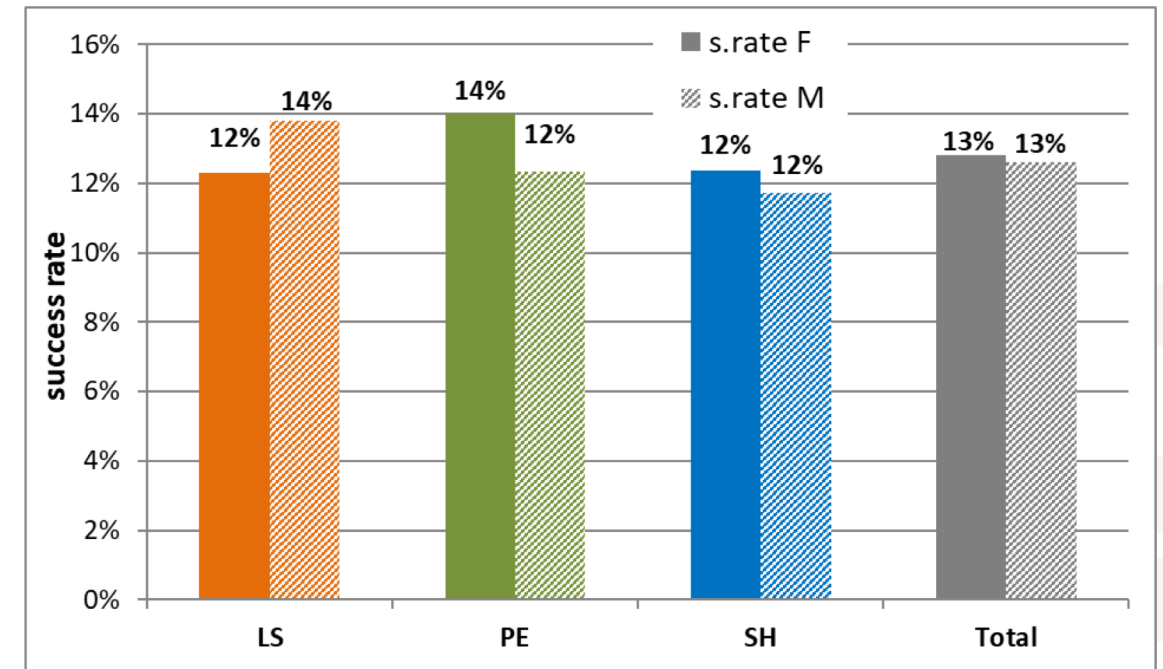


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ERC Calls 2007-2013



H2020 (2014-2020)



Life Science has not progressed as much as PE or SH

H2020 Female Shares data



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H2020 share of female applicants and grantees by domain:

- Increase in **applicants share** between 2014 and 2019:
 - **LS domain** from 30% to 36%;
 - **PE domain** from 18% to 20%; but PE domain remains low (below 30%)
 - **SH domain** from 37% to 45%.
- Increase in **grantees share** between 2014 and 2019:
 - **LS domain** from 28% to 34%;
 - **PE domain** from 19% to 23%;
 - **SH domain** from 38% to 44%.

H2020 share of female applicants and grantees by type of grant:

- The number of Applicants and grantees in each call StG, CoG and AdG have not evolved significantly
- Low participation **for AdG applicants & grantees** (below 20% for applicants; 21% for grantees in 2019)



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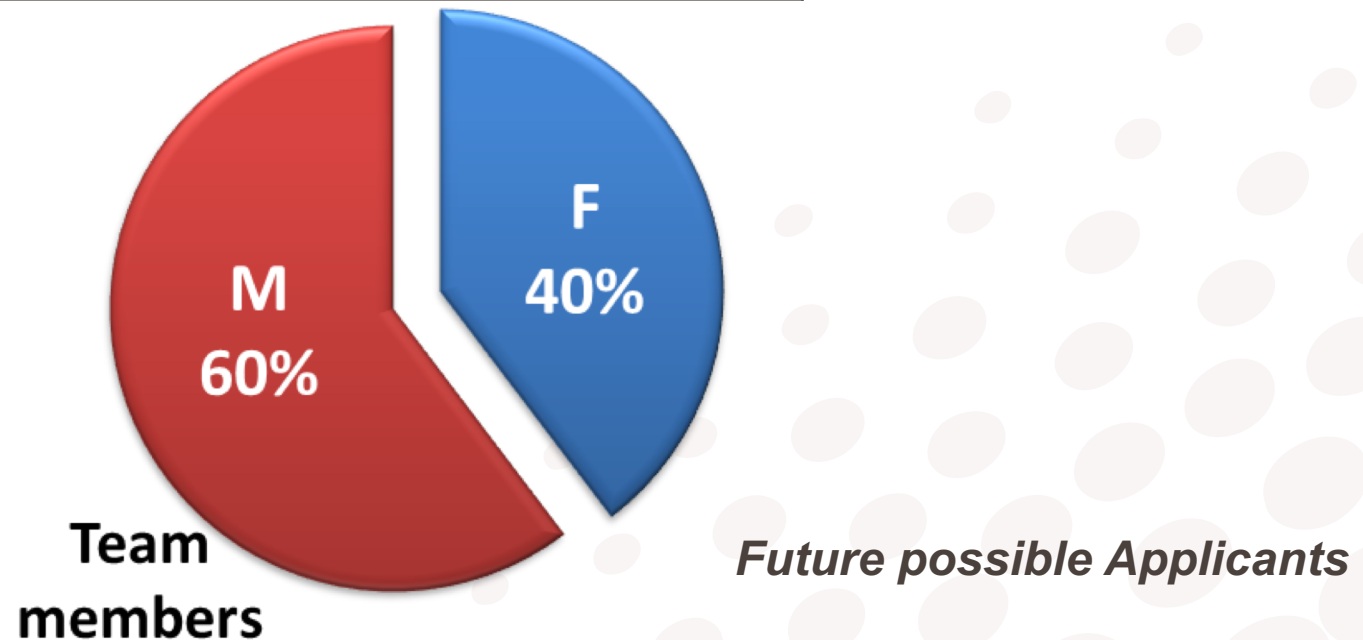
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ERC team members and gender- Future potential female applicants



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- 2000 Horizon 2020 projects analysed
- 60% man; 40% women



ERC COVID-19 related Questions

COVID19 Impact on activities

High increase in Amendments processed

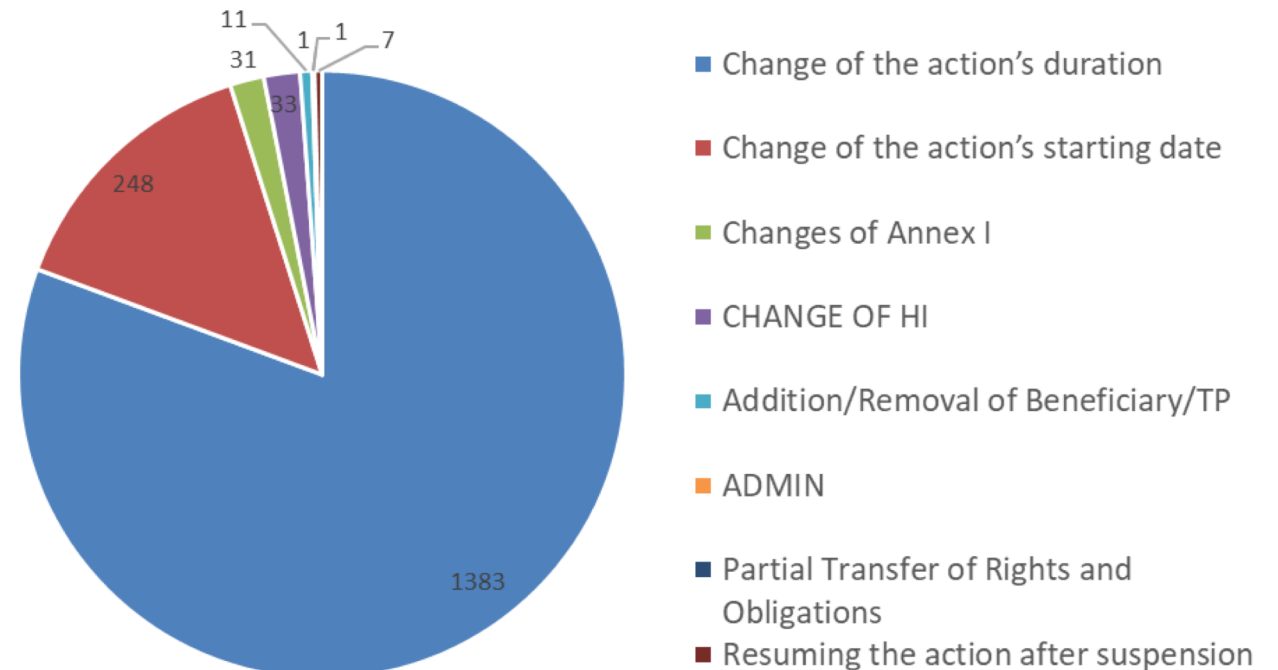


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- Around **2500** amendments requests received (March 2020-Feb 2021), compared to about 990 over the same period last year

- **~1700 COVID related amendments already signed**
- Extensions are the main reason for an amendment request

H2020 signed COVID related amendments per type (until 24/02/2021)



ERC actions to address COVID-19 pandemic impact



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- COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone and every institution in one way or another;
- Different categories of applicants have or will have been affected differently by the pandemic;
- ScC is concerned about the research community's youngest members (most likely to care for small children);
- ScC is concerned about those who have not been able to work in their laboratories (including access to field work) for an extended period of time;
- ScC discussed and agreed on possible measures to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the productivity of ERC applicants:
 - ***Provide clear guidance to applicants to declare in an objective, standard manner any delays/gaps in their productivity related to the pandemic situation in their ERC proposals so this can be taken into account in the evaluation process;***
 - Measure to be able to implement in the ERC Work Programme 2022;
 - Proposed changes could apply to any disruption to help to take these into account in the evaluation.



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



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