ERC Scientific Council
Advancing Gender Balance in Science – from the perspective of a funding agency

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ERC Scientific Council,
Chair of the ERC ScC Gender Balance Working Group

European Gender Summit
November 2011
The European Research Council
- a new type of funding body in Europe to support excellence in frontier research

Legislation
• Scientific Council with 22 members
• Support by the ERC Executive Agency
• Significant budget from EC – 1.2 billion €/year
• Excellence as the only valid criterion

Strategy
• Support for the individual scientist
• Pan-European competition, international peer review
• Support frontier research in all fields of science and humanities (bottom up, no predetermined subjects)
European Research Council
Budget € 7.5 billion

FP7 budget € 50.5 billion
The ERC Scientific Council Members
(renewed 1 February 2011)

- Prof. Claudio BORDIGNON (Medicine)
- Prof. Nicholas CANNY, (History)
- Prof. Sierd A.P.L. CLOETINGH (Earth Sciences)
- Prof. Mathias DEWATRIPONT (Economics)
- Prof. Tomasz DIETL (Physics)
- Prof. Daniel DOLEV (Computer Sciences)
- Prof. Carlos M. DUARTE (Biology)
- Prof. Daniel ESTEVE (Physics)
- Prof. Pavel EXNER (Applied Mathematics & Mathematical Physics), ERC Vice President
- Prof. Hans-Joachim FREUND (Physics & Physical Chemistry)
- Prof. Carl-Henrik HELDIN (Molecular Cell Biology), ERC Vice President
- Prof. Timothy HUNT (Biology)
- Prof. Norbert KROO (Physics)
- Prof. Maria Teresa LAGO (Astrophysics)
- Prof. Henrietta L. MOORE (Social Anthropology)
- Prof. Helga NOWOTNY (Social Studies of Science), ERC President
- Prof. Christiane NÜSSLEIN-VOLHARD (Genetics)
- Prof. Alain PEYRAUBE (Linguistics)
- Dr. Jens ROSTRUP-NIELSEN (Chemistry)
- Prof. Mart SAARMA (Biology)
- Prof. Anna TRAMONTANO (Biochemistry)
- Prof. Isabelle VERNOS (Molecular Biology)

ERC Secretary General:
Prof. Donald DINGWELL
(As from September 2011)

Members of the Gender Balance Working Group:

- **ERC Scientific Council**: Danny Dolev, Carlos Duarte, Carl-Henrik Heldin, Teresa Lago (chair), Helga Nowotny, Anna Tramontano, Isabelle Vernos

- **ERC EA**: Jens Hemmelskamp, Severina Shopova, Elisabeth Sjöstedt
ERC’s mission is to support excellent frontier researchers across Europe, irrespective of nationality, gender or age. ERC Scientific Council Gender equality plan was adopted in December 2010.

Three main objectives:

- to raise awareness of ERC gender policy among potential applicants in all research fields
- to identify and challenge any potential gender bias in the ERC evaluation procedure
- to improve the gender balance within the ERC’s peer review system
1. Main objective
– encourage more excellent female researchers to apply for ERC grants
The ERC Gender Equality Plan covers all phases of the ERC process (awareness, submission, evaluation, evaluation, granting, alumni), is based on gender mainstreaming with focus kept on excellence.

Take an active role in the gender debate, gender equality networks and workshops.

Make targeted visits to scientific meetings and workshops addressing gender topics, to inform about open ERC calls.

Highlight ERC women grantees as role models for potential ERC applicants.

Monitor submission rates of women and men.
The ERC attracts high calibre scientists

"Despite being a new, and thus untried instrument, the ERC has manifestly succeeded in attracting and funding world-class research and is playing an important role in anchoring research talent.”

The independent interim evaluation of FP7
Monitor submission rates of women & men by country and research domain

Share women StG applicants vs. women academic staff in Grade B, by country of host institution

Grade B: "Researchers working in positions not as senior as top positions (A) but more senior than newly qualified PhD holders". (She Figures 2009)
Monitor submission rates of women & men by country and research domain
Share women AdG applicants vs. women academic staff in Grade A, by country of host institution

Grade A: "The single highest grade/post at which research is normally conducted."
(She Figures 2009)
Main objective 2.
– identify and challenge any potential gender bias together with the ERC panels
European Research Council

Analyse relation between ERC grants and gender structures in research careers.

Look at success rates of and granted amounts to women and men.

Highlight good practice host institutions regarding coverage of family related costs (e.g. child care, moving with a family etc).

Monitor submission rates of women and men.

Ensure ERC evaluation criteria encompass the situation of both women and men in research.

Take an active role in the gender debate, gender equality networks and workshops.

Make targeted visits to scientific meetings and workshops addressing gender topics, to inform about open ERC calls.

Highlight women grantees as role models for potential ERC applicants.

The ERC gender equality plan covers all phases of the ERC (awareness, submission, evaluation, granting, alumni), based on gender mainstreaming with focus kept on excellence.

ERC Scientific Council gender equality plan 2007 – 2013
– example of steps taken or following
Every 3rd applicant and every 4th grantee is a woman

Source (evaluated/selected Oct 2011): StG 2007 (8788/299), StG 2009 (2 392/245), StG 2010 (2767/436), StG 2011 (4005/480)

* Not counting ineligible or withdrawn applications
ERC Advanced Grants by domain:
Every 7th applicant and every 8th grantee is a woman

ERC Advanced grants: Share of men and women applicants* and grantees by domain

* Not counting ineligible or withdrawn applications
3.

Main objective – improve the gender balance within the ERC’s peer review system
The ERC gender equality plan covers all phases of the ERC (awareness, submission, evaluation, evaluation, granting, alumni), based on gender mainstreaming with focus kept on excellence.

**ERC Scientific Council gender equality plan 2007 – 2013**

- **Awareness**
  - Monitor submission rates of women and men.
  - Ensure ERC evaluation criteria encompass the situation of both women and men in research.

- **Submission**
  - Look at success rates of and granted amounts to women and men.

- **Evaluation**
  - Analyse relation between ERC grants and gender structures in research careers.

- **Granting**
  - Achieve a better gender balance in each ERC evaluation panel as compared to that panel's relevant scientific communities.

- **Alumni**
  - Highlight good practice host institutions regarding coverage of family related costs (e.g. child care, moving with a family etc).

Take an active role in the **gender debate**, gender equality networks and workshops.

Make **targeted visits** to scientific meetings and workshops addressing gender topics, to inform about open ERC calls.

Highlight ERC women grantees as **role models** for potential ERC applicants.

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Gender balance in the ERC peer review system

Averaged over the first eight ERC calls 25% of the ERC panel members were women.

ERC domains and panels
Based on the eight ERC StG and AdG calls 2007 - 2011
“The medium term goal is to achieve gender balance in each ERC evaluation panel as well as among the panel chairs. This may take time, and will also depend on the overall gender balance in particular research fields. In a first step, the ERC will aim at a better gender proportionality in each ERC evaluation panel as compared to that panel's relevant scientific communities.”

(ERC gender equality plan 2007 – 2013)
ERC Scientific Council
Gender equality plan 2007 – 2013
What Next?

ERC Scientific Council gender equality plan

Awareness Submission Evaluation Granting Alumni
Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) 2012 call on “Gender aspects in career structures and career paths”

**Budget:** € 150 000  
**Deadline:** 12 January 2012  
**Aim:** Support to ERC monitoring and evaluation strategy.

**The studies may include:**
- Differences in terms of publications, invitations to conferences, citations, positions, teaching, funding, or recruitment;
- Differences in mobility behaviour and international networking;
- The career impact of work balance, family background or targeted support measures of host institutions (e.g. spouses, child care, moving allowances etc.);
- Career breaks and unconventional career paths;
- Future career perspectives taking into account national research systems;

ERC Scientific Council
Gender equality plan 2007 – 2013

Thank you!