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## EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

Making a mark on the world of science

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# PUSHING THE FRONTIERS OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

by Zach Hester, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, CEND

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Science has played a primordial role in helping to shape the world we humans have created around us. Within the span of our lives, the pace of technological change has been tremendous. But the human power of imagination is immense. Many of the digital technologies young children are now growing up with – from smart phones to Skype – were still the stuff of science fiction when the TV series *Star Trek* first aired.

While we are not quite yet able to tele-transport ourselves like in *Star Trek*, the chances are that scientists will get there one day soon. But basic and applied scientific research pushing the frontiers of human knowledge is fundamental in enabling such technological developments and their different applications.

Science feeds innovation and innovation is crucial in ensuring our future prosperity and well-being. Thus,

the importance of investing in and supporting those inquiring minds, as they push and extend the frontiers of scientific knowledge.

Launched in 2007, the European Research Council is doing just that, attracting the best scientific talent to come to or remain in Europe, while supporting the emergence of a new generation of top researchers. In this edition's dossier, we take a look at the European Research Council's formula for success and some of the exciting work ERC-funded researchers are doing – from the ERC grantees winning Nobel Prizes to those working on fundamental research into cell division that could help us fight cancer and those developing super-materials that may soon make spiderman suits a reality.

Beam me up, Scotty! ■

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# POST

## WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND FIT@WORK – REPLY TO JEAN-FRANCOIS HULOT (POST, CEND #25)

The 2014 Staff Survey clearly indicated that a significant share of staff feels that the Commission does not care enough about their well-being and have concerns over how to strike a good balance between their work and private life. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that many members of staff do feel that their manager takes into consideration work-life balance and supports the use of flexible working arrangements.

Nevertheless, I do think that as a modern organisation we need to do more in this area, and I have asked my services to review our internal decisions on part-time work and telework in order to provide staff with more flexibility in the working conditions, so that we, the Commission, can deliver effectively and efficiently the results citizens rightfully expect.

Proposals are being discussed with the DGs and staff representatives, with a view to implementing concrete actions in early 2016, such as increased possibilities for teleworking and a greater flexibility of part-time formulas.

**Kristalina Georgieva, Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources**

## THE COMMISSION OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY – REPLY TO DIETER FRISCH (POST, CEND #25)

Since the authority commanded by the Commission derives in large part from its technical expertise, we agree that it would be a serious problem if interlocutors find that their Commission counterparts lack specialist knowledge. Although we would like to have solicited external views, our study was focused on the perceptions of Commission staff. In our report and in other work, we emphasize the range and diversity of skills within the Commission workforce. However, we also found that managers and non-managers thought managerial skills should be more highly valued to ensure the optimal use of those talents. No-one thinks technical expertise is unimportant, but there is considerable support within the institution for a more modern approach to management – a view articulated to us directly by managers themselves in interviews. Moreover, in an increasingly competitive labour market, it is important that the Commission can offer a well-managed workplace.

**Professor Hussein Kassim**



“

In Europe equality between women and men is a fundamental principle. Still, only 20% of women have made it to the top of our largest companies. In times of fierce global competition for the best leaders, we cannot afford to waste the potential of highly qualified women

**Věra Jourová at Women in Parliament Global Forum**

► <http://europa.eu/!Jr84tc>



“

We are ready to assist the Greek authorities in their efforts to establish a new growth model, more knowledge-based, more competitive, and to carry out the necessary reforms to this end

**Corina Crețu**

► <http://europa.eu/!CQ69Xc>



“

An agreement with Turkey makes sense if it effectively reduces the inflow of refugees. Concessions will only be justified when this goal is achieved

**Donald Tusk**

► <http://europa.eu/!cC87VR>



“

The EU opposes capital punishment under all circumstances. The death penalty is cruel and inhumane, fails to act as a deterrent and represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity

**Federica Mogherini**

► <http://europa.eu/!gq99vt>

## Education and training at the heart of economic and social policy

**P**ublished on 12 November, the Commission's Education and Training Monitor 2015 puts the spotlight on education priorities most in need of public and private investment. Top of the list is inclusiveness, because of its potential to boost social cohesion and mobility between generations. This is the fourth edition of an annual report that captures the evolution of Europe's education and training systems by bringing together a wide array of evidence in a concise package. The Education and Training Monitor comprises a cross-country comparison, twenty-eight individual country reports, and a dedicated webpage with additional data and information.

The Education and Training Monitor shows clearly that the objectives for jobs, growth and investment can only be met if we put education at the heart of economic and social policy. The report has grown into an indispensable reference tool for the European education community, contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy with its headline target for education. The Education and Training Monitor identifies tangible policy levers that could help improve the inclusiveness, quality and relevance of Europe's education and training systems. ■

► <http://europa.eu/lwx73Mv>



## Labour markets improving – more jobs for older workers and youth

Labour markets and social indicators in the EU continue to improve gradually, benefitting from strengthening economic activity, according to the September 2015 edition of the Quarterly Employment and Social Situation Review. GDP grew by 0.4% in the EU during the second quarter of 2015 compared to the first quarter and by 1.9% between the second quarter of 2014 and the second quarter of 2015. The number of people employed continues to increase overall, with employment rates increasing for all population groups, including notably for older and young workers. Marianne Thyssen, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility commented: *"The recent improvements observed in employment are encouraging, in particular for workers aged over 55 and long-term unemployed. These groups often encounter greater difficulties to come back to the labour market and need particular attention."* ■

► <http://europa.eu/!Bw96KB>



## Commission publishes 'Trade for All' strategy

**T**he Commission has outlined a new, more responsible international trade and investment strategy for the EU, entitled 'Trade for All: Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy'. This strategy responds to new economic realities in line with the EU's foreign policy. It includes measures to ensure that trade policy benefits as many people as possible and is more effective, transparent and in tune with EU values – such as sustainable development, human rights, fair and ethical trade or the fight against corruption. EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström commented: *"We've listened to the debate, Europeans know that trade can deliver jobs, growth and investment for consumers, workers and small companies. And they want more of those results. But they don't want to compromise on core principles like human rights, sustainable development around the world or high quality regulation and public services at home. And they want to know more about the negotiations we carry out in their name. So trade policy must become more effective, more transparent and more in tune with our values. In short, it must become more responsible."* This new approach is in line with the Juncker Commission's pledge to listen and respond to the European public's concerns. ■

► <http://europa.eu/!YB88Mm>



## Refugee crisis Commission agrees joint Action Plan with Turkey

The Commission has reached an agreement with Turkey on a Joint Action Plan to step up their cooperation on migration management in a coordinated effort to tackle the refugee crisis. Heads of State and Government of the EU's 28 Member States on 15 October endorsed the agreement and welcomed the joint Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies a series of collaborative actions to be implemented as a matter of urgency by the EU and the Republic of Turkey with the aim of confronting common challenges in a concerted manner and supplementing Turkey's efforts in managing the large number of people in need of protection on its territory. In addition, the EU – the Institutions and its Member States – also committed to increasing political engagement with Turkey, providing Turkey with significant financial support, accelerating the fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap, and re-energising the accession process with Turkey. The agreement negotiated by the Commission, represented by First Vice-President Timmermans, is the result of intensive talks with Turkish President Erdoğan, Prime Minister Davutoğlu, and Foreign Minister Sinirlioğlu. ■

► <http://europa.eu/!qM96tH>



► On a recent visit to Germany in October, President Juncker went to a migrant registration centre in Passau. He also gave a press point with Thomas Lang, Chief Superintendent of Freyung's Federal Police (pictured to the President's left). In front of the President stand (full-face, left to right) Passau's Landrat, Franz Meyer (CSU), Passau's Mayor, Jürgen Dupper (SPD), and the Secretary-General of Bavaria's CSU party, Andreas Scheuer (glasses and scarf).

# JUNCKER COMMISSION BEING BIG ON BIG THINGS

by Michael Scheerer, CEND

**Taking office one year ago, the Juncker Commission has kept its promise to focus on the big political issues Europe faces in these difficult times.**

As outlined in the list of key initiatives in the 2015 Commission Working Programme, the College has made considerable progress in delivering the results European citizens expect.

One of the Juncker Commission's leading principles from the first day in office was to be "big on big things and small on small things". Another guiding principle was to be a "political Commission". And that still applies. As President Juncker stated in his State of the Union speech before the European Parliament on 9 September 2015: *"I believe the immense challenges Europe is currently facing – both internally and externally – leave us no choice but to address them from a very political perspective, in a very political manner and having the political consequences of our decisions very much in mind."*

This certainly is a College of political heavy-weights – including 9 former Prime Ministers or Deputy Prime Ministers, 19 former Ministers, 7 returning Commissioners, 8 former Members of the European Parliament, some with extensive foreign relations experience. With a clear focus on ten political priorities, the 2015 Com-

mission Work Programme presented only 23 new initiatives, down from an average 130 in the previous period. The 2016 Work Programme adopted at the end of October applies the same disciplined approach to regulatory work.

## Getting investment flowing again

The President's first priority is to strengthen Europe's competitiveness and to stimulate investment to create growth and jobs. The Commission, together with the European Investment Bank, produced an ambitious Investment Plan for Europe (see Dossier, CEND #24) to mobilise at least €315 billion in investment over three years. In less than six months the EU Institutions quickly passed the necessary legislation, with the Regulation establishing a European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) entering into force in July 2015.

The idea is to use public money as a guarantee and catalyst to stimulate private investment in the real economy, where it is most needed. The EFSI will be used to mobilise abundantly available liquidity to sup-



## The immense challenges Europe is currently facing leave us no choice but to address them from a very political perspective

port strategic projects that would not otherwise receive financing, in areas such as research and innovation, renewable energy, broadband, and health care.

As part of its broader effort to fight unemployment, the Commission proposed and the co-legislators agreed in May to frontload €1 billion to speed up the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative. This will help up to 650,000 young people find jobs, apprenticeships, traineeships or continued education across Europe. The Commission will swiftly present a recommendation to promote the integration of the long-term unemployed in the labour market.

### The first projects are already under way

Two other top policy priorities have advanced considerably in the last 12 months. In February, the Commission presented detailed steps for an Energy Union (see Dossier, CEND #21) to reach the twin goals of cutting the emissions that provoke changes in the climate and making energy systems more secure, sustainable and reliable

This was followed in May by a strategy to create a Digital Single Market (see Dossier, CEND #22), as the Commission's reaction to the digital revolution and a signal that Europe embraces the digital future. A Digital Single Market could contribute €415 billion per year to our economy and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

To create the conditions for a lasting recovery, it is also necessary to complete Economic and Monetary Union – another important priority. To achieve this task the Five Presidents Report, presented in June, has set out a roadmap for stabilising and consolidating the euro area. It also proposes more fundamental reforms, to help move the EU from crisis new growth perspectives. A more effective and more democratic system of economic and fiscal surveillance, more fairness in taxation policies and more social coherence, notably a fairer, truly pan-European labour market – these are key areas the Juncker Commission envisages working on in the near future.

The Commission also presented proposals for a Capital Markets Union (see article, page 14), booked progress in the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US, and presented an EU agenda for Security. Over the last year, Commission has played a constructive role in Ukraine and the Western Balkans.

Being political is not just about pursuing policy priorities. It is also about leadership in times of crisis, and this year two great crises put Europe – and the Commission – to the test.

### Tackling the refugee crisis

In May, the Commission presented the European Agenda on Migration (see Dossier, CEND #25). Since then, the EU has tripled its presence at sea, and over 122,000 lives have been saved. 29 Member States and Schengen countries are participating in the joint operations coordinated by Frontex in Italy, Greece and Hungary. The Commission has mobilised €2.8 billion in additional funding for 2015 and 2016, which means a total of €9.2 billion is now available to tackle the refugee crisis. In September, the Member States agreed to Commission proposals to relocate a total of 160,000 refugees throughout Europe. In October, the Commission negotiated an Action Plan with Turkey which will help refugees and aims to prevent irregular migration flows to the EU.

The Greek crisis was another test. After difficult and protracted negotiations, a deal was finally reached and commitments are now being adhered to and implemented. *"Collectively we looked into the abyss. But trust has started to be regained, even though it remains very fragile,"* said President Juncker. Now, with the new programme in place, a new start for Greece and for the euro area is emerging.

Together, strong political leadership by the President and hard work by many colleagues across the Commission have put our Institution at the very centre of policy-making and problem-solving in Europe. ■

### Commission priorities

► <http://europa.eu/!dN66Qr>





# HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE EU BUDGET FOCUSED ON RESULTS

by Simeona Manova, DG BUDG

**The Juncker Commission is keen to focus the EU budget on achieving policy and programme results**, as seen at the high-level conference on 'EU Budget Focused on Results' chaired by Kristalina Georgieva, Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources, on 22 September in Brussels.

To support this strategy, this conference brought together President Juncker, Vice-Presidents Georgieva and Šefčovič, Commissioners Crețu, Hogan and Moedas with three Member State finance ministers and representatives from the European Court of Auditors, the European Parliament, the World Bank, and the OECD. Over 400 persons attended the event, while many others watched on line and contributed with comments and questions.

## Achieving results with less in priority areas

*"In a difficult economic environment with high pressure on EU and Member States' finances, we have to pay more attention than ever to where and how we invest public money,"* Kristalina Georgieva told participants in her opening remarks.

The EU budget already delivers impressive results. For example, the EU budget has financed humanitarian aid amounting to €1,354 million, reaching 121 million

beneficiaries – the most vulnerable of the population in more than 80 countries. Within the EU, a total of 769,000 jobs were created between 2007 and 2013 thanks to the European Regional Development Fund. Many of these jobs were in research, SMEs or both, and coupled with 25,700 km of road and 4,800 km of rail building and reconstruction, they created the right conditions for competitiveness and innovation, and thus for real economic growth. Many other EU-funded projects with real benefits to citizens are presented in the new app (see box).

The EU Budget Focused on Results strategy is about delivering results like these and better, given that for the first time ever, the EU budget is smaller. *"Our needs are growing, but resources are not,"* pointed out Vice-President Georgieva. The only way to do more with less is by improving efficiency and effectiveness. Optimistic, the Vice-President stated: *"This can be done. This is a very big*

*shift for the budget to be more agile, more efficient, and more capable to deliver results for our people."*

*"What does it mean for the EU budget to be working harder for our people, to be focused on results?" she asked. "It is a systemic change in where we spend, how we spend, how we are assessed and how we communicate the results."*

As for 'where we spend', the budget should support core European priorities such as growth, jobs, competitiveness and innovation. The new MFF already establishes higher-than-before amounts for programmes in these areas. The budget should also be used to address cross-cutting policies like tackling climate change, while serving multiple objectives, for example, building infrastructure could have cohesion, job-creation and environmental components. The budget should be an instrument to address European urgencies such as migration. *"We must work to convince European citizens that public money – and especially European money – is really spent in a way that brings sustainable benefits to our economy and our citizens,"* stated Dr Schäuble.

### **Evolving from absorption to smart finance**

'How we spend' is equally important. A euro from the EU budget should attract additional financing from the private sector or Member States. The European Fund for Strategic Investments does precisely that – a small fraction of the budget reduces the risk to investors and attracts additional EU projects financing. Other financial instruments are at work to complement grants and thus increase the financial leverage and, by extension, effectiveness of EU money. To be efficient and effective, funding also needs to be simple. Simplification continues to be high on the agenda to ensure projects are not abandoned just because the rules are so complicated that all the effort goes in administration rather than delivering results.

Compliance continues to be an objective. However, trying to reverse 20 years of a negative declaration of assurance, because the annual error rate established by the Court of Auditors is above 2%, nowadays sounds a lot like the myth of Sisyphus – an impossible task.

We must continue to strive for compliance of course, but Member States, who implement 80% of the budget, should also work harder to reduce errors. Results – or what we achieve with money – should also be considered. After all, what is the value of a perfectly built bridge that is fully compliant with the rules, but that no one ever uses?

### **Communicating for results**

The last component of the Budget Focused on Results strategy is an obvious one – 'how do we communicate?' Vice-President Georgieva has made it a high-point of her mandate that citizens should know what happens with their money when it goes to the EU budget. The new app (see box) presented at the conference is part of communication efforts. Now anyone can check how the EU budget, which accounts for only 1% of EU GNI, makes a real difference for millions of people across Europe and beyond. This, in turn, helps create the conditions for an open dialogue and joint efforts between the EU institutions and Member States towards more results, increased accountability and transparency, and EU added value. As President Juncker said at the conference: *"The budget is not about accounting, it is about being accountable."* ■

#### **New app to showcase EU-funded projects**



Download the new 'EU Budget for Results' app (see link below) on your mobile device. Select one of many search options – on an interactive map, by country, by funding area, by keyword or from a list. For each of the over 500 projects, it provides information on the amount of EU funding, the objectives, and results achieved. A work in progress, the app will cover a growing number of projects over time.

#### **Video – 'EU Budget Focused on Results' conference**

► <http://europa.eu/!Hn48QT>

#### **EU Budget for Results**

► <http://europa.eu/!Jr89wR>

# ACTION FOR CAPITAL MARKETS UNION REMOVING THE BARRIERS TO THE FREE FLOW OF CAPITAL

by Michael Scheerer, CEND

**The Commission's proposed Capital Markets Union Action Plan will help build a true single market for capital across the 28 EU Member States.**

**T**he Capital Markets Union (CMU) Action Plan was launched on 30 September and is the blueprint on which a single market for capital within the EU will be built. The CMU is a key pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe and is designed to create more opportunities for investors, connect financing to the real economy, foster a stronger and more resilient financial system, deepen financial integration, and increase competition.

Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, stresses the aim of boosting the number of cross-border investments in the EU to make it easier for companies and infrastructure projects to raise the money they need, regardless of where they are based. *"During my roadshows, I have heard many times that insurers struggle to invest in infrastructure projects ...the most important part of the Investment Plan for Europe is removing obstacles to investment by deepening the Single Market."*

The CMU is not a legislative proposal in its own right but rather the framework within which a number of legislative and non-legislative initiatives will be proposed. Jonathan Hill, Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *"I want the Capital Markets Union to help European businesses, and our SMEs in particular, have a wider range of funding sources. I want it to give consumers more options for investing their money. I want to knock down barriers to make it easier for capital to flow freely across all 28 Member States."*

## Six priority areas

The Action Plan identifies six priority areas for action and how they will be tackled over the next four years. The priorities are to:

- improve financing for innovation, start-ups, and non-listed companies



- make it easier for companies to enter and raise capital on public markets
- invest for long-term, infrastructure and sustainable investment
- foster retail and institutional investment
- leverage banking capacity to support the wider economy
- facilitate cross-border investing.

As part of the package, the Commission also put forward a legislative proposal creating a European framework for simple, transparent and standardised securitisation – the process whereby a financial instrument is created (typically by a lender such as a bank) by pooling assets such as car loans or SME loans for investors to purchase. Securitisation tends to attract a greater range of investors, and so increases liquidity and frees up capital from the banks for new lending.

The next stage of CMU will focus on access to European venture capital funds/European social entrepreneurship funds and looking into the idea of a pan-European covered bonds market. The Commission is carrying out public consultations on both these issues before making any proposals. ■

**Capital Markets Union – Unlocking funding for Europe's growth**

► <http://europa.eu/!Rj64bR>



# RED, GREEN OR YELLOW? THE NEW SINGLE MARKET SCOREBOARD IS ON LINE

by Antje Streitenberger, DG GROW

**The new Single Market Scoreboard is out, with its traffic-light rating system.**

**M**ember States have been waiting impatiently for the October 2015 edition of the on-line Single Market Scoreboard and its traffic light chart that shows in which areas each Member State's performances are above average (green), give rise to concern (yellow) or where efforts need to be stepped up (red).

The Single Market is designed to enable citizens to work, travel, live, study and do business anywhere in the EU. It is an integral part of people's lives now – but it does not always work quite as it should. This is why the EU and Member States have developed tools to overcome the remaining shortcomings. Based on objective criteria and meaningful indicators, data has been collected over a full year for 12 governance tools and two policy areas, feeding charts and reports that underpin the traffic light chart.

The governance tools are designed to make the Single Market run more smoothly – but are they working? Are Member States doing enough in the various policy areas? Does the law really work, and is it having the desired effect? The Scoreboard aims at answering these questions.

## Main lessons learnt

Any failure to transpose EU law in a timely and correct way into national law is detrimental to the Single Market, as it means that a level playing field does not exist for citizens and businesses. The transposition rate has worsened slightly by comparison with last year's all-time top result. Although the number of infringement proceedings has fallen, the average duration has risen to 29.1 months. During this period, rules are not properly enforced, which prevents the Single Market from working as it should.

In July 2015, 12% of the investigations launched in EU Pilot – the Commission scheme designed to resolve

compliance issues without having to resort to infringement procedures – concerned the Internal Market and services (e.g. regulated professions, freedom to provide services or freedom of establishment). As regards public procurement, almost a third of Member States have difficulties in attracting bidders for their contracts. The costs of cross-border postal deliveries within the EU also remain disproportionately high, as most Member States charge two to three times more than for domestic deliveries. The cost of postal services within the EU should be proportional to the underlying costs. The EURES network is a useful tool for mobility, yet it remains under-used. Its huge potential should be exploited with more determination. The 'Your Europe' portal has provided information to more and more citizens in recent years, though the section on businesses' rights could attract more visits.

Member States with 'red lights' are, however, still in the race – and may well do better in the next Scoreboard. To help them, country-specific information is available in English and the official language(s) of the Member State concerned. ■

## Single Market Scoreboard

► <http://europa.eu/!GF83wD>

## Your Europe

► <http://europa.eu/youreurope>





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## Le 25e anniversaire de la réunification allemande célébré à Bruxelles

En anticipation de la fête nationale de l'Allemagne le 3 octobre, la nuit du 1er octobre, Bruxelles a célébré la 25e anniversaire de la réunification allemande avec un spectacle sons et lumière.

Le site du Cinquantenaire, au décor si semblable à celui de la porte de Brandebourg, n'aurait pu être mieux choisi. Plusieurs dizaines de milliers de personnes de toutes nationalités étaient au rendez-vous. Martin Schulz, président du Parlement européen a évoqué les décennies de paix et l'accueil de la Belgique, prouvant que, malgré deux invasions par l'Allemagne au cours du XXe siècle, la paix et la construction d'une union d'Etats était possible, malgré les défis rencontrés après la chute du Mur et du rideau de fer. La foule a applaudi Martin Schulz tout autant que le spectacle sons et lumières conçu spécialement pour les arcades du Cinquantenaire qui balayait soixante ans d'histoire de l'Allemagne et de l'Europe.

Notre collègue Bernard Van Poucke (DG SANTE), un passionné de photographie qui nous a envoyé ses images, y était et a été d'autant plus ému que ce spectacle a ravivé ses propres souvenirs de la chute du Mur en 1989. *«Juste avant le Nouvel An que j'ai décidé de prendre un train pour Berlin. Dès mon arrivée, je suis allé voir le fameux mur de la honte. Côté Est, des Allemands de l'Est s'en donnaient à cœur joie en cassant des morceaux sous le regard impassible des VOPO et en fêtant leur droit de voyager librement hors de la RDA et l'inéluctable réunification. Quelques années plus tard je suis devenu fonctionnaire européen, apportant ma modeste contribution à la construction de l'Europe.»* Il conclut: *«Nous devons rester vigilants car, pour citer un auteur dont une ville d'Allemagne de l'Est porta un temps le nom, Karl Marx, "Celui qui ne connaît pas l'histoire est condamné à la revivre".»* ■





© EU

► Vice-President Georgieva presenting the money raised from the staff appeals to representatives from the Red Cross – in the presence of members of DG HR and the OIB, Give EUR-hope, and staff representatives (not pictured).

## Refugee crisis

### Commission staff show their solidarity

Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva recently presented a cheque for nearly €122,000 to the Red Cross for urgent humanitarian aid to refugees in greatest need. This donation – collected in just over three weeks – was the result of two fund-raising appeals within the Commission for staff to help with the refugee crisis. The money raised by Give Eur-Hope will be used by the International Red Cross for humanitarian projects within the EU and in neighbouring countries, according to need, and the money raised by the OIB will be used by the Belgian Red Cross to support refugees who have arrived in Belgium.

Finding solutions to the refugee crisis is at the top of the Commission's agenda. At the same time, the very difficult physical, social and economic hardship which these individuals are facing was and is clearly a matter of deep concern to many staff who have been volunteering in their spare time and organising collections of essential goods.

Recognising this simple but powerful impulse amongst staff to help fellow human beings in difficulty, Vice-President Georgieva gave her support for a cross-Commission appeal in favour of the refugees.

The first appeal was co-ordinated by DG HR and Give Eur-hope, the internal staff-run charity, and raised over €100,000 in just over three weeks. A second fundraiser – run by the OIB and based on staff contributing in Commission restaurants and cafeterias – raised very close to €22,000 during the same period.

Give Eur-Hope will continue to raise funds for projects to support the refugees. If you would like to participate, please make your donation to the following bank account IBAN BE74 3630 8495 9007 (BIC: BBRUBEBB). ■

► [www.giveeurhope.eu/](http://www.giveeurhope.eu/)





## First Inter-institutional Alternative Mobility photo competition – And the winners are

For the first time, this year the EMAS and environmental management teams of the Commission, the European Parliament, the General Secretariat of the Council, the Committee of the Regions, and the European Economic and Social Committee co-organised with great success the first 'Inter-institutional Alternative Mobility Day' on Friday 18 September 2015. An inter-institutional alternative mobility photo competition was also organised among the numerous sustainable commuters, arriving at the office that day (and any other day) using alternative means of transport than the private car – public transport, carpooling, cycling, walking, as well as much more imaginative choices.

During the award ceremony on 16 October, hosted at the European Parliament, the names of the three Commission winners were also unveiled: Hannah Nielsen (SCIC) for her unique colourful bike (top left), the EMAS Site Coordination Team in JRC-Ispra (Philip Costeloe and Michael Hoffmann) for the organisation of the 3rd edition of the Sustainable Mobility Unit Competition with high staff participation and senior management involvement (below), and the EMAS Site Coordination Team in JRC-Petten (Brian Guldback Eriksen and Niels Wagenaar) for the perfect coverage of a multiple event with the most original sustainable commuters (including even an old-fashioned wagon pulled by two horses (top right).

Let's follow their examples and 'Do the Right Mix' for ourselves and the planet! ■

### EMAS Reflex issue 4 (dedicated to alternative mobility)

► <http://europa.eu/!Ct98Yv>

### Inter-institutional photo competition poster

► <http://europa.eu/!Dv38cj>



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## EKIDEN 2015 Ensemble contre la pauvreté

EKIDEN 2015 a tenu une fois encore toutes ses promesses. Le samedi 17 octobre, malgré une température bien plus basse que l'année dernière, plaisir et sourires étaient au rendez-vous pour les 600 coureurs inscrits dans les quelques 100 équipes des institutions européennes.

Les participants ont particulièrement apprécié le nouvel emplacement de la tente des institutions, hors du stade mais proche du point de départ: «Nous pouvions voir et encourager chaque coureur individuellement, en brandissant notre t-shirt Give Eur-Hope et en criant "Allez, allez, courage"».

Pour sa part, l'équipe «fit@work» de la DG HR – avec deux jeunes coureurs de 9 et 10 ans qui participaient pour la 3e année consécutive – a maintenu une moyenne de 12 km/h

Avec le soutien d'Affiliatys, les participants ont couru pour deux projets soutenus par Give Eur-Hope. En Roumanie, le «Projet éducatif Timmy Mouse» œuvre à l'impression de livres destinés à améliorer le développement d'enfants défavorisés vivant dans le nord-est, région la plus pauvre du pays (voir colonne de droite, photo du bas). En Belgique, dans le quartier défavorisé de Cureghem (Anderlecht), le projet «Gratins de cultures» du Centre d'Education et de Formation en Alternance favorise l'expression culturelle des élèves en contact avec des artistes, pour lutter contre le décrochage scolaire.

Merci aux coureurs, aux donateurs et aux bénévoles pour leur amitié, leur dévouement et leur engagement.

A l'année prochaine! ■

### EKIDEN 2015 – photos

► <http://bit.ly/1LADsLz>

### Give Eur-Hope

► <http://www.giveeurhope.eu/fr/projects-by-country>

► [ec-give-eur-hope@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ec-give-eur-hope@ec.europa.eu)




Le transfert de dons se poursuit sur le compte bancaire de Give Eur-Hope, en indiquant le nom de l'équipe: ING 363-0849590-07 – IBAN BE74 3630 8495 9007 – BIC BBRUBEBB.

### Affiliatys

► [www.affiliatys.eu/](http://www.affiliatys.eu/)





► Kenima, 15, holds her sister's 5-month-old daughter, Jahrida.

# COMBATING HIV/AIDS BREAKING THE LAW OF SILENCE

by Caroline Bach, UNICEF BELIZE

**In the run-up to World AIDS Day on 1 December, Commission en direct looks at an example in Belize of the work on the ground the Commission supports – as part of its development cooperation – to combat the spread of the virus.**

**D**angriga looks like the cover of a travel magazine – a tropical paradise in southern Belize, a place to relax under the sun and enjoy the palm trees and turquoise waters. What visitors may not know is that it is also the district with the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in the country, HIV/AIDS prevalence higher than anywhere else in Central America, and a place where violence and poverty are an ever-present reality.

## What poverty can pressure a girl into doing

A group of teenage girls and women gather in the main room of a small one-storey building and place their chairs in a ring to prepare for a POWA session. POWA is short for Productive Organization for Women in Action and has been active in Dangriga since 2003 (see box).

*"Being a woman in this community is not the easiest task," India, 19, shares. "We are the main targets here and you will often see older men prey on younger and vulnerable girls." Sitting next to her, Kenima is only 15 years old, but has already been a target. "The men approach us with little suggestions at first. A beer, a lunch for letting them*

*hold our hands or maybe even touch a breast... Then they take out the big guns – they offer to pay your school fees, pay your mother's rent, take care of the house bills... It's really not easy to say no when you are in our situation."*

Young girls in Dangriga find themselves lost in a system where they are not expected to have ambitions to ever provide for themselves, and where their own mothers feel that they have no other choice than to encourage them to accept these offers to save the family and put food on the table. The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Belize confirms this reality, as rates are highest among young girls and old men, many of whom unknowingly keep spreading the virus. Teenage pregnancies are the main reason for school dropouts, and sexual abuse is one of those things everybody knows about but too few dare to report.

## Working on self-esteem and education

Michele Irving, the coordinator for POWA, explains: *"We work on the self-esteem of girls, on keeping them in school, teaching them about safety and trying to keep them*





*away from dangers. We target girls at risk and we try to support them with school stipends and giving them practical skills that they can use to secure their own income and become economically independent. All of this to keep them away from falling victims to this horrendous abuse of power."*

POWA's initiatives have been supported by UNICEF and the European Union since 2006. Under the leadership of Michele Irving, POWA runs after-school programmes for vulnerable children, literacy and school completion programmes for women, an HIV/AIDS prevention and stigma and discrimination reduction programme, and conducts extensive work on empowerment of women and girls.

*"Rather than thinking that you have all the answers to people's problems, you create a space where people can create trust to transform their own realities,"* Michele explains. Sexual abuse is so commonplace that mothers, most of whom have probably gone through the same situations, often choose not to see it. *"They will tell you to forget it and never mention it again,"* one of the girls whispers.

### Empowerment – transforming lives

*"But now, when the male teacher in class says something nasty in our ear, or when men try to touch us, we scream, we say no, we report,"* Kenima shares with a confident voice. *"Nobody can tell me that it is ok."*

*"My passion comes from seeing lives transformed,"* Michele explains. *"I know I can't save the world, but I can save one, two, three of these girls and help by making one day at a time better, by giving them the capacities to change their own lives."*

In fact, by changing the girls' lives, Michele and the POWA programme do much more. They break the law of silence, change the power dynamics, and create role models for other girls to follow, allowing them to grow to be concerned, protective and empowered women. ■

DG DEVCO – Empowering one girl at a time

► <http://europa.eu/!kX33QB>

### Women in action

Co-funded by the EU since 2006, the Productive Organization for Women in Action (POWA) is a community-based organisation that began in 2003 in Dangriga Town, Belize.

- The HIV/AIDS prevalence in Belize is 2.5% – estimates show that 1 in every 10 children in Belize is affected and vulnerable.
- Toledo district has the highest rates of violence against children in the country, with a rate of 81.4%.
- The POWA youth arm focuses on girls that are vulnerable because of their exposure to issues such as HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence.
- Members receive training on HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, community outreach, self-esteem and negotiation skills.
- POWA and UNICEF's relationship focuses on supporting children in the areas of literacy, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS education.

### EU action to combat HIV/AIDS worldwide

Much progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The number of people dying of AIDS-related causes fell to 1.1 million in 2014, down from 2 million in 2004.

The EU's cooperation has greatly contributed to these advances. However, much more remains to be done, particularly on prevention. The newly adopted Sustainable Development Agenda, which builds upon the MDGs, aims to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030 (Goal 3.3).

EU assistance provides comprehensive health support and helps countries achieve universal health coverage. The Commission is also a founding member of the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The EU has provided about half of the US\$ 27 billion that the Fund has spent since 2002 to help put 8.1 million people on treatment in developing countries.

Treatment goes to about 40% of all people living with HIV/AIDS – up from less than 1% in 2000 and just 4% in 2005. 423 million people have been counselled and tested for HIV/AIDS, 5.1 million condoms have been distributed, and 3.1 million HIV/AIDS-positive women have been treated to prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS to their unborn children.

## COMITE ECONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL UN NOUVEAU PRESIDENT

par Chris Jones, CEND

**Le Comité économique et social européen vient de se doter d'un nouveau président. Georges Dassis, ancien syndicaliste, nous parle de son passé et de la vision de son mandat pour la période 2015-2018.**

**Vous avez rejoint le Comité économique et social européen (CESE) avec une expérience dans le syndicalisme en Grèce. Comment ce passé influence-t-il votre vision de l'Union européenne?**

En réalité, mon passé syndical grec se divise en deux parties: celle d'avant la dictature des colonels, quand, avec quelques amis, nous avons fondé le premier syndicat de jeunes travailleurs fréquentant les cours du soir, et celle qui a commencé en 1981, lorsque j'ai accepté la proposition du président de la Confédération du travail de Grèce de m'occuper des relations européennes et internationales. Entretemps, j'avais dû fuir la Grèce, précisément à cause de mon militantisme politique et syndical, et j'ai été réfugié politique en Belgique. Je m'y suis, naturellement, inscrit dans un syndicat – la FGTB (Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique) – et, longtemps après, je suis devenu permanent dans cette organisation, dirigée par Georges Debunne. Ma vision de l'Union a donc toujours beaucoup bénéficié de mon expérience dans un des pays fondateurs.

J'ai toujours considéré l'Union comme un espace de paix, de démocratie, de droit, de dialogue et de prospérité et, comme beaucoup d'Européens, j'ai ardemment souhaité que mon pays, après avoir connu comme d'autres la guerre, la guerre civile et la dictature, y adhère. En fait, j'ai énormément participé à l'effort d'information de mes concitoyens grecs, en particulier les travailleurs, à travers l'Institut du travail de la CGT-GR dont j'ai été membre fondateur, sur l'Union, ses principes et son fonctionnement, avant et après l'adhésion.

**Comment cela impactera-t-il la direction que vous souhaitez impulser au CESE pendant votre mandat?**

Je suis extrêmement sensible au sort des citoyens, à la pauvreté, au chômage, au drame des migrations for-

cées. Il est urgent que l'Union soit ressentie par ses citoyens comme un bien, sans quoi elle va se disloquer, au grand bénéfice des extrémistes et pour le malheur de tous nos pays. L'Europe doit devenir plus sociale et, entendons-nous bien, puisque je suis syndicaliste, cela signifie aussi que nos entreprises doivent fonctionner dans les meilleures conditions, afin de pouvoir fournir à un maximum de citoyens des emplois décents.

**Est-il pertinent qu'une société civile organisée existe au niveau de l'UE, dans le climat actuel d'austérité et de restrictions économiques?**

La société civile, précisément, paye une crise dont elle n'est pas responsable. L'Union s'est dotée d'une institution qui permet aux employeurs, aux travailleurs et aux associations citoyennes de s'exprimer ensemble. Quand ils le font, il faut absolument regarder ce qu'ils proposent, ça en vaut la peine.

Nous avons demandé la taxation des transactions financières bien avant que la Commission ne reprenne l'idée à son compte; nous avons proposé d'emblée des formules de mutualisation des dettes souveraines pour que nos Etats résistent mieux aux spéculateurs ensemble, nous avons des propositions pour la gouvernance, pour l'immigration, pour la lutte contre la pauvreté, pour notre économie, pour notre industrie, pour nos PME et tout un tas d'autres choses.

Il y a de l'énergie et de l'innovation dans nos entreprises, dans nos syndicats et dans nos associations. Nous avons des points de divergences mais il y en a deux sur lesquels nous sommes toujours d'accord. Tout d'abord, l'Europe n'est pas le problème, c'est la solution, mais ce ne doit pas être n'importe quelle Europe. Ensuite, il faut accorder une très grande importance au dialogue social et au dialogue civil et, là, il faut impliquer des



organisations clairement représentatives, que ce soit au niveau national ou au niveau européen.

**Vous semble-t-il important que le travail du CESE soit mieux connu et compris au niveau des Etats membres et si oui, que pouvez-vous mettre en œuvre pour cela?**

Les traités assignent au Comité une mission qu'il doit remplir avant toute autre chose: exprimer à l'intention des institutions européennes l'avis de la société civile organisée européenne. Cela dit, il est clair que les membres du Comité arrivent à Bruxelles pour relayer l'avis de leurs organisations nationales, mais aussi pour relayer vers leurs organisations nationales les avis que nous adoptons. Il y a beaucoup de ressources investies dans la traduction, mais il est fondamental que ces textes soient lisibles par tous dans tous nos pays.

Paradoxalement peut-être, je crois que ce dont le Comité a le plus besoin, c'est d'un peu de publicité de la part des grandes institutions qui le consultent. Celles-ci ne devraient pas manquer l'occasion de faire savoir au citoyen, dans son pays, que l'Union est dotée

d'un organe de consultation conjointe des entreprises, des syndicats et des associations. A vrai dire, c'est une spécificité européenne dont nous devrions être fiers, à condition qu'on puisse de temps en temps relever qu'on a prêté une oreille attentive aux demandes de la société civile et qu'on a suivi ses suggestions.

Un pouvoir qui met ainsi en place un organe qui émet nécessairement des avis critiques et propose des solutions différentes peut se targuer d'être démocratique. Il faut le dire. Et il faut bien entendu promouvoir la même chose au niveau national, ou même régional. ■

**Comité économique et social européen**

► [www.eesc.europa.eu](http://www.eesc.europa.eu)

**Video – Georges Dassis**

► <http://bit.ly/1GIktg1>

**Pour une Europe unie, démocratique, solidaire, de paix et de prospérité, proche des citoyens. Orientations pour les politiques de l'Union européenne – Mandat 2015-2018**

► <http://bit.ly/1GIkxFC>



## 2015 ICN AWARDS

# DG HR'S PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP WINS SPECIAL PRIZE

by Nilde Marchitto, CEND

In the 2015 edition of the Commission's Internal Communication and Staff Engagement Awards, the **'Participatory Leadership for staff engagement across the European Commission'** initiative was singled out by the jury with a special award for the entry with the highest impact. Matthieu Kleinschmager, who got the project started for DG HR, talks to *Commission en direct* about the initiative.

### What is Participatory Leadership?

I would define Participatory Leadership as a new leadership culture aimed at leveraging the potential, efficiency, and impact of our organisation. As the context in which the Commission operates has profoundly changed over the last 15 years, nowadays managers have to meet two seemingly conflicting requirements – to fulfil the Institution's objectives while keeping people motivated and involved. In this way, aspects such as building trust and relationships, developing cross-cutting collaboration, carving out space for reflection, innovation and networking become crucial for the business context. For me, Participatory Leadership is a way of responding to these needs.

### Are we prepared for it?

Leaders need to favour more participatory and co-creative approaches to reveal the collective intelligence that can be present in a team, in a whole department or among stakeholders in a European policy field. We need to create the conditions for a more real and meaningful dialogue to make sense together and collaborate for the common good. This ensures ownership of plans and therefore smoother implementation.

### How did Participatory Leadership get started in the Commission?

In 2006, DG HR's central Learning and Development Unit, together with other interested colleagues, started thinking about new ways to invite participation. Between 2006 and 2008, two approaches were tested



► Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva presenting the award to DG HR's Matthieu Kleinschmager and Ana Yturriaga.

© EU

through training and projects – the 'art of hosting conversations that matter' and 'communities of practice'. This had several important effects – participants promptly got involved in the conversations, and a positive dynamic started that led to results beyond any expectations in terms of both concrete outputs and more intangible outcomes – such as relationships and trust. To best introduce these approaches in our culture, we raised awareness among managers in DG HR and across the rest of the Commission, and we piloted a three-day training seminar and a senior leadership seminar about the challenges of the next decade.



## Why is Participatory Leadership so successful?

In addition to the impacts I already mentioned, once people experience the benefits of Participatory Leadership, most – though, of course, not all – want more of it. Participatory practices help people to work better together, improving communication and organisation at work. They also help create bridges to inter-service and inter-institutional collaboration, leading EU staff to build more prolific partnerships. This is why requests for more support, staff training and projects are on the rise. About 1,600 staff have already attended a three-day entry-level training seminar since 2008.

## What do participants like about the training?

Participants are selected to participate in our seminars on the basis of their motivations. They can show their own projects to the others and work on them in real time. In this way, both the participants and the organisation's needs can be best addressed. Teams are trained together, so as to maximise learning and implementation. For the same reason, training groups comprise up to 60 people. During seminars, both internal and external consultants support the learning process and people experience new methodologies by putting them into practice. To deepen the skills already gained, we have also gradually introduced new advanced modules and practitioners' gatherings.

## What kind of projects does Participatory Leadership run and how?

Management seminars, European stakeholder consultations, internal and EU-wide network gatherings, whole-department or staff engagement events and learning events are common examples – usually initiated by senior

and middle managers. Each project is different and we work in close collaboration with internal sponsors and their teams to clarify needs and purpose, design the project, identify participants, and collect and make sense of results. These projects are supported by the Commission's in-house consultants' team, a growing community of practitioners, and professional external consultants.

## How does the Internal Consultants Team work?

We have a team of six internal consultants in DG HR's Learning and Development Unit (B.3) which offers training, consultancy and coaching within the Commission at all levels, as well as in all European contexts. It supports the Commission's strategic objectives, facilitating both EU staff and stakeholder engagement, through the organisation of small- to large-scale events, as well as by improving working methods and the further development of policies and strategies. Consultants can encourage strategic leadership, thinking and planning and address the challenges implicit in change processes. They can help services to identify action plans by sector or by project and develop management teams, cross-unit groups, project teams, or individual managers' sessions. The team thus supports the Commission's ambition to make fuller use of the talents of its staff, while developing resilience and agility. ■

## More information about the 2015 Internal Communication Awards

- <http://europa.eu/InP43Pt>
- See also CEND #24 p. 25-27, CEND #25, p. 24-25

# JRC-GEEL CELEBRATES 55TH ANNIVERSARY WITH OPEN DAY

by Elke Anklam, JRC

**On Sunday, 4 October 2015, the Joint Research Centre's Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (JRC-IRMM) in Geel, Belgium, celebrated its 55th birthday by opening its doors to the public within the context of the Belgian national event 'Open Bedrijvendag/Portes Ouvertes'.**

The JRC-IRMM is one of the seven institutes of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Commission's in-house science service. The JRC provides EU policies with independent, evidence-based scientific and technical support throughout the whole policy cycle. It addresses key societal challenges while stimulating innovation and sharing its know-how with the EU Member States, the scientific community, and international partners.

### Measurements' role in innovation and consumer protection

The JRC-IRMM brings together multi-disciplinary expertise for developing new measurement methods and tools such as reference materials, promoting standardisation and harmonisation across the European Union to stimulate innovation and to protect consumers and citizens. The JRC-IRMM employs about 250 individuals who work in multi-disciplinary areas, such as biotechnology, food and feed safety, food fraud detection, health care, nanotechnology, nuclear safety and security, and threat detection. The scientific work is conducted in state-of-the-art laboratories and facilities and supports the harmonisation of measurements in Europe. The Institute develops and distributes reference materials for establishing measurement scales, calibrating laboratory instruments, and checking the trueness of measurement results. Reference materials serve as a benchmark in the quality control of laboratories. It also develops standardised analytical methods, together with guidelines for better measurements. Many rapidly growing areas, such as nanotechnology, biotechnology and personalised medicine, require the substantial support of measurement standards and measurement technology to bring

products to the market. Innovation cannot occur without state-of-the-art measurement tools. The JRC-IRMM therefore develops measurement quality assurance tools to facilitate trade and reduce costs by providing efficiency and preventing duplication of measurements throughout Europe and at a global level.

### Visitors discover measurements in our daily lives

More than 1,200 visitors arrived to visit the site. On their arrival, they were provided with a programme consisting of an overview of all the activities in the different laboratories and facilities and the role and importance of the Commission in general. Visitors were entertained through several videos, including the latest JRC-IRMM video 'Measurements in our daily lives' and the film shown in the European Pavilion of the EXPO 2015 in Milan, Italy (see Dossier, CEND #20).

Visitors were allowed to tour the entire site – about 40 ha large in size – and they enjoyed the opportunity to visit selected laboratories and facilities. This included the JRC-IRMM fire department where adults and children alike were fascinated by the JRC-IRMM's fire engine, and they learned how to extinguish fires. The visitors also learned how the Institute is protected in the event of a potential blackout, especially as the scientific institute houses unique facilities and laboratories under specific conditions (pressure, temperature, humidity). Thanks to these services, power outage for an extended period is not an option, thus ensuring an uninterrupted flow of activities at the JRC-IRMM. This is crucial, given that the Institute stores a vast number of reference materials that must be preserved at low temperatures, sometimes even as low as -150°C.





At the aviation security laboratory, visitors discovered how science and technology are used at airport security checkpoints to detect prohibited items, as well as about the harmonisation of luggage scanners at airports and their importance in threat detection.

Exceptionally, the JRC-IRMM's linear accelerators were opened to the public. At the Van de Graaff accelerator, visitors on the guided tour saw cosmic particles in a cloud chamber – showing the natural radioactivity in the air – and discovered what happens to the body if it accumulates positive charges during an electrostatic experience. A guided tour at the Geel Linear Accelerator (GELINA), which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, took visitors all the way to the building's rooftop where they had a glimpse of neutron flight paths and the measuring stations.

### The importance of reference materials

The JRC-IRMM is well equipped to prepare – by grinding, milling, extracting, drying, lyophilising, and packaging – various kinds of materials to become certified for specific inherent components. The range of certified reference materials encompasses nuclear and industrial materials, health diagnostic biomarkers, food and feed materials, and environment samples. In the reference

materials production laboratory, visitors discovered how the food reference materials are preserved for long periods without losing their properties, for example, by freeze-drying them. Also, they learned how bacteria can be counted, how doctors test the kidney function of patients, and why reference materials are needed.

At the food laboratories, they learned about how foods cause allergies and how important it is to detect food fraud (e.g. wine, honey, fish) to protect European consumers. Visitors were given the opportunity to guess the amount of sugar contained in our everyday food products, and they experienced the importance of chemistry in the kitchen, including a cryo-show where they learned how modern gastronomy uses liquid nitrogen for fancy meals.

By the end of the day, the visitors had gained a good understanding of why measurements matter in our daily lives. ■

Joint Research Center (JRC)

► <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en>

JRC-IRMM Open Day 2015 on Facebook

► <http://on.fb.me/1hEbaHn>



# INTERNAL AUDIT A LIFETIME CAREER?

by Patrick de Boom, IAS

**Ever thought of becoming an internal auditor? What are the career opportunities and paths? This topic was precisely the focus of this year's annual Internal Audit Service Conference.**

Once an auditor, always an auditor? There is, of course, some truth to this – after all, auditors train long and hard to get where they are, so they have every incentive to stick with it throughout their careers. But there are many and varied aspects to audit work, and a career in auditing can lead in many different directions.

This was the message from the 14th annual Internal Audit Service Conference on 29 September in Brussels, where some 450 audit experts from a variety of international organisations such as the United Nations, NATO, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and other EU Institutions, as well as from all 28 Member States, learned about the audit function in all its aspects.

## Diversifying skills and experiences

While previous editions of the annual conference have concentrated very much on specific aspects of our job, such as audit methodology or standards, the 2015 event was an opportunity to concentrate on internal audit from the individual and organisational perspectives.

Focused entirely on career paths for auditors, many personal testimonies showed the range of possibilities on offer.

Opening the conference, Michelle Sutton, Deputy Head of Cabinet of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, under whose portfolio the Internal Audit Service (IAS) now falls, stressed that the quality of internal audit continues to depend on the quality of the auditors and that the First Vice-President welcomed any move from auditors to diversify their skills and experiences.

Keynote speaker Henrik Stein, President of the European Confederation of Institutes of Internal Auditing (ECIIA) and Chief Auditor at DZ Bank in Germany, shared his experiences of 25 years in internal audit. Over that time, he said, he had seen the profession move away from simple internal audit towards a wider support function for management. *"Some 64% of Fortune 500 companies use their internal audit function as a management training ground for future managers,"* he said, although he stressed that the move into management roles depended essentially on the willingness of organisations to develop this kind of mobility. Most auditors still remain auditors for most of their careers,





Some 64% of Fortune 500 companies use their internal audit function as a management training ground for future managers

he added, citing figures from the Institute of Internal Auditors that showed that in Germany, Austria and Switzerland the average career length is 3 to 7 years for 36% of internal auditors and longer than 7 years for 54% – a long time in today's dynamic job market. Not all internal auditors move into management positions however, there being no established practical model for advancing in the career.

Larry Rittenberg, Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, former Chairman of the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) and a past president of the Institute of Internal Auditors' Research Foundation, stressed that what was important for auditors in their careers was to add value to the organisation. *"We are not unique – management gets assurance and advice from other sources as well, so internal audit needs to earn its seat at the management table."* To do this, he said, internal audit needed to focus on the important things for the organisation. *"You have to know the business, and remember you are only as good as your last audit."*

### A breeding ground for motivated talent

One of the main themes to emerge from the discussion was how to attract and retain young people to the internal audit function. Young graduates are not looking for a job, they are looking for a starting point in their career, an opportunity to learn and grow, and they keep this desire for improvement throughout their careers.

The clearest example of how internal audit can be a breeding ground for talent came from the Netherlands. Beate Numan and Annelies Visscher shared their experiences of working for the Dutch audit department. They explained that the department was created in 2012 to

centralise 13 different audit functions at ministry level, while keeping client services in each ministry. Through a better understanding of the complex and continuously changing political environment, they are far better placed to offer internal audit insight into other key human resource issues such as IT, change management, and organisational behaviour and culture. At the same time, auditors are continually encouraged to further develop their skills through regular training, and this can include management skills.

The conference came to the conclusion that getting into internal audit should not be seen as a trap, a golden cage or a dead end, but that, on the contrary, it opens a world of opportunities for motivated auditors. Time spent working in internal audit is time well spent for anyone's career. It is a job based on ethics, standards and a commitment to the organisation – experience that is useful for many other roles as well. But while internal audit is definitely a profession, it is not always a career, and the more we can do to help auditors feel fulfilled, stimulated and motivated in their jobs, the more we will be able to recruit and retain the very best talent in the field. ■

#### More information and conference webstreaming

► <http://bit.ly/1ZWCsLg>

#### IAS on Europa

► [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/internal\\_audit/](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/internal_audit/)

#### The Institute of Internal Auditors

► <https://na.theiia.org/Pages/IIAHome.aspx>

#### European Confederation of Institutes of Internal Auditing

► [www.eciia.eu/](http://www.eciia.eu/)





## BYE BYE JMO FAREWELL BIKE RIDE FROM BRUSSELS TO LUXEMBOURG

by Viorel Florean, DGT

**A number of events are being held to mark the closure of the Jean Monnet (JMO) building in Luxembourg – including a trans-Ardenne bike ride reflecting the two-site status of Commission translators.**

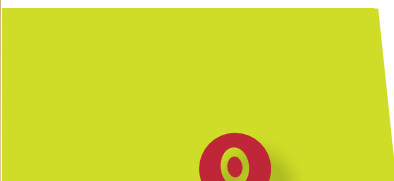
Many of us are cyclists, commuting back and forth between home and work on the same route every day or, weather allowing, going for evening rides or weekend tours. A few of us even spend our holidays on longer trips under bluer skies abroad. And it was while sharing our experiences of one such trip – a spring ride in southern France – over a cup of coffee that the idea of linking Brussels and Luxembourg by bike was born. We agreed it was a good idea, *"but the weather around here...?"* was our main concern. So we planned our adventure for September, hoping for the best. In the end, we decided that the weather around here was not going to change any time soon, so we had better just prepare and ride, no matter what. And that's exactly what we did.

So, on the morning of Saturday, 12 September, a group of 10 cyclists from DG Translation (DGT) and other DGs, plus a couple of friends and family members – a truly diverse mix in terms of age, gender and equipment levels – set off from the Berlaymont and headed south-east towards Luxembourg.

We left Brussels through Auderghem, threaded our way through the fields and hills of Flemish Brabant, passing Overijse and Tombeek, to reach Wavre, then carried on to Namur under moody skies that blessed us with a few quick showers. There, we stopped for lunch and a little shelter from the rain, which was now testing our resolve somewhat. It left us after a while, moving on to its familiar stomping ground, Brussels. So the group moved on too, along the picturesque banks of the Meuse to scenic Dinant, where a coffee break gave us the strength to face the last leg of that day's itinerary – the mighty hills to Beauraing, where we would be able to rest for the night.

The day had been long and demanding, but it was barely past seven when we reached our rooms in the exquisite Castel Sainte Marie and relaxed as the daylight faded. The night ended with laughs and stories over tasty Walloon dishes. And Belgian beer, of course, which had never tasted better.

Some of the group left that night and the next morning, as they had to return home before the end



of the weekend, taking the train from nearby stations to Brussels or Luxembourg. The others resumed the journey south-eastward on Sunday after breakfast. It took us the whole morning to climb the Ardennes to Libramont, where we stopped for lunch, and most of the afternoon to cross green pastures and roller-coaster woods, passing through Neufchâteau and Léglise to reach Arlon, where the Ardennes finally gave way to a smoother landscape.

The weather turned out fine, despite the ominous forecast, and the group had been right to hope for the best. After a last break, we climbed back onto our bikes and rode on to reach our final destination, the good

old Jean Monnet building, as the sun was setting. It was eight o'clock on Sunday, 13 September, and the group, now down to three DGT colleagues (Tim Cooper, Filip Majcen and myself), had been riding for two days and 250 km.

The 2015 Cycle the Ardennes group were: Anders Ericsson (DGT), Filip Majcen (DGT), Benjamin Majcen (family), Bogdan Bulat (friend), Bogdan Sofronea (friend), Damjan Premoze (DGT), Tim Cooper (DGT), Fiona Pitt (DG JUST), Francisco Sepulveda (DG ECFIN), and myself.

See you next year for another adventure! ■





**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission







DOSSIER

# European Research Council

## Making a mark on the world of science

Eight years after its launch by the Commission, the European Research Council is already one of the most recognised names in science, supporting researchers from different countries and disciplines to work in Europe. Called by Angela Merkel "*the Champion's League*" of European research, it gives substantial, competitive funding to top international scientists to do innovative research at the frontiers of knowledge, leading to radical, sometimes unexpected discoveries. *Commission en direct* finds out more.

## ATTRACTING AND NURTURING THE BEST SCIENTIFIC TALENT

by Massimo Gaudina and Madeleine Drielsma, ERCEA

Established by the Commission in 2007, the European Research Council has emerged as the first pan-European organisation for funding research at the frontiers of knowledge. Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, shares his views on this unique body.

### Why should the EU fund curiosity-driven frontier research?

Under the Horizon 2020 programme, the European Research Council (ERC) supports research done by top scientists active in Europe. The cutting-edge research supported by the ERC has been pushing the frontiers of our knowledge. History shows that this type of science often generates unforeseen, but crucial, discoveries that improve people's lives. Frontier science can spark innovation and thereby boost growth and well-being. Since the ERC's creation in 2007, five of its grantees have already won the Nobel Prize (see page 40), with very clear impacts for society. Europe needs to host more talent and support more breakthroughs to stay competitive in today's world.

### What makes the ERC a success?

The ERC has been an exciting and very successful experiment. Whilst belonging to the EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020, the ERC is led by an independent Scientific Council. Twenty-two renowned researchers and scholars, representing the scientific community in Europe, ensure the independence and excellence of the programme. With its motto of 'For scientists, by scientists', the ERC's set-up has been a successful formula, especially when combined with other key features. It only funds excellence and goes for risky projects – that's where real breakthroughs happen. With its bottom-up mode, the ERC also gives researchers free rein to explore and does not impose from above any policy priorities, allowing them to follow their passion. In this way, it helps unleash innovation. Last but not least, the ERC is praised by the research community for its user-friendly procedures. Less red tape has been a guiding principle. Today the ERC is applauded inside – but also outside – the EU.



### What is the ERC's role in supporting research and innovation in Europe?

The ERC has a mission to make Europe more attractive to world-class talent, and it has been doing this since day one. It has been critical to prevent brain drain – a growing challenge when it comes to top scientists in Europe. Its substantial grants allow the most successful researchers to remain on our continent, and this means Europe can reap the full impact of their scientific output and their innovation. Through the ERC, many European scientists based abroad were able to return to European scientific institutions. To be competitive, Europe needs to be a central hub for the best research in the world. ■

#### European Research Council (ERC)

► <http://erc.europa.eu/>

#### Commissioner Carlos Moedas' website

► <http://europa.eu/tv63qV>

#### Commissioner Carlos Moedas' blog

► <http://europa.eu/mY99VR>



# SUPPORTING A NEW GENERATION OF TOP RESEARCHERS

by Madeleine Drielsma, ERCEA

**Jean-Pierre Bourguignon**, President of the European Research Council (ERC) since January 2014, explains the ERC's mission and role.

## What lies at the heart of the European Research Council's mission?

The ERC is the EU's first body funding individual top researchers, from the bottom-up. Its core mission is to support frontier research – without discriminating between basic and applied. The selection – made under the responsibility of the ERC's Scientific Council – is based solely on scientific quality. With a budget of €13 billion for 2014-20, the ERC offers attractive five-year grants to scientists from anywhere in the world in all fields – Social Sciences/Humanities, Physical Sciences/Engineering, and Life Sciences. As the Scientific Council cares about young talent, no less than two-thirds of its budget goes to early-career researchers, to help them fully develop their potential.

## Why was the ERC created?

The research community in Europe had fought to create a scheme like the ERC for years, and in 2007 it finally took flight. We needed top competition at a European level, and the ERC grants filled a real gap, notably for young talent. It was a watershed moment when the Commission, the Member States and the European Parliament agreed to make it happen. Making the governing body – the ERC Scientific Council – independent was a bold, wise step (see page 38). Today, the ERC is a prominent part of the Horizon 2020 programme.

As a scientist and fervent European, it is my privilege to lead the ERC and build on the commendable work of past ERC Scientific Council members. The professionalism of the implementing body – the ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA) – also plays a key role (see page 39).

## What are its main achievements?

In its short lifetime, the ERC has achieved a great deal. We recently celebrated a new milestone – 5,000 researchers funded across Europe (see page 41). The grants have



allowed them to set up research teams, employing to date over 40,000 researchers and other professionals. This helps support a new generation of top talent.

Many projects funded have already produced groundbreaking results in fields as diverse as cancer research, renewable energy and new materials, to name just a few that resonate with topics making headlines. These results benefit Europe, its citizens and its economy in many ways – through radically new knowledge, through new products, through the training of highly skilled and innovative professionals. Without the first-rate peer review selection system to pick the best candidates, this would not have been possible.

The grantees often stress the great impact ERC funding has had on their careers and vision. On top of that, research institutions across Europe have been pushed to provide the right environment for top talent. For the first time, we see competition at a European level raising the overall quality of research on our continent. ■

**ERC Scientific Council**

► <http://bit.ly/1NGrpII>



# FACTS & FIGURES

The European Research Council (ERC) is the most prestigious European funding organisation for curiosity-driven research at the frontiers of knowledge. It is boosting scientific excellence in Europe by funding the best research talents from all over the world, following a highly competitive selection process. The model is very simple – one researcher, one institution, one project, and one selection criterion.



Over **5,000**  
top researchers funded since  
the ERC's creation in 2007



Over **30,000**  
articles featuring ERC projects published  
in prestigious scientific journals



Over **40,000**  
researchers and other professionals  
employed in ERC research teams



**626** research institutions  
hosting ERC grantees – universities,  
public or private research centres in  
the EU or associated countries

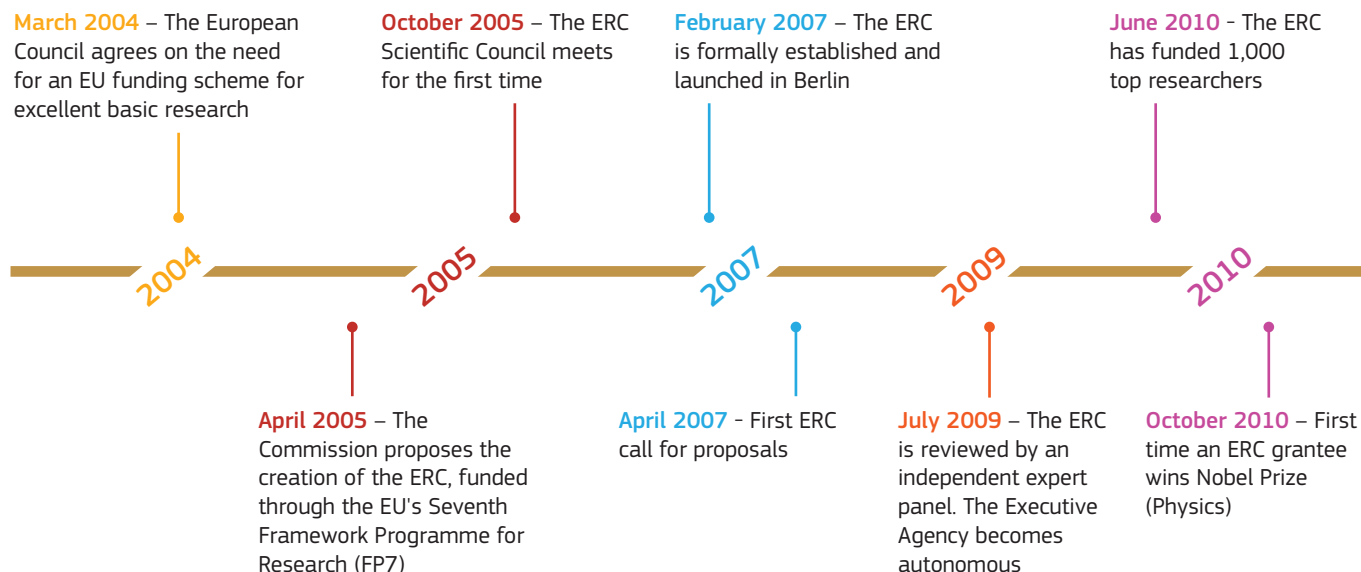


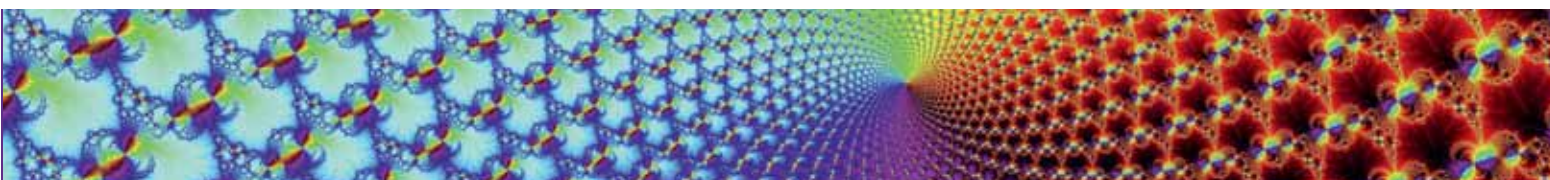
**€13 billion**  
ERC budget for 2014-2020 under  
Horizon 2020



**66**  
nationalities of  
grant holders

## ERC KEY MILESTONES





“*The ERC is one of the best things we’ve ever done*”

Robert-Jan Smits,  
Director-General, DG RTD

### ★ Selecting the best quality research

The ERC strives to retain talent and attract it to Europe from anywhere in the world, with no national quotas. The annual competitions are based on international high-quality peer reviews and the only evaluation criterion is scientific excellence, with no thematic priorities.

### ★ A wider Europe

The ERC operates in the 28 EU Member States and in 13 non-EU countries associated with Horizon 2020. The associated countries contribute to the Horizon 2020 budget and can participate in ERC calls under the same conditions as EU Member States.

### ★ International recognition

The ERC grantees have won prestigious prizes, including 5 Nobel Prizes (see page 40), 3 Fields Medals (for mathematicians) and 5 Wolf Prizes.

### ★ Funding brilliant ideas

The ERC provides 5-year individual grants for ground-breaking, high-risk/high-gain research projects through different schemes:

- **ERC Starting Grants** for early-career, emerging research leaders who obtained their first PhD 2 to 7 years before their application. The funding is up to €1.5 million per grant.
- **ERC Consolidator Grants** for excellent researchers who are already independent and who obtained their first PhD 7 to 12 years before their application. The funding is up to €2 million per grant.
- **ERC Advanced Grants** for established top scientists with an excellent scientific track record of at least 10 years. The funding is up to €2.5 million per grant.
- **ERC Proof of Concept Grants** only for ERC grantees to help them commercialise results from their ERC research. This additional funding is up to €150,000 per grant for a period of up to 18 months.

July 2011 – A dedicated task force reflects on the ERC's future

2012 – The ERC celebrates 5 years of existence. For the second time, an ERC grantee wins a Nobel Prize (Physics)

January 2013 – The ERC participates, for the first time, in the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland

2015 – The ERC celebrates its 5000th grantee funded

July 2012 – The ERC and US National Science Foundation (NSF) conclude a pioneering agreement, encouraging early-career NSF researchers to join ERC grantees' teams in Europe. Similar agreements with other countries follow in the coming years.

2014 – Three ERC grantees win Nobel Prizes in Physiology/Medicine and in Economic Sciences

# ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL FOR SCIENTISTS, BY SCIENTISTS

by **Helena González-Sancho Boderó**, ERCEA

**The European Research Council funds pioneering science. Its structure also makes it one of a kind.**

**T**he European Research Council (ERC) is a science-led research funding body that brings together a Scientific Council and an Executive Agency (ERCEA). Composed of 22 eminent scientists and scholars, the Scientific Council is the independent decision-making body of the ERC and acts on behalf of the research community in Europe. Its members are appointed by the European Commission, following the recommendations of an independent Identification Committee, also made up of a group of seven internationally distinguished scientists.

The Scientific Council defines the ERC's scientific and funding strategy, free from any political or national agenda. Meeting typically five times a year in plenary, it sets the ERC's work programme and the methodology used to evaluate project proposals. In addition, it is responsible for the selection of ERC panel members and reviewers that assess the research projects considered for funding. The panel members are chosen on the basis of their scientific reputation, guaranteeing that the ERC's peer reviewing system remains highly respected by the research community worldwide. Finally, the Scientific Council is responsible for monitoring the quality of the operations and evaluates the implementation and achievements of the programme.

Since 1 January 2014, Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, a leading mathematician, is the President of the ERC. Based in Brussels, his role is to chair the Scientific Council and to ensure its leadership, acting as an ambassador for the ERC in the world and representing it before the European Institutions. ■



## The Scientific Council members

Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, ERC President • Sierd A.P.L. Cloetingh, ERC Vice-President, Utrecht University • Mart Saarma, ERC Vice-President, University of Helsinki • Núria Sebastián Gallés, ERC Vice-President, Universidad Pompeu Fabra • Klaus Bock, Danish National Research Foundation • Margaret Buckingham, CNRS and Pasteur Institute • Nicholas Canny, National University of Ireland • Athene Donald, University of Cambridge • Barbara Ensoli, Istituto Superiore di Sanità • Tomas Jungwirth, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic • Matthias Kleiner, Leibniz Association • Eva Kondorosi, Hungarian Academy of Sciences • Michael Kramer, Max Planck Institute • Nils Christian Stenseth, University of Oslo • Martin Stokhof, University of Amsterdam • Janet Thornton, European Molecular Biology Laboratory – EMBL-EBI • Isabelle Vernos, ICREA, Centre for Genomic Regulation • Reinhilde Veugelers, KU Leuven • Michel Wieviorka, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme • Fabio Zwirner, University of Padua.



# ERC EXECUTIVE AGENCY MAKING IT HAPPEN

by Ricardo Pereira Agostinho, ERCEA

In 2007, the **European Research Council Executive Agency** was established to manage the 'Ideas' programme – part of the EU's Seventh Framework programme for Research and Innovation – and to support the work of the European Research Council.

The European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA) – now located in the 'Covent Garden' building at Place Rogier, Brussels – operates under the new Horizon 2020 programme, with the same goal – to support investigator-driven frontier research on the basis of scientific excellence.

ERCEA has administrative autonomy, whilst being accountable to the Commission. It differs from other Executive Agencies in its 'Dedicated Implementation Structure' – entrusted with the very special task of assisting the ERC Scientific Council and communicating its work worldwide. Its activities include implementing calls for proposals in accordance with the work programme, providing information and support to grant applicants, organising peer review evaluations, and establishing and managing grant agreements. Like all Executive Agencies, the ERCEA is managed by a Director, Pablo Amor, and a Steering Committee, chaired by DG RTD's Director-General, Robert-Jan Smits, and which also includes Scientific Council members. Both ERC bodies are appointed by the Commission.

## Different backgrounds, broader horizons

The Executive Agency does not directly perform research or operate laboratories – like the Commission's Joint Research Centre does. Instead, it provides funding to the best researchers from all over the world. *"We select and fund the excellent ideas that have not happened yet and the scientists that are dreaming them up,"* states Pablo Amor.

ERCEA currently has 425 staff members. 25% are Temporary Agents, including detached Officials. 75% are Contract Agents and Seconded National Experts. They are divided into three departments – Scientific Management, Grant Management, and Resources and Support – and two units directly under the supervision of the Director – Support to the Scientific Council and Communications.



► ERC Executive Agency's building in Place Rogier, Brussels.

The number of staff is foreseen to grow to 529 by 2020. To deal with the increasing workload both in selecting new projects and following up on-going ones, the new staff will be deployed mainly in the Scientific Management and Grant Management Departments.

To be able to implement the programme to the highest standards expected of a science-led funding body, the Agency employs the most competent staff members, who come from a large variety of academic backgrounds, with different experiences and specialities.

As an organisation, ERCEA is committed to pursuing innovative policies and initiatives to build an exciting and rewarding workplace. It strives to help its staff reach their fullest potential, while maintaining a work environment that fosters well-being and healthy lifestyles, encourages innovation, and focuses on exceptional scientific performance. ■

ERCEA

► <http://bit.ly/1GGTYre>



# A LABEL FOR EXCELLENCE

The European Research Council (ERC) is a unique and recognised label for excellence all over the world. **ERC grantees have frequently won international prizes and awards, including five Nobel Prizes.**



**Konstantin Novoselov,**  
**2010 Nobel Prize in Physics,**  
"for ground-breaking experiments regarding the two-dimensional material graphene"  
Novoselov received an ERC Starting Grant to investigate the potential of graphene and to exploit its possible applications. Now widely considered as the most promising new material in science, Novoselov was amongst the first to experiment with it.



**Serge Haroche,**  
**2012 Nobel Prize in Physics,**  
"for ground-breaking experimental methods that enable measuring and manipulation of individual quantum systems"

With his ERC Advanced Grant, Serge Haroche explored the 'decoherence' of light in cavities, which paves the way for creating and using pure quantum steady states. His studies shed light on the smallest particles matter is made of.

**Edvard I. Moser and May-Britt Moser,**



**2014 Nobel Prize in Physiology/ Medicine,**  
"for their discoveries of cells that constitute a

positioning system in the brain"

These two scientists have explored the functionality of 'grid cells'. Their work has been key in understanding how the brain operates during spatial navigation, unravelling our inner GPS. Edvard I. Moser's research

received two consecutive Advanced Grants. May-Britt Moser's work also received an ERC Advanced Grant.



**Jean Tirole,**  
**2014 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences,**  
"for his analysis of market power and regulation"

Jean Tirole is one of the most influential economists worldwide.

Based at the Toulouse School of Economics, France, he received an ERC Advanced Grant in 2009. His research focuses on bringing together behavioural economics with psychology and sociology, and exploring cognition during consumer decision-making processes. ■

## The ERC brand

The European Research Council (ERC) has become a prestigious name in the research community and beyond. Benefiting from a special autonomous status, the ERC has its own branding, communication strategy and tools, logo and visual identity. Today, it has robust relations with specialised and mainstream media and is invited to high-level events, including the World Economic Forum in Davos, TEDx talks, BBC debates, etc.

## A few figures

- 500,000 website visitors a year  
► <http://erc.europa.eu/>
- 18,000 Twitter followers @ERC\_Research
- 10,000 Facebook likes EuropeanResearchCouncil
- over 6,500 press articles so far this year
- over 75 million – total newspaper circulation with articles mentioning the ERC so far this year

# THE DRIVING FORCES OF CELL DIVISION

by **Helena González-Sancho Bodero**, ERCEA

**In June 2015, Dr Iva Tolić was awarded the 5000th European Research Council grant. Let's meet this leading scientist, who has moved back to Croatia to conduct her research on the mechanical principles of cell division.**

## Tell us about your professional career.

I obtained my PhD at the Ruđer Bošković Institute in Zagreb, Croatia, before moving to the United States, where I conducted the experimental part of my PhD research. After that, I did consecutive post-docs in Denmark and Italy to master laser techniques for cutting inside cells. I then became a group leader at the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics in Dresden, Germany, where I worked for ten years. Finally, I decided to move back to my home city of Zagreb, where everything started, and I got my European Research Council (ERC) grant.

## What is your ERC research about?

It focuses on the forces acting on the chromosomes during cell division. Inside cells, there are microtubules – imagine them as little rods – that pull the chromosomes and split them apart while the cell divides. The main question is – how do microtubules do this? The current theory is that kinetochore fibres are the only structures that exert force on the chromosomes as they attach to opposite sides of them. However, our hypothesis is that a specific class of microtubule connects the kinetochores like a bridge, and exerts a significant force on the chromosomes.

## What could be the impact of such a new discovery?

Cell division is the process that makes life possible in the first place! Understanding the mechanical principles of this process is extremely important. New findings in this area could be applied to curing diseases, such as cancer, in which cell division is altered. Our research would potentially lead to a whole new vision of the cell and molecular biology of cell division.

## Why did you apply for an ERC grant?

ERC grants are the best and the biggest research grants for basic science in Europe. Every scientist doing basic research aims at getting such funding, even if it is difficult to obtain. After having spent several years in the United States, Denmark,

Italy and Germany, this grant allowed me to carry out my research in Croatia, where the financial support is limited. It also gave me the opportunity to hire other scientists in my team and buy state-of-the-art equipment for our lab. ■

**Iva Tolić's web page**

► <http://bit.ly/1Kk5VTU>







© Fotolia

# BIONIC SPIDER WEBS AND OTHER SUPER-MATERIALS

by Giulia Gabrielli, ERCEA

**What are the world's toughest, strongest, most water-repellent, and most adhesive materials? Often nature can provide an answer. By combining biological observations with the potential of nanotechnologies, ERC researcher Professor Nicola Pugno has focused on the quest for just such super-materials.**

**I**n the past four years, the European Research Council (ERC) has funded Nicola Pugno and his team's work through a Starting Grant worth €1 million. *"Before winning the ERC grant, I felt like I was trying to do the Tour de France with a folding bike. So for me, the ERC also means top Equipment to Run the Competition, i.e. the challenge of improving the quality of our life accelerating the advent of a new material age,"* declares Pugno.

In his research work, he has taken inspiration from animals and plants to improve manufacturing materials from sportswear to aeronautics. By copying the physical structure of spider webs and silk, and combining it with the strength of nanotubes and graphene, Nicola Pugno has developed the world's toughest fibre. In limpet teeth he has discovered the strongest biological material. Gecko feet are the basic inspiration behind a fabric with 'spiderman-like' adhesion qualities. Lotus leaves could revolutionise the technologies behind self-cleaning and waterproof surfaces, focusing on their nanostructure, rather than on currently used chemical treatments.

## Nanoscience mimics nature

Pugno's studies mimic nature, and enhance it, using the latest scientific developments, so that materials like these are no longer science-fiction, but nanoscience. The innovative aspect and business potential of Pugno's

research have not gone unnoticed. Further 'Proof of Concept' Grants (see box), awarded by the ERC, will allow him to develop manufacturing processes that could lead to the commercialisation of these ideas. Pugno's work, in fact, does not simply focus on finding these super-materials, but also on developing systems to produce them on a mass scale, with potentially great consequences – from the transport industry to the clothing and white goods sector. ■

## Nicola Pugno's lab

► [www.ing.unitn.it/~pugno/](http://www.ing.unitn.it/~pugno/)

## ERC Proof of Concept Grants

Proof of Concept Grants, such as those awarded to Nicola Pugno, allow researchers who have already received an ERC grant, and whose research has commercial business potential, to explore the possibility of marketing their innovation. This type of grant is an opportunity that represents the link between scientific discovery and industrial technology. It allows ERC grantees to see their research through to its applications, bridging the gap between academia and industry and often resulting in the creation of spin-offs. This way, no ground-breaking idea goes unexploited.

► <http://bit.ly/1GP3rNf>

# FOUR THOUSAND METRES UNDER THE SEA

by Giulia Gabrielli, ERCEA

**Dr Veerle Huvenne**, from the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton, UK, tells us about her ERC-funded project that has taken her to the depths of the Whittard Canyon. For the first time, state-of-the-art technology has allowed her to study biodiversity patterns in these challenging deep-sea environments.

## Why did you decide to explore this area?

Whittard Canyon is the largest submarine canyon in the Bay of Biscay. Submarine canyons can have incredible species richness, they can be real biodiversity hotspots. But they are also harsh places, located in deep waters, with steep cliffs and sharp ridges. This makes them hard to explore with traditional equipment, so until now, we didn't know much about their ecology.

## What was novel about the Whittard Canyon expedition?

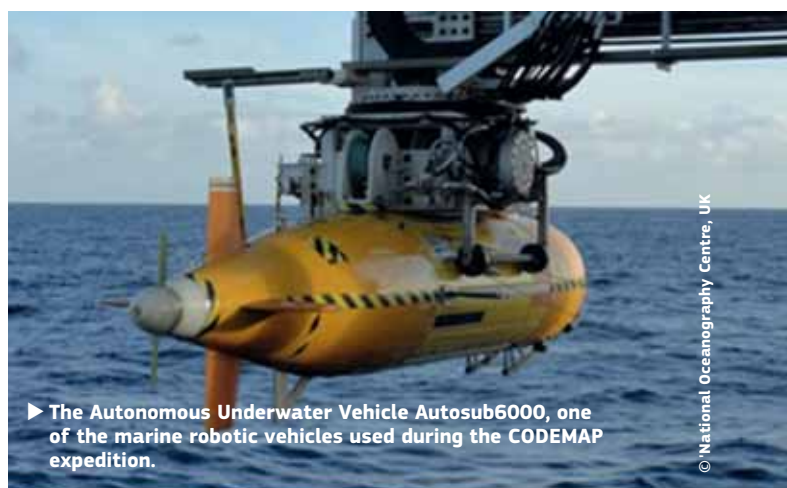
Thanks to the newly developed deep-water robotic vehicles we used, we were able to obtain great imaging, at canyon-wide scale, zooming in as far as the size of an individual polyp on a coral. Our robots are the only ones able to access the vertical cliffs of these geological structures, and so the results are pretty unique. They allowed us to map the many different habitats provided by the canyon. This gives us knowledge into how habitat heterogeneity has supported the formation of entire, rich ecological communities of cold-water corals, clams, deep-sea oysters, and obviously their associated fauna, including a broad range of fish species.

## Did you see anything unexpected?

There was huge excitement on board when we got a glimpse of a blue whale, probably the first sighting to be photographed in English waters. The robots also captured amazing footage of blue sharks and swordfish. This area is already known for its whales, dolphins and seabirds – our new data only underlines its relevance for iconic marine life.

## Why are these results important?

Studies like this one tell us something about marine biodiversity. Human activities, such as fishing, are



► The Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Autosub6000, one of the marine robotic vehicles used during the CODEMAP expedition.

© National Oceanography Centre, UK

moving towards deeper and deeper waters, in areas that would have previously remained untouched. We need to know where the most species richness is found, and what areas to protect. Submarine canyons are good study objects. Not only do they provide a large variety of habitats for different species, but they are the pathways between coastal waters and the deep sea, so they experience strong currents that transport large quantities of nutrients. All these factors make them ideal biodiversity hotspots. Unfortunately, they are also very fragile, since they tend to be places where human pollution accumulates. This is a threat to their incredible natural heterogeneity. Hopefully, these results can orient policy efforts towards the protection of these extraordinary environments. ■

Veerle Huvenne's website

► <https://noc.ac.uk/people/vaih>

CODEMAP expedition blog

► <https://codemap2015.wordpress.com/>

# THE FASCINATING MYSTERIES OF A LOST CIVILISATION

by Rosaria Carbone, ERCEA

**Professor David Mattingly** is one of the recognised leaders in Saharan archaeology. Funded by the European Research Council (ERC), he is investigating an ancient people, the Garamantes, dating back to the period 500 BC to 600 AD.

Contemporaries of the Roman Empire, the Garamantes have been depicted as a nomadic tribe living in scattered camps in the central Sahara. Recent studies suggest, however, that they were a remarkably civilised population, living in permanent urban settlements, practicing oasis agriculture and producing textiles and metal artefacts.

Aiming to shed more light on the Garamantes, David Mattingly and his team have carried out extensive research work in southern Libya using aerial photography and satellite imagery. Thanks to these sophisticated tools, they have discovered an outstanding archaeological heritage, including hundreds of fortified oasis settlements, with advanced irrigation systems, which were exceptionally preserved by their remote setting. *"It is like suddenly discovering all the medieval castles in England. These settlements were so far unremarked and unrecorded,"* says David Mattingly.

The research has also shown that the Garamantes traded with both the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan zone, establishing trans-Saharan trading networks and migration flows.

These exceptional findings are reshaping the history and archaeology of the African continent. Contrary to previous beliefs, the pre-Islamic Sahara now emerges as a much more populous place and, rather than being a barrier to contact, the desert appears to have been an interconnected space that put Mediterranean civilisations in regular contact with sub-Saharan societies from the late first millennium BC onwards. ■

David Mattingly's web page

► <http://bit.ly/1XffpJu>

Ground shot of a fortified site (qasr) with projecting towers. ►



© Trans-SAHARA project





© www.iStockphoto.com

# CAN WE FORESEE THE MEGAPOLISES OF THE FUTURE?

by Helena González-Sancho Bodero, ERCEA

**The European Research Council (ERC) has awarded Professor Michael Batty, a distinguished theorist and modeller of urban change, a grant to work on a new 'Science of Cities'.**

Cities are currently under pressure. Increasing in size and number, they are regularly confronted with population density challenges, extreme congestion, constraints on development and urban sprawl. Professor Michael Batty uses mathematical models and fractal geometry to analyse the functioning and evolution of the urban landscape. He studies cities as complex systems built of networks which contain a diversity of flows and movements.

Professor Michael Batty has set up an interdisciplinary research team of physicists, mathematicians, social scientists, computer programmers, engineers, geographers, planners, and architects to better grasp how cities grow. *"The ERC grant has enabled me to attract researchers from many disciplines who are able to contribute to the Science of Cities. We look at cities from different scientific approaches, developing new theories in the same way as it is done in physics, biology or social sciences."*

To build his theories, Batty observes cities' regularities and relations and applies concepts traditionally

used in physics – such as energy, potential and force as well as scaling and diffusion – to human populations. He looks, for instance, at the opposing dynamics that can determine the shape of a city, such as people's desires to be close to one another, leading to agglomeration, and people's wishes to maximise the space available to them, acting as dispersion.

Michael Batty's focus is on energy and climate change – how urban morphology can be affected by energy usage as a consequence of global warming. Beyond developing a new 'Science of Cities', the aim of the research is to support urban planners and policy makers in designing better metropolitan environments. ■

Michael Batty's website

► <http://bit.ly/1kmjLQQ>

Project blog

► [www.complexcity.info](http://www.complexcity.info)

# Novembre 2015

## NEW EU LAISSEZ-PASSER FOR SAFER AND SIMPLER TRAVEL

by Chris Jones, CEND

**A new procedure for producing and issuing the new form of the EU *laissez-passer* will help holders of the document when travelling inside or outside the EU for service purposes.**

The *laissez-passer* issued by the European Union is a travel document that eligible applicants can use when travelling inside or outside the EU for work purposes. But the traditional paper booklet with a photograph glued in was far from meeting the requirements of a modern, secure travel document – especially given the advances in security features and biometric data imposed by EU legislation on the passports issued by Member States. This is why the Council called in 2013 for the *laissez-passer* to be brought into line with EU legislation and turned into a secure e-travel document.

Working closely with the other Institutions over nearly two years, the Commission has developed a new streamlined and cost-effective procedure for issuing the *laissez-passer* on behalf of all the EU Institutions, agencies and other bodies. This was not an easy task.

To ensure its complete security, the system for creating and issuing the documents needs to be completely isolated, and a number of new procedures had to be put into place as a result, some of which were completely new to the Institutions. A secure system of connections for the exchange of data between all the organisations concerned was also necessary.

### How the *laissez-passer* is produced

Only certain categories of staff are eligible for the *laissez-passer* (see box) and it is the responsibility of each Institution to assess whether applicants meet the requisite criteria. If they do, their biographical and biometrical data are registered by the Commission (the PMO) in one of three secure locations – Brussels, Luxembourg and Frankfurt (where the European Central Bank carries out this procedure on its premises on behalf of the Commission). Once registered, the data are encrypted and sent by the Commission to an external contractor

which then produces a personalised travel document based on a very secure and newly designed booklet, adding biometrical data into each new *laissez-passer*. These documents are then returned to the Commission which checks that they meet European legislative requirements and international recommendations. If so, the personalised *laissez-passer* can be delivered to the end user.

The new secure centre in Brussels is in the Breydel 25 building and staff from the PMO are already applying the new *laissez-passer* procedure. The first of the new-style documents should be available from 25 November 2015, at which time the old versions of the document will cease to be valid.

### Increasing use

The definition of the *laissez-passer* issued to the members of the European Parliamentary Assembly was the second Regulation adopted by the Council of the European Economic Community in 1958. But although the *laissez-passer* has existed since the start of the European project, its use and appearance has changed dramatically over the years. The latest version of the document looks more like a standard travel document than previous versions. It contains 48 pages and has a new design based on most of the elements of the EU symbols. The paper used for its pages includes two types of watermarks and some coloured fibres. It has a laminated data page and contains a chip where biometrics will be stored. Each visa page will be slightly different from the others.

These changes reflect the wider use of the *laissez-passer* in recent years. Following the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the expansion of the EU Delegations to include a wider range



► The members of DG HR's Task Force for the EU *laissez-passer* (from left to right): Francis Deschrijvere, Nathalie Creste (Adviser and Head of the Task Force), Christian Levasseur (Director), Paulo Pires, and Corinne Henrotte.



▼ The PMO's team working on the EU *laissez-passer*, with the PMO's Director, Marc Lemaître (first from right).



of staff, many of them with families, the *laissez-passer* system was under considerable pressure to become more secure, to move more into line with national identity and travel documents, and to cover a wider range of holders.

These significant improvements aim at having the new document more widely recognised at international level. There will now be a secure interface between the EU *laissez-passer* system and national border systems across the world, thanks in no small part to technical expertise from Commission experts in Brussels and

Ispra, although work on completing the system and ensuring its compatibility with national systems across the world is expected to continue for another two years. The ultimate aim is that the *laissez-passer* will become the *de facto* travel document used by the Institutions in the name of the European Union when in third countries for travel, residence or service purposes, as it already is within the EU. ■

**EU *laissez-passer***  
► <http://europa.eu/!uU39CR>

## Who is eligible for a *laissez-passez*?

Council Regulation (EU) N°1417/2013 makes a distinction between eligible applicants – as defined by Article 23 of the Staff Regulations and by analogy Articles 11 and 81 of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants (CEOS) of the European Union – and special applicants – newly defined by the 2013 Regulation.

### Eligible applicants

- Heads of Units
- Officials in grade AD12 to AD16
- Officials serving outside the territory of the EU
- Other officials for whom it is required in the interest of the service (subject to a note from the Head of Unit justifying the request)

*shall* be granted a *laissez-passer* issued by the EU

### Special applicants

- Family members of a member of an Institution
- The following categories of staff if they are on a long stay outside the Union, including long-term postings:
  - Family members of officials and other servants of the Union who fulfil the conditions laid down in the Staff Regulations and in the CEOS
  - Officials and other servants of the Union who do not fulfil those conditions and their family members
  - Seconded National Experts (SNEs) and their family members
  - Junior Professionals in EU Delegations (JPDs) and their family members

*may* be granted a *laissez-passer* issued by the EU



► The new My IntraComm project team from DGs HR and DIGIT (from left to right and back to front): Jan De Vis, Tomek Helbin, Lawrence Ayamba, Nicolas Fosty, Jessy Govart, Fabrice Jacqmin, Maria Te, Marion Bonnafe, Sebastien Nunes, Pablo Gutierrez, David Manrique, Jérémy Changeur, and Manoj Malireddy (not pictured, Nicolas Bernier and Martin Piper).

# NEW MY INTRACOMM REVAMP RESPONDS TO STAFF NEEDS

by Chris Jones, CEND

**The new My IntraComm launched on 1 November offers a host of new features, many of which have been included as a result of direct consultation with staff.**

When in 2014 DG DIGIT announced it was to upgrade the platform on which the Commission intranet is based, the My IntraComm team in DG HR's Communication Unit decided to take the opportunity to make some changes of its own – and launched a Commission-wide consultation to ask staff what they really wanted from their intranet.

Some 1,346 people from a wide range of jobs across the Commission took part in the survey in November 2013. This was then followed by interviews with 41 people from the majority of the Commission DGs to get a more in-depth understanding of the needs of our users, their work patterns and habits, the tools and systems they use most frequently, and the information they need and where they get this from.

Based on this feedback, as well as the results of a usability survey carried out in late 2013, it was possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of My IntraComm and set a number of specific objectives to improve it – simpler navigation and information architecture, greater distinction between corporate and local content, a responsive format for mobile access, a more social intranet, and a more consistent and distinctive 'look and feel'.

Staff were also widely involved in helping reach these objectives. A Steering Committee made up of the owners of the main corporate sites and selected local intranet site owners was set up, and staff were also invited to help design the new navigation through a so-called 'card sorting' exercise, where they were asked to group

50 of the most important corporate content items in a way that made sense to them. The new navigation was then itself tested several times by users from across the Commission.

## New home page

One of the issues the consultation highlighted was the confusion between local and corporate-level information. With this in mind, the corporate My IntraComm starting page will be the default home page for all Commission users from 1 November, in order to facilitate staff access to important corporate information and further strengthen the sense of one corporate culture. Staff will be able to access their local intranet directly from the My IntraComm home page, via the 'My DG' tab, as was the case with the previous version.

The news section has been improved and a commenting function has been added to encourage staff to be more social. In addition, the Staff Forum has been revamped with more sophisticated features designed to help staff to comment on and share information, questions, and problems. Finally, as more staff start to work away from their offices and make use of digital technology, My IntraComm has been redesigned to make it respond to a wide range of devices, adapting its layout to fit smaller screens on smartphones and tablets, for example. ■

**For further information or comments**  
► [EC-MYINTRACOMM@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EC-MYINTRACOMM@ec.europa.eu)

## LESS IS MORE FOR THE SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

by Alejandro Izquierdo López, SG

The SG has taken advantage of the My IntraComm upgrade to revamp its own presence, improving access and content to the many sites it runs.

With more than 7,000 visitors every month, the SG's pages on My IntraComm are among the most widely read by Commission staff, offering a wide range of information and documentation on the tools and activities that many of us use in our daily tasks. They are also a vital channel for communicating with DGs and correspondents' networks across the Commission, helping to break down the silos we all too often find ourselves.

The need to improve was certainly there, not least because most of these sites have grown organically over a number of years, turning into repositories for often out-of-date material rather than the up-to-the-minute sources of information they were designed to be. These sites often reflected badly on the SG and were confusing for users, who found it increasingly difficult to find exactly the information they were looking for.

### Staff involved at every stage

The SG's reorganisation last year gave us a good opportunity to revamp our local intranet, My SGnet. The next step was to update and streamline all our corporate sites, the aim being for information about SG services and activities to complement other relevant tools such as My SGnet, Europa, GoPro, Vista or Ares. In total, 27 sites were revamped – the number of pages were reduced to 204 (from 499) and documents cut to 2,919 (from 10,017).

Like the wider upgrade of My IntraComm, this was all carried out in close cooperation with content owners and end users alike. Metrics, user surveys and a card sorting workshop were core elements of the project. Based on this and other feedback, the new sites are designed to meet both content owners' requests and users' needs. Having less content allows for higher quality standards and ensures that the focus is put on what really matters. We also made it easier to find all the SG's information by giving access through a single entry point on My IntraComm (see link below) that covers SG business-related information available on Europa, GoPro and on-line tools.



► The team behind the SG sites' revamp (left to right): Olivier Maloteau, Lana Tomić, Alejandro Izquierdo López, Anne Vanroy, Elisabetta Degiampietro, and Anne-Laure de Harlez (not pictured, Marcin Majewski).

### New SG presence on My IntraComm in brief

#### Information available:

- Decisions taken at the weekly College meetings
- How to prepare a management plan
- Guide for dealing with a request for access to Commission documents
- Management of President's mail
- Better Regulation procedures
- Contact lists and Commission networks (DMOs, SPP, application of EU law...) and much more...

#### SG on My IntraComm

► <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/sg/Pages/index.aspx>

#### For further information or comments

► [SG-COMMUNICATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:SG-COMMUNICATION@ec.europa.eu)

# TACKLING PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AT WORK

fit@work

by Nilde Marchitto, CEND

As part of the Commission's fit@work programme, the Medical Service Brussels organised a lunchtime conference on psychosocial risks on 9 October.

**Laurine Heris, psychologist in the Psychosocial Intervention Team, talks to Commission en direct about the main psychosocial risks at work, as well as addressing prevention and recovery strategies.**

## What are the most common problems the Psychosocial Intervention Team treat?

A third of our clients come for work-related problems, followed by private, family or personal problems. Work and health are two deeply interconnected aspects of our lives. Recent studies by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) show that around one out of four workers in the EU experiences work-related stress for all or most of their working time, and a similar proportion report that work affects their health negatively. Our experience is in line with these findings. Work-related stress has a major negative impact on cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal diseases, immunological problems, and problems with mental health – anxiety and depression disorders. According to World Health Organization forecasts, by 2020 depression will be the main disease in the world, overtaking cardiovascular disorders. Thus, the importance of preventing stressful work situations from becoming harmful and the need to foster resilience solutions. But we should not be catastrophic either. Change is possible, as shown by these same studies and what we see in our everyday work with our clients.

## What are the main psychosocial risks in a work environment?

Those aspects of the work that have the potential to cause psychological and/or physical harm. Due to the design and management of the work, and the social and organisational environment, people can be exposed to the risk of stress, conflicts, harassment or violence. These factors can have an impact on our health by producing serious individual and collective consequences – such as depression, burnout, substance abuse, and



disease. Since jobs are increasingly demanding, we need to learn how to recognise the factors that can constitute a risk for occupational health – work overload and time pressure, lack of control over unexpected changes and uncertainty about work content, low autonomy, and poor development opportunities can challenge our health. Furthermore, a lack of both a personal and external recognition of our work's quality and utility, as well as a perceived gap between our personal contribution and the symbolic rewards we gain from work – the so-called 'effort-reward imbalance' – can have negative impacts on our health. Lastly, coherence between our values and the work content and purposes, as well as how much feedback and support we receive from our





## Reacting in time to ask for help from the existing psychosocial services within the Commission is very important

hierarchy and colleagues, can contribute to our professional well-being.

### What are the forms and symptoms of stress?

Stress is experienced according to how we perceive both work demands and our capacity to cope with them. Symptoms can be seen at emotional and intellectual levels – such as anxiety, nervousness, lack of concentration, and difficulties in taking initiatives – as well as at a physical level – such as muscular or articular pain, sleeping or digestive difficulties, and increased blood pressure – and can cause behavioural problems, affecting work relationships and professional performance, on top of personal and family relations. Stress perception is highly subjective, as demonstrated by the fact that a specific situation, like a request to perform a last-minute task, can be seen as feasible or not by different persons. From a physiological point of view, health problems arise when the stress becomes permanent and our body enters into a resistance mode.

### How can psychosocial risks be prevented?

There are three main levels of prevention. At a 'primary level', prevention consists of an evaluation and reduction of the main risk factors, so as to promote, where necessary, a reorganisation of the work and a positive social environment. At a 'secondary level', prevention is aimed at enhancing resilience. Developing awareness of the nature of internal and external stress factors, taking time to recover, adopting a positive attitude and a healthy lifestyle and developing a social support network can help individuals to recover. This is why we strongly encourage people to listen carefully to their emotional and physical state and to note the impressions arising from the external context. Situations can be perceived as more stressful than they actually might be, making possible solutions harder to find. Also managers can play a key role in prevention. Enabling staff to participate in the decision-making process, reducing uncertainty, aiming for manageable workloads and increasing communication and social

interactions between team members and co-workers can all help.

### What help can the Psychosocial Intervention Team provide?

The very important 'third level' of prevention is reacting in time to ask for help from the existing psychosocial services within the Commission – in Brussels, as well as in Luxembourg and Ispra (see box). Our multi-lingual team of psychosocial counsellors includes social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, a social nurse, and a budget counsellor. Our help and advice can help to solve problems linked, for example, to work situations, adapting to working for the Commission, moving country and living abroad, balancing private and professional life, managing money, and all the stress-related factors before they affect health, professional performance, and private life. We also help people facing acute psychological problems and provide collective support to teams facing potentially traumatic situations. Finally, awareness-raising is also a crucial part of our work. ■

#### Lunchtime conference

► <http://europa.eu/!Hk89kx>

#### Need help?

The Psychosocial Interventions Team of DG HR's Medical Service in Brussels can help you look for solutions adapted to your needs – in-house and/or in cooperation with external services. We offer free advice and help in difficult circumstances, on a confidential basis.

For an appointment:

- call +32 (0)2/29 88000 during working hours
- or send an e-mail

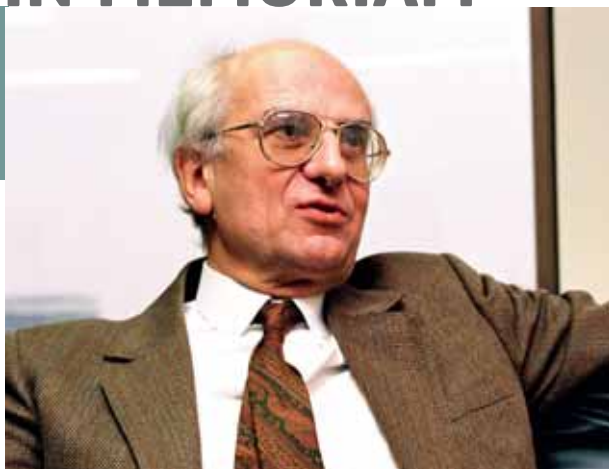
#### ► HR BXL EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

Retired staff can seek advice from the social workers in DG HR's Social Welfare Unit (C.1).

#### Social and psychological assistance

► <http://europa.eu/!TH84bQ>

# IN MEMORIAM



## Jean-Louis Cadieux (1931-2015)

Jean-Louis Cadieux, grand commis de l'Europe et personnalité attachante, est décédé le 6 octobre 2015 à Paris. Juriste et économiste de formation, il entre à la Commission en 1960 à la DG Concurrence dont il devient directeur général adjoint avant de rejoindre les Relations extérieures où il sert, de 1990 à 1993, comme directeur général adjoint. Il y assume la charge de la taskforce «Pologne-Hongrie» et du service opérationnel «PHARE», ainsi que des relations avec les pays à commerce d'Etat.

Jean-Louis Cadieux disait lui-même qu'il avait eu la chance ou la malchance d'être désigné parachutiste des tâches difficiles. D'abord responsable des aides d'Etat, il se voit assigner dès 1980 la mission de mettre en place le règlement sur les fusions et les concentrations. Le règlement est finalement adopté par le Conseil en 1986. Jean-Louis Cadieux prend alors la direction d'une taskforce spéciale chargée de la restructuration de la sidérurgie européenne, à l'égard de laquelle la Commission disposait au titre du traité CEEA de pouvoirs très étendus. D'esprit profondément européen, Jean-Louis Cadieux a obtenu des résultats exceptionnels grâce à des qualités de tacticien hors pair et à la complicité très étroite nouée avec sa hiérarchie et avec ses collaborateurs. Il avait une grande liberté de ton vis à vis de tous et n'était pas homme à s'esquiver lorsqu'il fallait annoncer des choses désagréables, et cela quand bien même son interlocuteur était d'un rang très élevé. Le courage moral était sa marque.

Ses collègues, qui furent souvent pour lui de vrais compagnons d'armes, se souviendront que Jean-Louis Cadieux était tout à la fois un homme de réflexion, leader né et personnage flamboyant, mais aussi simple, chaleureux et quelque part très réservé. ■

# NOMINATIONS

La Commission a décidé de nommer



## Delilah Al Khudhairy

directeur  
direction «Coordination du  
soutien aux politiques»  
JRC



## Ernesto Bianchi

directeur  
direction «Enquêtes II»  
OLAF



## Barbara Kauffmann

directeur  
direction «Economie  
sociale de marché dans  
les Etats membres II: FSE»  
DG EMPL



## Stefan Olsson

directeur  
direction «Europe 2020:  
politiques sociales»  
DG EMPL

# NOMINATIONS



**Olivier Waelbroeck**

directeur  
direction «Service  
financier central»  
DG BUDG

## La Commission a décidé de muter



**Péter Balas**

conseiller hors classe  
rattaché au directeur  
général  
DG TRADE



**Alain Scriban**

conseiller principal  
rattaché au directeur  
général  
DG HOME



**Declan Costello**

conseiller principal  
rattaché au directeur  
général adjoint  
des directions C, E, F et G  
DG ECFIN



**Ewa Synowiec**

conseiller principal  
rattaché au directeur  
général  
DG TRADE



**Humberto Delgado  
Rosa**

directeur  
direction «Capital naturel»  
DG ENV



**Gabor Zupkó**

chef du bureau de  
représentation  
de la Commission  
européenne  
en Hongrie



## 30 YEARS AS AN EU DIPLOMAT FROM SOMALIA TO THE CAUCASUS

by Michael Scheerer, CEND

**Now retired, Torben Holtze talks to *Commission en direct* about '30 Years in EU External Services', his memoirs of his exciting career abroad.**

**In how many countries did you work as an EU official and 'European abroad'?**

I worked and lived in eight countries during my 30-year career in the Commission. I started in one of the poorest countries in the world, Somalia, and ended up in two countries, Georgia and Armenia, still suffering from the break-up of the Soviet Union. In between, I worked in Jamaica, Brussels, Jordan, Yemen, and Egypt, before I retired in 2006.

**You were posted in Somalia between 1977 and 1992. How do you see the changes that have taken place since you left?**

As stated in my memoirs, when I made trips to my previous postings in 2013-14, I would have liked to go back to all the countries where I had worked, but this was not possible in Somalia, where moving around in the capital, Mogadishu, as a foreigner was only possible accompanied by armed guards, and even that could be too risky. This was far from the situation during my time in Somalia, where security was not a problem, and, to many people's surprise, my family and I spent five pleasant and interesting years in an environment where the nomadic culture was in the process of adapting to modern times. However, when I left Somalia I did not expect any economic boom and the accompanying social development. But nor did I expect the disaster that followed, with infighting between clans and the involvement of the radical Islamist Al-Shabaab movement in southern Somalia. This has left Somalia as poor today as it was 33 years ago, and the social and administrative structures in disarray.

**Another hotspot where you worked as an EU diplomat was the Middle East. What were for you some of the decisive developments?**

The wrong perceptions of Iran's, Iraq's and Israel's intentions. The oppressive rule of Iran by the Shah could



not continue, but the West was not capable of dealing with the Ayatollah's regime as something better. Even worse, the West strongly supported Iraq during Saddam Hussein's brutal eight-year war against Iran. This led to the First Gulf War in 1990-91, and as a consequence, created a more unstable Middle East. Furthermore, the lack of pressure/sanctions on Israel by the US and EU, as Israel continues its settlement expansions and ignoring the rights of the Palestinians, are leading nowhere, except to a future disaster.

The other conflicts in the Middle East are often seen as a religious struggle between Shia and Sunni Muslims as expressed by fanatics, but differences between tribes and economic interest groups are far more often the reasons for the upheavals. As long as this is not fully understood, I am afraid that the turmoil will continue in the Middle East.

## Did you ever feel that the situation in your host country was critical for you and your family?

Having lived in a number of countries, where security, to the outside world, has been portrayed as a major issue, it is surprising that, except for Jamaica and the first two years in Georgia, my family and I felt as at home and secure as living in Denmark. In most countries, we could safely move around night and day. In Jamaica, where the annual murder rate exceeded 400, I was really concerned about security – and even more so when a close Norwegian friend was murdered in his house in front of his wife as a revenge by three Jamaicans who had been fired by him. For several following nights, I did not sleep particularly well.

## Twice during your career you worked at headquarters in Brussels. What was that like?

The first time I volunteered as part of the first group of advisers serving in the Delegations to be posted to Brussels. I found it interesting to work in the mighty bureaucracy located in the Berlaymont building in an international environment of competent colleagues from Member States, as well as learning how the Commission functioned. However, the large number of signatures required for approval of documents was not impressive, and nor were the small shared offices and their facilities. For the second posting to Brussels nine years later, I did not volunteer, since I preferred working in a Delegation. The office facilities and management had improved, although interference by Member States was sometimes an issue in the decision-making process.

## What was your last assignment to Georgia and Armenia in 2001-06 like?

Quite different from my several postings in the Middle East. However, I was very happy to be posted to these two countries with their ancient and interesting cultures. Georgia, where I had my residence, was in a terrible situation with an economy at one-third of the pre-independence level, wide-spread corruption,



► Georgia, 2003. Torben Holtze wears a fur hat made of sheep skin, which is part of the national dress.

regular power-cuts and big security problems. During my first year, one of my colleagues in the Delegation was murdered and an EU-financed consultant was kidnapped for four months. Fortunately, he was released physically unhurt and did not become one of the 30 kidnapping victims in 2002, who were never seen again. The situation changed drastically following the November 2003 Rose Revolution, when the new government under Mikheil Saakashvili undertook a number of economic, social and political reforms – strongly supported by the EU and the US, which until then had focused very little on the Caucasus. With these developments, the Delegation's responsibility increased and the staff doubled, preparing for the role as an 'EU super embassy' it has today. Security and the economy improved a lot, and looking back, it was a busy and interesting five years in the Caucasus.

## What advice would you give to young colleagues wanting to work in an EU Delegation?

Seek overseas postings, even when they do not look that attractive, as they may turn out to be an interesting and unique experience. The working and living conditions have changed a lot since my time. So serving overseas today would be a different experience, but hopefully without the four murders and two kidnappings associated with the people with whom I worked and knew well. ■



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# SAINT GEORGES UN COMBAT POUR L’AFFIRMATION D’UN DESTIN GLORIEUX

par Nilde Marchitto, CEND

Dans le cadre du programme Mons 2015 Capitale européenne de la culture, jusqu’au 17 janvier 2016, l’exposition «L’Homme, le Dragon et la Mort. La Gloire de saint Georges», au MAC’s – Musée des Arts Contemporains de la Communauté française au Grand-Hornu – parcourt l’évolution d’un mythe toujours actuel, celui de saint Georges.

La popularité de saint Georges est telle que son culte est répandu à la fois dans plusieurs régions européennes ainsi que dans d’autres parties du monde chrétien. Les raisons de ce succès sont liées à la diffusion d’une tradition légendaire cristallisée d’abord autour de l’histoire de son martyr, puis de celle d’un combat glorieux contre un dragon.

À Mons, une représentation de ce combat – le Dou-dou – a lieu chaque année le dimanche de la Fête de la Sainte Trinité, selon une tradition accréditée également au Portugal, en Italie et en Espagne. Le mythe de saint Georges s’enracine dans sa lutte contre la dernière grande persécution des chrétiens, en l’an 303 sous l’empereur Dioclétien. Torturé pendant sept ans, saint Georges meurt et ressuscite trois fois avant sa capitulation définitive en affirmant toujours de manière héroïque son credo religieux.

## Un regard sur d’anciennes œuvres

L’iconographie traditionnelle de saint Georges armé d’une cuirasse étincelante, d’un bouclier à la croix rouge, d’une épée et d’une lance ébréchée – comme le représente l’enluminure de Simon Marmion (vers 1480) – est popularisée par la *Légende dorée*, un ouvrage du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle de Jacques de Voragine, sur les vies de saints.

Cette hagiographie conte le combat du saint: dans une province romaine de l’actuelle Libye, la ville de Silcha était terrorisée par un dragon exigeant l’offrande d’une jeune personne choisie au hasard. Saint Georges traversait par hasard la ville le jour où le sort désigna la fille du roi comme victime. Il s’engagea alors dans un combat pour la sauver et transperça de sa lance le dragon qui fut traîné dans la ville par la princesse.

Saint Georges accepta de le terrasser à condition que les habitants se convertissent au christianisme.

## Entre fiction et réalité

La représentation du saint et du dragon suit tout d’abord l’iconographie traditionnelle. Puis, l’histoire du combat devient rapidement l’emblème de la lutte éternelle entre le bien et le mal. De sa gravure *Saint Georges à cheval* (1508) – image traditionnelle du saint à cheval, la lance à la main et le dragon vaincu à ses pieds – Albrecht Dürer décline *le Chevalier, la Mort et le Diable* (1513) associée à la figure de l’empereur à cheval et au mal à éradiquer, le diable.

Au fil des siècles, le motif prolifère et s’altère. Initialement, une bête ailée avec une queue de serpent et des griffes figure le dragon. Après les croisades, les artistes s’inspireront des têtes de crocodiles rapportées par les croisés, dont on peut encore admirer un exemple dans la Maison Jean-Lescarts de Mons.

Parallèlement, l’image du saint évolue également: d’une figure de soldat, il se transforme, à partir du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, en dandy affublé d’un chapeau à plumes selon la représentation sculptée de Johann Michael Schaller (vers 1725).

## Interprétations contemporaines

La représentation du combat reste la plus diffusée dans l’Occident chrétien et près de 1 500 représentations de ce sujet sont répertoriées. Parmi la sélection de sculptures, peintures, enluminures, gravures ou dessins réalisée par le MAC’s, certaines œuvres proviennent des Offices de Florence, du Kunsthistorische Museum de Vienne ou encore de Nuremberg. ►



▲ *Travel*, de David Claerbout (1996-2013).  
 Courtesy de l'artiste,  
 Galeries Micheline  
 Szwajcer, Bruxelles et  
 Sean Kelly, New York.

◀ *Saint-Georges*, de Luc Tuymans (2015).  
 Courtesy Luc Tuymans.

Le MAC's a également invité des artistes contemporains – David Claerbout, Giuseppe Penone, Angel Vergara Santiago et Luc Tuymans – à réélaborer les motifs du mythe sans en altérer l'histoire. La vidéo *Travel* de David Claerbout ne parle pas directement du saint mais de lieux imaginaires. Angel Vergara Santiago propose pour sa part la vidéo *Ascalon*, autour de la sculpture de saint Georges de l'église néogothique Saint-Georges à Anvers. Avec *Albero folgorato* (*Arbre foudroyé*), Giuseppe Penone travaille sur la disposition de deux arbres – l'un dressé, l'autre couché au sol – pour figurer respectivement le saint et le dragon grâce aux concepts de verticalité et d'horizontalité. Luc Tuymans, quant à lui,

a réalisé *Saint-Georges*, un tableau dans les tons gris: des personnages accoudés à une balustrade regardent le paysage désormais vide d'un autre célèbre combat, celui de Waterloo. Cette peinture fait le lien entre les personnages de la composition et les visiteurs de l'exposition, invités à regarder des images anciennes et à leur donner une nouvelle interprétation.

En effet, le combat de saint Georges peut se présenter aux yeux de nos contemporains comme le creuset de tous les combats de l'homme contre des forces hostiles, mais aussi – et peut-être surtout – de l'homme contre lui-même dans l'affirmation de son destin. ■

► [www.mac-s.be/](http://www.mac-s.be/)



## Théâtre

### ***Les Amours de Sacha***

Du 13 au 15 novembre, BOZAR, Bruxelles

Cette année, l'ATIE (Atelier Théâtral des Institutions Européennes) monte *Les Amours de Sacha*, d'après *Je t'aime* du dramaturge Sacha Guitry. Cette comédie de mœurs piquante et légère relate une histoire d'amour qui se déroule dans l'ambiance tourmentée et caricaturale des soirées mondaines parisiennes des années 1950. À l'image de Sacha Guitry, ses personnages sont des charmeurs qui, malgré leur misogynie renommée, aiment les femmes. On se souvient de la maxime: «*Je suis contre les femmes, oui mais contre, tout contre*». Le dimanche 15 novembre, une soirée de gala sera organisée au profit de l'ONG FOCHTA. ■

► <http://atiecom.eu>

► [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

## Exposition

### **François Schuiten.**

### **Lumières sur les Cités**

Jusqu'au 7 février 2016, Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image Imprimée, La Louvière

Le dessinateur de bandes dessinées et scénographe belge François Schuiten nous emmène dans des mondes imaginaires, à la fois proches et lointains. Ces mondes, de Pahry à Brüssel, en passant par Samaris ou Kobenhavn, sont au cœur des Cités Obscures, une série réalisée avec Benoît Peeters depuis 1982. L'exposition «Lumières sur les Cités» présente des planches originales et plonge le visiteur dans un univers d'images fantomatiques. Ce voyage est un plaidoyer pour la mémoire de nos cités et pour donner le goût de l'aventure vers le futur. ■

► [www.centredelagravure.be/](http://www.centredelagravure.be/)



## Lecture

### ***Villa Muller.***

### **Marcel Spittaël, 1938**

d'Amaury de Smet et Serge Brison, préface de Maurice Culot, Editions AAM, Bruxelles, 2015

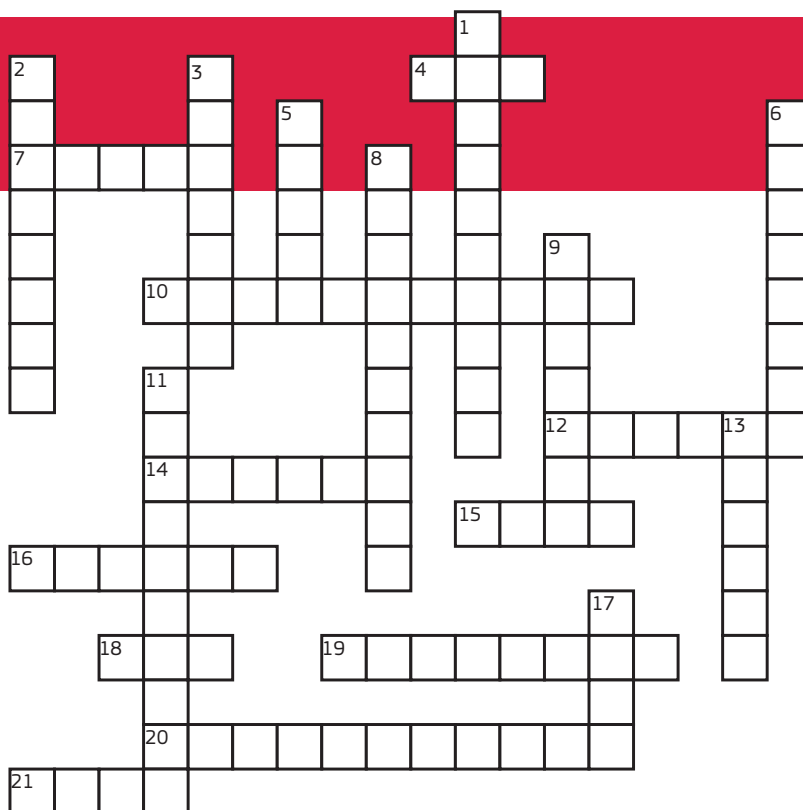
Demeure énigmatique, apparentée aux légendaires réalisations de Robert Mallet-Stevens ou de Josef Hoffmann, la villa Muller nous est parvenue intacte. Construite en 1938 dans la périphérie de Bruxelles, d'après les plans de l'architecte Marcel Spittaël (1899-1981), elle nous replonge au cœur de l'effervescence artistique propre à l'entre-deux-guerres. Derrière les sévères façades de brique se déploie un décor luxueux fait de marbres, de bois précieux et de feuilles d'or dont chaque détail témoigne du talent de son concepteur. Son raffinement et son état de conservation remarquable font de la Villa Muller une des merveilles de l'architecture Art Déco et moderniste en Belgique. ■

► <http://aam.be/fr/editions/>





## CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 04** Schrödinger's pet who is simultaneously dead and alive  
**07** Alfred, invented dynamite and his fortune was used to institute the world's most famous recognition for scientists  
**10** Species of the genus *Homo* who populated Europe before the advent of *H. Sapiens sapiens*  
**12** The famous Archimedes interjection when he stepped into an 'inspiring' bath  
**14** Carlos, Commissioner for Research, Science, and Innovation  
**15** The functional basic unit of life  
**16** Atomic particle with positive charge  
**18** Acronym for diodes that emit light  
**19** The most common element in the Universe  
**20** Dating method based on the natural radioactive decay of  $^{14}\text{C}$   
**21** Probably the most famous Australopithecus

## DOWN

- 01** The largest constituent of the Universe, but no one has seen it yet...  
**02** Discovered (among other things) the equivalence between mass and energy  
**03** Had to recant his theories in front of the Inquisition  
**05** The 'God particle' whose existence has been theorised by Peter Higgs and others  
**06** Cave in Cantabria famous for its Upper Palaeolithic paintings  
**08** Nickname for the *Institut d'études politiques de Paris*  
**09** His 'demon' could violate the second principle of thermodynamics  
**11** Study of mathematical models of conflict and cooperation between intelligent and rational decision makers, used mainly in economics and political science  
**13** The temperature scale at whose zero matter stops moving  
**17** French acronym of the European Organisation for Nuclear Research

## ANSWERS TO OCTOBER'S CROSSWORD

**ACROSS:** 01 MOWGLI - 03 CAMELOT - 05 STRASBOURG - 08 DUDA - 11 TRIER - 12 MAZARIN - 14 KRANJSKAGORA - 15 GMO - 17 VANCOUVER - 18 KOLKHOZ

**DOWN:** 02 INTERREG - 03 CSS - 04 PARMA - 06 INTERRAIL - 07 SIMPLONTUNNEL - 09 DUISBURG - 10 SPAMALOT - 13 BAIXA - 16 BERGEN

Answers in next month's edition. Send your suggestions for clues and keys to [matteo.manzonetto@ec.europa.eu](mailto:matteo.manzonetto@ec.europa.eu), with 'crosswords' in the subject line.

# QUIZ

- 01** Where in Brussels is the European Research Council (ERC) based?
- Place Rogier
  - Rond-point Schuman
  - Rue de la Loi
- 02** Who is the President of the ERC?
- Pablo Amor
  - Jean-Pierre Bourguignon
  - Jean-Claude Juncker
- 03** How many ERC grantees have won Nobel Prizes while funded by the ERC?
- 0
  - 1
  - 5
- 04** How many years of post-PhD experience are required to be eligible for an ERC Starting Grant?
- 3
  - 2-7
  - 10
- 05** What structures attach to chromosomes to pull them apart during cellular division?
- microtubules
  - triglycerides
  - chromatids
- 06** Where is the world's strongest natural material found?
- in spider webs
  - in limpet teeth
  - on gecko feet
- 07** Where is the Whittard Canyon?
- in the Atlantic Ocean
  - in the Indian Ocean
  - in the Pacific Ocean
- 08** What do Michael Batty and his team use to study cities?
- mathematical models and fractals
  - historical documents
  - 3D modelling
- 09** Where did the Garamantes tribe live?
- in the Atacama Desert
  - in the Sahara Desert
  - in the Namib Desert
- 10** To what did Angela Merkel liken the ERC in terms of European research?
- the World Cup
  - the Champion's League
  - the Eurovision Song Contest

ANSWERS:  
1.a - 2.b - 3.c - 4.b - 5.a - 6.b - 7.a - 8.a - 9.b - 10.b

## HISTOIRE EN IMAGES

## EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

2007



- The launch of the European Research Council (ERC) is celebrated in Berlin, hosted by Chancellor Angela Merkel under the German Presidency of the EU, with representatives from over thirty countries. Professor Fotis Kafatos becomes the first ERC President and Professor Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker takes up the post of first Secretary-General.

2012



- The ERC celebrates its fifth anniversary in Brussels, having awarded more than 2,500 grants. In 2012, the ERC also establishes a cooperation agreement with the US National Science Foundation (NSF) – the first in a string of such initiatives with counterparts outside Europe.

2013



- In 2013, for the first time, the ERC President, Professor Helga Nowotny, attends the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, bringing the science perspective into the debate. Since then, the ERC participates yearly. In 2015, Commissioner Moedas and ERC President Bourguignon hold a press conference (pictured). The ERC also takes part in the 'Summer Davos' – the Annual Meeting for the New Champions – held in China.

► See also timeline p. 36-37

2015



- The ERC marks a new milestone – its 5,000th grantee. Overall, some 50,000 project proposals have been evaluated through the ERC peer review system. The ERC grantees employ over 40,000 team members, including PhDs and post-docs, laying the foundations for a new generation of researchers.



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