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EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2023



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12:02 PM · Jan 10, 2022

European Research Council: Grants for Researchers from Africa

Wednesday 16 March 2022

Piero VENTURI EU Delegation to the African Union	Hambani MASHLENI African Union Commission	Felix DAKORA African Academy of Sciences
Angela LIBERATORE Head of the Scientific Department, ERCEA	Jennifer ROBINSON ERC grantee	Ato QUAYSON Former ERC panel member

#ERCWorld

The Nobel Prize
EU Science, Research and Innovation



Svante Pääbo wins 2022 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

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From space, @Thom_astro could realize how much our planet is in danger.

Tune in on 7 December to listen to this @esa & @FAO Goodwill Ambassador talking about science, young people & the environment.

More info erc.europa.eu/news-events/ev...

#COP27 #ERCengage Photo CESA/NASA

ERC Public Engagement with Research Award 2022 #ERCengage


PUBLIC'S CHOICE



Artur Obluski
Engaging local community in Sudan to promote archaeological heritage

“We are witnessing terrible events in Europe that we thought we had banished to history - with a dictator ordering his tanks across internationally recognised borders.”

PROF. MARIA LEPTIN
PRESIDENT OF THE ERC




<https://erc.europa.eu>

European Research Council

External Communication Strategy 2023

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1. Foreword

After my first year as ERC President, I am more convinced than ever that our organisation does a fantastic job supporting frontier research in Europe. But it's not enough simply to do great things, we also need to make sure that the ERC's activities and achievements are widely known and understood. That is why communication is such a strategic function.

I and the members of the ERC's Scientific Council fully understand that there are competing demands on public budgets in these challenging times. From the war in Ukraine to the cost-of-living crisis, from climate change to public health, politicians have to make difficult decisions about where to invest taxpayers' money.

But support for frontier research is not a luxury! The Covid pandemic is just one example of how important it is to continue pushing the boundaries of human knowledge in order to face future challenges. As we begin to look ahead to the EU's next framework programme for research and innovation, I am determined to ensure that we get that message across loud and clear to EU and national level decision-makers, stakeholders and the media.

The ERC is rightly recognised for the excellence of its peer review evaluation system. But we are not complacent, and the Scientific Council is constantly looking at new developments and potential improvements to the way we do things. Of course, we need to make sure that any changes are properly justified and explained to those who are most concerned (particularly applicants for ERC grants).

Our commitment to scientific excellence as the sole evaluation criterion for ERC grants remains as resolute as ever, but we are of course sympathetic to the need to encourage grant applications from less well represented countries and scientific domains. Communication can play an important role here too, both by listening actively to feedback from different communities and by tailoring the information we provide.

We have all been concerned to see the growing polarisation and the spread of disinformation and misinformation in social media over the last few years. However, it is also encouraging to see from numerous surveys that scientists have become by far the most trusted sources of information (not least since the pandemic). I think that puts a particular responsibility on us as researchers to engage with the public. The ERC's Public Engagement with Research Award and our new science journalism initiative are designed to make a modest but hopefully useful contribution in this regard.

The ERC is blessed with a vibrant community of supporters and ambassadors. These include the members of our Scientific Council, our grantees, their research teams and their host institutions, as well as European and national level funding bodies and research organisations. As a former ERC panel chair, I would also add the wonderful panel members and remote reviewers who do such great work for us evaluating research proposals. We look forward to joining forces with all of them next year to continue spreading the word about the importance of frontier research for Europe's future!

Maria Leptin
President of the ERC

2. Objectives

The ERC's communication actions in 2023 will be guided by the following strategic objectives:

1. Explain the intrinsic value of frontier research, as well as the contributions it makes to tackling societal, economic, environmental and policy challenges.
2. Provide talented researchers in Europe and globally with timely and reliable information about funding opportunities offered by the ERC.
3. Promote public engagement with research by offering ERC grantees opportunities and incentives to share their work.

3. Audiences

The ERC's priority audiences for external communication are:

1. Potential applicants for ERC grants
2. ERC grantees and their research teams
3. Universities and research institutions that host grantees
4. Policy-makers and research stakeholders at European and national levels
5. Journalists and media
6. Members of the general public who take an interest in science

We will continue to serve all these audiences in 2023, but with a particular focus on engaging with the groups mentioned under 3, 4 and 5 above.

4. Actions

Explain the intrinsic value of frontier research

The President and the members of the Scientific Council are the ERC's most effective ambassadors when it comes to making the case for frontier research. The ERC Executive Agency's Communication Unit will continue to support their efforts to engage with policy-makers, stakeholders and the public through speaking engagements, media interviews and other communication activities.

We will join forces in 2023 with the European Parliament's Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) to organise an event on smart agriculture and sustainable food (tbc).

We will highlight the contribution of frontier research by organising sessions with ERC grantees at the EU Research and Innovation Days, as well as several high-profile events focusing on different EU policy priorities (aligned with the ERC's work on feedback to policy).

We will organise an event looking at frontier research and widening participation. This event will focus on the action needed to overcome barriers to the development of excellent science in countries and regions with less developed research sectors, the support available from different EU programmes and good practice examples showing what can be achieved under the right conditions.

We will provide communication support for a scientific conference on frontier research and diversity to be organised by the agency at the request of the Scientific Council's Gender and Diversity Issues Working Group (tbc). We will also continue to provide communication support to the Scientific Council's other Working Groups, including the Working Group on Mapping Frontier Research and the Widening Working Group.

We will also prepare the ground for a dialogue with Nobel prize winners to be organised in early 2024 in collaboration with the Nobel Prize Outreach. We will also explore the potential for collaboration with other high-profile science prizes.

Provide information on ERC funding

We will continue promoting ERC grant schemes and funding opportunities to potential applicants, including through a webinar to be organised following the adoption of the 2024 ERC Work Programme. This will include explanations of any new developments, including decisions taken by the Scientific Council on research assessment and the possible introduction of lump sums for some grants.

We will continue to work with new grantees and their host institutions to announce the results of ERC calls, which can serve to inspire future applicants as well as showcasing examples that illustrate the added value of frontier research.

Targeted communication actions will be organised to support the ERC's work on widening European participation. This will include awareness-raising activities in selected countries (in agreement with the Scientific Council's Widening Working Group) as well as promotion of the ERC's mentoring and fellowship schemes.

Global outreach to research talent worldwide will rely increasingly on empowering key multipliers like the Euraxess network and the science and innovation counsellors in EU Delegations. Considering the relatively low application rates for grants in some Life Sciences panels, we will work with the ERC Executive Agency's Scientific Department to see communication with the relevant research communities could play a useful role.

Promote public engagement with research

Following on from the second edition of the ERC's Public Engagement with Research Award in July 2022, we will begin preparing a third edition of the Award as part of the ERC's 2024 Work Programme. The call is expected to be launched in November 2023.

We will roll out the ERC's new science journalism grant scheme designed to support stronger relationships and improve mutual understanding between ERC grantees and science journalists. The placement of science journalists in research labs is expected to kick off in the second half of 2023.

We will continue to work with grantees in order to produce ERC stories showcasing their research. These will include stories that illustrate how bottom-up frontier research can deliver policy-relevant results. This will support the ERC's work on Feedback to Policy (priority themes for 2023 will adapt to evolving policy priorities and scientific advancements but are expected to include artificial intelligence as well as the EU research missions on climate, ocean/water, cities, soil/food and cancer). In line with the objective of explaining the intrinsic value of frontier research, ERC stories will also include projects that push the frontiers of human knowledge but without necessarily offering immediate applications or impacts.

The stories will be disseminated via the ERC's own channels, and in cooperation with the Commission (corporate campaigns, research success stories, Cordis etc) and European Parliament (European Science Media Hub etc). We will also work with grantees and their host institutions to pitch these stories to journalists and the media (including popular science TV shows and podcasts).

A more detailed calendar of events and communication opportunities is annexed to this communication strategy, as well as a list of scientific conferences where Scientific Council members and ERC Executive Agency staff will be speaking.

5. Channels

5a. ERC communication tools and channels

Website

- > The ERC website attracted around 1 million visits in 2022. A revamped version of the website was launched in September 2022, and further improvements are planned in order to ensure that it offers a reliable source of information for potential applicants, as well as a dynamic presentation of the Scientific Council's priorities and the work of ERC grantees.

Multimedia

- > In 2022, ERC videos were viewed more than 500,000 times across different platforms. Video productions next year are expected to include additional "ERC classes" (one on science communication for ERC grantees) and possibly use of audio-visual content to tackle certain issues (e.g. on gender, visiting fellowships programmes, proof of concept projects in social science and humanities). We will continue to explore different formats to showcase ERC stories and data including videos, infographics and podcasts.

Social media

- > 2022 saw continued strong growth in the ERC's followers across our two main social media platforms, with a consistent increase of followers on Twitter (now surpassing 140,000) and very rapid follower gains on LinkedIn (130,000). There has also been an increase in engagement with content posted on the ERC's social media channels, for example around the announcement of call results. We have had two positive experiences with the use of Twitter Spaces to host live events in 2022, and will continue to explore and experiment with different features and content forms in 2023. Building on these achievements, we aim for a further increase in social media engagement in 2023, via careful community management (fulfilling the needs of our online audience through e.g. responding to comments and questions, and sharing the type of content our followers need).

Online magazine

- The ERC online magazine's editorial approach will continue to be based on quarterly collections of articles with a thematic focus, including op-ed written by thought leaders from broader research community, inside analysis and hands-on advice for current and prospective grantees and ERC applicants.

Email alerts

- The ERC maintains a database of more than 70,000 subscribers who have chosen to receive alerts about ERC funding and stories. In 2023, we will further maintain and develop this mailing list.

Publications

- During the pandemic, the ERC discontinued print publications. This trend is expected to continue, with a limited number of exceptions, for environmental and budget reasons. Our priorities for 2023 will be to focus on reader-friendly online formats and to enhance promotion on social media.

5b. Earned media

The ERC is frequently in the news. Every month, more than a thousand articles mention us in the online and printed press. Next year, we will explore collaborations with audio-visual media (both traditional broadcast media and online channels) including popular science TV shows and podcasts.

During 2023, we will continue to provide media relations support to the ERC President and the Scientific Council. We will work with grantees and their host institutions to encourage media reporting of the results of ERC grant competitions, as well as groundbreaking research results by ERC grantees.

We will continue to cooperate closely with science, EU affairs, international and national journalists. Our media relations work involves prompt responses to journalists' enquiries, as well as reaching out proactively to the media with newsworthy information. We will proactively pitch stories about ERC grantees and their research to popular science TV programmes and podcasts. We will also organise media briefings on hot current affairs topics from a science perspective.

The Commission's Representations in EU Member States and the EU's Delegations in countries around the globe are important partners, as are the press offices of institutions hosting ERC grantees.

5c. Multipliers and communication partners

National Contact Points

The ERC's National Contact Points (NCPs) are the first port of call for potential applicants. We will continue to ensure that the NCPs have the latest information on ERC grant schemes and calls. Three webinars with the NCPs and ERCEA staff will be organised throughout the year, with a physical event in Brussels scheduled in the middle of the year.

Host Institutions

The communication departments of Universities and Research Institutions that host ERC grantees are key partners when it comes to the communication of call results as well as project examples. We will continue to expand our network of communication officers from host institutions and organise 2-3 online events during 2023. In addition, a physical workshop will be organised to share experiences promoting frontier research at European, national and regional levels.

Association of ERC Grantees

The Association of ERC Grantees has now been formally established as an independent voice for the growing community of current and former grantees. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Association on its 'Science and Society' series of webinars and other communication actions.

European Commission Representations

The European Commission's Representations in the Member States play a key role in raising the visibility of EU policies and programmes amongst the media and the public. We will continue to cooperate with the Representations on success stories, call results and other announcements.

European Parliament

We will continue to work closely with the European Parliament's Committee for Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), the Science and Technologies Options Assessment Panel (STOA) as well as the European Science Media Hub (ESMH) and to collaborate on various events and activities.

EU Delegations / Euraxess network

Following on from the very successful series of global outreach webinars organised in 2020-2022, we will continue to work with the Science Counsellors in EU Delegations and the Euraxess Worldwide Network in order to bring ERC grant schemes and calls to the attention of talented researchers around the world. We will also pursue our collaboration with the International Cooperation Directorate in the Commission's DG for Research and Innovation.

Commission DGs and EU staff

Commission DGs use a wide range of communication channels to reach the European citizens and stakeholders. In 2023 we will continue building synergies with their communication services, in order to amplify the message and spot windows of opportunity, in close coordination with the Feedback to Policy sector in order to ensure maximal synergies. In addition, the European Commission counts more than 33,000 staff members and the total number of people employed by the EU is over 60,000 people. The ERC will continue to strengthen its internal networks, aiming to count on this important audience to relay its messages. The ERCEA staff will be part of this effort.

6. Internal communication and staff engagement

The new ways of working have brought advantages and challenges, both for the organisation and the staff. The Internal Communication (IC) strategy builds on three pillars - Connecting, Channelling, and Conversing - aiming to tackle part of the challenges of our professional environment. The first focuses on bringing ERC's mission and funded research closer to ERCEA staff.

Communication actions include regular visibility of ERC projects and researchers on IC channels, science-related events, and increased visibility of colleagues across the agency. They also focus on providing more opportunities for the staff to meet the President and the Scientific Council members and on sharing timely information on the ERC governing bodies and management team discussions.

The migration to a future intranet that will fully merge communication collaboration and knowledge management at the Commission level will be an essential challenge for internal communication in the coming years. The new tool, addressing the main objectives of the IC strategy pillars, will require broad mobilisation at the ERCEA. It aims to enhance collaboration across departments, break silos, provide better ways to capture and share knowledge Commission-wide and reduce digital overload.

7. Key Performance Indicator

We will track the following KPIs in order to assess the performance of our communication actions:

Indicator	Baseline 2022
Website visits	1 million
Social media followers	Twitter – 141,100 LinkedIn – 129,476 Facebook – 38,043 YouTube – 4700
Social media mentions	126,000
Mainstream media mentions	15,000
Views of ERC videos across different platforms	600,000
Subscribers to e-mail alerts	70,000
Grantees speaking at webinars/events	28
ERC stories shared via different channels	200
Events – participants/views	6070

Annex 1 – Key Communication Opportunities in 2023

January	February	March	April	May	June
World Economic Forum (Davos)	-	Science journalism call results	Host Institution communication network (in person)	Webinar on Implementing Arrangements	European Network of Science Centres & Museums (ECSITE)
Consolidator Grant call results		ERC Annual Report 2022	2022 Advanced Grant call results	Widening event Slovenia (tbc)	Scientific Council plenary + side event (Stockholm)
		Host Institution communication network (online)			National Contact Points (in person) EuroPCom (possible ERC session/ speakers)

July	August	September	October	November	December
2024 ERC Work Programme adoption		2023 Starting Grant call results	EU Research & Innovation Days (tbc)	ERC-European Parliament (STOA) event	Annual ERC Scientific Conference
			Widening event (tbc)	Opening of Public Engagement with Research Award call	

Annex II - List of Scientific Conferences attended by ERCEA Scientific Officers

Domains	Conference/Webinar title	Date	Location
LS	EAN 2023 (European Academy of Neurology)	July 1-4, 2023	Budapest (HU)
LS1	63rd edition of the International Conference on the Bioscience of Lipids (ICBL)	2-5/10/2023	Palma de Mallorca (ES)
LS2 project	Project visit: RNPdynamics (Ljubljana)	tbd	Ljubljana (Slovenia)
LS3	Auxins and Cytokinins in Plant Development Symposium (ACPD 2023)	25-29 June 2023	Prague (CZ)
LS3	European Developmental Biology Congress (EDBC 2023)	25-28 September 2023	Oxford (UK)
LS3 (LS7)	The International Society for Regenerative Biology conference	3-6 Sept. 2023	Vienna (AT)
LS3/LS4	Stem Cells and Cancer - Gordon Research Conference	14-19 May 2023	Lucca (IT)
LS4	European Association for Cancer Research	12-15 June	Torino, Italy
LS4	ESC Congress 2023	25-28 August 2023	Amsterdam (NL)
LS4	European Association for the Study of Diabetes	3-6 October 2023	Hamburg (DE)
LS5, LS9, SyG	FENS regional meeting	3-5 May 2023	Algarve (PT)
LS5	IBRO 2023 (International Brain Research Organization)	September 9-13, 2023	Granada (ES)
LS5	ECNP 2023 (European College of Neuropsychopharmacology)	October 7-10, 2023	Barcelona (ES)
LS5	WFSBP 2023 (World Federation of Societies of Biological Psychiatry)	August 2-5, 2023	Istanbul (TR)
LS7	EACTS Young researchers course "Interactive Course to become a Surgical Investigator"	08/02/2023	Windsor (UK)
LS7	19th World Congress of Basic & Clinical Pharmacology 2023	2-7 July 2023	Glasgow (UK)
LS7	EMBO Confere - CRISPR-Cas: from biology to therapeutic applications	7-10 November 2023	Sevilha (ES)
LS8	2023 Society for Molecular Biology & Evolution meeting	July 23-27	Ferrara (IT)
LS8	European Conference of Tropical Ecology	19-23 June 2023	Ceske Budejovice (CZ)
LS8, PE10	ASLO Aquatic Sciences Meeting 2023 Resilience and Recovery in Aquatic Systems	4-9 June 2023	Palma de Mallorca (ES)
LS9	10th FEMS Congress of European Microbiologists	09-13/07/2023	Hamburg (DE)
several LS and PE panels	ASGCT 26th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy	16-20 May 2023	Los Angeles (US), remote participation is possible
several LS and PE panels	ESGCT Annual Congress of the European Society of Gene & Cell Therapy	24-27 October 2023	Brussels (BE)
several LS panels	FEBS 2023	8-12 July 2023	Tours (FR)
SyG	Island Biology Conference	3-7 July 2023	Lipari (IT)
SYG	Project visit (special amendment): ANEUPLOIDY, ATTAC or Kill-or-Differentiate	to be defined with the PIs	to be defined with the PIs
SyG	Project visit: SPHERES	tbd	tbd (Université Toulouse-France, Karolinska Institutet-Sweden, Valbonne-France)
LS2	Genes 2023 - Single-Cell Genomics Moving Forward	29-31 Mar 2023	Barcelona (ES)
LS7	EMIM 2023: European Molecular Imaging Meeting	14-17 March 2023	Salzburg (AT)

Domain	Conference/Webinar title		Location
SyG	BacterialCORE (TBC)	tbd	tbd (Jerusalem, IL/ London UK)
SyG	DDREAMM (TBC)	tbd	tbd (Zurich,CZ/ Cambridge UK)
SyG	AgingTimer (TBC)	tbd	Rehovot (IL)
PE2	26th Conference on Quantum Information Processing	Feb 4 – 10, 2023	Ghent, Belgium
PE6	14th International Conference on Bioinformatics models, methods and algorithms	16 – 18 February 2023	"Lisbon, Portugal, there is option for remote participation according to the web- site of the conference"
PE1	"SIAM Conference on Computational Science and Engineering "	26 Feb - 3 March	Amsterdam
PE10	EGU General Assembly 2023	23-28 April 2023	Vienna
PE2	LHCP - Large Hadron Collider Physics	22 - 27 May 2023	Belgrade, Serbia
PE2	Quantum Matter 2023	23-25 May 2023	Madrid
HoS PE6-7- 8-11	International Conference on Robotics and Automation	29 May -2June 2023	London
PE3	World of Photonics Congress—International Congress on Photonics in Europe	25-29 June 2023	Munich, Germany
PE1	22nd ECMI Conference on Industrial and Applied Mathematics	26 - 30 June 2023	Wroclaw, Poland
PE8	Aerospace Europe Conference (Joint 10th EUCASS - 9th CEAS conference)	9-13 July 2023	Lausanne
PE10	Goldschmidt Conference 2023	9-14 July 2023	Lyon
PE9	European Astronomical Society Annual Meeting	10 July – 14 July 2023	Kraków, Poland
PE9/PE10	28th General Assembly of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG)	11-20 July 2023	Berlin, Germany
PE6	Scientific Conference MIUA 2023	19-21 July	Aberdeen (Scotland)
PE3 (but could also touch PE4 and PE2 and to a lesser extent PE7)	StatPhys28	August 7 to 11, 2023	On-site. Tokyo, Japan
PE1	10th International Congress on Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM 2023)	20 – 25 August 2023	Tokyo, Japan
PE6	29th International European Conference on Parallel and Distributed Computing 2023 (Euro-par)	28 Aug – 1 Sept 2023	"Limassol, Cyprus , from the website the conference seems to be on-site"
PE8	"ETMM14 - International ERCOFTAC symposium on engineering, turbulence, modelling and measurements OR THMT'23 - Turbulence-related Heat and Mass Transfer "	"6-8 September 11-15 September"	"Barcelona, Spain Rome, Italy"
PE3	European Quantum Technology Conference (EQTC)	end October	TBD, probably Hannover, Germany
PE10	AGU 2023	10-15 December 2023	San Francisco

Domain	Conference/Webinar title	Date	Location
PE8	Any of the following conferences in chemical engineering: 8th EPIC (Warsaw, Poland, 31/05-2/06); 13thESEE2023 (Toulouse, France, 26-29/06); Mixing 17 (Porto, Portugal -- 2-5/07) ECCE 14 & ECAB 7 (Berlin, Germany, 17-21/09) or ISIC 22 (Glasgow, UK, 5-8/09)	from May to September 2023	Warsaw, Toulouse, Porto, Berlin, Glasgow
	ICAANE - International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East	22-26 May 2023	Copenhagen (DE)
	-Transforming Regions: Policies and Planning for People and Places2023 RSA Annual Conference -	14-17 June 2023	Ljubjana (SI)
	AAAS2023	2-5 March 2023	Washington (US)
	ESCOPE 2023 23rd Conference of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology	6-9 September 2023	Porto (PT)
	ICPS- International Convention of Psychological Science-	9-11 March 2023	BXL (BE)
	International Congress on Risks: Risks and Territorial Conflicts-From natural disasters to geopolitical tensions	23-26 May 2023	Coimbra (PT)
	EuQu (SyG)	9-12 Mai 2023	Nantes (FR)
	'Translating Memories'	September 2023	Tallin (EE)
	Pleenary meeting	18-20 April 2023	Stockholm (SE)
	Pleenary meeting	18-20 October 2023	Pompeii (IT)
	European Network for Cinema and Media Studies	13 - 17 June 2023	Oslo (NO)
	European Association of Archaeologist Annual Meeting	30 August-2 September 2023	Belfast (IE)
	LUMIERE (StG)	TBC	Brussels (BE)
	IBRO World Congress of Neuroscience	9-13 September 2023	Granada (SP)
	International Conference on Arts in Society, Jagiellonian University	5-7 Jly 2023	Krakow (PL)
SH2	JUDI-ARCH and "INFINITY" [project n°678375 and n°101002660]	End of 1st Semester 2023	Brno (Cz)
SH2	The European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference	4 - 8 September 2023	Prague (Cz)
SH1/SH2	40th European Association of Law and Economics (EALE) conference	21/22 September 2023	Berlin
	International Conference on Scientific Methods and Research Ethics	16-17/02/2023	London, UK
	International Conference on Application of Medical Ethics and Embryo Research	06-07/03/2023	Barcelona, Spain
	Big Data and Research Synthesis in Psychology	08-10/05/2023	Germany
	Oxford International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences	19-21/07/2023	UK
	12th HEPA Europe conference "Implementing health-enhancing physical activity research: from science to policy and practice"	11-13/09/2023	Leuven, Belgium
	International Conference on Public Health Research and Ethics	09-10 /12/2023	UK



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