



Highlights

INNOVATION

RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY

European Research Council: supporting frontier research

The European Research Council (ERC) - the first European funding agency for investigator-initiated frontier research - has surpassed its goals beyond expectations during the first years of its operation. The feedback of the scientific community has been enthusiastic, resulting in a positive spillover into national systems. The Specific Programme "Ideas" (7th Framework Programme) has received around 15000 proposals in the first calls and 600 contracts have already been signed with a total EC contribution of 900 million euros. 11 projects submitted by Greek scientists have been selected for frontier research in Athens, Crete, Patras and Thessaloniki. Several countries have used the ERC assessment and ranking system to give grants to runners up from their countries that had met the quality criteria but could not be financed due to a lack of funds.

The ERC calls for Starting and Advanced Grants are published on a yearly basis and cover all scientific and interdisciplinary fields, as well as high risk research. Proposals are evaluated by internationally acknowledged scientists and the sole criterion is excellence. The total budget of the Programme amounts to € 7.5 billion for the period 2007-2013, and, until now, 22.10% of the budget has been absorbed. On the one hand, the over-subscription to the ERC calls demonstrates the need in the EU for the funding of basic research, but on the other, makes the operation and efficient running of the ERC difficult. The European Commission has recently published a review on the ERC mechanisms and structures. The experts' panel chaired by Vaira Vike-Freiberga found that, overall, the ERC has succeeded in attracting outstanding scientists across Europe and abroad. However, there are fundamental problems related to rules and practices regarding the governance, administration and operation of the ERC that are not geared to the nature of modern frontier science management.



European Research Council
<http://erc.europa.eu/>

Interview of Aiki Giannakopoulou, ECSITE, Conference Communication and Coordinator

ECSITE is the European network for science centres and museums, linking science communication professionals in 424 institutions from 52 countries across Europe and the world. Members include science centres and museums, science festivals, natural history museums, zoos, aquariums, universities, research organisations and companies communicating and engaging the public in science through accessible, interactive exhibits and programmes. Aiki Giannakopoulou, Conference Communication and Coordinator, describes the operation of the Network, the role of institutions in science communication, the opportunities offered by new technologies, and the participation of Greek organizations in such initiatives.



ECSITE
<http://www.ecsite.eu>

Rescue Robots and Formula car by Greek research teams

Two new robots for the search and rescue of survivors after natural disasters have been developed by the PANDORA research team of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The research team has earned distinctions in international competitions in Austria and China. Another robot, in the same field of rescue and assistance for the survivors of natural disasters, has been developed by the Technological institute of Kavala. ROXANI was voted by the public as the best product of digital technology and innovation during the Athens Digital Week 2009.

Another international distinction for a Greek research team was won by the Aristotle Racing Team (Department of Mechanical Engineers, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki). The team was awarded first prize for designing a formula car at the International Formula Student Competition that took place on 10-14 July at Silverstone speedway, UK.



<http://www.ee.auth.gr>
<http://iivm.teikav.edu.gr/ii>
<http://www.formulasae.meng.auth.gr>

Three NHRF open access journals now in DOAJ

The three peer-reviewed open-access journals in the humanities run by NHRF have been included in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), namely Byzantina Symmeikta, Tekmeria, and The Historical Review/La Revue Historique. The journals are published in electronic form by the National Documentation Centre.

The development of electronic journals has been part of the project "National Information System for Research and Technology, Phase III - Open Access Electronic Repositories and Journals". More specifically:

1. BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA has been published in print since 1966 at the Institute for Byzantine Research/NHRF under the title SYMMEIKTA. It publishes original research and book reviews on Byzantine Studies.
2. Tekmeria has been published in print since 1996. Initially published with the University of Thessaloniki, since 2008 it has been published by the Institute for Greco-Roman Research/NHRF. It publishes original research on Greco-Roman Antiquity.
3. The Historical Review/La Revue Historique has been published in print since 2004 with the Institute for Neohellenic Research/NHRF. It publishes original research and book reviews on Modern Greek Studies.

All three journals, with a significant history of circulation in print, publish original peer-reviewed papers and are supported by international advisory boards. Their content is offered under open access, that is, available without charge for reading, downloading and/or printing. Their inclusion in DOAJ comes as recognition that these journals, their publishers and EKT support the principle of open access to knowledge. DOAJ is the most significant indexing service for open access journals, providing access to more than 4000 journals originating from all over the world.



<http://www.byzsym.org/>
<http://www.tekmeria.org/>
<http://www.historicalreview.org/>
<http://www.doaj.org/>
<http://www.kb.nl/hrd/dd/index-en.html>
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