



On the pressures facing the evaluation of ERC grant proposals

We are writing jointly as the Board of Directors of the *Association of ERC Grantees* (AERG) and the *Ambassadors for the ERC network* to address the discussion around the announced restrictions on the resubmission of ERC grant proposals¹, the accompanying letter from the ERC President², and the subsequent decision of the ERC Scientific Council to readjust the rules³. We are pleased that the ERC Scientific Council has **listened to the concerns raised within the communities we represent**.

These events have highlighted the difficult position the ERC currently finds itself due to the increased number of applications. The widespread reaction to the now-mooted resubmission restrictions suggests that the ERC would be well served to **consult relevant stakeholders** before introducing such major changes, without prejudicing its right to make independent decisions. We share the ERC's goal of preserving high standards of evaluation while expanding opportunities for applicants⁴.

We particularly welcome the ERC's willingness³ to **share its thinking around the feasibility and pros versus cons** of alternative measures to address the current difficulties. We further call on the ERC to **share any findings about the underlying reasons for the increase in the number of applications** so that appropriate and potentially more targeted measures can be considered. In this way, we hope that the research community including the AERG can work alongside the ERC, providing useful and actionable suggestions (for example, expanded commitments to reviewing and serving on its evaluation panels).

In this context, we believe it is also important to consider not only the implications for the ERC as an institution, but also the broader effects on the research ecosystem. Persistently **low success rates place a considerable burden on researchers**, whose substantial efforts in preparing high-quality proposals too often remain unfunded. Scientific ambition is not the problem, underfunding it is⁵. As institutions across Europe have to a degree outsourced evaluation to the ERC, providing it with sufficient capacity and resources is a vital shared responsibility.

The AERG and the Ambassadors for the ERC network are committed to helping the ERC fulfill its vital mission of funding frontier research, and are well aware of the difficulties caused by a chronically insufficient budget. Only significantly greater funding can ensure that this European success story continues to thrive for years to come, and we thereby reiterate our **strong support for doubling the investment in research and innovation**⁶ – including the ERC budget – to maintain the EU's competitive edge in global science and technology.

¹ <https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/applying-erc-grant-2027-competitions-what-you-need-know>

² <https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/erc-president-explains-stricter-application-measures-amid-rising-demand-funding>

³ <https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/erc-scientific-council-readjusts-rules-reapplication>

⁴ <https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/changes-2026-and-2027-work-programmes>

⁵ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-01411-0>

⁶ <https://aerg.eu/news/the-aerg-fully-supports-the-erc-scientific-council-s-call-for-a-doubling-of-spending-on-research-and-innovation>