

# europe beckons top young scientists

Promoted by the European Union Research Organisations Heads of Research Councils (EUROHORCs) and managed by the European Science Foundation (ESF), the European Young Investigators Awards (EURYI awards) represent a 'fast-track' approach to joint funding, in the context of a specific pilot initiative. Each year, the fund – to which 18 research councils from 15 EU Member States and Associated states will initially contribute – will make awards worth at least €1 million to outstanding young scientists from all over the world. The European Commission is contributing to this original scheme of programme co-operation, which is designed to create a high-profile incentive for the best and brightest researchers to build careers in Europe. It will also enable national research councils to identify and overcome barriers to joint funding, preparing the way for wider collaboration in the future.

Most ERA-NET projects plan the progressive strengthening of transnational collaboration in the management of research through a number of phases leading step by step towards joint research activities. The European Young Investigators (EURYI) awards, by contrast, represent a bold move to implement from the outset a jointly funded policy instrument, with integrated programme management and common selection procedures, in the context of a specific pilot initiative – an award to outstanding young scientists from anywhere in the world to carry out innovative research in Europe. Promoted by the European Union Research Organisations Heads of Research Councils (EUROHORCs) and managed by the European Science Foundation (ESF), the EURYI awards will not only create a valuable and prestigious incentive for the best and brightest young researchers to build careers in Europe. They will also enable national research councils to identify, explore and overcome practical barriers to transnational funding, establishing a sound and lasting basis for larger joint programmes in the future.

## Quantum leap

The European Commission's 2000 Communication, 'Towards a European Research Area', outlined a new strategy for the eventual creation and implementation –

by the EU, the Commission's Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, the Member States and others – of a common European science policy. The Communication and subsequent follow-up initiatives have been very widely welcomed, and have already galvanised the thinking of policy-makers, programme managers and academic and industrial researchers.

EUROHORCs was established in 1992 as an informal association of EU Member States' national research councils. It acts as an independent forum and network for the heads of such agencies to discuss issues of common interest.

In order to contribute to the realisation of the European Research Area (ERA), the EUROHORCs General Assembly agreed in May 2001 to initiate active development of collaboration in research funding between national research councils. The Assembly proposed to coordinate its members' research activities in order to create a joint programme capable of delivering a new, politically independent European science policy instrument, based on criteria of scientific quality and need.

EUROHORCs therefore decided, in April 2002, to create a pilot scheme in which, for the first time, national funds would be pooled and jointly managed by the ESF. The 18 founding partners of the EURYI Awards scheme sought support from the ERA-NET for the coordination activities needed to establish and manage this new European activity.



## Coordination Action

**Full title:**

European young investigators awards

**Research field:**

Careers in scientific research

**Coordinator:**

France: The European Science Foundation (ESF)

**Further information:**

Dr Dominique Martin-Rovet,  
European Science Foundation  
1 quai Lezay-Marnésia,  
Strasbourg, 67080 France  
Fax: +33 3 88 37 05 32  
dmartin@esf.org

**Duration:**

4.5 years

**EC funding:**

€1.75 million

**Project reference:**

CA-510191-EURYI

“ *This gives the world's scientists a new opportunity to come and do their best work in the European Research Area.* ”

### Who wants to be a millionaire?

The EURYI scheme is designed to attract the best up-and-coming postdoctoral researchers in the world to establish academic careers in Europe through a prestigious, high-profile annual award. The winners will share a combined fund of at least €1 million contributed by the participating national research councils.

The European awards, which will be open to researchers in any field from anywhere in the world, are intended to strengthen the next generation of leading European scientists by supporting work that addresses new scientific problems and develops novel approaches and methods. Winners will be selected, first by the participating national agencies and then by the ESF, solely on the basis of the quality, originality

and potential of their scientific work. The prizes will enable them to launch independent research careers in Europe over a five-year period and, where appropriate, to build their own teams of collaborators and assistants.

In addition to its scientific and promotional impacts, EURYI will allow national funding institutions to make real progress towards the alignment of their different systems by developing a collaborative approach to the support of young researchers in Europe. The EURYI partnership is open to all funding agencies which are members of EUROHORCs or the ESF, and is therefore expected to grow during the project's 54-month life – with a corresponding increase in the value of the fund and the number of annual awards.