Objective

Despite long study, European paleoanthropology is still hotly debated and continues to produce unexpected and surprising findings. Such discoveries have radically changed our ideas about human presence in Europe: The former view of Europe as inhospitable to humans until 500 thousand years before present (ka) is now challenged by new evidence indicating colonization at just over one million years ago. Although these discoveries represent breakthroughs in European paleoanthropology, many questions remain about the identity of these earliest colonizers, their place of origin, their adaptations enabling their dispersal and their relationship to later hominins. After 500 ka the European fossil human record is more abundant, but still difficult to interpret: the number of species present and their relationship to each other and to African/Asian contemporaries is not well understood. Questions also arise with the advent of modern humans, Homo sapiens, in Europe around 40 ka, and the degree and kind of potential interaction between them and the Eurasian hominin Homo neanderthalensis.

In this discussion crucial information that would decisively help resolve these problems is lacking. Such evidence would come from the gateway through which both archaic and early modern people likely entered Europe, the southern part of the Balkan peninsula. This region lies directly on the most likely route of dispersal between Africa, W. Asia and Europe and is one of the three major European refugia for fauna,
flora and likely also human populations during glacial periods. Paleoanthropological research in the area, however, has been sparse. The proposed high risk project aims to document the earliest human dispersals into Europe, the possible role of the region in late Neanderthal survival, and the earliest venture of modern humans in Europe. Such an undertaking is imperative if our hypotheses about the course of events of human evolution in Europe are to be tested.

Field of Science

/social sciences/sociology/anthropology/physical anthropology

/social sciences/sociology/anthropology/physical anthropology/paleoanthropology

Programme(s)

FP7-IDEAS-ERC - Specific programme: "Ideas" implementing the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007 to 2013)

Topic(s)

ERC-SG-SH6 - ERC Starting Grant - The study of the human past

Call for proposal

ERC-2011-StG_20101124

See other projects for this call

Funding Scheme

ERC-SG - ERC Starting Grant

Principal Investigator

Aikaterini Charvati (Prof.)

Host institution
### EBERHARD KARLS UNIVERSITAET TUEBINGEN

**Address**
Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 72074 Tuebingen, Germany

**Activity type**
Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

**EU Contribution**
€ 1 288 200

**Website**

**Contact the organisation**

**Principal Investigator**
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### Beneficiaries (1)

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