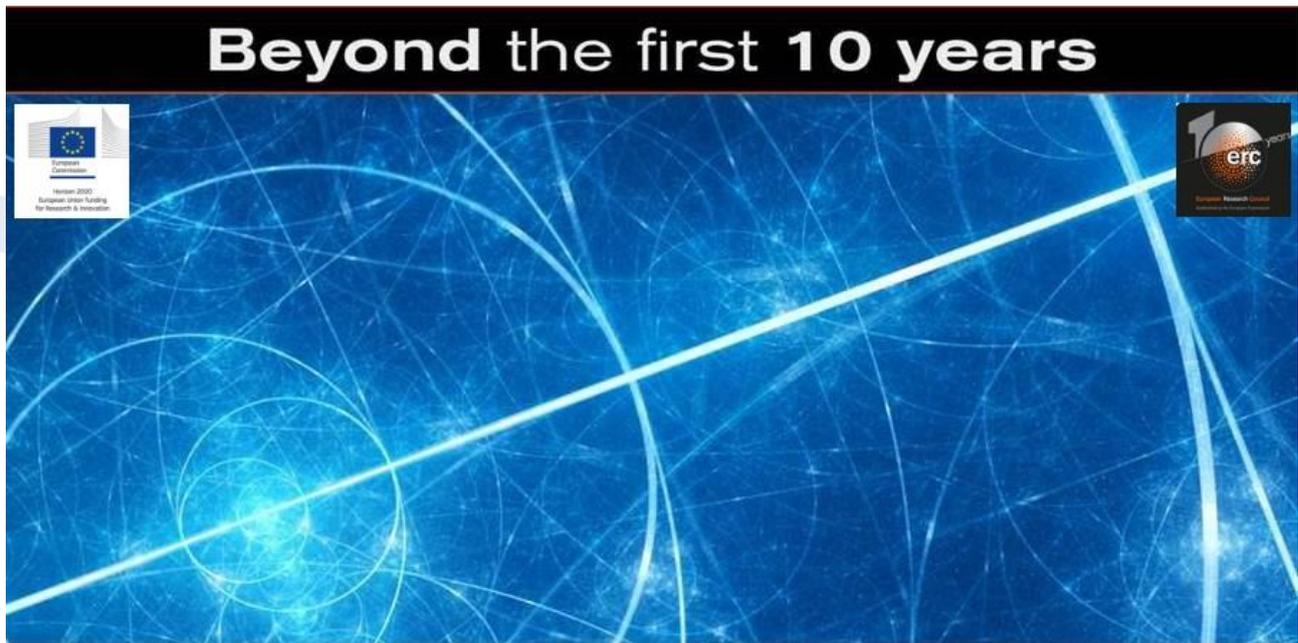




PRESS RELEASE

## Beyond excellence



**«Leading-edge science can succeed only with the support of small-scale, bottom-up research». World-renowned scientist Giorgio Parisi, at SISSA in Trieste to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Research Council (ERC), outlines his vision of research policy**

**March 17<sup>th</sup> at 9.00 am  
SISSA, "P. Budinich" Main Lecture Hall  
Via Bonomea, 265  
Trieste**

13<sup>th</sup> March, 2017

**«Europe should do more and not only for ground-breaking research». Giorgio Parisi, theoretical physicist at the University of Rome "La Sapienza", winner of the Dirac medal in 1999 and the Boltzmann medal in 1992, uses the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *European Research Council* (ERC) to encourage the European Union «to push governments to support research funding beyond the subsidence level, in order to allow all European scientists – and not only, for example, those from Germany and Scandinavian countries – to keep doing top-level science». Parisi will present the key points of his vision of research policy during an event planned**



for **March 17<sup>th</sup>** at **SISSA** in Trieste. **“ERC DAY”** will offer a good opportunity to **take stock and define potential developments of the European body that has been funding the best scientists for frontier projects over the last 10 years.** «ERC grants» Parisi continues «are definitely a positive tool, but they are not enough in countries like Italy. Leading-edge science can succeed only with the support of small-scale, bottom-up research».

**The physicist will participate, together with many other scientists and representatives of both Italian and European research policy, in the SISSA conference. Also involved are nearby universities of northeast Italy.**

The meeting will start at 9.00 am with opening remarks by the SISSA Director, Stefano Ruffo. Next will come speeches by Fabio Zwirner, member of the ERC Scientific Council, and Serena Borgna, representative of the APRE (Agency for the Promotion of European Research) National Contact Point.

The programme will continue with the round table entitled “Research perspectives towards a European Knowledge society” with Giorgio Parisi and SISSA neuroscientist Mathew Diamond, both ERC grantees and members of ERC Evaluation Panels. The discussion will be conducted by Luca De Biase, editor in chief of *Nova 24 - Il Sole 24 Ore*.

Then, it will be the turn of both Italian and foreign grantees from the different disciplinary domains, with a poster session and two round tables.

**The event is open to the public but participants are kindly requested to confirm their attendance by March 14<sup>th</sup> 2017.**

The ERC is the European body set up in 2007 to support excellent scientists of any age and any nationality. It provides funding in all disciplines, with excellence as the sole selection criterion: each proposal is reviewed by multiple referees (between 5 and 7) across two evaluation steps. The selection procedures are managed by high-level scientists and scholars from all over the world. As a key component of Horizon 2020, ERC aims to help Europe attract and hold onto the best scientists. Grants vary between 1,5 and 2,5 millions of Euros and are mobile, following researchers who decide to change their university affiliation.

Since 2007, the ERC has funded about 7,000 projects chosen from 62,000 proposals. About 2/3 of ERC recipients are early and middle career scientists, most of them being less than 40 years old. Numerous grantees have claimed prestigious prizes including 6 Nobel Prizes and 4 Fields Medals.

Since the founding of the ERC, 380 out of 7,500 proposals from Italian institutions have been selected to receive funding. Thirty beneficiaries are foreigners, while the Italian grantees based outside Italy are 294. Holding a Starting or Consolidator award makes the grantee automatically qualified for an associate or full professorship, respectively.

According to the data collected in December 2016, the University of Padua, with about 2,000 faculty members holding 18 grants, is among the top five host institutions in Italy. SISSA, with under 80 faculty members, is just behind: «We have hosted 17 ERC grants. This is a very high number compared to the size of the faculty; in percentage it is one of the highest in Europe»



Director Stefano Ruffo declares «This is one of the reasons why we decided to host this celebration, an idea received with particular enthusiasm by our younger grantees».

«SISSA is very attractive, even for those who have already been selected to receive ERC funding at another institution, not only for the research quality, but also for availability of the technical and administrative staff, who provide an essential support».

«Over the years» Ruffo concludes «we have received ERC grants of all three types and in many disciplines. In the absence of a well-funded or systematic national funding scheme, ERC has been critical to SISSA. Even theoretical research needs consistent funding when the challenge is particularly hard».

To confirm your participation, please send an email to [segreteria@sisssa.it](mailto:segreteria@sisssa.it) by March 14<sup>th</sup> 2017.

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#### USEFUL LINKS:

- Programme: <https://goo.gl/eMtWFw>
- ERC10 Press Pack: <https://goo.gl/aa7yIX>
- ERC Country sheet Italy: <https://goo.gl/qQJdPi>

#### IMAGE:

Credits: European Research Council

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