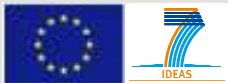




Fotis C. Kafatos

President, European Research Council

The Importance of Excellence Initiatives In an Enhanced Lisbon Process





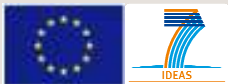
Primacy of Excellence in Research Policy

| 2

**Quality (more than number of researchers/discoveries)
determines success and impact**

**Scientists require suitable conditions
(autonomy environment, support, colleagues, facilities)
and predictability (not episodic actions)**

**Or they vote with their feet
(especially, but not only, the young)**

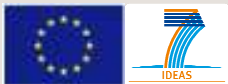




ERC: Towards a European Institution

For the Promotion of Excellent Frontier Research

- **Currently established in the context of the European Community (funded through FP7, Ideas Programme)**
- **Concept long promoted by the Scientific Community (ISE)**
- **Review of ERC structure foreseen by 2010**





Strategic Aims of the ERC

Overview

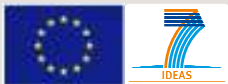
How Boost European Frontier Research Excellence?

By investing in the best researchers and ideas

- **Through competition at European level**
- **On the basis of Scientific excellence as the sole criterion**

**By raising incentives towards quality
and aspirations of individual researchers**

**By providing benchmarks and leverage towards
Structural improvements in European research**



The Scientific Council

Members & Role

22 highly respected researchers reflecting the wide scope of European research and scholarship

- proposed by an independent identification committee
- appointed by the Commission (for 4 years, renewable once)



Role:

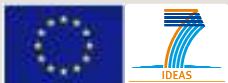
- **Establishes overall scientific strategy**
determines annual work programmes (incl. calls for proposals, evaluation criteria); defines peer review methodology; ensures selection and accreditation of experts
- **Controls quality of operations and management**
- **Ensures communication with the scientific community**



The Agency

“Establishing the ERC Executive Agency”

- **Progressive establishment of ERC Executive Agency**
 - Principles of lean and efficient management apply
- **First: Building up of capacities and operational methods as dedicated service within Commission**
- **Then: Transition to agency structure**
 - Executive Agency will be legally established in the second half of 2007 and is expected to be fully operational by mid-2008
- **Review of ERC structure by 2010**





The ERC Board

Linking strategy and operations

Prof. Fotis Kafatos
President of the ERC



Prof. Helga Nowotny
Dr Daniel Esteve

Vice-Presidents of the ERC

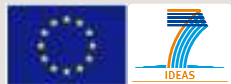


Prof. Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker
ERC Secretary-General



Jack Metthey

Director of ERC DIS
(EC RTD Directorate S)

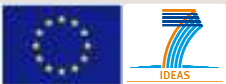




ERC Grants

Strategic principles

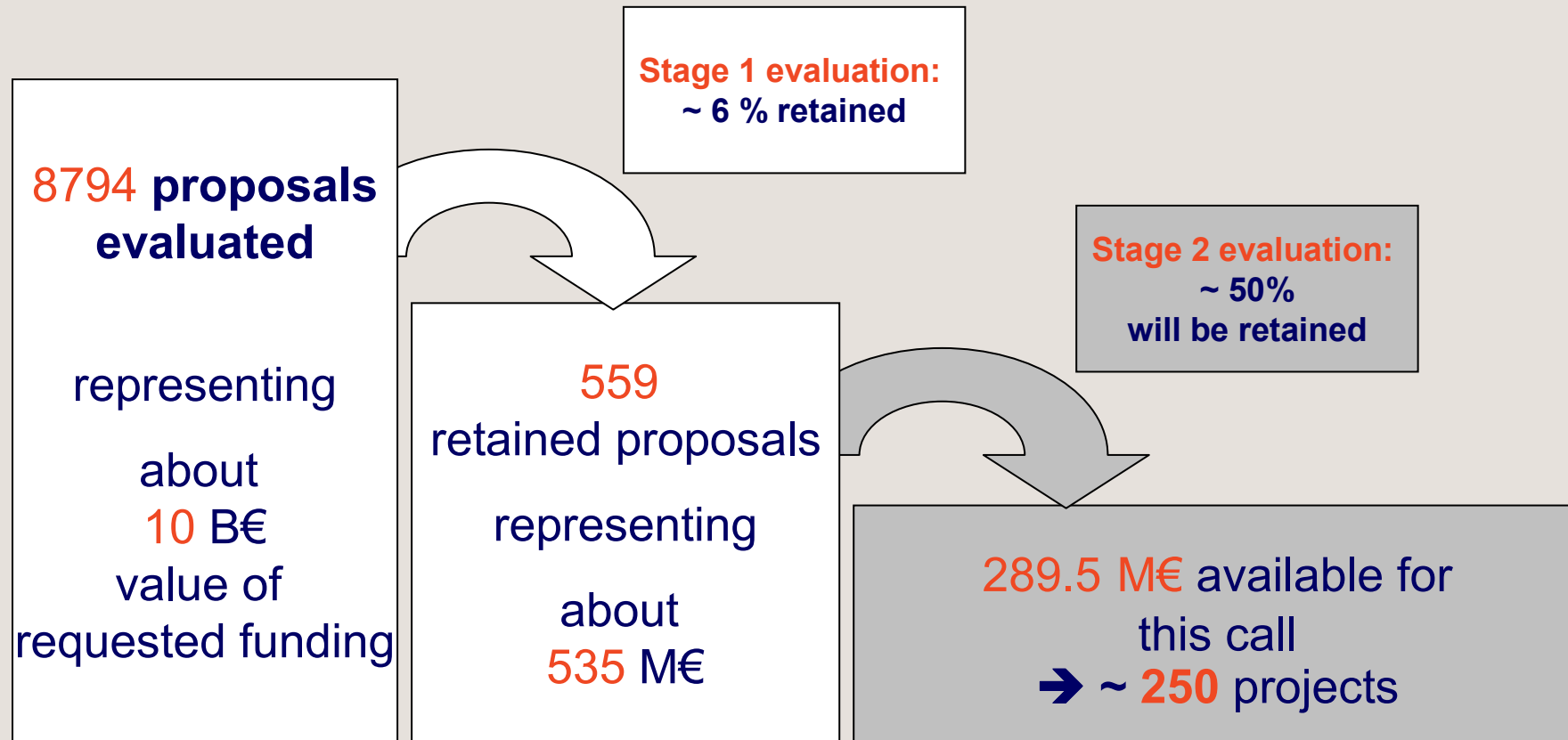
- **All fields of science and scholarship are eligible**
 - ☞ investigator-driven, bottom-up
- **Excellence is the only valid criterion**
 - ☞ individual team + research project
- **Investment in research talent**
 - ☞ Attractive, flexible grants, up to five years
 - ☞ under control of the lead researcher (PI)
- **Independent individual teams in Europe**
Starting and advanced
 - ☞ nationality of researchers is not relevant
 - ☞ host organisation to be located in EU or AS





ERC-2007-StG

Evaluation: overview



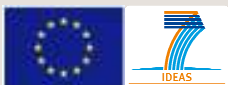


ERC-2007-StG

Evaluation (stage 1): Geographical distribution

<u>Cluster</u>	<u>Number of proposals</u>	<u>Current PI residence %</u>	<u>Host Institution location %</u>
European Union New Member States	475 30	85 5	89 4
Associated countries	47	8	11
Overseas	37	7	0
	100*	100*	100*

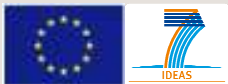
* Based on the total of 559 retained proposal





Beyond individuals

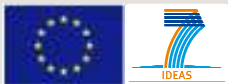
- Invest in best researchers and ideas through competition at European level
- Leading to formation of excellent teams:
Including Grad. Students / postdocs, partners if needed
- Interdisciplinarity encouraged; twinning grants; “4th domain”
- Open to all research-performing entities, including industry if it allows investigators freedom for frontier research
- Opportunity for proactive Univ., RC, Regions, Countries to develop Clusters of Excellence by targeted recruitment





Historic Antecedents: EIROs

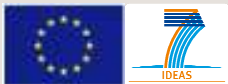
- European Intergovernmental Research Organisations
CERN, ESO, EMBL.... ITER (Global)
- Began in aftermath of WWII,
Parallel to the politico-industrial Coal & Steel Community
- Again: focus on the frontier of science
- Again: initiative of the scientific community
- Large European Infrastructures
- Lesson: promote infrastructures at EC, transnational
and European level; **Open to the world**





Importance of Excellence Initiatives @ National Level

- German Universities: Excellence Initiative
- UK Universities: Research Assessment Exercise
(but must simplify)
- French Agence Nationale de la Recherche
- Focus on excellence in additional national organisations and programmes: Scandinavia, Netherlands, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, Israel





Importance of Excellence Initiatives @ National Level

- Recommend complementary actions:
European, National, Multilateral incl. Mobility
- Obvious requirement for convergence towards 3% objective
- Reinforcement of and reform in European Universities
- Block grants to Universities vs. Full Economic Cost research funding

