



The European Research Council for a Policy of Excellence :
the First Starting Grant Winners Pave the Way
Collège de France, Paris, 7th October 2008

Speakers



European Research Council



Pierre Corvol

Administrator of the Collège de France



Pierre Corvol is a doctor in medicine, with a post-graduate degree in biochemistry. He has held the posts of intern in Hospitals of Paris (1964), International Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the National Institutes of Health in the United States (1969), Senior Registrar (1971), Associate Professor at the Faculty of Medicine at Broussais - Hôtel-Dieu (1976), Head of the Hypertension Department at Broussais Hospital (1986), and was a doctor at the Hôpital Européen Georges Pompidou until August 2007. From 1983 to 2006, Pierre Corvol directed the INSERM 36 Unit (Vascular Pathology and Renal Endocrinology), and is the head of one of the three teams at INSERM U833 (Psychological and Pathological Angiogenesis). He is Director of IRF 52 (Institut Fédératif de Recherche de Biologie du Collège de France). His work concerns experimental and human hypertension, as well as the renin-angiotensin system, a vital element in controlling cardiovascular function. He is Professor at the Collège de France (Chair of Experimental Medicine) since 1989, and is one of its trustees since September 2006.

Valérie Pécresse

French Minister for Higher Education and Research



Graduated from both Ecole des hautes études commerciales (HEC) and Ecole nationale d'administration (ENA), Valérie Pécresse was elected at the National Assembly (French Parliament) in 2002 and re-elected in 2007. Previously, she had been Auditeur [junior officer] at the Conseil d'Etat (1992-1998), the highest administrative jurisdiction. She was also an adviser responsible for forward planning and IT at the Presidency of the Republic (1998 - 2002). She was a spokeswoman for the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) political party during the presidential rally which saw Nicolas Sarkozy elected (April 2007), and she was appointed Minister for Higher Education and Research in May 2007.

Janez Potočnik

European Commissioner for Science and Research



Janez Potočnik was born in 1958. He graduated with honours from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana. He continued his studies at the same University where he did his Master's degree in 1989 and a Ph.D. degree in 1993. For several years (1989-1993), he worked as a researcher at the Institute of Economic Research in Ljubljana. In July 1994, he was appointed Director of the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development of the Republic of Slovenia. In April 1998, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia appointed Dr Potočnik Head of Negotiating Team for Accession of the Republic of Slovenia to the European Union. From June 2000 to December 2000, he was also the acting director of Government Office for European Affairs. In June 2001, he was appointed a Minister Councillor at the Office of the Prime Minister. On 24 January 2002, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia appointed him for the Minister without portfolio responsible for European Affairs. From 1991 until 2004 Dr Potočnik has also been an assistant professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Ljubljana, where he lectured on statistics and economy. Janez Potočnik became a Member of the European Commission on the May 1, 2004. He is currently responsible for the Science and Research.

Catherine Trautmann

Member of the European Parliament, Vice-President of the Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committee



Catherine Trautmann has been a MEP for the Party of European Socialists (PES) from 1989 to 1994 and since 2004. She is the Vice-chairwoman of the Industry, Research and Energy Committee as well as a substitute member in the Culture and Education Committee. She has been a member of the French parliament (1986 to 1988), Secretary of State for the Elderly and Disabled (1988) as well as president of the Inter-Ministerial Working Party on Addictions (1988 to 1989). From 1989 to 1997 as well as from 2000 to 2001 she was Mayoress of Strasbourg. She was appointed as Minister of Culture and Communications (1997-2000) as well as government spokeswoman (1997-98). She is currently a member of Strasbourg's City Council as well as second Vice-President of Strasbourg's urban community, in charge of university and economic development. She is also a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres.

Fotis C. Kafatos

President of the European Research Council (ERC) and its Scientific Council



Fotis C. Kafatos is chair of Immunogenomics at Imperial College London. Fotis C. Kafatos was born in Crete, Greece, where he received his primary and secondary education. He graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor's degree with high honours and earned his Masters and PhD degrees (1965) in biology from Harvard. He became the youngest full Professor at Harvard in 1969, serving until 1994. In parallel, he promoted training and development of the life sciences in Greece, holding adjunct professorships at the University of Athens (1972-1982) and the University of Crete (from 1982 until now, currently on leave). His institution-building activities included founding and directing the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology at the Research Centre of Crete from 1982 to 1993. He served two successful terms (1993-2005) as Director-General of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), the top leading molecular biology laboratory in Europe promoting new approaches to Biology and the development of research infrastructures in Europe. In the 1960's Kafatos was one of the scientists who introduced molecular biology to the study of development. He helped develop fundamental techniques such as cDNA synthesis, cloning and sequencing (the beta globin gene) and invented the dot-blot, the precursor of DNA microarrays. He pioneered the analysis of gene families in development and evolution (chorion gene families), helped launch the Drosophila and Anopheles genome projects, and made important contributions to comparative and functional genomics. His current scientific work is on malaria research with emphasis on mosquito genomics and immunity of Anopheles to the Plasmodium parasite. He is active in efforts to promote research and scientific education in the developing world. His professional activities include service on the advisory boards of distinguished scientific centres and organisations, in several countries of Europe and abroad. He is the recipient of numerous honours including five honorary doctorates. He is a Foreign Member of the Royal Society of London and the French Academy of Sciences, and Member of the US National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, EMBO and Academia Europea

Arnold Migus

General Director of CNRS



Arnold Migus was born in Paris on October 1st 1948. A former student at the Ecole Polytechnique, he also holds a Post-graduate degree in pure mathematics (1972) and a State Doctorate in physics (1977). He joined the National Centre of Spatial Studies (CNES) as a research associate (1973 – 1977) and continued his research in the United States at the Bell Telephone Laboratories (1978 – 1979). On returning to France, he joined the LOA (Laboratory of Applied Optics) in Palaiseau as researcher at the Ecole Polytechnique (1979 – 1983), later working as a researcher at CNRS (1983) before being promoted to Senior Researcher in 1985. In addition to his research activities, Arnold Migus also teaches - he lectured at the Université Paris 11 from 1982 to 1992, as well as teaching at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications and the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Techniques Avancées from 1982 to 1993. He was a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Michigan, USA, in 1994, and was appointed Head of the Laboratory for the Use of Intense Lasers (LULI) at Palaiseau from 1996 to 2003, when he became Director General of the Institut d'Optique (Orsay). The same year, he created the Institut Lasers et Plasmas (Bordeaux), of which he is also the Director General. Arnold Migus is a specialist in lasers and their applications (in optics, physics, chemistry and astronomy), and especially in femtosecond lasers and ultrafast and ultraintense optical science. He is also particularly interested in the use of lasers and physics in thermonuclear fusion, artificial stars for astronomy and wave propagation in random media. He has published over 130 articles in international peer-reviewed journals. He was a member of the National Committee of Scientific Research from 1995 to 2005, and chaired the board of the Department of Engineering Sciences from 2000 to 2001. He has been on the scientific board for the Ministry of Defence since 1998. As a Fellow of the Optical Society of America, he is Topical Editor of Optics Letters.

Alain Peyraube

Member of the ERC Scientific Council



Directeur de recherche au Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, Paris) and Directeur d'études of Chinese Linguistics at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, Paris), Alain Peyraube received his Ph.D. from Paris 8 University in 1976 and his Doctorat d'Etat from Paris 7 University in 1984. Research Fellow at the CNRS since 1975, he has been Director from 1984 to 1998 of the Institute of East Asian Linguistics (CNRS and EHESS). He served as President of the International Association of Chinese Linguistics and as President of the European Association of Chinese Studies. He has been Visiting Professor and Visiting Scholar at Cornell University (Hu Shih Chair), at the University of California at Santa Barbara, at the Hong Kong Baptist University, at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Peking, at the Academia Sinica of Taiwan, at La Trobe University in Australia. He is corresponding member of the Academia Sinica of Taiwan and Adjunct Professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. A specialist in Chinese historical syntax and linguistic typology of Sinitic languages, Alain Peyraube has authored five books and more than a hundred of articles on Chinese studies and mainly on Chinese linguistics. His latest research has been done within a broadly functional and cognitive framework in a cross-linguistic perspective. Some of his recent publications are the chapter on Ancient Chinese in the *Encyclopaedia of the World's Ancient Languages* (Cambridge University Press), articles on Languages and Genes in China and on the cognitive approaches of the expression of Space in Medieval and Modern Chinese.

Esperanza Alfonso

ERC Grantee



Esperanza Alfonso is currently a research fellow at the Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CSIC), in Madrid. Her research interests include various aspects of medieval Jewish intellectual history. She has published the edition and translation into Spanish of a fourteenth-century polemical treatise against the Jews (Abd al-Haqq al-Islam, *Al-sayf al-mamdud fi l-radd ala ahbar al-yahud*), and a book on the attitudes of medieval Jewish authors towards Muslims and Islamic culture (*Islam through Jewish Eyes: Al-Andalus from the 10th to the 12th Century* [London: Routledge, 2007]), as well as several articles in academic journals and collective volumes on medieval Jewish literature and exegesis. Dr. Alfonso has received fellowships from the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies of the University of Pennsylvania, the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture and the European Research Council and has taught at Cornell University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Universidad Complutense.

Ivo Gomperts Boneca

ERC Grantee



Born in Lisbon, Portugal, 14th October, 1971, Ivo Boneca is an INSERM investigator and leader of the group "Biology and Genetics of Bacterial Cell Wall" at the Pasteur Institut, Paris France. Ivo Boneca worked for his Thesis under the supervision of Prof. Alexander Tomasz, at The Rockefeller University, New York, USA, and finished his PhD in Biology in 2000. He obtained his PhD from the Institut of Technical Chemistry and Biology (ITQB) from the New University of Lisbon (UNL), Portugal. From 2000 to 2004, he was a post-doctoral fellow at the Institut Pasteur where he did research on *Helicobacter pylori* and host-microbe interactions. In 2004, he joined the INSERM as an INSERM investigator at the Institut Pasteur. In 2008, Ivo was awarded a junior group at the Department of Microbiology, Institut Pasteur, Paris, France. For his research on the cell wall metabolism of *Helicobacter pylori*, he received in 2002, the Jacques Monod award from the Fondation de France, as one of the two best Young scientists in the field of Molecular Biology, and in 2003, the Roux fellowship. In 2007, for his research on cell wall metabolism and host-microbe interactions, he received the INSERM Avenir 2007 award and an European Research Council starting grant. He is member of the Editorial Board of the Journal « Microbial Drug resistance » and has published 28 papers.

Guillaume Dubus

ERC Grantee



Guillaume Dubus is an astrophysicist working since 2006 at the Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Grenoble, a joint lab of the Université Joseph Fourier and CNRS. He works on understanding physical processes in the vicinity of compact stars such as black holes and neutron stars. His initial training was at Ecole polytechnique (France). He entered the astrophysics doctoral program of the Paris universities, earning a DEA in 1995. He studied for his PhD in astrophysics (1995-1998) jointly at the University of Oxford (UK) and at the Observatoire de Paris-Meudon, thanks to a "Paris-Oxford" studentship. Afterwards, he was a research fellow in the theoretical astrophysics department of the California Institute of Technology (Pasadena, USA, 2000-2002), and a postdoctoral fellow funded by the European Community in the astronomy department of the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands, 1998-2000). He initially held his position at the Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, a particle physics lab of Ecole Polytechnique and CNRS (2002-2006). Since 2003, he has been primarily interested in what high energy gamma-ray observations teach us. He is involved with the High Energy Stereoscopic System (HESS) collaboration, which operates a gamma-ray observatory in Namibia. HESS received the 2006 Descartes Prize from the European Community. He is also involved with the Fermi Space Telescope collaboration, a space-based gamma-ray detector launched last June. His project aims at exploring the exciting observational opportunities in high energy gamma-ray astronomy. His particular emphasis is on non-thermal emission from compact binary sources, in which a black hole or neutron star orbits around a companion solar-like star. These systems typically show highly relativistic outflows and he hopes to learn more about why, when and how they form using the newly available information in the gamma-ray part of the spectrum.

Julia Kempe

ERC Grantee



Julia Kempe was born 34 years ago in East Germany, studying in Austria and then Australia before arriving in France. She has fifteen scientific publications to her name, enabling her to defend two theses on quantum computation, one in Paris and the other in Berkeley, for which she was awarded the Murray Prize for “the most promising research” and the Friedman Prize for “the best thesis in applied science”. Julia Kempe has been a researcher with the CNRS since 2001, and received the CNRS bronze medal and the Irène Joliot-Curie award for the Young Female Scientist of the Year. Since April 2007, she has been on leave of absence at the University of Tel Aviv. Her projects deals with the power of Quantum Computers. Quantum computation has been put forward as a way to overcome current computational limits, by exploiting the quantum properties of nature. It is an interdisciplinary area at the interface of physics and computation. Her research goal is to expand the understanding of quantum resources and computation and its interplay with classical computation, as well as to open new directions in this field. More specifically, they want to advance progress in algorithm design, using new paradigms. An important aspect of this project is to parallel this investigation into the power of quantum systems with a study of its limits. In a society where information is a crucial economic resource it is important to protect today’s information against tomorrow’s possible progress in the implementation of quantum computers.

Armagan Koçer

Lauréate ERC



Armagan Koçer was born in Tunisia in 1970. She graduated with distinction from the Biology department of Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. She started her Ph. D. at the same department and in its last year she perform her experiments at the Biochemistry department of University of Groningen in Netherlands. After receiving her PhD degree back in Ankara in 2000, she started to work in BiO-MaDe Research Foundation in Netherlands as a research scientist on the topic of drug delivery. From 2002 to 2007 she worked as a senior scientist in the same place. At the end of 2007 she received two carrier development grants: Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO) VIDI Innovational Research Incentives Scheme Grant, and ERC-Ideas, European Research Council Starting Grant. With these grants she moved to University of Groningen in order to perform her line of research with her own group. Her research interest includes chemical biology, mechanosensitive channel proteins, viral channels, electrophysiology methodologies, protein-lipid interactions, and reconstitution platforms for channel proteins, bio-inspired micro/nano devices for delivery and sensory applications, and drug delivery systems. She received national and international awards, and gave invited talks in international conferences.

Daniel Estève

Vice-President of the European Research Council and its Scientific Council



Daniel Esteve was born in Montpellier France in 1954. He is research director at the French Commission for Atomic Energy (CEA). His main fields of research are Nanosciences, with a focus on mesoscopic physics. In 1984 he created Quantronics, a group with the objective of designing, fabricating and operating electronic circuits which behave quantum mechanically. More specifically, he has contributed to develop electron pumps that clock electrons one by one with metrological accuracy, and superconducting circuits whose quantum state can be manipulated at will. These artificial atoms provide the building blocks for electronic devices able to fully exploit the resources of quantum physics. Daniel Esteve was co-awarded the Agilent-Europhysics Prize in 2004.

Virpi Lummaa

ERC Grantee



Virpi Lummaa is a biologist applying an evolutionary approach to understand variation in health, longevity and reproductive behaviour in human populations. Her research concentrates on two main topics: (1) the evolution of human family system, ageing rate and lifespan; and (2) the effects of early environmental conditions on subsequent health, growth, survival and reproductive success in historical human populations and in contemporary developing countries. This work is multi-disciplinary and is carried out in collaboration with medical scientists, evolutionary biologists, historians, population demographers, geneticists and anthropologists. It has so far produced about 40 peer-reviewed publications, including 7 in Nature, Science and PNAS. Dr. Lummaa conducted her undergraduate and PhD research at the University of Turku in Finland. Since finishing her PhD in 1999, she has held Marie Curie and Academy of Finland fellowships in University of Cambridge, and is now a Royal Society Research fellow at the University of Sheffield, UK.

David Holcman

ERC Grantee



David Holcman received his PhD thesis at the University of Paris VI in 1998 in Mathematics and conducted various post-doctorate periods at the Ecole Normale of Pisa, at the Weizmann Institute of Science (Israel), the university of California at San Francisco and Berkeley (USA) and was visiting professor in 2005 at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. In September 2005, he was recruited as director of research at the CNRS in the laboratory of "Development and evolution of the nervous system (CNRS / ENS)" and was awarded a chair of excellence grant on the theme of modeling traffic membrane receptors involved in synaptic transmission and plasticity. He leads an interdisciplinary research team in mathematics, physics and biology composed of a dozen people and its themes focus on computational biology and modeling in cell biology. He focuses on understanding biophysical laws and rules underlying the cellular functions such as phototransduction, synaptic transmission and cellular trafficking at a molecular level. His project deals with modeling cytoplasmic trafficking and molecular delivery in cellular microdomains. David Holcman proposes to derive from biophysical considerations, the trajectory and the dynamics of small DNA molecules and viral particles evolving inside cells. Obtaining quantitative laws will make possible to better understand mechanisms by which a virus efficiently traffic inside the cytoplasm compare to a naked DNA particle. Another example concerns the fate of an irradiated cell and its ability to repair double strand DNA breaks. The potential of this research project concerns gene therapy optimisation, the design of new molecular cargo involved in cytoplasmic transport and the quantitative analysis of DNA repaired inside the nucleus triggered by irradiation.

Thomas Mrsic-Flogel

ERC Grantee



Thomas Mrsic-Flogel received a B.A. degree in Biological Science (1996), a MSc in Neuroscience (1997) and a PhD in Neuroscience (2001), all from the University of Oxford. In 2001, he moved to Munich to conduct postdoctoral research at the Max Planck Institute of Neurobiology (Tobias Bonhoeffer's Department) where he applied advanced imaging methods to study the function of the mammalian visual system. In 2007, he took up a lectureship at University College London (Department of Neuroscience, Physiology and Pharmacology). His research in London is funded by the Wellcome Trust and the European Commission (ERC Starting Grant and FP7 framework). His main scientific interests are to understand how individual neurons and circuits in the brain process sensory information and how experience shapes the function of neuronal networks during

Maja Pantic

ERC Grantee



Maja Pantic received the M.S. and PhD degrees in computer science from Delft University of Technology, in 1997 and 2001. From 2001 to 2005, she was an Assistant and then an Associate professor at the Electrical Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science at Delft University of Technology, Netherlands, where she was doing research in the areas of image and video analysis of face and body gestures, affective computing, and multimodal human-machine interaction (HCI). In 2006, she joined the Imperial College Department of Computing, UK, where she is a Reader in Multimodal HCI, working on machine analysis of human non-verbal behaviour and its applications to HCI. From November 2006, she also holds an appointment as the Professor of Affective and Behavioural Computing in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Twente, Netherlands. In 2002, for her research on Facial Information for Advanced Interface (FIFAI), she received Innovation Award of Dutch Scientific Organization as one of the 7 best young scientists in exact sciences in the Netherlands. In 2007, for her research on Machine Analysis of Human Naturalistic Behavior (MAHNOB), she received European Research Council Starting Grant. She was an Associate Visiting Professor at the Face Group, Robotics Institute, Carnegie Mellon University in Summer 2005. She is the Associate Editor of the IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics - Part B: Cybernetics (TSMC-B), and the Image and Vision Computing Journal (IVCJ), responsible for computer vision and its applications to human-computer interaction. She has published more than 70 technical papers in the areas of her expertise and has served as a Key Note speaker, General Chair and a program committee member at several conferences in these areas.

Hélène Rey

ERC Grantee



Hélène Rey is an Economics Professor at the London Business School, which she joined in 2007. Previously, she was Professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University and the Woodrow Wilson School. In 2005 she was awarded an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship for her research in international economics (there are 8 economic fellowships for the whole of North America). In 2006, she also won the Bernácer prize (for the best young European economist working in macroeconomics and finance) "for her important research on the determinants and consequences of external trade and financial imbalances, the theory of financial crisis and the internationalization of currencies. Her contributions help to improve our understanding of the connections among globalization, exchange rates and external markets". Her work has been published in the most prestigious international reviews and she is associate editor of the International Journal of Central Banking, the Journal of the European Economic Association, the Review of Economic Studies and the Economic Journal. She is part of the Bellagio Group (bringing together top-ranking officials of Central Banks and Finances and various academics), and the NBER (National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge MA). She is also a member of the Scientific Board of the Fondation Banque de France and the Board of the European Economic Association as well as the Royal Economic Society. Hélène Rey writes a regular column on economics for Les Echos.

Gilles Bloch

Director General of Research and Innovation, French Ministry of Higher Education and Research



Gilles Bloch was born in July 1961 and studied engineering at the Ecole Polytechnique. He owns a PhD in molecular biophysics and medicine. He has been a researcher with the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) and visiting researcher at the University of Yale. He was Laboratory Manager at the Frédéric Joliot Hospital in Orsay (1997-2000), and later head of the "Nuclear Medicine and Functional Imaging" department at the CEA, where he was appointed Deputy Director of the Department of Life Sciences in 2001. In 2002 he joined the Ministry for Research as an advisor in Claudie Haigneré's cabinet, and in 2004 was made Deputy Director in François d'Aubert's cabinet. From February 2005 to May 2006 he was Director of the National Research Agency. Since May 2006 he has been the Director General of Research and Innovation.

Helga Nowotny

Vice-President of the European Research Council and its Scientific Council



Helga Nowotny is Professor em. of Social Studies of Science at ETH Zurich and former Director of its Collegium Helveticum. She was Chair of EURAB, the European Research Advisory Board of the European Commission from 2001-2006. She is Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of the University of Vienna and member of the Governing Board of the Science Center in Berlin. She was also Vice-Chair of the Governing Board of the University of Goettingen and continues to hold other advisory positions. Helga Nowotny has a doctorate in law from the University of Vienna and a Ph.D. in sociology from Columbia University, New York. Before moving to ETH Zurich she was professor at the University of Vienna and Permanent Fellow at Collegium Budapest/Institute of Advanced Study. She has held teaching and research positions at King's College, Cambridge, the University of Bielefeld, the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin and at the Ecoles des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. She has been a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and is a former president of the International Society for the Study of Time. She is a member of the Academia Europaea and founding member of Euroscience. In 2003 she received the John Desmond Bernal Prize for life-long achievement in social studies of science and in 2002 the Arthur Burckhardt-Preis. Her main scientific interests are in social studies of science, science and society and social time. Among her many publications in social studies of science and technology are "The New Production of Knowledge" (co-authored) and its sequel "Re-thinking Science. Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty" (with P. Scott, M. Gibbons). In 2005 "Unersättliche Neugier: Innovation in einer fragilen Zukunft" and "The Public Nature of Science under Assault: Politics, Markets, Science and the Law" (co-authored) were published and in 2006 "Cultures of Technology and the Quest for Innovation" (editor). In 2008 MIT Press will publish the English translation of "Unersättliche Neugier", "Insatiable Curiosity: Innovation in a Fragile Future".

Katherine Richardson Christensen

Chair of the ERC evaluation panel “Physical sciences and Engineering - 8”



Katherine Richardson is a vice Dean at the Faculty of Science at the University of Copenhagen. She is also a professor in biological oceanography. Her research focuses on the importance of biological processes in the ocean for the uptake of CO₂ from the atmosphere. She is chairman of the Scientific Steering Committee a large scientific congress “Climate Change: Global Risks, Challenges and Decisions” (www.climatecongress.ku.dk) which is being held as a part of the preparations for the UN Summit Meeting on Climate Change to be held in Denmark in 2009. She has been active both as a member and/or chairman for a number of national and international research committees/advisory boards, including Vice President of ESF from 2001-2008. She is chairman of the “Earth System Science” Evaluation Panel for ERC Starting Grants.

Ferenc Kiefer

Member of the ERC evaluation panel «Social sciences and humanities»



Born on May 24, 1931, in Apatin, Yugoslavia, Ferenc Kiefer obtained MAs in mathematics (1956), German linguistics (1962), French linguistics (1965) and a PhD in German linguistics in 1965. Research fellow at the Computing Center of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1962-1973), at the Research Institute for Linguistics (1973-2001). Director of the Institute (1992-2001). Full professor at the University of Budapest (ELTE, part-time appointment) in theoretical linguistics. Ferenc Kiefer is a Research professor at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (since 2002), a visiting professor in Stockholm, Paris, Stuttgart and Vienna, a member of various academies and learned societies: Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1987), Academia Europaea (1993), Linguistic Society of America (honorary member, 1996), Comité International Permanent des Linguistes (president, since 2003). He obtained a Honorary doctorate of the University of Stockholm (1992), of the Université de Paris 13 (2001), and of the Szeged University (2006). Ferenc Kiefer's research areas are: Morphology, esp. the morphology-syntax interface (compounding, derivational morphology, case systems); semantics, esp. lexical semantics (verbs and adjectives), event structure, aspect, modality; pragmatics, esp. the boundary between semantics and pragmatics; the grammar of Hungarian. He has published over 200 international publications.

Frank Gannon

General Director of the Science Foundation Ireland



Frank Gannon was appointed as SFI Director General by the SFI Board in February 2007 and formally took up position on July 2nd 2007. Frank Gannon joins SFI from his position as Executive Director of the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) and Senior Scientist at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), based in Heidelberg, Germany where he worked since 1994. Prior to his appointment at EMBO, Frank Gannon was Director of the National Diagnostic Centre and Associate Professor in the Department of Microbiology at University College Galway, Ireland, with particular responsibility for the development of a biotechnology programme. He obtained a Bachelor of Science from the National University of Ireland, Galway in 1970, a PhD from the University of Leicester, England in 1973. He was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Madison Wisconsin, USA from 1973 to 1975, and Chargé de Recherche in INSERM at the University of Strasbourg, France from 1975 to 1981. His major research interest is the expression and functional regulation of Estrogen Receptor which plays a major role in breast cancer and osteoporosis. These studies have provided leads to novel treatments or therapeutic approaches to these and other cancers. Prof Gannon has authored over 200 research articles published in international journals. In addition he contributes a monthly editorial to EMBO Reports of which he is founding Senior Editor and also writes extensively on diverse topics related to science policy. Frank Gannon has seven patent applications, four of which are active at present and was the founder of both Bimini Ltd. (1990) and Elara Pharmaceuticals (2006). He was a member of the interim Board of Science Foundation Ireland from 2002 to 2004. He has served on a range of high-level scientific advisory boards at institutes throughout the world and was co-founder of the European Life Sciences Forum (ELSF) and the Initiative for Science Europe (ISE) that played significant roles in the establishment of the European Research Council (ERC).

Josef Syka

President of the Czech Science Foundation



Professor Josef Syka, president of the Czech Science Foundation, graduated at the Medical Faculty of Charles University in Prague. He is a director of the department of auditory neuroscience in the Institute of Experimental Medicine, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, for several years he was the director of the institute. He is a professor of physiology, his main interest is in auditory neurophysiology, training of PhD students and science policy. He has worked as a visiting scientist in several laboratories in Germany, Australia and the USA. He has been member of the Research and Development Council, an advisory body of the Czech Government, since 1992. At present time he serves at the steering committee of the European Heads of Research Councils and at the Governing Council of the European Science Foundation. He was a founder and first chairman of the Czech Neuroscience Society and Czech representative to the IBRO, he has received several awards (honorary member of the Italian Audiological Society, the Czech Medical Society, member of the Academia Europea etc.)

Dieter Imboden

President of the Swiss National Science Foundation



Dieter Imboden has been a full Professor of Environmental Physics in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the ETH Zurich since 1988. Since 2005 he is President of the Research Council of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), which is Switzerland's main public funding agency for basic research. He is also Vice-President of EUROHORCS, the association of the heads of European research organizations. Dieter Imboden studied theoretical physics in Berlin and Basel and in 1971 received his doctorate at the ETH Zurich for his studies on theoretical solid-state physics. His interest for the environment, particularly water led him to the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG) and to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, California. In 1987 he was one of the co-founders of the new curriculum in Environmental Sciences at the ETH Zurich.

From 1992 to 1996 he served as head of the Department of Environmental Sciences.

Suzanne Fortier

President of the Canadian Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council



S. Fortier joined the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) as its President in January 2006. Prior to her arrival at NSERC, Dr. Fortier held administrative and academic positions at Queen's University, where she was full professor in both the departments of Chemistry and Computing. She was Vice-Principal (Academic), 2000-2005, after serving as Vice-Principal (Research), 1995-2000. Dr. Fortier is a crystallographer by training. Her research is concerned with the development of mathematical and artificial intelligence methodologies for protein structure determination and crystallographic data mining. Dr. Fortier has had many administrative and collegial posts. She sat on the Board of Governors of the Royal Military College of Canada and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Centres of Excellence, Inc. She is currently a

member of the Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Progress. She was also a member of the Council of Science and Technology Advisors (CSTA) from 1998 to 2005.

Gilbert Omenn

Director CCMB – Michigan University, Chair of HUPO Plasma Proteome Project



Gilbert Omenn is Professor of Internal Medicine, Human Genetics and Public Health and Director of the university-wide Center for Computational Medicine and Biology at the University of Michigan. He served as Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs and as Chief Executive Officer of the University of Michigan Health System from 1997 to 2002. Gilbert Omenn was Associate Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Associate Director, Office of Management and Budget, in the Executive Office of the President in the Carter Administration. He chaired the Presidential/Congressional Commission on Risk Assessment and Risk Management in the 1990s. He was President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in 2006. He is a director of Amgen Inc., Rohm and Haas Company, and the Salzburg Global Seminar. Gilbert Omenn is the author of 454 research papers and reviews and author/editor of 18 books. Omenn is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Association of American Physicians, and the American College of Physicians. He received the John W. Gardner Legacy of Leadership Award from the White House Fellows Association in 2004. Gilbert Omenn received his B.A. from Princeton, M.D. from Harvard Medical School, and Ph.D. in genetics from the University of Washington.

Philippe Busquin

Member of the European Parliament, Director of the Science and Technology Options Assessment Panel (STOA) of the European Parliament



Philippe Busquin was born on 6th January 1941 in Feluy, Belgium. Since 2004 he has been a member of the European Parliament and is Chairman of the Scientific Technology Options Assessment (STOA). His parliamentary duties are a logical continuation from his achievements as European Commissioner responsible for Research from 1999 to 2004 where he devoted his time to the European Research Area, researcher mobility. At the end of the 1970s, after a scientific training, he became a member of the Chamber of Representatives and then the Senate, taking on various ministerial portfolios (education, internal affairs, the budget, the economy and social affairs) over 20 years, and was Chairman of the Parti Socialiste during the 1990s. Philippe Busquin is currently mayor of Seneffe and has held a series of mandates in cultural, academic and scientific affairs.