

# A PUBLIC INTERVIEW AND STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR JEAN-PIERRE BOURGUIGNON, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL



12/10/16

Royal Irish Academy  
19 Dawson Street  
Dublin 2

- 13:30 Networking Lunch
- 14:30 Welcome: Professor Mary E. Daly,  
President, Royal Irish Academy
- 14:35 Panel Session:  
**‘Showcasing ERC Funded Research in Ireland  
and its Impact on Society’**  
Chair: Professor Nicholas Canny, MRIA
- Professor Mary Rogan, TCD  
(ERC Starter Grant)
  - Professor Emma Teeling, MRIA, UCD  
(ERC Starter Grant)
  - Professor Marie-Louise Coolahan, NUIG  
(ERC Consolidator Grant)
- 15:05 Panel Session:  
**‘Showcasing the ERC Domestic Support Network’**  
Chair: Professor Peter McHugh, MRIA  
Policy and International Relations Secretary,  
Royal Irish Academy
- Professor Mark Ferguson  
Director General, Science Foundation Ireland
  - Dr Eucharia Meehan  
Director, Irish Research Council
  - Dr Imelda Lambkin  
National Director for Horizon 2020, Enterprise Ireland
- 15:40 **Public Interview and Stakeholder Conversation:**  
Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon,  
President of the European Research Council  
and Dick Ahlstrom,  
Science Editor of the Irish Times
- 17:00 Closing Remarks



## Introduction

The 57th plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council will take place in the Royal Irish Academy from the 10th to 12th October.

The plenary meeting will be followed by a public interview and stakeholder conversation with Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, President of the European Research Council (ERC). The interview will be preceded by a panel session which will showcase the impact of ERC funded research and the importance of the national support system on winning ERC funding.



**PROFESSOR PETER McHUGH, MRIA**

**Policy and International Relations Secretary Royal Irish Academy**

Hosting the ERC Scientific Council meeting at Academy House is hugely important for the Academy, for Irish academia and for the wider community of stakeholders in Ireland. Arguably, the ERC represents the pinnacle of research funding success at the European level, as it seeks to enable and fund the most visionary and innovative fundamental research, that has the potential for ground-breaking long-term societal gain. The high profile status that the ERC gives to fundamental research only serves to further emphasise the importance of such research, and why continued investment in fundamental research is so crucially important to society. In addition to the Council deliberations in Academy House, the event presents a wonderful opportunity for dialogue between Professor Bourguignon and a wide range of highly influential stakeholders in academia and the public and private sector; to emphasise why continued investment in fundamental research is critically important for the future of science, technology and economic and societal development.



**PROFESSOR JEAN-PIERRE BOURGUIGNON**

**President of the European Research Council**

On behalf of the ERC Scientific Council, let me express our thanks to the Royal Irish Academy for hosting our plenary meeting. We are delighted to meet in Dublin at this time. Ireland is a country that has hosted, and continues to host, pioneering scholars who have contributed to great advancements of science in many forms. I have a particular admiration for Sir William Rowan Hamilton who created quaternions some 173 years ago, one of my favourite mathematical objects which is still of great use and inspiration today.

For real breakthroughs to happen, curiosity-driven, high-quality research is a must and the ERC is an exemplary investment of this nature at European level that needs to be accompanied at national levels. To remain competitive, and to attract and retain bright minds, it is essential to keep supporting blue sky research. Creation of new knowledge is a prerequisite for offering new avenues to the economy and society at large, both across countries and in Europe as a whole.