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Press release

New agreement signed: Japanese researchers to join ERC teams in Europe

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A new agreement was concluded today to encourage young top scientists in Japan to join European Research Council (ERC) research teams in Europe. The President of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Prof. Yuichiro Anzai, and the European Commission's Deputy Director-General for Research and Innovation, Dr Wolfgang Burtscher, signed the agreement in the presence of the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT), Mr Sadayuki Tsuchiya, and the ERC President, Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon.

The agreement was signed just before the 23rd [EU-Japan Summit](#) that also took place today in Tokyo. The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, endorsed a joint vision for their strategic partnership on research and innovation.

The ERC-JSPS initiative is open to recipients of the JSPS's Research Fellowships for Young Scientists, who can come to Europe for scientific visits, temporarily becoming part of teams led by ERC grant holders.

JSPS President Yuichiro Anzai commented: *"It is one of JSPS's most important missions to foster the next generation of researchers. In doing so, it is essential to provide excellent young Japanese researchers with opportunities to carry out research within international environments. This new framework initiated between JSPS and ERC will offer a valuable opportunity for these young researchers. I believe that international collaboration under this initiative will benefit the academic communities of both Japan and Europe."*

On this occasion, ERC President Jean-Pierre Bourguignon said: *"It is a great pleasure to be back in Japan - a country with one of the world's highest R&I investments per capita. I am very pleased that this deal is sealed - a clear win-win for both parties. It allows teams led by an ERC grantee to draw on the excellence and new ideas of Japanese talent, whilst researchers from Japan will benefit from an international experience in a very selective environment overseas. It will stimulate scientific exchange, and I do believe that the bonds created during such collaborations are lasting and help widen researchers' horizons. Encouraging brain circulation, attracting talent to Europe and exposing European scientists to international competition lie at the heart of the ERC's mission."*



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Background

The common initiative launched today is in the form of an 'Implementing Arrangement' of the existing EU-Japan [Scientific and Technological Cooperation](#) Agreement signed in 2009. The JSPS Fellows who will come for these scientific visits in Europe will continue to receive remuneration from JSPS. The first [initiative](#) of this kind was signed in July 2012 with the US (National Science Foundation, NSF) to provide opportunities for NSF researchers to join ERC-funded teams for shorter visits. This was followed by similar agreements with [Korea](#) (National Research Foundation of Korea, NRF) in November 2013 and with [Argentina](#) (National Scientific Technical Research Council, CONICET) in March 2015.

The **Japan Society for the Promotion of Science** is Japan's core funding agency with a mission to advance scientific research and foster future generations of talented researchers.

In Japan there are more than 90,000 early career researchers including doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers. Among them, about 6,000 young researchers are supported under the JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists Program. This is equal to 6.5% of all doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers in Japan in 2013. As this figure indicates, these JSPS fellows are among the most excellent doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers in Japan. They are encouraged to do research overseas during their fellowship tenures.

Set up by the European Union in 2007, the **European Research Council** is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year, it selects and funds the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run five-year-projects based in Europe. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. To date, the ERC has funded some 5,000 top researchers at various stages of their careers. Of these, 18 are Japanese researchers based in institutions across Europe. On average, ERC grantees employ around six team members during their ERC project. An estimate shows that some 18% of these team members are nationals from countries outside Europe.

The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the Scientific Council, and, since January 2014, the ERC President is Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. The ERC has a budget of over €13 billion and is part of the EU research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, for which European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Carlos Moedas is responsible.

For more information

[Implementing Arrangement](#)

[JSPS website](#)

[ERC website](#)

[Horizon 2020](#)

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