



President of European Research Council in Slovenia organised by Slovenian Business and Research Association (SBRA), Brussels & the National Institute of Chemistry (NIC)

On 5 - 7 June 2016, the Slovenian Business & Research Association (SBRA), Brussels and the National Institute of Chemistry (NIC) will organise the visit of Prof. Dr. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon – the President of the European Research Council (ERC - <https://erc.europa.eu/>) – and his colleagues from the ERC to Slovenia. The visit will coincide with the 70th anniversary of the National Institute of Chemistry (NIC). It will also mark the very first time that the ERC President will be in Slovenia; ERC is one of the most important European scientific institutions, which annually distributes close to 2 billion Euros (for period 2014-2020 app. 13 billion Euros) for excellence in science and research. The ERC prestigious grant scheme targets researchers who have already established themselves as top independent research leaders; of which Slovenia has three ERC grantees. Additionally, two Slovenian researchers have also been successful abroad.

On Sunday, 5 June 2016, prior to the conference, the ERC will meet with the Minister of Science, Education and Sports Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič, alongside Minister of Finance Dr. Dušan Mramor; Minister Minister for Economic Development and Technology dr. Zdravko Počivalšek; Minister responsible for Development, Strategic Projects and Cohesion Alenka Smerkolj; and the director of Slovenian Research Agency, dr. József Györkös.

On Monday, 6 June 2016, the morning session of the programme will consist of various activities at the National Institute of Chemistry, led by Dr. Anderluh, its director. At 10.00, the Slovenian Prime Minister Dr. Miro Cerar will welcome the ERC delegation, participants at the NIC, as well as the ERC grantees. Later, at 12.15 a press conference is envisaged, which will be moderated by the President of the Management Board of the Slovenian Business & Research Association, Brussels Dr. Draško Veselinovič, and will include the guest of honor Prof. Dr. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, the president of ERC, Minister of Science, Education and Sports Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič, and Prof. Dr. Gregor Anderluh, NIC director.

Later in the afternoon, the ERC will pay a two hour visit to the Jožef Stefan Institute, under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Jadran Lenarčič. There the ERC will get the opportunity to visit state-of-the-art facilities and laboratories. Slovenian ERC grantees will also get the opportunity to personally meet the ERC delegation.

Lastly, a final stop will be made at the University of Ljubljana, kindly hosted by the rector of the university, Prof. Dr. Ivan Svetlik. The session will include a roundtable discussion on excellence in science, as well as presentations from ERC President; and Prof. Dr. Kondorosi from ERC on science problematics of EU-13 in connection with the so-called widening, of which she is an expert of.

With the organisation of such an event, the Slovenian Business & Research Association, Brussels wished to put extra emphasis on the important role that science and research plays in Slovenia; especially greater access to finance of research both on a national level as well as via various EU instruments. While Slovenia is relatively successful in Horizon 2020, which gives prominence to applied science and research, interestingly not as much attention has been paid in acquiring funds from the ERC, which represents more basic science and research. According to Prof. Dr. Draško Veselinovič, while researchers in Slovenia cover a wide variety of fields and sectors in science and research, it would perhaps be prudent and more effective if niche areas were determined and thus easier to finance. After all, Slovenia as a small nation cannot be successful and a world competitor on all scientific fields and sectors.

***Organised by Slovenian Business & Research Association (SBRA), Brussels
and the National Institute of Chemistry (NIC), in cooperation with***



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
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University of Ljubljana

