

V4 Rectors Conferences Forum and HRC 30 Jubilee Symposium

Participation of V4 Countries in the FP9 Program – Panel discussion I

Prof. László Gulácsi

May 17th 2018

10:30- 11:00

Panel discussion

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The “Distributed Excellence” concept and its relation to the European Universities Initiative and the FP9 program – *How to reverse brain-drain from the East to West, and from the South to North?*

National reflections and moderated discussion on the “Distributed Excellence” concept

Moderator: Prof. László Gulácsi, vice-rector for research, Corvinus University of Budapest

Prof. Tomáš Zima (Czechia), president, Czech Rectors’ Conference, rector, Charles University

Prof. Gábor Szabó (Hungary), vice-president, Hungarian Rectors’ Conference, rector, University of Szeged

Prof. Robert Redhammer (Slovakia), chairman, Slovak Rectors’ Conference WG on Research, rector, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava

Background – distributed excellence

The “European Excellence Initiative” has been proposed by the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) and the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, and was discussed at a strategy day for European university leaders in January 2017, which was organised by the HRK and attended by political and academic experts.

EU framework programme processes

Over the past 35 years, the European Union (EU) institutions have adopted eight framework programmes for research. The lifecycles of these framework programmes have been progressively streamlined and aligned with the general guidelines for the adoption of EU programmes. These lifecycles unfold in four key phases: **adoption, implementation, execution, and evaluation**, with the EU institutions being in charge of all phases except execution.

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Author: Vincent Reillon

Members' Research Service PE 614.663

Briefing

January 2018

Horizon 2020 is the first European programme to systematically combine research and innovation funding and thus constitutes one of the world's largest and most successful funding programmes.



European
Commission

Horizon 2020
European Union's largest
programme for research & innovation

RESEARCH & INNOVATION
POLICY

Annual Report on the ERC activities and achievements in 2016

Prepared under the authority of the
ERC Scientific Council



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

Grants

Three grant schemes form the core of the ERC activities:

Starting Grants (StG) support researchers at the early stage of their careers, with the aim of providing working conditions enabling them to become independent research leaders;

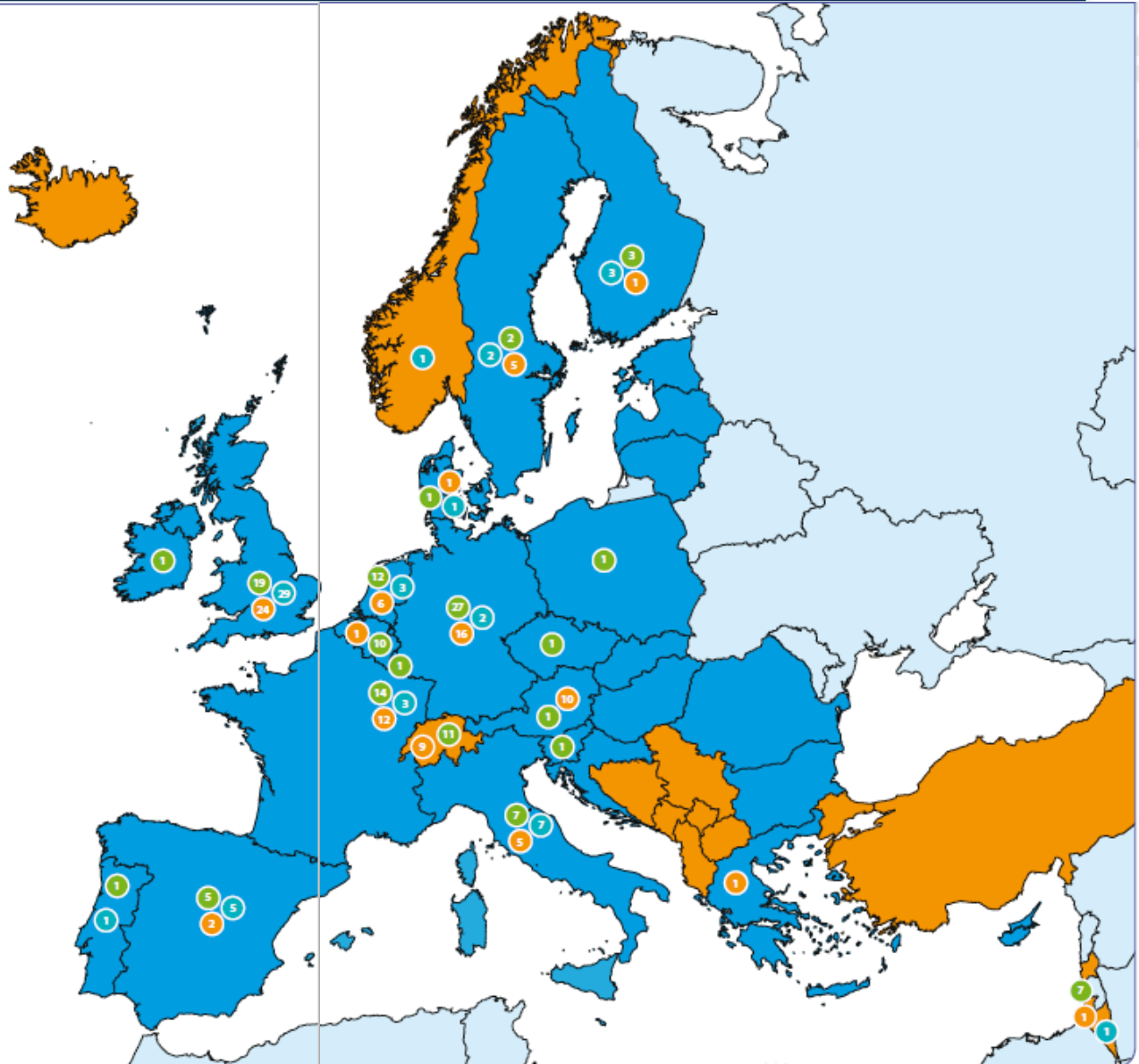
Consolidator Grants (CoG) support researchers who are at the early stage of their careers but often already working with their own group (while the ‘starters’ are usually still in the process of setting up their own research group); and

Advanced Grants (AdG) are designed to support outstanding and established research leaders by providing them with the resources necessary to continue the work of their teams in expanding the frontiers of scientific knowledge.

ERC Advanced Grant: 2015 Call

Geographical distribution of grant holders

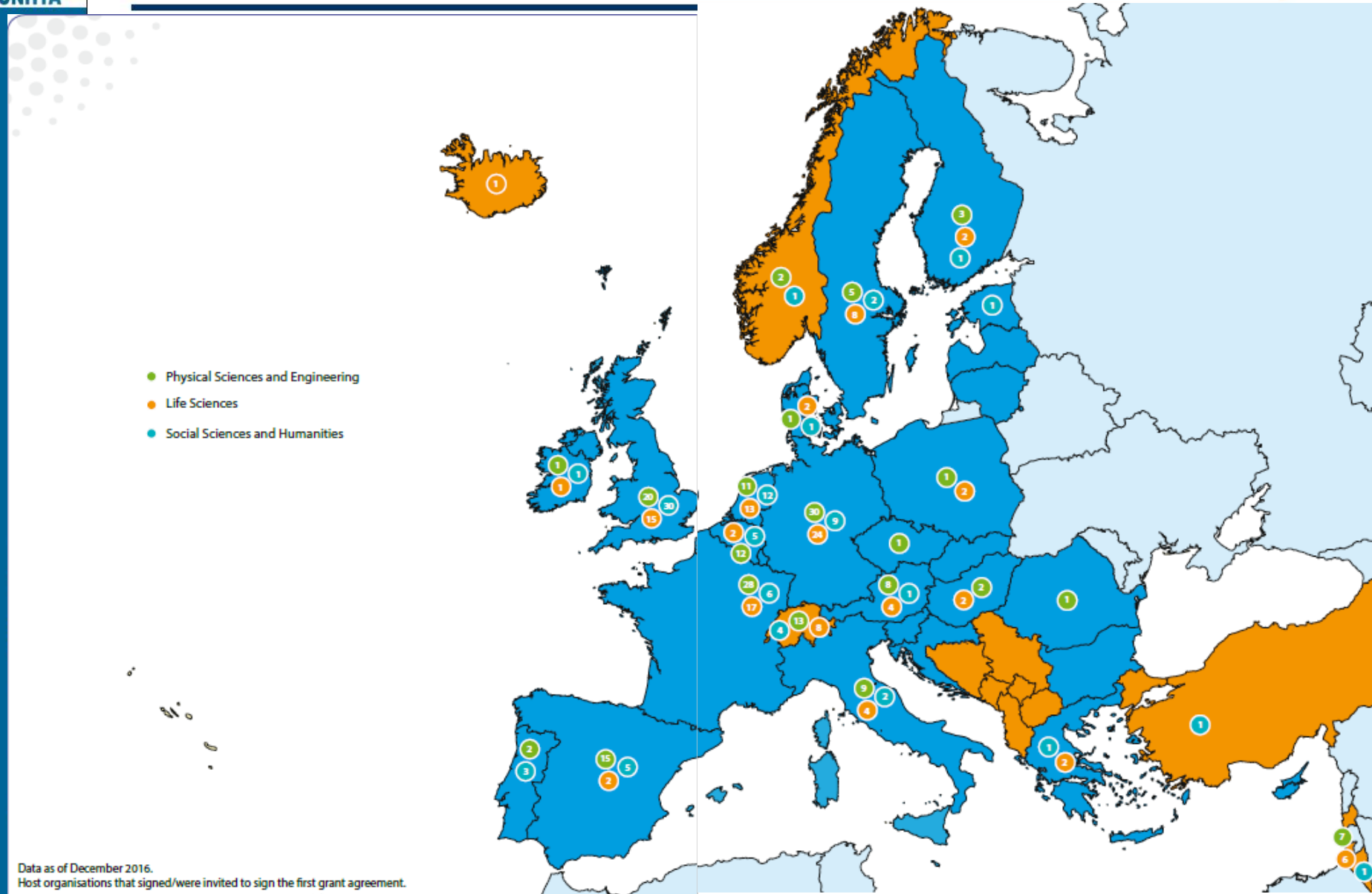
- Physical Sciences and Engineering
- Life Sciences
- Social Sciences and Humanities



Data as of December 2016.
Host organisations that signed/were invited to sign the first grant agreement.

ERC Starting Grant: 2016 Call

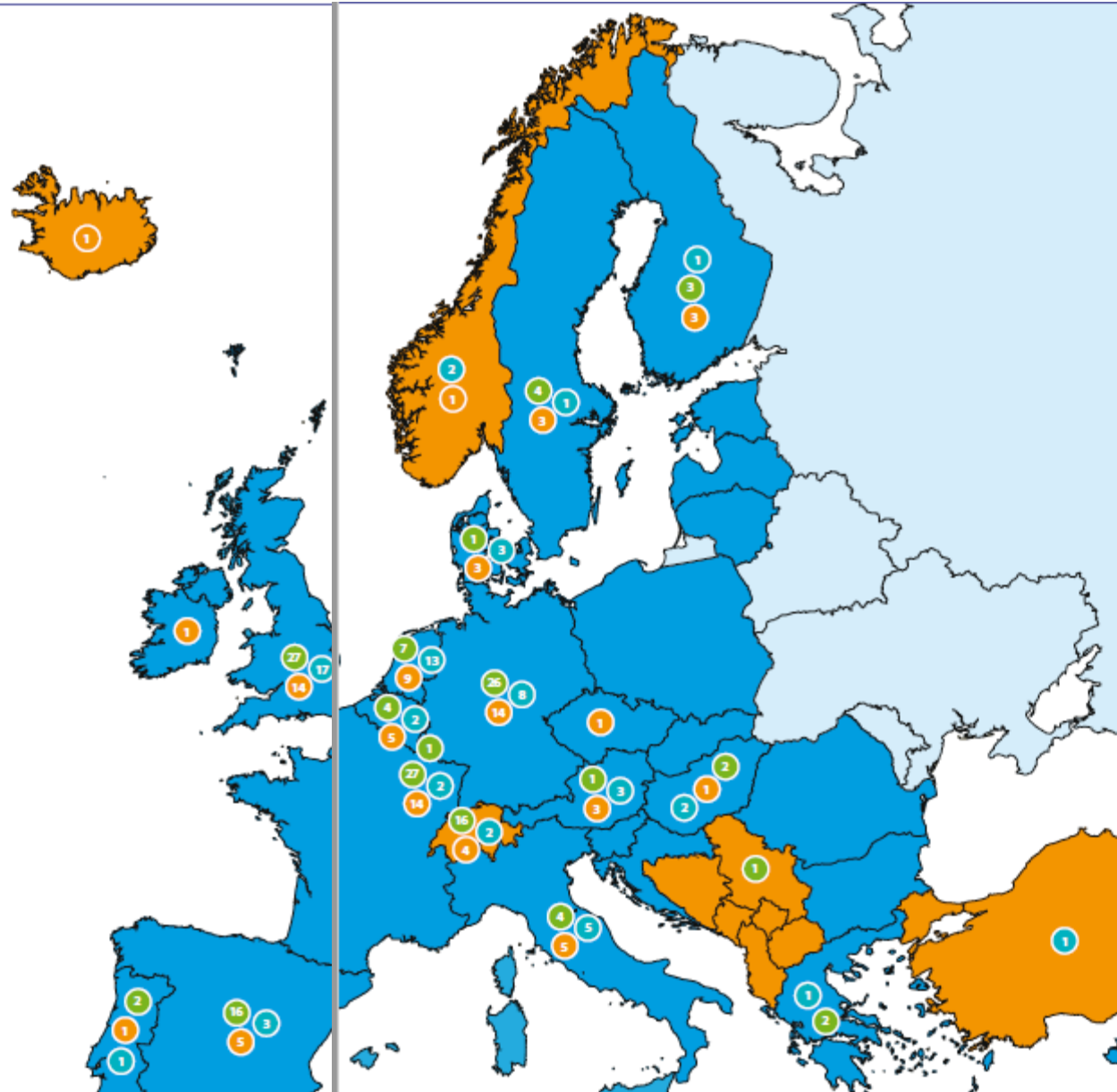
Geographical distribution of grant holders



ERC Consolidator: 2016 Call

Geographical distribution of grant holders

- Physical Sciences and Engineering
- Life Sciences
- Social Sciences and Humanities



FP9

Major conditions for FP9

- FP9 must be an **integral part of a comprehensive European strategy** to support research and innovation which covers all key fields of European action and the various sectoral policies.
- FP9 will only achieve its full impact if activities can be coordinated more successfully in this **multilevel system**.
- Care must be taken to ensure **compliance with the principle of subsidiarity** in all areas when designing FP9.
- The **support of cooperation both across national borders and between the different stakeholders** (science, industry, civil society, politics) has proven to be a verifiable added value of European R&I funding. The basic focus of FP9 must be to further improve cooperation between these sectors.
- FP9 **should bring research and innovation even more closely together**. In the future we must succeed in translating knowledge in **marketable products and services**.

...

Guidelines for the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Federal Government Position Paper, Berlin, September 2017

Distributed Excellence

A discussion paper by the German and Polish Rectors' Conferences on elements of the future research, education and innovation funding of the EU after 2020

1. Introduction
2. Is Distributed Excellence in basic/frontier research a distinctive feature of the university system of the EU?
3. Is Distributed Excellence a term capable of rallying European university and research policies?
4. Features of European Funding Programmes based on Distributed Excellence – Example: Features of an EU “Excellence Initiative” for universities

1. Introduction

The term „Distributed Excellence” has been used in different political, economic and social contexts for a long time. The term is discussed by the presidents/presidential representatives of the French, German and Polish University Rectors' Conferences (CPU, HRK, KRASP) in Berlin on 20 May of 2017. It was valued as a term that is de facto describing the national situation in France, Germany and Poland and in the EU as well as in the EU higher education system(s).

You have been provided with the discussion paper of the Polish and German Rectors' Conferences on this concept. Therefore, I am only going to highlight some central parts of the text.

Questions

Is Distributed Excellence in basic/frontier research a distinctive feature of the university system of the EU?

There are remarkable differences in the research performance and intensity inside national higher education systems. ... only very **few** European states have universities that are able to lead in **global research rankings** as institutions. A big group of European universities in most member states, however, is capable to excel in certain fields of research.

... There are proponents of the view that **single world class institutions** are the only chance for European universities and European innovation to be competitive and visible worldwide and to attract top researchers as well as the biggest private and public funders in the world. Others consider the broad distribution of **good institutions with some excellence spikes** in the EU as the prerequisite for a fair chance of development in all of its regions. In this view, the distribution of excellence would be seen as the prerequisite for an evenly spread development of economies and societies in the EU member states.

Questions

Is Distributed Excellence a concept capable of rallying European university and research policies?

Europeans put a lot of emphasis on the necessity to achieve social and **regional cohesion** inside the member states as well as inside the EU in order to make the political and economic structures sustainable. Independent of economic arguments for the one or the other model this political culture in Europe makes it reasonable to use the notion of Distributed Excellence as a basic principle of European higher education and research systems and as a term able to prescribe policy goals for the future of them.

Fields, disciplines and teams

Features of European Funding Programmes based on Distributed Excellence
A European Excellence Initiative has been proposed in 2016 by Robert Madelin in his report on a new innovation concept for the EU to the President of the EU Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker.

„But Professor Hippler said that **Mr Madelin’s idea** “was only interested in **top universities** of the Anglo-American type” whereas the latest proposal would “broaden the base for university excellence in the EU that should not be limited to a small group of member states”.

A key element of the idea is that participating countries would have to encourage applications from at **least three different locations or regions** to provide opportunities for institutions outside nations’ political centres.

The funding would go to “**fields, disciplines and teams in the first place**” rather than entire universities, Professor Hippler said.”

Interview: Prof. Hippler cont.

„He (*Prof. Hippler*) said that the proposed initiative was “separate” from plans to create a European Education Area focused on student mobility and French president Emmanuel Macron’s idea of establishing 20 cross-border European universities or university networks, but that it would “increase the chance of participation of all member states” in that process.”

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/university-leaders-push-europe-wide-excellence-initiative>,
February 15, 2018

Discussion -national reflections

Prof. Tomáš Zima (Czechia), president, Czech Rectors' Conference, rector, Charles University

Prof. Gábor Szabó (Hungary), vice-president, Hungarian Rectors' Conference, rector, University of Szeged

Prof. Robert Redhammer (Slovakia), chairman, Slovak Rectors' Conference WG on Research, rector, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava

Important issues/questions:

-how to identify (recognition/accreditation) of „good institutions with some excellence spikes” & a) formalisation and institutionalisation; b) standardization; c) execution; d) further professionalization

-access FP9

-wide range cooperation between the different stakeholders (science, industry, civil society, politics): improvement opportunities?

-whom to compare and how” excellence spikes”? How to identify comparators? Excellence and benchmarking? Excellence or competition as a main concept?

-regional cohesion: how to measure? scenarios?