

ERC Grant schemes

Stockholm, 6 December 2007

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ERC-DIS
European Commission





FP7 Ideas Programme

Part of Seventh EU Research Framework Programme (FP7)

- **Creates the ERC (new “institution”) – Feb 2007:**
 - Scientific Council (ScC)
 - Dedicated Implementation Structure (DIS)

- **Provides funding – €7.51 bn (2007-2013):**
 - around 15% of FP7 budget
 - Average budget: € ~1 bn per year

- **Sets overall objectives for research and operating principles**





ERC Actors

The Scientific Council

Independent scientific governance

The Agency (Dedicated Implementation Structure, ERC-DIS)

Practical implementation and management of operations

The European Union

Providing the financial means, guarantor of ERC's autonomy





ERC Grant schemes

Strategic principles

- **All fields of science and scholarship are eligible**

- ☞ investigator-driven, bottom-up, frontier research

- **Excellence is the only valid criterion**

- ☞ Principal Investigator + research project

- **Investment in research talent**

- ☞ Attractive, flexible grants, up to five years

- ☞ under control of the Principal Investigator

- **Independent individual teams in Europe**

- ☞ nationality of researchers is not relevant

- ☞ host organisation to be located in EU or AS





ERC Grant schemes

“Individual Research Team” Concept

Individual Research Teams:

- headed by a single team leader who is the “Principal Investigator” (PI)
- can be of any nationality
- if necessary, including additional team members meeting the needs of the project
- Advanced Grants only: for interdisciplinary projects, the PI can choose a co-investigator(s) from the related discipline(s)

PI’s host institution:

- Located in an EU Member State or Associated Country



ERC Grant schemes

“Frontier Research” concept

European Research Council



A new understanding of basic research avoiding distinctions:

- ⇒ between “basic” and “applied” research
- ⇒ between “science” and “technology”
- ⇒ between “traditional” disciplines

The term “**Frontier Research**” reflects:

- going beyond these categories
- absence of disciplinary boundaries
- intrinsically risky character of ground-breaking research (high-risk/high-gain research) at and beyond the frontiers of knowledge
- new and emerging fields: opening new opportunities and directions in research including those of a multi- and inter-disciplinary nature





ERC Grant Schemes

Launch Strategy of ERC Scientific Council

Retain – Repatriate – Recruit

- ↳ Favour “**brain gain**” and “**reverse brain drain**”
 - increase **competition, recognition and international visibility** for excellent individual scientists and scholars in Europe
 - **ERC Advanced Grant**: attract & reward established independent research leaders
- ↳ **Keep (young) researchers** in Europe
 - improve **career opportunities and independence** - especially for young researchers
 - **ERC Starting Grant**: attract & retain the next generation of independent research leaders





ERC Grant schemes

Operational Principles

- **Application in response to calls for proposals**
 - ↳ Principal Investigators applies in conjunction and on behalf of a research-performing host institution
- **Staged Evaluation Procedure**
 - ↳ to manage large number of expected applications (almost 9167 proposals received in response to 1st Call for ERC Starting Grant proposals)
- **Panel-based peer review process**
 - ↳ Scientific Council selects panels and peer reviewers
 - ↳ Panels assess and select proposals





ERC Grant Schemes

Evaluation: Scientific Excellence is the sole criterion

Evaluation of *Excellence* at three levels:

- Quality of Principal Investigator
- Quality of Research Project
- Research Environment

Referees and panels evaluate and score criteria 1 and 2 numerically, which will result in the ranking of the proposals

Criteria 3 will be considered on a "pass/fail" basis and commented but not scored



ERC Grant Schemes

Peer Review Evaluation Panels

European Research Council



- **25 Panels** covering all fields of science, technology and scholarship
- Each Panel consists of the **Panel Chair** and **10-15 Panel Members**
- Panel Chair **oversees evaluation process** for the proposals assigned to his/her panel in collaboration with the ERC staff
- The Panel Chair gives high level **credibility** stamp and **visibility** to the whole evaluation process





ERC Advanced Grant

(ERC Advanced Investigator Researcher Grant)

- Designed to **support excellent investigator-initiated frontier research projects** by established independent research leaders
- Targeting researchers who have already established their independence as team leaders and are **exceptional leaders in terms of significance of their research achievements** (in the last 10 years)

up to 5 years,
up to €2,5 (3,5) Mio. per grant

~2500 Advanced Grants
over 7 years of FP7
(2007-2013)





ERC Advanced Grant

First call: ERC-2007-AdG1 (30 Nov 2007)

- **Indicative Budget: €517 Mio.**
- **Single submission (1 stage, 2 steps)**
- **Electronic submission via EPSS**
 - ↳ Early (pre-)registration strongly recommended
- **3 deadlines, 3 domains, 25 panels (10 PE, 9 LS, 6 SH)**
 - ↳ Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE) on 28th February
 - ↳ Social Sciences and Humanities (SH) on 18th March
 - ↳ Life Sciences (LS) on 22nd April
- **20,000 proposals expected (?)**





ERC Advanced Grant

Managing high demand for grants

- ➔ **Maximise call budget**
 - ↳ By combining budgets over 2 successive years (only one application per researcher in either 2008 or 2009)
- ➔ **Encourage the best to apply**
 - ↳ Excellent track record (in recent years)
 - ↳ Strong leadership profile
- ➔ **Discourage trivial or low-quality applications**
 - ↳ Applications should be substantive (one-stage submission with two stage evaluation)
 - ↳ Re-application rules: Disincentives to submission of not well prepared or not highest quality application





ERC Starting Grant

(ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant)

- Support researchers at the beginning of their career, **establishing or consolidating their own independent research team**
- Provide a structure for transition from working under a supervisor to an independent research leader

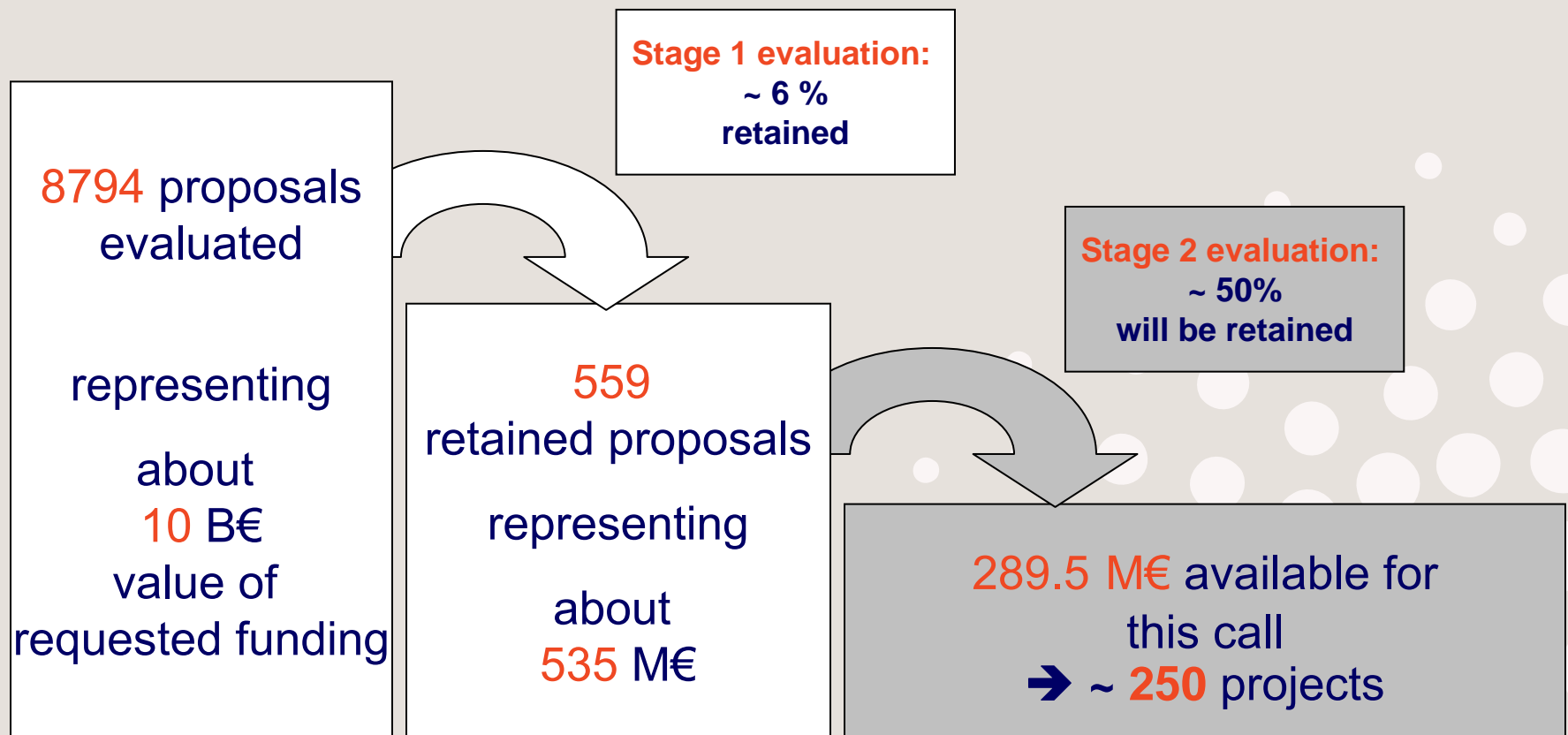
up to 5 years,
up to €2 million per
grant

~1400 Starting Grants
over 7 years of FP7
(2007-2013)



ERC-2007-StG

Evaluation: overview



ERC-2007-StG

Proposals received at stage 1: Massive response!

Domain	Number of proposals received at stage 1	Number of proposals passing to stage 2	% of budget pre-allocated*
Life Sciences	3,396 (37%)	206 (37%)	40
Physical Sciences & Engineering	4,408 (48%)	251 (45%)	45
Social Sciences & Humanities	1,363 (15%)	102 (18%)	15
Total	9,167	559	

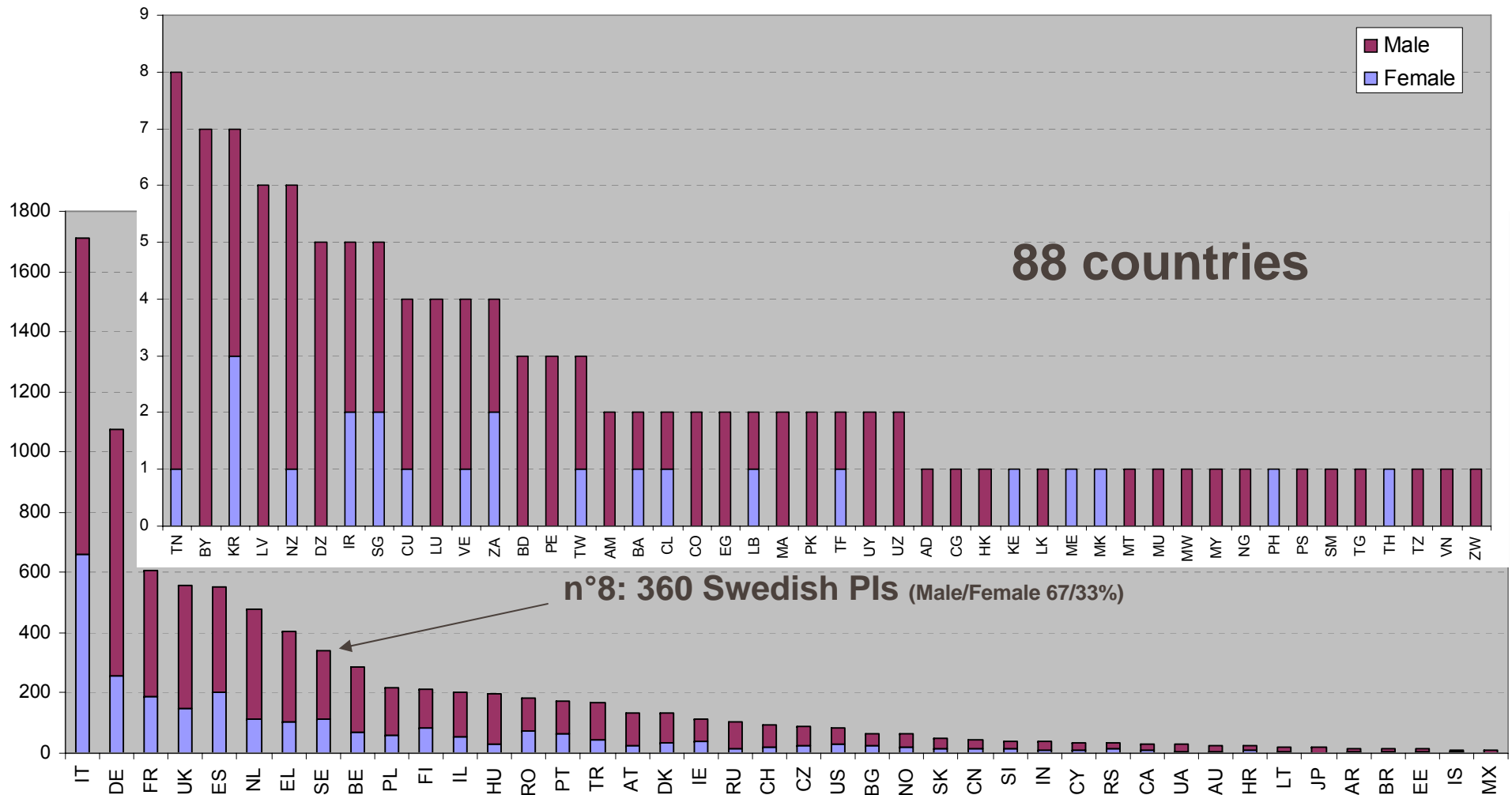
*Indicative budget established by ScC (Work programme 2007)

Nationality

of the PIs of the evaluated 8794 proposals



Number of proposals by gender and nationality

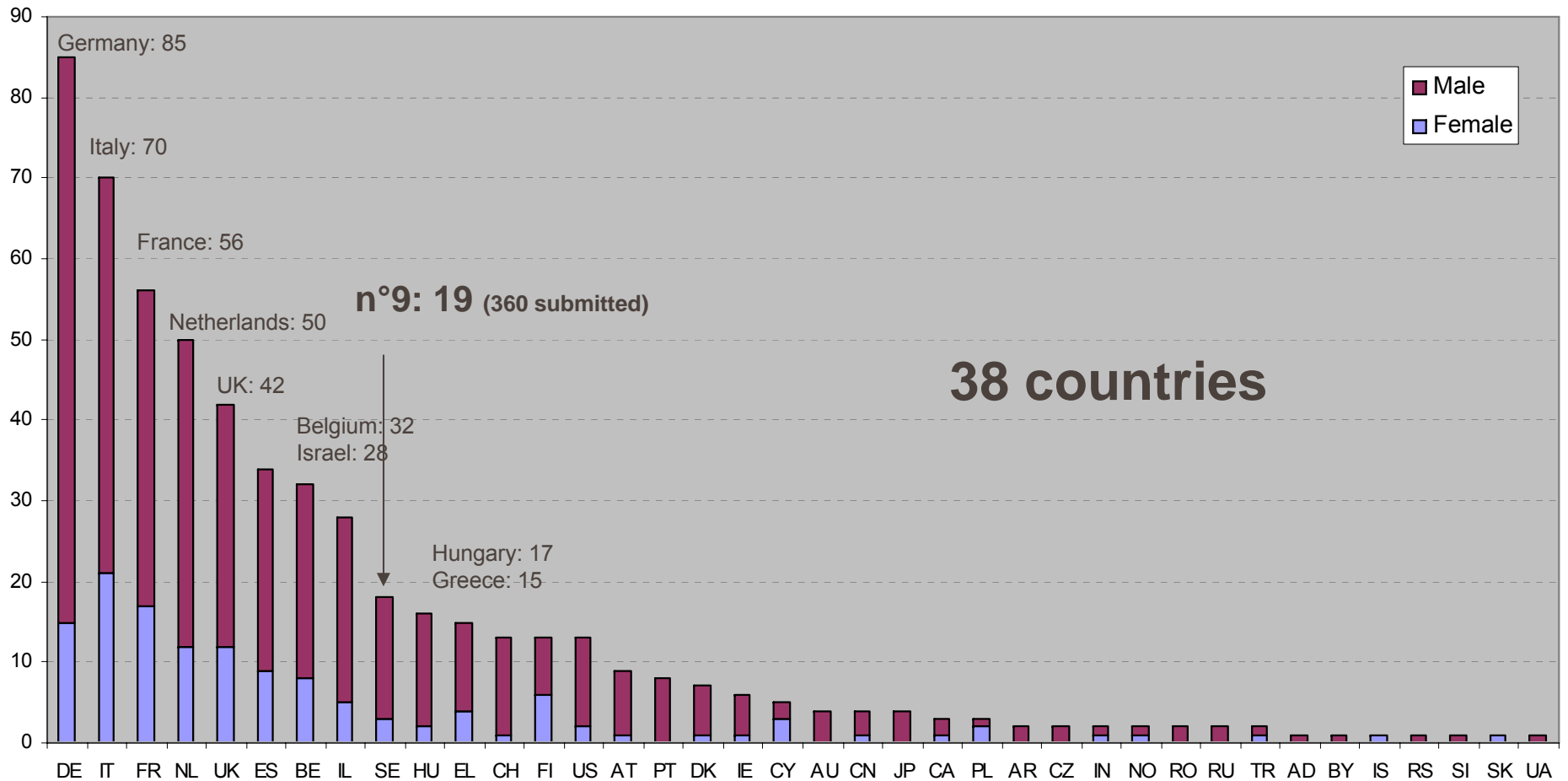




Nationality

of the PIs of the selected 559 proposals

Number of proposals by gender and nationality

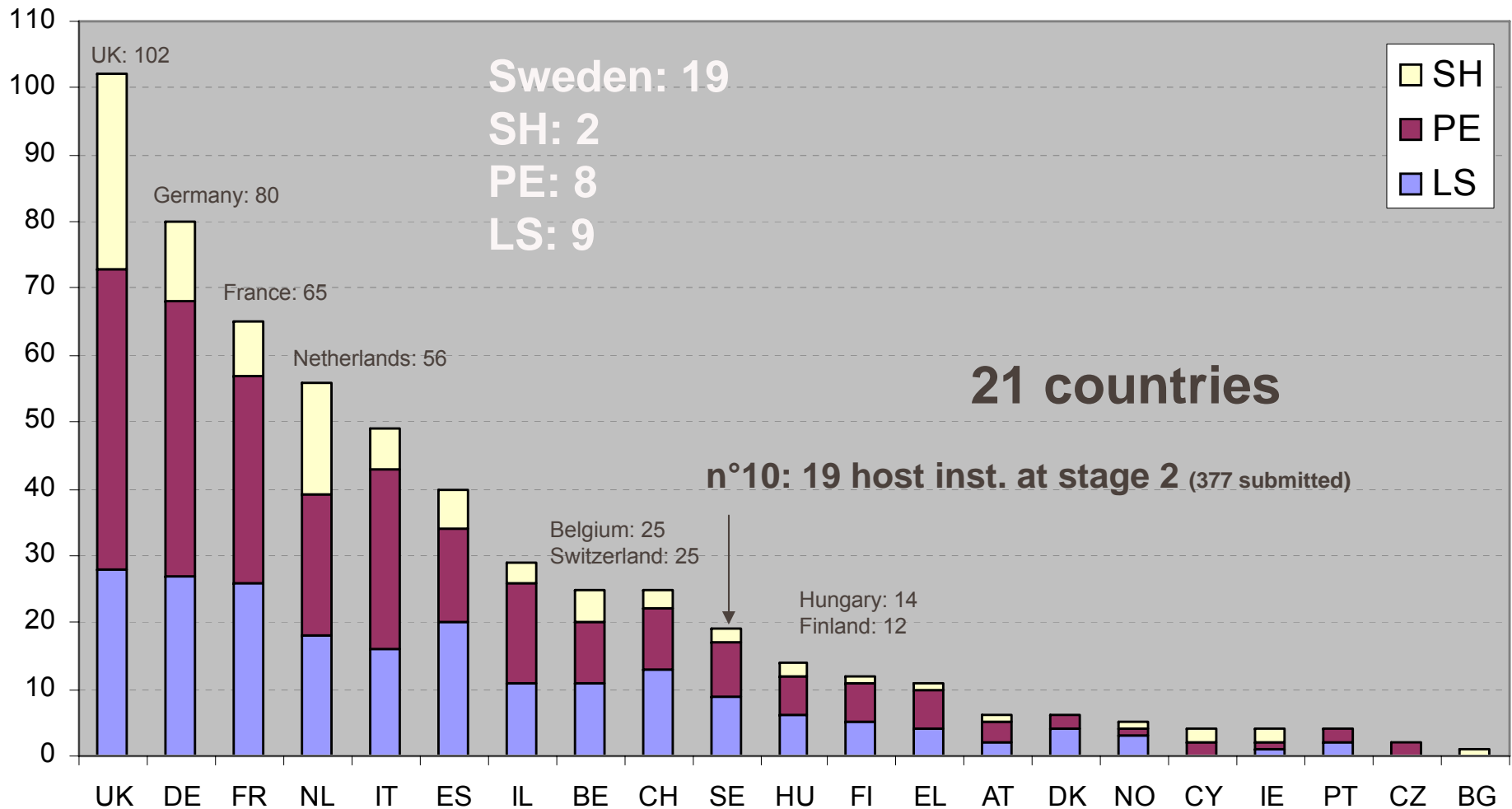




Country of host institution

of the selected 559 proposals

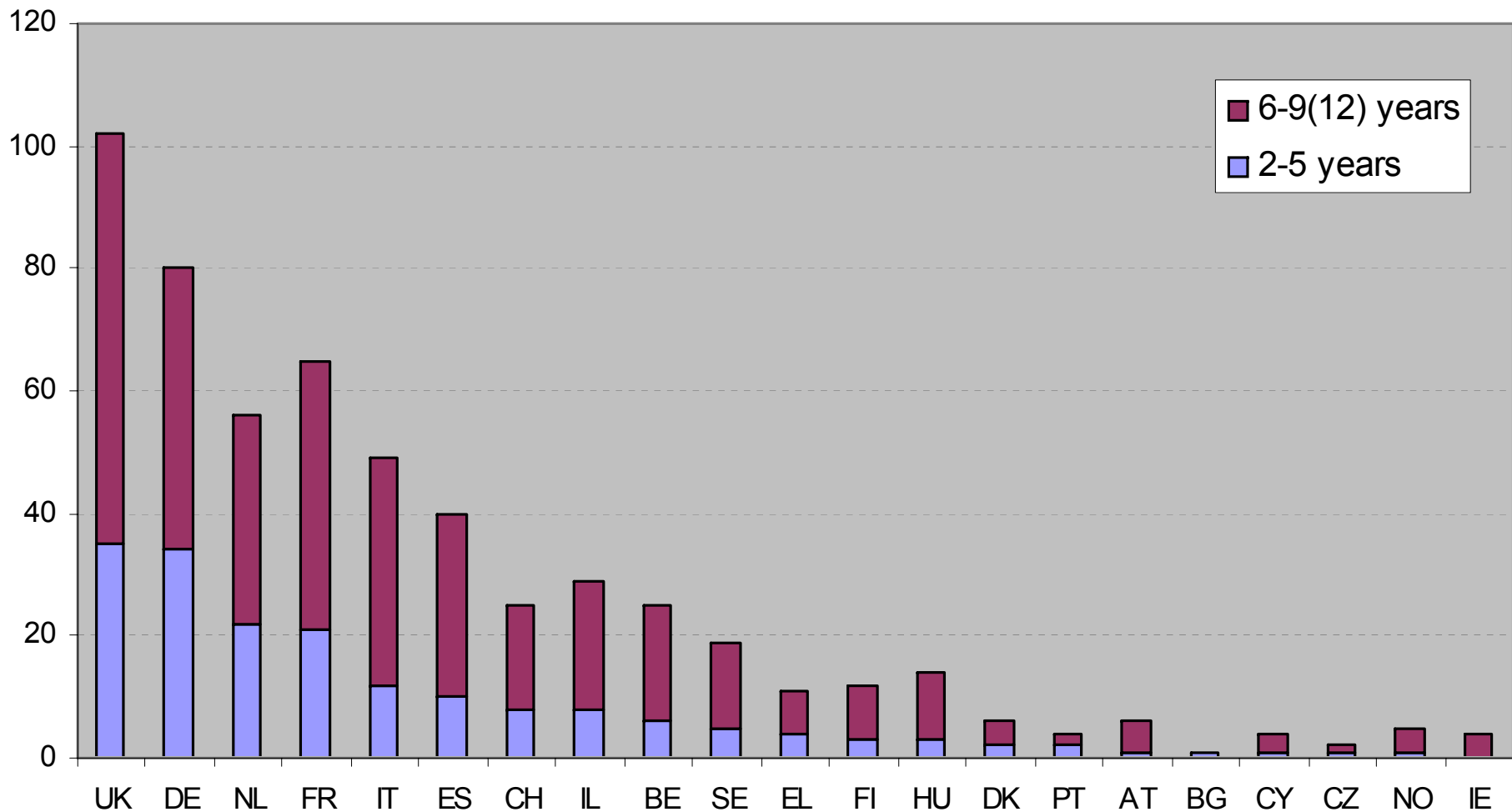
Number of proposals by domain and country of host institution (head quarters)



Time after first PhD

for the PIs of the selected 559 proposals

Number of PIs by host country and time after first PhD

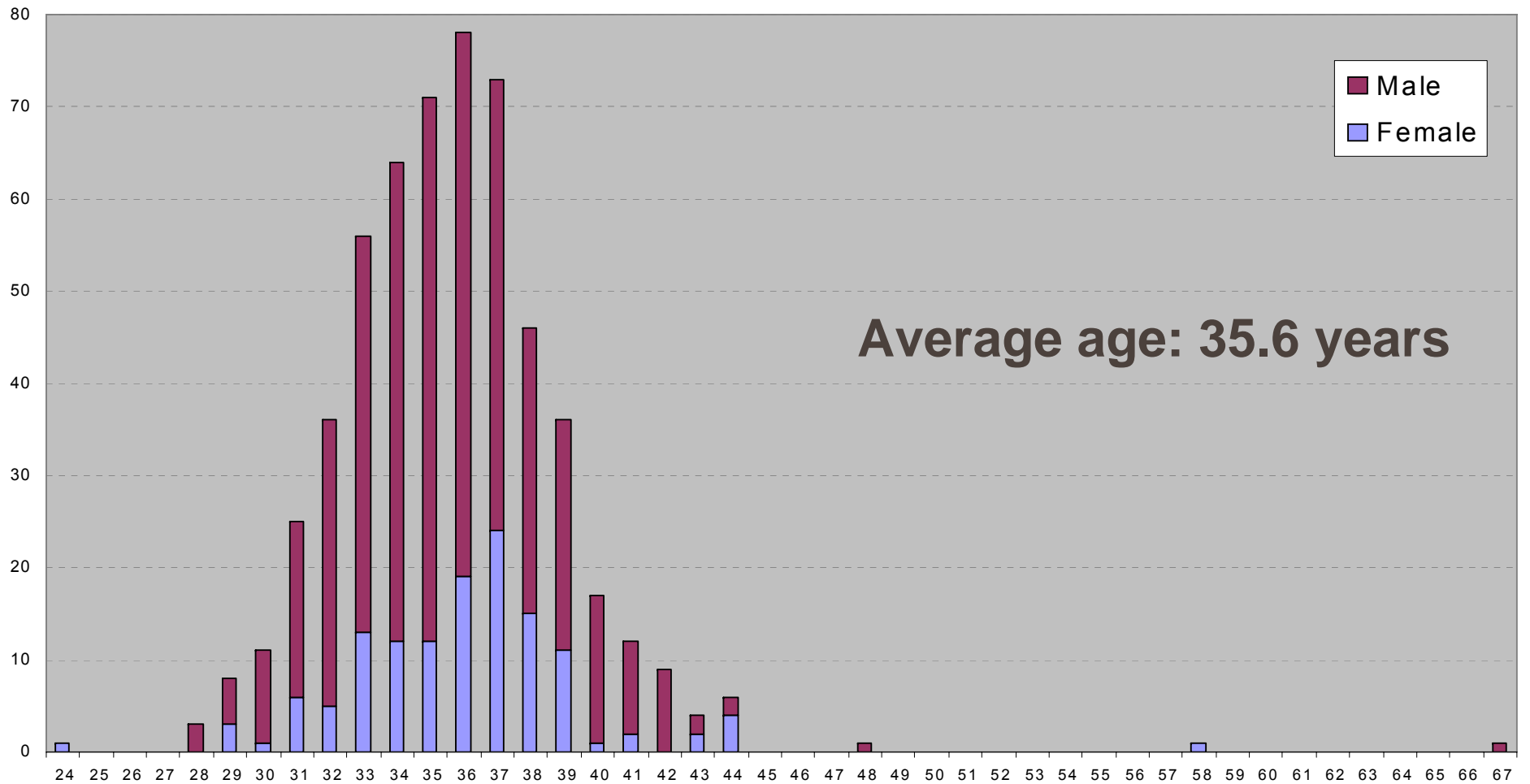




Age

of the PIs of the selected 559 proposals

Number of PIs by age





Documentation

- **Specific text of “Call for Proposal”**
- **ERC Work Programme**
- **ERC Guide for Applicants**
- **ERC Grant agreement**

Other:

- **ERC Guide for Grant Holders (coming soon)**
- **ERC Guide for Peer Reviewers**
- **ERC Rules on submission, evaluation, selection and award procedures**





Up-to-date Information

ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu>



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HIGHLIGHTS

4 bn Euro for Europe's most far-reaching research
21 November 2007

The Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) today announced the successful completion of its first round of funding and unveiled the detailed design of a new high-profile initiative which is set to become one of the most prestigious...[Read more](#)

What's New

- **ERC Guide for Peer Reviewers**
- 10/09/2007 -
- **Scientific Council of the ERC: Relaunching the European Research Area (ERA)**
- 03/09/2007 -

Message from the President of the European Research Council



The creation of the European Research Council (ERC) by the common action of the political institutions of the European Union (the Commission, the Parliament and the Council of Ministers) represents a landmark event for science policy in our continent. By this action, Europe is taking a decisive step towards the formation of a common European Research Area.

We are committed to establish the ERC as an outstanding research funding agency that attracts the very best researchers, beginning in 2007 with those who are embarking on or consolidating their independent careers.
... [read more](#)



Professor Fotis C. Kafatos, FMRS
ERC President and Chairman of its Scientific Council

Last update: 16-11-2007

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The ERC is established by the European Commission and funded through the EU 7th Research Framework Programme






G. van de Goor, Stockholm, 6 December 2007



| 23



Other Services

- **ERC News Alert**
<http://erc.europa.eu/?fuseaction=reg.edit#01>
- **ERC National Contact Points**
inform, raise awareness and provide advice on ERC funding opportunities, application, follow-up
<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.ncpList>
- **ERC helpdesk**
<https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/helpdesk.jsp>
- **EPSS helpdesk**
technical support on electronic proposal submission
<https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/helpdesk.jsp>





Thank you !

