

Academic Career in the Social Sciences and Humanities – National Comparisons and Opportunities
Florence, European University Institute, November 30, 2007
Abstract

Funding opportunities for postdoctoral fellows at the European level

Alain Peyraube
CNRS, Paris, France

My paper will discuss the funding opportunities for postdoctoral fellows within the 7th Framework programme of the EU (2007-2013) with an overall budget of 50.52 billion euros.

The four specific programmes (Cooperation, Ideas, Personnel, Capacities) will be presented, with a special focus on the “Ideas” programme better known as the ERC (European Research Council).

ERC is the first pan-European funding agency for frontier research. Funding is directed to individual teams and projects selected solely on the criteria of excellence. It operates according to the principles of scientific excellence, autonomy, efficiency and transparency. The content of proposals and funding areas are science-driven and « bottom-up ». Individual grants are allowed. There is no requirement for multi-national projects. Grant allocations are flexible, light and portable. Finally, grants are open to researchers of any nationality who would like to locate their research activity in any EU Member State (EU-27) as well as any associated country.

Two schemes are to be distinguished within ERC: (i) ERC Starting Grants, supporting excellent early stage independent investigators (2-9 years since completion of PhD); (ii) ERC Advanced Grants, supporting investigators at all subsequent stages.

250 to 300 projects will be funded for Year 1 [2007], only for the Starting Grants scheme. The average grants will be between 100,000 and 400,000 euros per year for a period of up to 5 years.

Following the first call of proposals, 9,167 projects were submitted: 4,408 in Physical Sciences and Engineering (48.1%), 3,396 in Life Sciences and Medicine (37%), 1,363 in Humanities and Social Sciences [HSS] (14.9%).

The evaluation is conducted in two stages: a first stage consisting of an evaluation of an outline proposal of four pages maximum by the panel members without any involvement of remote referees; a second stage during which the full proposals (maximum 10 pages) are examined by remote referees and during which all candidates having passed the first stage are interviewed by the panel members.

Five panels are in operation for HSS:

SH-1 Individuals and organizations: Economics, management, demography, geography, urban and environmental studies – 379 projects were submitted in this panel, out of the 1,363 proposals for the entire HSS;

SH-2 Institutions, behaviour, values and beliefs: Anthropology, sociology, political science, law, communication, social studies of science and technology – 355 / 1,363;

SH-3 The human mind and its complexity: Cognition, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, and education – 349 / 1363;

SH-4 Cultures and cultural diversity: Literature, visual and performing arts, music and cultural studies – 130 / 1363;

SH-5 The study of the past and cultural artefacts: Memory, history and archaeology – 150 / 1363.

Advice for young scholars seeking funding from ERC will be given.

Lastly, a brief report will be given on the funding opportunities offered by the French ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche) for postdoctoral fellows.