

NEWS

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A better future for ageing

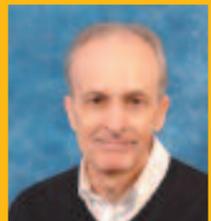
ERA AGE

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SIXTH FRAMEWORK
PROGRAMME

European Commission
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ERA-NET/1/CA-SSA
No.510177



Project Progress

ERA-AGE continues to make considerable progress resulting in some excellent outcomes to the benefit of the European ageing research field.

The highly significant development in the project and in European Ageing Research is the joint interdisciplinary funding initiative 'Future Leaders in Ageing Research (FLARE)' which was announced in February 2006. The interdisciplinary FLARE funding call promotes European scientific mobility and cross-disciplinary development. Nine ERA-AGE funding organisations have been involved in the FLARE post doctoral programme and in the development of various complex administrative processes leading up to the FLARE Commissioning Review Panel meeting which was held in Berlin, September 2007. The high quality of submitted applications resulted in a decision to award 18 post doctoral grants – that is, two more than originally agreed!

ERA-AGE continues to identify key European research priorities, good practices and to share associated information. Key funders, policy makers, scientists, nongovernmental organisations, and end users from 18 countries attended and contributed to the outcomes of the highly productive ERA-AGE Forum meeting in Italy in March 2007 which aimed to formulate the next phase in the development of a European ageing research programme. A subsequent Forum report is available via the ERA-AGE website. More recently, ERA-AGE held a Forum meeting in Paris, November 2007 which focused on the important issue of Ageing and Migration. The recommendations of this Forum will be covered in a subsequent newsletter.

Please read on for details on the FLARE programme and recommendations of the ERA-AGE Forum meeting in Italy.

FUTURE LEADERS OF AGEING RESEARCH IN EUROPE (FLARE) JOINT FUNDING CALL



BACKGROUND

FLARE is the first European programme on ageing research funded by the Member States themselves. It is a pilot project which shows the ERA-AGE consortium's readiness and ability for collaboration. Launched in February 2007 the joint programme aimed to provide up to sixteen 3 year post-doctoral fellowships for recently qualified scientists. FLARE has two innovative features: part of the fellowship must be spent in another country and involve a cross-disciplinary collaboration. These novel features reflect the strong scientific consensus in ERA-AGE meetings on the need to develop a multi-disciplinary approach to ageing research and also a European networking in this area. Another key priority for both scientists and end users is the support of the next generation of researchers on ageing, hence the title, 'Future Leaders of Ageing Research in Europe' (FLARE).

SUBMISSIONS

The ERA-AGE consortium received a total of 49 European applications from 9 European countries.

EVALUATION PROCESS

FLARE applications were evaluated online by three reviewers which were subsequently classified into four rating subgroups to pre-structure review panel discussion which took place on 10th – 11th September 2007 in Berlin. A total of 45 expert European scientists were involved in the FLARE evaluation process. The European Commissioning Panel comprised 13 FLARE peer reviewers who each evaluated four or more FLARE applications, 10 FLARE funding organisation representatives and one end-user representative. See 'Acknowledgements' for more details.

OUTCOME OF THE FLARE COMMISSIONING PANEL

The Commissioning Panel agreed that quality of the submitted proposals was very high and within the scope of the call resulting in 18 FLARE post doctoral grants being awarded to successful applicants – that is, two more than originally anticipated! Successful applications reflect the whole range of ageing research from the biological to social sciences.

The Commissioning Panel paid tribute to ERA-AGE for its innovative contribution to ageing research in Europe and praised in particular the emphases on research training, multi-disciplinarity and the involvement of end-users.

The table below provides details of the successful FLARE applicants and their projects.



FLARE SUMMER SCHOOL

The first FLARE Summer School for the FLARE fellows will be hosted by a partner organisation, the Swedish Council for Working Life (FAS) and the Vardal Foundation for Health Care Sciences and Allergy Research in Sweden. The one-week Summer School is scheduled for the 22nd to 27th June 2008 which will include lectures and presentations given by multidisciplinary experts in the field and sessions on strategic career themes for post doctoral scholars such as the development of leadership skills, developing research teams and funding strategies.



FLARE FUNDING CALL RESULTS

The FLARE review panel agreed that overall the quality of submitted applications was very high and within the scope of the call.

FLARE 3 year post-doctoral fellowships were awarded to the following successful applicants:

	Name	Country of applicant	Topic of application	Fields of research
1	Dr Dietmar Herndler-Brandstetter	AUSTRIA	Effect of interleukin-6 on T cell subsets in old age: A search for new markers of immunological competence and frailty	Molecular biology / immunology and clinical medicine
2	Dr Birgit Trukeschitz	AUSTRIA	Quality of social care for older people - the effects of public funding on social care systems and social care provision	Economics, Sociology and Statistics
3	Dr Kristina Tiainen	FINLAND	Inflammatory markers, anaemia and generic factors in the development of muscle weakness among older people	Public health science
4	Dr Marko Kervinen	FINLAND	Degeneration and Ageing – the effect of pathogenic mitochondrial mutations	Clinical medicine
5	Dr Davin Bérangère	FRANCE	Economics of formal and informal care for ageing population	Social care and Economy
6	Dr Rubel Katarzyna	FRANCE	The emergence and legal construction of a social risk in Europe	Dependency Law and Economy
7	Dr Meidani Anastasia	FRANCE	“Forms of ageing, dependency and responsibility: from public policies to the informal sector. Configurations of care and intrafamilial solidarity in France, Great Britain and Greece”	Sociology, Epidemiology Public health, Clinical gerontology
8	Dr Jochen Ziegelmann	GERMANY	Fostering Lifelong Autonomy and Resources in Europe: Behaviour and Successful Ageing (FLARE-BSA)	Psychology, Gerontology, Biomedicine, Epidemiology
9	Dr Julia Kiyan	GERMANY	The urokinase receptor in vascular ageing: regulatory mechanisms and clinical perspectives	Molecular biology, cell biology, vascular ageing diseases
10	Dr Ravi Jagasia	GERMANY	Role of mitochondrial dysfunction in astrocytes in brain ageing	Neurobiology, Neuropathology
11	Dr Hans-Joerg Ehni	GERMANY	The social and justice implications of age-related biomedical innovative interventions and “anti-ageing”-medicine	Medical Ethics, Moral Philosophy, Public Health, Theory of Health
12	Dr Lynn Welter	LUXEMBOURG	The Impact of PPAR signaling on Alzheimer's disease	Immunology Molecular biology, Computational biology
13	Dr Anna Marie Herghelegiu	ROMANIA	Impact of metabolic control on cognitive function and quality of life in elderly diabetic patients	Gerontology and geriatrics, social gerontology
14	Dr Yvonne Brehmer	SWEDEN	Mechanisms of strategic elaboration and associative binding in episodic memory: A lifespan developmental approach	Psychology and Cognitive science
15	Dr Sandra Torres	SWEDEN	Elderly care in a globalized world: A study of cross-cultural interaction in the context of elderly care	Sociology, Nursing and social work
16	Dr Chengxuan Qiu	SWEDEN	The role of lifestyle factors in the prevention of dementia: A life course approach	Public health, preventive medicine, epidemiology, geriatrics, dementia
17	Dr Blossom Stephan	UK	An integrated investigation of vascular cognitive impairment in population based studies across Europe	Public Health (Vascular risk, imaging) and Epidemiology (Biostatistics)
18	Dr Antje Heinrich	UK	Age-related changes in the use of linguistic cues for speech intelligibility in adverse listening ability	Phonetics (Experimental Psychology) and Cognitive Neuroscience



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FLARE COMMISSIONING PANEL

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- Professor Susanne Iwarsson (Sweden)
- Professor Boo Johansson (Sweden)
- Professor Amos D Korczyn (Israel)
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- Assoc. Professor Veronica Mocanu (Romania)
- Professor Hilikka Soininen (Finland)
- Professor Marta Szebehely (Sweden)
- Professor Clemens Tesch-Roemer (Germany)
- Professor Fred Van Leuven (Belgium)
- Professor Hans-Werner Wahl (Germany)

End User Involvement Advisor

- Dr. James Goodwin (Help the Aged, UK)

FLARE PEER REVIEWERS

- Dr Aamir Ahmed (UK)
- Professor Roger Anderson (UK)
- Professor Joel Ankri (France)
- Dr. P Bailey (UK)
- Prof Kenneth Boyd (UK)
- Professor Karen Bryan (UK)
- Professor Sara Carmel (Israel)
- Professor Usha Chakravarthy (UK)
- Dr Amanda Clarke (UK)
- Dr Francesca Cordeiro (UK)
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- Professor Mark Hawley (UK)
- Professor Eef Hogervorst (UK)
- Professor Risto Huupponen (Finland)
- Professor Marie-Eve Joël (France)
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- Dr George Leeson (UK)
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- Dr Michelle Peckham (UK)
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- Dr Danit Shahar (Israel)
- Professor Jo Shaw (UK)
- Professor David Spanswick (UK)
- Professor Brun Ulfhake (Sweden)
- Dr Mark Yeoman (UK)

FLARE FUNDING PARTNER REPRESENTATIVES

- Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria
- Academy of Finland (AKA), Finland
- Caisse Nationale de Solidarité pour l'Autonomie (CNSA), France
- Caisse Nationale D'Assurance Vieillesse (CNAV), France
- Projektträger des BMBF im DLR, Germany
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- Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (FAS), Sweden
- Medical Research Council (MRC), UK

ERA-AGE COORDINATION TEAM

- Professor Alan Walker (Sheffield, UK)
- Dr. Sam Taylor (Sheffield, UK)

EUROPEAN FORUM MEETING

FOURTH EUROPEAN MEETING

The fourth successful ERA-AGE forum meeting was hosted by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy in Rome, Italy on 13th to 14th March 2007. The meeting brought together the ERA-AGE partners, associate members and the other European ageing research funders and policy makers from 17 European countries with the aim of developing collaboration.

This European Forum meeting aimed to draw upon, and further develop recommendations of the European Forum on Population Ageing Research (FORUM) and those deriving from the four ERA-AGE scientific workshops to formulate the next phase in the development of a European ageing research programme.

The Forum commenced with a short welcome by Dr Stefania Salmaso (Director of the National Centre for Epidemiology, Surveillance and Health Promotion) on behalf of Prof. Enrico Garaci, President of the Italian National Institute of Health, Istituto Superiore di Sanità which was followed by introductions and a series of presentations.



Key recommendations from the meeting included the following actions:

- To develop a European Institute on Ageing Research (real or virtual) to structure ageing research in Europe.
- To develop a 'European database house' to provide a solid empirical foundation for comparative multidisciplinary ageing research.
- To encourage end user involvement in research.
- To ensure that research priorities focus on all aspects of ageing including socio-economic, psychological, medical and genetic factors associated with and affecting healthy and active ageing.
- To ensure knowledge transfer between all stakeholders.

- To establish a European research academy for ageing studies to:

- provide scholarships and training for newly established and less experienced researchers in ageing
- coordinate accumulative knowledge
- facilitate multi and interdisciplinary research training
- encourage further research in ageing and later life
- promote collaboration with diverse stakeholders including industry.

- To expand the FLARE post doctoral joint funding programme.

Interested colleagues may download a detailed Forum report from the ERA-AGE website: www.shef.ac.uk/era-age



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Forthcoming Events

The final ERA-AGE Forum will take place in 2008. Details of this important event will be made available via forthcoming newsletters and the ERA-AGE website in the near future.



The ERA-AGE Consortium