

The European Research Council results endorse Catalonia's Science policy

The Catalan research system has attracted around 400M€ funding for innovative research projects

Catalonia is the second EU country in number of ERC grants per million inhabitants

Wednesday, 31st May 2017

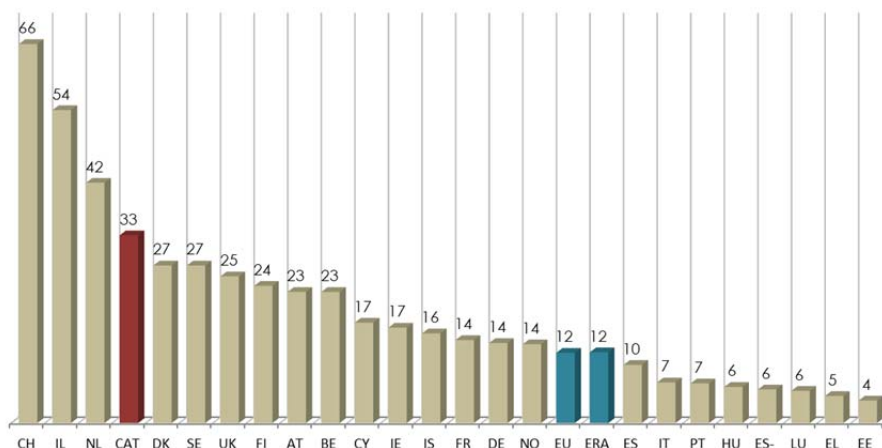
The results obtained throughout the past 10 years in European Research Council calls endorse Catalonia's Science policy. The Secretary of Universities and Research of the Government of Catalonia, Arcadi Navarro, has made this statement during the 'CERCA Conference 2017: Fostering excellence in research for the benefit of society' celebrated at the Delegation of the Government of Catalonia to the European Union.

CERCA, a group gathering 41 top performing Catalan research centres in all scientific disciplines created in 2010 to foster high-level scientific activity, has celebrated its annual conference in Brussels today in order to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the European Research Council.

"The ERC grants have been one of the most important instruments used to promote the Catalan research system. Catalan research centers have attracted around 400M€ in ERC funds, a fact that has allowed them to be part of the European research elite" said Navarro.

The representative of the Government of Catalonia to the EU, Amadeu Altafaj, said during the welcome speech, that these results are especially impressive because ERC calls are open and competition is very high. **"Amidst the countries of the European Union, Catalonia appears in second position in number of grants per million inhabitants"**, he stressed.

Catalonia occupies the fourth position in the European Research Area, which also includes Switzerland and Israel. Both are also placed before The Netherlands.





Furthermore, the Catalan research system performance attains very balanced results in the several calls.

According to Secretary of Universities and Research, the excellent results obtained are the outcome of different factors that endorse the science policy of Catalonia. **“Consensus has been gathered throughout these years by different Governments. The deployment of a strategy has made it possible to fund people and institutions and foster their participation in programs to attract competitive funds, as it is the case for ERC”**, Navarro said.

Multiply by thirty the attractiveness of European funds

In a nutshell, **“the progress of the research system has resulted in a dramatic improvement of the most important indicators”**, said Navarro, who has listed some of the highlights:

- Between 2002 and 2015, the percentage of population engaged in research activities has increased by 50%.
- Between 2004 and 2010, the number of authors signing scientific publications of high impact has doubled.
- In the last 20 years, Catalonia has multiplied by 30 the attractiveness of European funds, while resources devoted to the EU have increased only by 7.
- The Catalan Research system attracted over €990M in the 7th FP (2007-2013) compared to the €132M obtained in the 5th Framework Program (1998-2002).

Throughout today, the CERCA Conference, analyses the role of the ERC in research and innovation systems, and shares successful experiences in CERCA competition for ERC funding. It also highlights the coaching program offered by the Catalan? Agency for Management of University and Research Grants (AGAUR) to support candidates for ERC grants in all stages of the call, involving preparation and evaluation of proposals (briefings, workshops and specific role-play interviews).

CERCA are a group of research centres from Catalonia characterized by a self-management model devoted exclusively to research. CERCA network embodies one of the most important changes in the Catalan system and is a cornerstone of the success of the research carried out in Catalonia.