

## **Professor Nektarios Tavernarakis was appointed as new member of the ERC Scientific Council**



Professor Nektarios Tavernarakis, Director of the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology of FORTH, was appointed as new member of the Scientific Council of the ERC. New members are selected by an independent Identification Committee, composed of six distinguished scientists appointed by the Commission. The scientific community was consulted in this process.

The ERC Scientific Council which is composed of 22 distinguished scientists and scholars representing the European scientific community, is the governing body

of the European Research Council. Its main role is setting the ERC strategy and selecting the peer review evaluators.

The European Research Council (ERC) – the first pan-European funding body for frontier research - was set up in 2007 under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7, 2007-2013). The total budget allocated to the ERC for the period 2014-2020 is € 13.1 billion. Since 2007, some 6,500 projects have been selected for funding from more than 62,000 applications.

[ERC Press Release](#)

### **SHORT BIOGRAPHY**

Nektarios Tavernarakis is the Director of the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, at the Foundation for Research and Technology, and Professor of Molecular Systems Biology at the Medical School of the University of Crete, in Heraklion, Greece. He is the Director of the Graduate Program on Bioinformatics, at the Medical School of the University of Crete, and is also heading the Neurogenetics and Ageing laboratory of the Institute. He is an elected member of the *Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC)*, the *European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO)*, and *Academia Europaea*. He earned his Ph.D. degree at the University of Crete, and trained as a postdoctoral researcher at Rutgers University in New Jersey, USA. His research focuses on the molecular mechanisms of necrotic cell death and neurodegeneration, the interplay between cellular metabolism and ageing, the mechanisms of sensory transduction and integration by the nervous system, and the development of novel genetic tools for biomedical research. For his scientific accomplishments, he has received several notable scientific prizes, including an Innovation-supporting *ERC Proof of Concept Grant* and two *ERC Advanced Investigator Grants* (in 2009 and 2016). He is one of the first in Europe, and until now the only one in Greece, to have been awarded this highly competitive and prestigious grant

twice. He is also the recipient of the *EMBO Young Investigator* award, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel research award, the Bodossaki Foundation Scientific Prize for Medicine and Biology, the Empeirikeion Foundation Academic Excellence Prize, the Research Excellence award of the Foundation for Research and Technology, the BioMedical Research Award of the Academy of Athens, the International Human Frontier in Science Program Organization (HFSP) long-term Postdoctoral Fellowship, and the Dr. Frederick Valergakis Post-Graduate Research Grant Program Academic Achievement Award of the Hellenic University Club of New York. For more information, please visit: <http://www.elegans.gr/>.

### 5 Representative Publications

- Palikaras K., Lionaki E. & Tavernarakis N. (2015) Coordination of mitophagy and mitochondrial biogenesis during ageing in *Caenorhabditis elegans*. **Nature**, 521: 525-528.
- Kourtis N., Nikoletopoulou V. & Tavernarakis N. (2012) Small heat shock proteins protect from heat stroke-associated neurodegeneration. **Nature**, 490: 213-218.
- Artal-Sanz M. & Tavernarakis N. (2009) Prohibitin couples diapause signaling to mitochondrial energy metabolism during ageing in *Caenorhabditis elegans*. **Nature**, 461: 793-797.
- Syntichaki P., Troulinaki K. & Tavernarakis N. (2007) eIF4E function in somatic cells modulates ageing in *Caenorhabditis elegans*. **Nature**, 445: 922-926.
- Syntichaki P., Xu K., Driscoll M. & Tavernarakis N. (2002) Specific aspartyl and calpain proteases are required for neurodegeneration in *C. elegans*. **Nature**, 419: 939-944.