

Strasbourg: 8 April 2020

ISE STATEMENT ON THE RESIGNATION OF THE ERC PRESIDENT

The President of the European Research Council (ERC), Mauro Ferrari, announced his resignation on April 7, three months after starting in his new position.

The ERC Scientific Council has made a clear **statement** on 8 April about the reasons that led to their unanimous vote of no-confidence in Mauro Ferrari on 27 March. This contrasts with Prof. Ferrari's **statement** published by the **Financial Times** presenting his decision as having been triggered by the rejection by the ERC governing body of his proposal to allocate ERC resources for top-down funding of research related to COVID-19.

We support the Council's view that it is not for the ERC to engineer a quick response to this crisis. A move to top-down funding would be fundamentally at odds with the mission and the spirit of the organization. The ERC already funds projects related to coronaviruses; this **recently published list** illustrates the point that basic research is the best long term preparation for new challenges. In all of the research groups with a competence in virus research, including those funded by the ERC, researchers are working round the clock on SARS-Cov-2.

We also maintain that the European Commission has used the right tools to swiftly allocate dedicated funds for COVID-19 research, with some projects having already received specific funding a month ago and establishing a high-level scientific advisory committee to lead the research effort.

ISE strongly supports the values and mission of the ERC. More than ever now is its role for European research relevant to address global challenges. We praise the results achieved so far and are confident about ERC's positive and long-lasting impact on Europe.

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About ISE: ISE represents major European Learned Societies and Research Organizations in Europe operating within different disciplines and across sectors. Active in the policy debate at the European level, ISE has been instrumental in promoting disruptive excellence-based funding programmes for scientific research such as the ERC.

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