Preliminary Announcement

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) are the largest cause of death in the European Union (EU), as they account for around 2 million deaths per year. Furthermore, they are one of the leading causes of long-term sickness; chronic diseases and loss to the labour market thus pose a major health and socioeconomic problem in Europe and beyond. Based on a better understanding of the causes of CVD, development of new innovative medicinal products and improvement in medical technology requires innovative research based on scientific excellence. Cardiovascular research and its translation into better preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic outcomes are fundamental for patients in Europe and worldwide.

The ERA-NET on Cardiovascular Diseases (ERA-CVD) has been established under the ERA-NET scheme of the European Commission (http://www.ERA-CVD.eu). The aim of ERA-CVD is to foster new, but also extend existing transnational cooperation of European countries, and to coordinate research efforts and funding programmes of its partner countries.

Under the umbrella of ERA-CVD, the following funding organisations intend to launch a joint transnational call for Early Career Scientists for international collaboration and new consortia establishment in all cardiovascular areas:

- Austria: Austrian Science Fund (FWF)
- Belgium: Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO)
- Belgium: Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS)
- Canada: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
- Estonia: Estonian Research Council (ETAg)
- France: French National Research Agency (ANR)
• Germany: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
• Italy: Italian Ministry of Health (MoH-IT)
• Latvia: State Education Development Agency (VIAA)
• Norway: The Research Council of Norway (RCN)
• Poland: National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR)
• Portugal: Ministry of Health Portugal (MS)
• Slovakia: Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)
• Spain: National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII)
• Taiwan: Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST)
• The Netherlands: Dutch Heart Foundation (DHF)
• Turkey: The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBITAK)

1. **Aim of the Call**

JTC2018 aims at enabling Early Career Scientists (for definition please see chapter 2.2) in different countries to build an effective collaboration on common multidisciplinary research projects. The consortia should be based on complementarities and sharing of expertise in the field of cardiovascular disease, with a clear translational research approach. The call aims to promote co-operation and interchange between Early Career Scientists and thus enable international collaboration and new consortia establishment in cardiovascular research. Cardiovascular disease research can comprise hypertensive, ischaemic, pulmonary heart diseases and diseases of pulmonary circulation, other forms of heart disease, diseases of arteries, arterioles and capillaries and congenital malformations of cardiac chambers and connections and cardiac septa (analogues to ICD-10). The opportunity to independently develop and perform highly innovative research projects enables capacity building and empowering of Early Career Scientists.

The ERA-CVD funding organizations particularly wish to promote multi-disciplinary work and translational research proposals. The individual components of joint applications should be complementary and contain novel, ambitious ideas to answer key questions or lead to a step-wise change in understanding of cardiovascular diseases. There should be a clear added value in funding the collaboration over individual projects by sharing of resources (models, databases, diagnosis etc.), harmonisation of data, sharing of specific know-how and/or innovative technologies, etc. The research proposals should be built on an effective collaboration between the different research participants from different countries. Each transnational consortium should represent the critical mass necessary to achieve ambitious scientific goals. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate engagement with clinics, patient organisations and small and medium-size enterprises (SME) for their active participation including sharing of resources, capabilities and expertise in order to ensure an efficient transfer of pre-clinical results into clinical utility.
Excluded from the call are interventional clinical trials, building up of new cohorts, registries and/or biomaterial banks, cerebrovascular and rheumatic diseases, research that primarily leads to cardiovascular risk management as long term health improvement and/or CAD prevention, and the conduction of screenings.

2. Conditions for Application

2.1 General Eligibility

Joint transnational research proposals may be submitted by academic research teams working in universities (or other higher education or research institutions), non-university public research institutes, clinical/public health sector research teams (from hospitals/public health and/or other health care settings and health organisations), as well as by enterprises’ research teams working in commercial companies, particularly small and medium-size enterprises when allowed by national/regional regulations.

The eligibility of the afore-mentioned institutions, together with details of eligible costs (e.g. personnel, material, consumables, travel money, investments), are subject to the administrative requirements of individual funding organizations and will therefore differ. Please note that, for some funding organizations, commercial companies are not eligible or are only eligible under certain conditions (e.g. only in partnership with academic institutions in the consortium). Clarification should be obtained from the individual funding agencies (see contact details below). It is advised to read carefully all national annexes regarding eligibility and funding by the respective funding agencies.

Only transnational projects will be funded. Each consortium submitting a proposal must be comprised of a minimum of three research groups eligible for funding by organizations listed in this call text (see list above). The eligible research groups must be from at least three (3) different countries. The total number of research groups in a consortium is limited to five (5). A consortium must not involve more than one research group from the same country or region participating in the call, unless the second partner is an associated partner who secures his/her own funding. As an exception, two (2) research groups from Spain may be comprised in the same research consortium. Each Principal Investigator (PI) - in an applicant consortium cannot participate in more than one proposal.

ERA-CVD strives to strengthen the European Research Area in the field of cardiovascular diseases by including as many partner countries as possible in its funding scheme. Therefore, consortia including partners from countries that are to date underrepresented in this funding scheme (Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey) may increase the total number of partners to six (6).
2.2 Specific eligibility

The Early Career Scientist must have been awarded his/her first doctoral degree at least 3 and up to 10\(^1\) years prior to the pre-proposal submission deadline of the ERA-CVD JTC 2018 call. Extensions to this eligibility period may be allowed in case of reasonably justified career breaks, which must be properly documented. Acceptable career breaks are leaves of absence for maternal, paternal or long-term sick leave and compulsory military service.

- Applicants may subtract the time spent on leaves of absence in connection with childbirth and adoption, i.e. pregnancy, birth, parental, or care leave. This applies to mothers and fathers alike. Only the actual amount of time spent by the applicant on leave/at home with the child may be deducted, with a limit of 100 per cent leave for 12 months per child.

- Applicants may also subtract time for full-time, continuous leaves of absence for more than eight weeks in connection with illness in their immediate family. The time to be deducted will be calculated from the first day of the leave.

- Applicants may subtract the entire period of completed compulsory military service, including compulsory civilian national service.

- Applicants may subtract the time spent on full-time, continuous sick leave for more than eight weeks. The time to be deducted will be calculated from the first day of the sick leave.

- Proper documentation of leaves and other absence include the verification of leave and other types of absence (by employers or physicians, etc.) and must be attached to the grant application. Applicants who were not employed at the time of the birth or adoption of their child must submit a copy of the child’s birth certificate and specify how long they were at home with the child, with a limit of 100 per cent leave for 12 months per child. All time deductions to be included must also be listed in the CV.

Eligible events that take place within the extension of the eligibility window may lead to further extensions. The cumulative eligibility period should not in any case surpass 14 years following the doctoral/inauguration. No allowance will be made for principal investigators working part-time.

Applicants must have the necessary qualifications (see above) and the required infrastructure to perform the project. It is essential that applicants have published excellent work in international scientific journals or have made recognized contributions in the scientific community to the development of a particular field. Candidates must prove that they are scientifically independent, for example that they lead or have led a research group or project.

\(^1\) Applicants refer to ANNEX 2 of the Guidelines for applicants: National/regional regulations upon publication of the call documents
With the support of the host institution, successful Principle Investigators (PI’s) will be expected to lead their independent research project and be strongly engaged in running the call grant, which will enable them to establish or consolidate their independent research activity. All PIs, including the coordinator of the project consortium must be “Early Career Scientists” (detailed definition as above, and for country specific information applicants refer to ANNEX 2 of the Guidelines for applicants: National/regional regulations).

3. Timetable
The call is scheduled to open on January 11, 2018.
The deadline for submitting the pre-proposals is scheduled for March 15, 2018, 17:00 CET.
Please check if your funding organisation has a pre-selection process with a deadline before March 15th, 2018.
The pre-proposals will be reviewed in a written (remote) peer review process. By mid-May 2018 the coordinators of the top-ranked pre-proposals will be invited by the Joint Call Secretariat to submit a full proposal by June 15, 2018, 17:00 CET.
An international Peer Review Panel will evaluate the full and establish a ranking list of the fundable proposals by scientific assessment. Based on this ranking list the Call Steering Committee will determine the projects to be funded. Based on these recommendations, final decisions will be made by the funding agencies and will be subject to budgetary considerations. Funding is expected to start May/June 2019.