



# When one is not enough: inspiring young scientists in Latvia to think big

ERC grants focused event at the University of Latvia, hall "Sapere aude",  
O.Kalpaka bulvāris 4, Rīga, Latvia  
February 6, 2025

**09.30–10.00**

**Welcome coffee**

**10.00–10.05**

**Welcome and introduction**

Elita Zondaka, Latvian Council of Science

**10.05–10.25**

**25 years of Latvia's participation in research framework programmes. Looking ahead to FP10**

Anna Leiškalne, Ministry of Education and Science  
Jūlija Asmuss, Latvian Council of Science

**10.25–11.10**

**ERC grants 360. Overview of ERC, ERC grants, evaluation process and criteria, statistics across years, ERC support schemes to applicants**

Janka Matrai, The Executive Agency of the European Research Council

**11.10–11.30**

**Lack of ambition? Situation with ERC grants in Widening countries, including Latvia**

Janka Matrai, The Executive Agency of the European Research Council

**11.30–11.45**

**Q&A**

**11.45–12.05**

**Lessons from next door. National support schemes for ERC applicants in Estonia**

Kristin Kraav, Estonian Research Council

**12.05–12.15**

**Q&A**

**12.15–13.00**

**Lunch break and networking**

**13.00–13.45**

**Panel discussion: Can Latvia go from zero to hero? What does it take to boost the number of ERC applicants from Latvia and increase the success of those who do apply? The road to establishing a positive pattern**

Panel members:

Janka Matrai, The Executive Agency of the European Research Council

Kristin Kraav, Estonian Research Council

Inta Mieriņa, University of Latvia

Andris Ambainis, University of Latvia

Moderator: Jānis Ancāns, Latvian Council of Science

**13.45–14.00**

**Q&A**

# Speakers



## **ANNA LEIŠKĀLE**

Anna Leiškāle is a deputy director for research at the Ministry of Education and Science (Latvia). Over the years at the ministry, she has been a part of the administration team for several national and international research programmes and initiatives, e.g. EEA/Norway grants or national research funding programmes. Her professional interests include evidence-based policy planning and enhancing international collaboration in research, incl. scientific diaspora relations. Now Anna is actively involved in governing the research assessment process while also overseeing the implementation and monitoring processes of smart specialisation strategy and more broadly the development and implementation of different aspects of science policy in Latvia.



## **JŪLIJA ASMUSS**

Jūlija Asmuss is Horizon Europe National Contact Point (NCP) Coordinator at the Latvian Council of Science. Additionally, she is NCP for Cluster 4 “Digital, Industry and Space”, national representative in the Cluster 4 Programme Committee and representative in the Chips Joint Undertaking (Chips JU) Public Authorities Board and Governing Board. She has experience of participating in various projects, including Horizon Europe CSA projects.



## **JANKA MATRAI**

Janka Matrai is a scientific officer at the ERCEA - The Executive Agency of the European Research Council (ERC), in the Life Sciences Unit. She is responsible for the whole life cycle of grant application, evaluation and follow-up processes in two panels, Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems, and Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System. She is also involved in the widening participation campaign, which aims to close the gap between the widening participation countries and the rest of the EU.



## **KRISTIN KRAAV**

Kristin Kraav is the Deputy Head of International Research Cooperation Department at the Estonian Research Council. She is the national contact point and the national delegate to the Programme Committee for 3 areas of Horizon Europe: European Research Council (ERC), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, and Widening participation and spreading excellence. As NCP, she consults clients on proposal preparation and project implementation, pre-screens applications, and organises communication and training events. As Programme Committee delegate she is in charge of consolidating national positions on draft Work Programmes. Kristin Kraav has a background in IT and adult education.

## Speakers



### **ANDRIS AMBAINIS**

Andris Ambainis is a tenured professor of computer science at the University of Latvia. His field of research is quantum computing and mathematical computer science. To the global scientific community, Andris Ambainis is known for widely used methods for the development of quantum algorithms. In 2013, he became the first ERC grantee from Latvia.



### **INTA MIERIŅA**

Inta Mieriņa is the director of the Centre for Diaspora and Migration Research and a tenured professor at the University of Latvia. She specialises in political sociology and has extensively studied issues related to migration and inter-ethnic relations. Her recent research focuses on the new forms of migration, changes in attitudes towards migrants, integration policies and practices, reception of Ukrainian refugees, as well as increasing ethnic tensions in Latvia. In 2024, she was awarded the ERC Consolidator grant for her research: "Welcoming Immigrants in Central and Eastern Europe: Lessons from Russia's Invasion of Ukraine" (WICE)".

## Moderator



### **JĀNIS ANCĀNS**

Jānis Ancāns is Senior Expert at Horizon Europe National Contact Point, Latvian Council of Science. Janis is responsible for Cluster "Health" and "Cancer Mission", he is national representative in the respective Programme Committee, and representative in Horizon Europe ERDERA (European Rare Disease Research Alliance) Partnership. He has experience of participation in several Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects.