

News Release

European Research Council Awards €2.5 million to Trinity Environmental Historian – the only ERC 2014 Advanced Grant Awarded in Ireland

Trinity is Awarded the Most Funding Nationally (€14.5 million) in Prestigious EU European Research Council Awards

Dublin, June 18th, 2015 – Professor of Environmental History at Trinity College Dublin, Poul Holm has been awarded an EU European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant valued at €2.5 million. These highly prestigious awards allow exceptional researchers to pursue ground-breaking research. This is the only ERC 2014 Advanced Grant that was awarded in Ireland and represents the maximum amount of funding available for an individual. The ERC forms part of the EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020.

A total of eight researchers at Trinity College Dublin have been awarded prestigious ERC grants in 2014 worth more than €14.5 million to Ireland for excellence in research – the highest number of ERC grants awarded to any higher education institution in Ireland. A further ninth researcher in receipt of an ERC grant will also be hosted at Trinity shortly, bringing the number to almost half of Ireland's total number of ERC grants under Horizon 2020.

The award will see Professor Holm and his team at the School of Histories and Humanities conduct world-leading humanities research into marine environmental history, assessing and synthesising the dynamics and significance of the North Atlantic 'fish revolution' of the 1500s and 1600s that reshaped alignments in economic power, demography, and politics. With acute consequences in peripheral Atlantic settlements from Newfoundland to Scandinavia, it held strategic importance for all major western European powers. The fish revolution catalysed the globalisation of the Atlantic world, but adequate baselines and trajectories for key questions of natural abundance, supply and demand, cultural preferences, marketing technologies, and national and regional strategies are still lacking. Professor Holm's research will establish a framework of extractions, supplies and prices, while also charting the politics that motivated actors of the fish revolution across the North Atlantic.

Explaining the impact of the research, Professor Holm said: "Knowing more about past fish populations, fishing power, and climate variability will help fishery modelers understand long-term variability of stocks and the effects of both climate and human extractions. It will also provide us with a much better historical understanding of the creation of the North Atlantic world – what drove us across the ocean and how is that legacy still with us."

"In recent years we have all been affected by the impact of globalisation, climate change, and threats of unemployment and social upheaval. It is important to know how people in the past responded to the same forces."

Congratulating Professor Holm on his success, Trinity Provost, Dr Patrick Prendergast said: "Professor Holm's award is the culmination of Trinity's achievement in the ERC grants awarded under Horizon 2020 for cutting edge research and innovation. As a world leading university, Trinity's research continues to address issues of global societal and economic

importance. We aim to stimulate a wave of innovation that will stimulate jobs creation and generate long-term economic impact for the country. We are seeing the results, and this year has seen Ireland's best performance ever in the ERC. It has jumped from second-lowest ERC performer to second-highest. Only Israel performed more strongly in per capita terms."

Dean of Research, Professor Vinny Cahill added: "Ireland has set ambitious targets for the EU Horizon 2020 programme. The targets set by Trinity are similarly ambitious and we are particularly well positioned to meet this challenge. The total of eight ERC awards received this year bear testament to that. Excellence in research across all disciplines underpins our strategy. Professor Holm's success highlights the importance of humanities research in helping society to understand the world in which we live and prepare to meet future challenges."

Other Trinity ERC recipients were Professors Wolfgang Schmitt, Daniel Kelly, Ruth Britto and Anna Davies who were awarded Consolidator Grants of almost €2 million each. Three Trinity researchers were also awarded ERC starting grants of almost €1.5 million each. These grants are aimed to help researchers in their early career to develop their full potential. The researchers are Professors Redmond O'Connell, Mark Ahearne and Sarah McCormack. A fourth researcher awarded an ERC starting grant will be hosted by Trinity shortly.

[For more details on ERC awards](#)

*For media queries contact College Press Officer, Caoimhe Ní Lochlainn
communications@tcd.ie/ 8962310/ 087-9958014*

Ends

About Professor Poul Holm

Professor Holm is Professor of Environmental History in the Department of History (ranked 39th in the world by QS World University Subject Rankings) in the School of Histories and Humanities. He is from Aalborg in Denmark and completed his Masters on the Viking history of Ireland in 1979. He was a professor of maritime history at several Danish universities before he moved to Trinity College Dublin in 2008 to help build the Trinity Long Room Hub, the research institute for the arts and humanities.