



Trinity European Laureate Award

23 June 2026

Theme: Research

Recipient: Professor Maria Leptin



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Long Room Hub
Arts & Humanities Research Institute

 Teneo®

Order of Events

- »» 6.00 p.m. Introduction and welcome by **Professor Patrick Geoghegan**, Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub.
- »» 6.05 p.m. Reflections on the Future of European Research and Presentation of the Trinity European Laureate Award by the Provost, **Dr Linda Doyle**.
- »» 6.15 p.m. Laureate Address by **Professor Maria Leptin**, President of the European Research Council.
- »» 6.25 p.m. Panel discussion on the Future of Research, with Government Science Advisor, **Professor Aoife McLysaght**, **Professor Luke O'Neill**, and **Professor Maria Leptin**.
- »» 6.15 p.m. Concluding remarks by **Dr Diarmuid O'Brien**, CEO of Research Ireland.

Panel:

Professor Aoife McLysaght is Chair of Evolutionary Genetics at Trinity College Dublin and is the Government Science Advisor.

Professor Luke O'Neill is Chair of Biochemistry at Trinity College Dublin. A world expert on innate immunity and inflammation, he is a member of the ERC Scientific Council.

Professor Maria Leptin is the President of the European Research Council (ERC) and chairs the ERC governing body, the Scientific Council.

Trinity European Laureate Award

Professor Maria Leptin

The Trinity European Laureate Award is presented to Professor Maria Leptin in recognition of her outstanding contributions to scholarship, her transformative leadership within the European research community, and her enduring commitment to advancing excellence in research across Europe.

Professor Leptin is one of the world's most distinguished developmental biologists. Through pioneering research into embryonic morphogenesis and tissue formation, she has fundamentally advanced our understanding of how individual cells organise themselves to create complex multicellular organisms. Her landmark work on gastrulation and cell-shape changes during embryonic development reveals essential mechanisms through which tissues acquire form and structure. Through studies using *Drosophila* and other model systems, she has transformed our understanding of how biological complexity emerges from individual cells, making discoveries that continue to shape developmental biology and modern life sciences research around the world.

These scientific achievements exemplify the power of curiosity-driven discovery. By pursuing fundamental questions about how life develops and is organised, Professor Leptin has created new knowledge that has profoundly influenced subsequent generations of researchers.

Alongside her distinguished research career, Professor Leptin has demonstrated exceptional leadership in European science.

As Director of the European Molecular Biology Organisation in Heidelberg - the first woman to hold that position - she championed scientific excellence, strengthened international collaboration, expanded opportunities for early-career researchers, and reinforced Europe's position as a global leader in the life sciences. Her leadership helped foster a culture in which talent and creativity could flourish across borders and disciplines.



As President of the European Research Council, Professor Leptin has become one of the foremost advocates for frontier research in Europe, giving researchers the time and freedom to explore the unknown. Under her stewardship, the ERC has continued to support ambitious, investigator-led research at the highest level, enabling scholars across all disciplines to pursue bold ideas and make transformative discoveries. She has also championed the role of the humanities, making a compelling case that ‘to understand human values, we need disciplines that study humans in all their variety’.

At a time of profound scientific, technological, and geopolitical change, Professor Leptin has articulated a compelling vision of research as a strategic investment in Europe’s future, emphasising the importance of curiosity-driven research, creativity, intellectual freedom, and international collaboration.

Professor Leptin’s distinguished career offers a compelling example of what can be achieved through long-term investment in excellent research and talented researchers. Her work demonstrates that discovery research is the foundation upon which future breakthroughs, societal progress, and economic prosperity are built. In recognising Professor Leptin, we celebrate the enduring importance of research itself, and the values of openness, collaboration, and intellectual ambition that have been at the heart of European scholarship.

This gold medal is awarded by the Trinity Long Room Hub, in partnership with Teneo, the global CEO advisory firm, to Professor Maria Leptin in recognition of her outstanding contributions to developmental biology, her distinguished leadership in European science, her stewardship of the European Research Council, and her unwavering commitment to the advancement of research and knowledge.

About Us

The greatest challenges of our time – from threats to democracy and the erosion of public trust, climate change, inequality, and the impact of AI – require historical understanding, cultural insight, ethical awareness, imagination and empathy.

The Trinity Long Room Hub brings new perspectives, critical thinking, and creativity and imagination to the great questions of our time, reaffirming that curiosity is a public good, and that excellent research is a strategic asset. By bringing together the full range of human knowledge, we help make a more prosperous, democratic, and hopeful future possible.

Learn more

For further information about any of our activities, please email patrick.geoghegan@tcd.ie or scan the QR code to sign up for our mailing list





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