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# ERC grants for nanophotonics, quantum crypto, soft robots and visual AI

*Nieke Roos*

8 September

The European Research Council (ERC) has awarded its annual Starting Grants. Among the winners are Eindhoven University of Technology's Alberto Curto, Léo Ducas from Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica, Bas Overvelde from Amolf and University of Amsterdam's Efstratios Gavves. They each receive 1.5 million euros to help them build their own teams and conduct pioneering research.

Curto's Chanson project aims to design new techniques that can accurately measure the 'right or left-handedness' of molecules using semiconductor nanophotonics. In project Articulate, Ducas is to study quantum-safe cryptography, employing lattice and

code-based methods. With the Flowbot project, Overvelde wants to replace electronics by dedicated soft fluidic circuits to fully control and power a soft robot. Gavves, in the EVA project, will focus on applying artificial intelligence to predict what will happen based on visual observations in the past.



*Credit: European Research Council*

In the [2020 round](#), the ERC has awarded 436 Starting Grants to researchers from 40 nationalities, allocating a grand total of 677 million euros. The winners have two to seven years of experience since completion of their PhD (or equivalent degree) and a scientific track record showing great promise in the fields of physical sciences and engineering, life sciences, and social sciences and humanities. The new grantees will be based in 25 countries across Europe, with Germany (88 grants), the UK (62), the Netherlands (42) and France (38) as top locations.

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