

Media Release

9th February 2010

€1.4m for Trinity Economics Professor – First in Ireland to Receive European Research Council Advanced Grant

Humanities & Social Sciences disciplines win coveted funding

A European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Research Grant, worth €1.4m, has been awarded to Trinity College Economics Professor, Kevin O'Rourke. This is the first time an ERC award of this premier status has been awarded to a researcher in Ireland. It is hugely prestigious for the Humanities and Social Sciences fields – and particularly for the area of Economic History research.

This accolade recognises the world class quality of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) research being carried out in Ireland. More importantly, the undertaking of such prestigious research projects in Ireland gives added impetus for Ireland's HSS research community demonstrating the value of HSS disciplines in producing policy relevant, impact based knowledge.

Now three years in existence, ERC awards are among the most competitive academic awards worldwide and are open to experienced Academics in all disciplines. They are designed to support internationally recognised research leaders from across the globe, to undertake pioneering frontier research in Europe and to create new research centres of excellence. Award winning proposals focus on Innovative ideas demonstrating the quality of the research idea – rather than the research area itself.

Dipti Pandya, Director of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) which acts as the National Contact Point for the European Research Council says:

“If Ireland and Europe are to meet new global challenges, we need to develop our research base in line with the best minds and standards in Europe and the rest of the world. This award demonstrates that Irish Research capability is right up there with the best in Europe, with potential to attract huge additional funding. As part of the EU economy, we must innovate and encourage the best research available at an EU and global level. We look forward to working closely with EU Commissioner designate for Research and Innovation, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn in furthering this goal.”

“This is one of the highest accolades that can be given to any research scholar. IRCHSS congratulates Professor O'Rourke's achievement which establishes him among an elite group of European Academics. Ireland is extremely fortunate to have such undisputed talent.”

The project entitled “Trade and the Great Depression in a Long Run Perspective” resonates with today's economic situation and should provide a telling insight into historical solutions and mistakes from the decisions and policies during the Great Depression. Professor O'Rourke's research will explore the short run inter-relationships between output and employment, trade, and trade policy during the Depression. It will also place the event in the longer run context of the

gradual spread of industry from the European and North American core to the European periphery and the rest of the world.

Professor O'Rourke is Professor of Economics at Trinity College Dublin with a particular interest in Economic History. He was previously an IRCHSS Senior Research Fellow and is currently a member of the IRCHSS International Advisory Committee, representing IRCHSS in the network GLOBALEURONET – (Globalizing Europe Economic History Network) - a Research Programme funded by the European Science Foundation, and the IRCHSS which brings together key research groups at European level, in order to share knowledge and expertise, develop new techniques and train young scientists.

ENDS

For further information, contact Malcolm Byrne, Head of Communications, Higher Education Authority

086 22 37 102 or 01 231 71 62

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Biography

Kevin O'Rourke is Professor of Economics at Trinity College Dublin, a co-organiser of the CEPR's [Economic History Initiative](#), a Research Fellow of the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#), and a Member of the Royal Irish Academy. He received his PhD from Harvard in 1989, and has taught at Columbia University, UCD, Harvard, and Sciences Po (Paris). He is currently serving as President of the European Historical Economics Society, and an Editorial Board member of [World Politics](#). He has served in the past as an editor of the [European Review of Economic History](#), an Editorial Board member of the Journal of Economic History, an [Economic Policy Panel](#) member, and a Trustee of the Cliometric Society.

Kevin O'Rourke has published extensively on the history of globalization. *Globalization and History* (co-authored with Jeffrey G. Williamson) won the 1999 American Association of Publishers/PSP Award for the best scholarly book in economics. *Power and Plenty: Trade, War and the World Economy in the Second Millennium* (co-authored with Ronald Findlay) was published in 2007 by Princeton University Press, to widespread critical acclaim. Among his forthcoming publications is *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Europe* (2 volumes, co-edited with Stephen Broadberry).

About the ERC Advanced Grant

The ERC Advanced Grant's main aim is to stimulate scientific excellence by supporting and encouraging the very best, truly creative scientists, scholars and engineers to be adventurous and take risks in their research. The scientists are encouraged to go beyond established frontiers of knowledge and the boundaries of disciplines.

The ERC complements other funding activities in Europe such as those of the national research funding agencies, and is a flagship component of the 'Ideas Programme' of the European Union's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7).

Being 'investigator-driven', or 'bottom-up', in nature, the ERC approach allows researchers to identify new opportunities and directions in any field of research, rather than being led by priorities set by politicians. This

approach ensures that funds are channelled into new and promising areas of research with a greater degree of flexibility.

ERC grants are awarded through open competition to projects headed by starting and established researchers, irrespective of their origins, who are working or moving to work in Europe - the sole criterion for selection is scientific excellence. The aim here is to recognise the best ideas, and retain and confer status and visibility to the best brains in Europe, while also attracting talent from abroad.

However the ERC aims to do more than simply fund research.

In the long term, it looks to substantially strengthen and shape the European research system. This is done through high quality peer review, the establishment of international benchmarks of success, and the provision of up-to-date information on who is succeeding and why.

By challenging Europe's brightest minds, the ERC expects that its grants will help to bring about new and unpredictable scientific and technological discoveries - the kind that can form the basis of new industries, markets, and broader social innovations of the future.

Ultimately, the ERC aims to make the European research base more prepared to respond to the needs of a knowledge-based society and provide Europe with the capabilities in frontier research necessary to meet global challenges.

More ERC information available at <http://erc.europa.eu/>

Malcolm Byrne
Head of Communications
Higher Education Authority
Brooklawn House
Shelbourne Road
Dublin 4

Tel: +353 (0)1 2317 162
Fax: +353 (0)1 2317 172
www.heai.ie