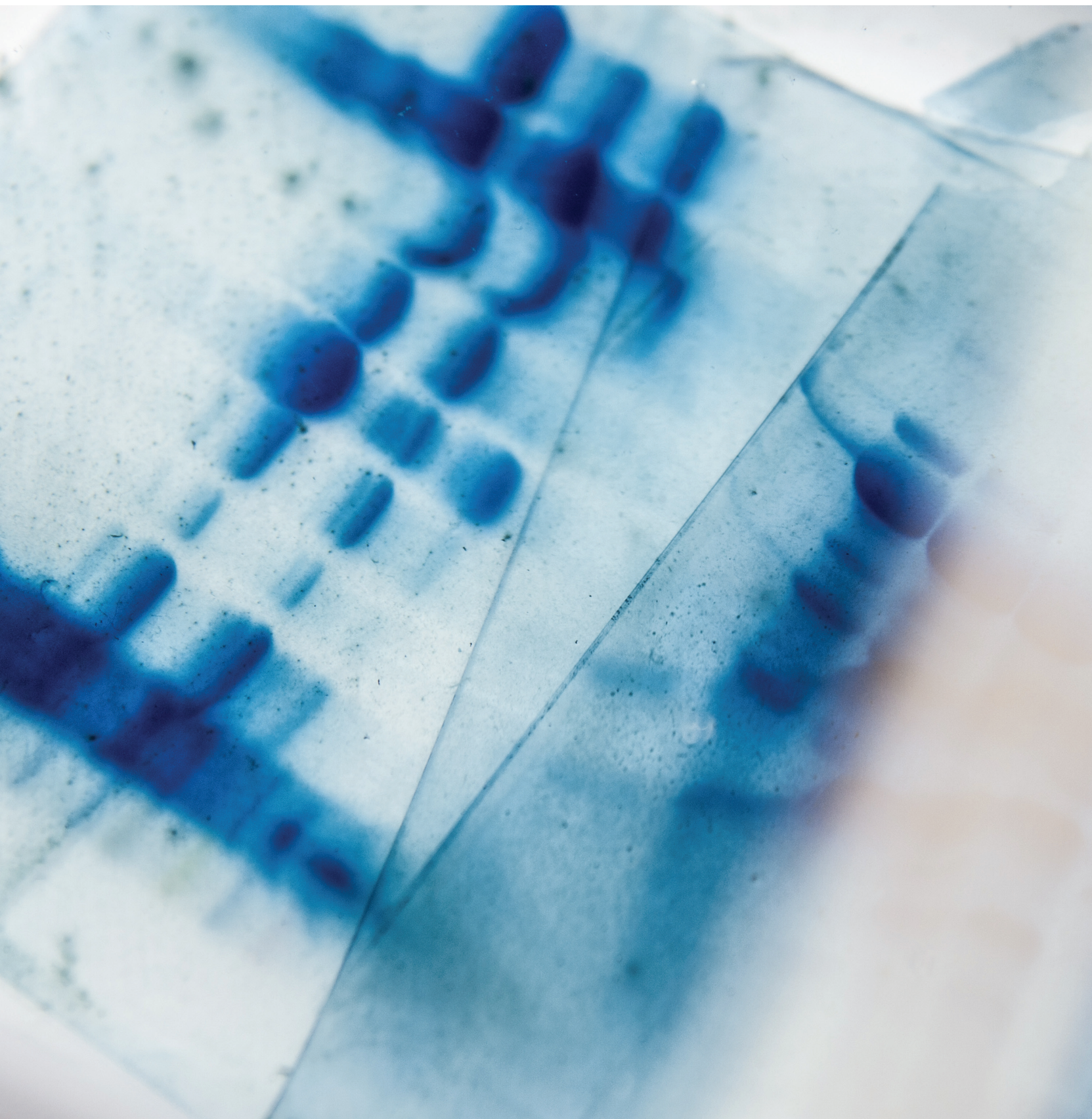


ERC Grant



Pioneering ideas, cutting-edge research and scientific excellence are common attributes of the European Research Council (ERC) Grants. The ERC was established by the European Commission in 2007, and, since then, more than 4,500 projects have been selected for funding across the EU Member States and Associated Countries, of which 34 are from Portugal.

The ERC aims to enhance the dynamic character, creativity and excellence of European research at the frontiers of knowledge providing generous funding for scientists who “pursue ground-breaking, high-gain/high-risk research”. That was the case of the project “IgYPurTech - IgY Technology: A Purification Platform using Ionic-Liquid-Based Aqueous Biphasic Systems”, promoted by Mara G. Freire, a young scientist of CICECO, an Associated Laboratory of the University of Aveiro.

Mara G. Freire graduated in Chemistry - Analytical Chemistry, by the University of Aveiro, in 2003, and concluded her PhD in Chemical Engineering, by the University of Aveiro, in 2007. Over the last years she has built an extraordinary research career, with more than 100 papers in international peer reviewed journals, over 2500 citations and an h-index of 31. Among the published works, 6 are actually “highly cited papers” (Essential Science Indicators by ISI Web of Knowledge).

In 2013, Mara G. Freire was awarded with a 1.4 million euros ERC Starting Grant to develop a new technology, in the scientific area of biopharmaceuticals, which will be applied to the production and purification of antibodies, mainly IgY, an antibody produced in large amount by birds and that exists in egg yolk. The emergence of antibiotic-resistant microorganisms and diseases that do not respond to conventional therapies stresses the need to seek alternatives to conventional drugs, and antibodies may be a hopeful alternative. This project will run over the period of 5 years.

In the new framework programme, Horizon 2020, ERC will have a total budget of 13 095 million euros to support researchers in carrying out frontier research projects in every career stages and all scientific areas: ERC Starting Grant, ERC Consolidator Grants and ERC Advanced Grant, being estimated that around 7,000 grantees will be funded.

