

From Sea2Sky: Inspiring science across Europe

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Credit: EU

On the last Friday of September people gathered across 800 venues in 320 cities located in 32 European countries to take part in European Researchers' Night - a free, day-long research festival dedicated to popular science and fun learning that the whole family could attend. On hand to open the Sea2Sky Researchers' Night in Galway, Ireland was Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, who applauded the interest taken by the public, especially the young, in the event.

'I am delighted to be here at the Sea2Sky Researchers' Night in Galway where scientists and researchers are opening up the world of science to the general public and to young people in particular. Europe needs to

attract more young people into careers as researchers to stay ahead of the game in research and to tackle the biggest issues of our time, such as energy, [climate change](#) and our [ageing population](#). Exciting events like this, which are bringing science to life right across Europe tonight, will certainly help to achieve this goal' said the Commissioner at the opening.

More than 10,000 visitors attended Sea2Sky exhibitions in three different locations in Galway and in CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory in Cork, Ireland on Friday 28 September.

The Sea2Sky events in Ireland were part of [European Researchers'](#) Night, which was partly funded by an EU Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) Marie Curie Action. At these events across Europe the general public were encouraged to participate in experiments, competitions and quizzes, to watch demonstrations and simulations, exchange ideas and get to know researchers.

'Interest in science is riding high and making headlines around the world. We have been captivated by news from the [Large Hadron Collider](#) in Geneva, images from NASA's mission on Mars, and video from the journey to the deepest point of the ocean by Hollywood's [James Cameron](#),' explained chief organiser, National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway's Dr Andrew Shearer, a lecturer in physics.

Visitors attending Sea2Sky had access to a vast range of exhibitions including one about the work of CERN - Accelerating Science. This exhibition, sponsored by Boston Scientific in partnership with NUI Galway, showed how CERN's Large Hadron Collider can help us understand fundamental questions about the origins of the universe. Over 40 stands in the Galway Bay Hotel showcased local research, many of which were FP7 funded projects. Meanwhile, Galway Atlantaquaria, National Aquarium of Ireland - which seeks to present a comprehensive view of the world of water through clear and interesting displays, was

also open for free to the public.

Local scuba divers were on hand and gave an exhibition in the aquarium, the Marine Institute showcased their Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) and a Japanese oyster farmer made a special guest appearance as a tie-in with the Galway Oyster Festival. Thousands visited the Promenade in Salthill and watched a parade with Galway Colour's Street Theatre, while others viewed the night sky through telescopes from Galway Astronomy Club.

'Sea2sky this year was an even bigger success than 2011 with astronomers, marine scientists and atmospheric physicists engaging with a wide cross section of the community from small children to the over 80s. One of the highlights was the Café Scientifique linking Galway, Cork and NASA astronaut Dan Tani in the US. Our Sea2sky event was even mentioned in the NASA broadcast showcasing the recent Curiosity Rover findings,' commented Dr Shearer.

Ireland has a success rate of nearly 23% of the eligible proposals submitted being funded - which is above average for the EU27 countries as a whole. This has up to now resulted in EU funding of just over EUR 360,4 million.

Dr Shearer explained the benefits that such European research projects have given researchers in Ireland. 'Irish researchers are involved in some huge European research projects, and this is an opportunity to share some of the most exciting elements with the public,' added Dr Shearer. 'At third-level, we have seen a surge in applications for science related courses and this event will be a real draw for anyone tempted by a career in [science](#) and research.'

More information: www.sea2sky.ie/
ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/

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