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Commission's 2027 food and veterinary audits programme demonstrates continued commitment to high food safety standards

The European Commission has published its [2027 programme of audits](#) in the areas of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, plant health and import controls. The aim of these audits is to ensure continued protection of EU citizens' health through the effective implementation and enforcement of EU food safety rules, which are among the strictest in the world.

Next year, the Commission plans to carry out 144 audits and 8 fact-finding visits to reinforce controls on products imported into the EU.

These audits and visits will cover EU Member States, third countries exporting or wishing to export to the EU, and candidate countries in the context of pre-accession support.

The Commission had already increased the number of planned audits on third countries for 2026, and this will be built upon in 2027. Next year's programme has a strong emphasis on trade-related onsite audits in third countries – with a planned increase of 107% compared to 2025 – and audits on EU border control posts – with a planned increase of 60% compared to 2025. 12 audits are planned in EU candidate countries, and four fact-finding visits will be dedicated to advancing the [One Health approach](#), which recognises that now more than ever, the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment are closely interconnected.

The priorities for 2027 were established on the basis of legal requirements, food safety and health risks, trade volumes, evidence of non-compliance, and results of previous audit activities. The programme may be adapted during the year in response to emerging issues or concerns.

More information on the [audits programme for 2027](#) is available online.

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€705 million awarded to Europe's next generation of researchers

The European Research Council (ERC) has announced the winners of its latest [Starting Grant](#) competition, awarding €705 million to 421 early-career researchers across Europe. The grants will support them at a crucial stage of their careers, helping them pursue ambitious ideas and build their own teams.

The results highlight Europe's growing attractiveness for world-class research talent. 21 successful researchers currently based outside Europe will now relocate to the EU and Horizon Europe associate countries (up from 11 last year) to carry out their projects.

Ekaterina **Zaharieva**, European Commissioner for Startups, Research, and Innovation, said: *"Congratulations to all the successful applicants. I am particularly pleased to see that 21 researchers currently based in the United States and Canada plan to relocate to Europe to pursue their work. Their decision reflects Europe's growing appeal for frontier research and is an encouraging sign that the EU's Choose Europe initiative is helping to attract the next generation of scientific talent while reinforcing Europe's position as a destination of choice for excellent research."*

This year's competition drew a record 4,807 proposals, representing a 22% increase compared with last year's 3,928 applications. Due to strong competition, only 8.8% of proposals could be funded. Interest also rose among researchers based outside of Europe. In particular, 169 researchers based in the United States applied this year, up from 116 in the previous call.

The selected projects cover a broad spectrum of research fields from life sciences and engineering to social sciences and humanities. The new grantees will be hosted by universities and research centres in 25 EU Member States and associated countries, notably in Germany (89 grants), France (38), Switzerland (36), and the Netherlands (33). Among the winners are 84 Germans, 50 Italians, 30 French, and 24 Spanish, as well as researchers of 48 other nationalities. The grants are expected to create more than 3,000 jobs in the teams of the new grantees.

As part of the [Choose Europe](#) initiative to attract and retain scientific talent, researchers moving to Europe can request up to an extra €2 million to set up laboratories or research teams in Europe.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

European Heritage Days 2026 celebrate culture across the continent

The 2026 edition of the [European Heritage Days](#) has kicked off with cultural events planned across over 50 European countries from September to early October. This year's theme 'Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine' will gather the public around how endangered heritage can be protected and passed on to future generations.

The European Commission and the Council of Europe are co-founders of the initiative. Building on the [Faro Convention](#), which recognises the value of cultural heritage for society, the Heritage Days events highlight the crucial role of communities in identifying, safeguarding, and transmitting heritage. Each year since 1999, participating countries organise their annual programmes around a specific theme, offering citizens of all ages and interests fresh perspectives on the history of the people and places that have enriched European culture and heritage.

Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, Glenn **Micallef**, said: *"European Heritage Days celebrate what makes Europe distinctive and diverse. This year's theme reminds us that heritage threatened by war, climate change, disasters or neglect needs active protection and that communities have a crucial role in keeping it alive for future generations."*

Events encompass guided heritage tours, exhibitions, workshops, performances and digital experiences. Examples include visits exploring the tradition of the Saints' Guard in Croatia, the discovery of industrial heritage in a former Belgian brewery, and exhibitions showcasing over 1,000 minerals and fossils in the French Ardennes.

[More information on all the individual events](#) being organised is available online.

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[Tentative agendas](#) for forthcoming Commission meetings

Note that these items can be subject to changes.

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission

[Eurostat](#) press releases

[Calendar items of the President and Commissioners](#)

[Individual calendars of the President and Commissioners](#)

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