HERAKLION, CRETE, October 10, 2016

Prof. Nektarios Tavernarakis earns an ERC Proof of Concept Grant.

Nektarios Tavernarakis, a Researcher at the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas (FORTH), and Professor at the Medical School of the University of Crete is one of just 45 scientists from across Europe, and the only one in Greece, that recently secured funding from the innovation-supporting *Proof of Concept* Programme of the European Research Council (ERC).

The ERC Proof of Concept Grants are open only to researchers who have already received funding from the ERC in the past and are intended to facilitate the final stage of capitalizing on forefront research results to develop innovative products and services.

The objective of the new research program that was funded by the ERC is the development of effective interventions to combat neurodegenerative disorders, an ever-increasing contributor to human disability in modern societies. Battling human neurodegenerative pathologies, and their pervasive societal impact, is a global multi-billion Euro enterprise. Development of therapeutic interventions against such maladies is thus becoming a pressing priority.

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Short Bio

Nektarios Tavernarakis is the Director of the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, at the Foundation for Research and Technology, and Professor of Molecular Systems Biology at the Medical School of the University of Crete, in Heraklion, Greece. He is the Director of the Graduate Program on BioInformatics, at the Medical School of the University of Crete, and is also heading the Neurogenetics and Ageing laboratory of IMBB. He is an elected member of the *Scientific Council* of the *European Research Council*, the *European Molecular Biology Organization*, and *Academia Europaea*. He earned his Ph.D. degree at the University of Crete, and trained as a postdoctoral researcher at Rutgers University in New Jersey, USA. His research focuses on the molecular mechanisms of necrotic cell death and neurodegeneration, the interplay between cellular metabolism and ageing, the mechanisms of sensory transduction and integration by the nervous system, and the development of novel genetic tools for biomedical research. For his scientific accomplishments, he has received several notable scientific prizes, including an innovation-supporting *ERC Proof of Concept Grant* and two *ERC Advanced Investigator Grants*. He is one of the first in Europe, and until now the only one in Greece, to have been awarded this highly competitive and prestigious grant twice. He is also the recipient of the *EMBO Young Investigator* award, the Alexander von *Humboldt Foundation*, *Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel* research award, the *Bodossaki Foundation Scientific Prize for Medicine and Biology*, the *Empeirikeion Foundation Academic Excellence Prize*, the *Research Excellence* award of the *Foundation for Research and Technology*, and the *BioMedical Research Award* of the *Academy of Athens*.

More information on the research activities of the lab is available at: http://www.elegans.gr/