

How (long) will we live?

Press release: June 2nd 2017

This question was asked by the [Association ScienceCenter-Netzwerk](#) on the occasion of the Open Campus of [IST Austria](#) on May 21st. About 2000 visitors were invited to engage in hands-on and dialogue activities on the theme of “[Longevity](#)” within the framework of the EU project „[ERC=Science²](#)“.

Vienna, June 2, 2017 – On May 21st the Association ScienceCenter-Netzwerk presented fascinating insights in international research on the themes of longevity and ageing, which is funded by the [European Research Council \(ERC\)](#). About 2000 visitors – adults, families, students – of the Open Campus event at IST Austria had the opportunity to get to know innovative research, discuss in dialogue activities, how (long) are we – probably – going to live and experience the challenges of ageing in hands-on-workshops.

European Frontier Research on Relevant Issues of Today’s Societies

The EU project „ERC=Science²“ puts a spotlight on frontier research which tackles the big issues of our time, such as longevity, food or urban issues, and communicates ground-breaking research projects and their results, funded by the ERC. The 42-month Europe-wide multimedia communication campaign targets the wider European public, in order to raise awareness for the most innovative research and in order to promote the exchange between researchers and the public. Currently, the project explores the topic of „longevity and ageing“.

Theme „Longevity“ at the Open Campus of IST Austria.

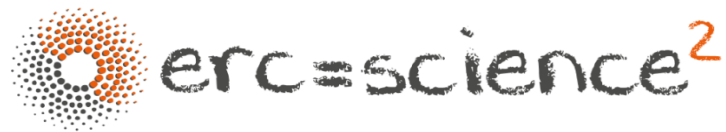
A multimedia stand, travelling around the project’s partner countries, presented the latest research studies on Alzheimer and other forms of dementia. Visitors also learned that “stress”, which is seen as “modern disease” of our time, actually, already strained people in the Victorian age. Based on the research findings of Marc Luy’s project of the life expectancy of monks and nuns visitors questioned the pros and cons of “our” modern and mundane lifestyle. The research of Michal Schwartz of the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, which might lead to a promising new treatment of Alzheimer, gained a lot of attention and stirred interesting discussions, too.

An interactive exhibit of worldpopulation.io, IIASA and FH Joanneum displayed worldwide statistical data of the UNDP on longevity, which is then used by an algorithm to calculate the (statistical) individual life expectancy dependent of categories like gender, age and place of birth and living. The glance into

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one's future life expectancy and the comparison with the life expectancy e.g. of children or with men and women in other countries of the world, sparked a lot of talks and discussions among the visitors.

For the young ones an age-simulation suit, presented by the Technical Museum Vienna (tmw) provided an immediate experience what ageing might be about. In four tinkering workshops children, parents and grand-parents alike, could not only engage in building scribbling machines, cars and spider webs, but also experience – with the help of DIY age simulations – how difficult normal things like using scissors, gluing things together, or making knots, can become, when sensory experiences and movements are getting weaker and weaker with ageing.

Several hundred visitors followed the family lecture of [Bernd Bickel](#), researcher at IST Austria, and ERC grantee, who focused on a current innovative technology, the 3D-printing, which might become a widely used technology at home, thus changing today's consumer attitude into a more "participatory" approach of home-producing things of everyday use. The 3D-printer thus, is one example out of many others, which demonstrates how fast technological innovation takes place today, and how quickly individual competences and knowledge have to change and adapt throughout a (growing) life-time.

In autumn, the Association ScienceCenter-Netzwerk will be part of the European Researchers' Night on September 29th with "sensory experiences", the next theme of the "ERC=Science²" project.

The activities of the science centres and museums are coordinated by [ECSITE](#), the European Network of Science Centres and Museums, while the project is coordinated by [Science I Business](#).

To find out more about the ERC=Science² campaign, featured ERC-funded research and the project multimedia content, please visit www.sciencesquared.eu

To get the latest news and updates follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Scisq and like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ScienceSquaredbyERC>.

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