

Else Kröner Fresenius Preis für Medizinische Forschung ("Else Kröner Fresenius Award for Medical Research") Background information

Else Kröner and the Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung (EKFS) (foundation)

Else Fernau was born on 15 May 1925 and grew up in the household of Dr Fresenius, a pharmacist in Frankfurt, Germany. In the immediate aftermath of World War II Dr Fresenius had just begun to reorganise his business activities when he suddenly passed away in February 1946. The community of heirs, which included Else Fernau, decided that she should be trained as a pharmacist. After completing her studies in 1951 she assumed management of the Fresenius corporate enterprise. She was advised in business matters by a consultant, Dr Hans Kröner, who later became her husband and joined the company as its managing co-director in 1972. Together they laid the foundation for the success of the global healthcare company we know today. Else Kröner remained managing director of the company until its conversion into a joint-stock company in 1981, then subsequently served in a capacity as Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board until she died in June 1988.

The commitment Else Kröner displayed in building up the company was matched by her devotion to charitable and humanitarian work. EKFS, the foundation she established in 1983, became her sole beneficiary upon her death and is the largest shareholder of Fresenius, as well as the largest foundation of its type in Germany. It is dedicated to promoting medical research and equally supports medical aid/humanitarian relief projects in developing countries.

To date the Else Kröner Fresenius Stiftung foundation has supported some 1,760 projects by means of a total of approximately EUR 337 million. Among the beneficiaries are numerous outstanding research projects in all fields of medical research. A special focus has been set on supporting the research careers of young scientists, in particular clinician scientists. Group research and individual fellowship programmes offering training and advancement at all career stages have been readily established.

Besides providing immediate care for patients in need, medical aid/humanitarian relief at EKFS also focuses on supporting projects involved with medical training and education.

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In 2013, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the death of Else Kröner, the foundation inaugurated an international research award, the Else Kröner Fresenius Preis für Medizinische Forschung ("Else Kröner Fresenius Award for Medical Research"). Originally designed as a quadrennial research prize, the concept will be changed from 2020 onwards to a biennial award endowed with 2.5 million euros. Each prize call is dedicated to a different field of medical research that promises particular progress in the near future.

The award shall be presented to an outstanding scientist to honour his or her achievements in research and to significantly support their future work in a promising field of medical

research. The award is meant to mark the worldwide importance of Else Kröner's lifetime achievements.

In 2013, the prize was presented in the field of immunology to Yale researcher Ruslan Medzhitov. Karl Deisseroth from Stanford University won the prize in 2017 for his work on the biological causes of mental illnesses.

Time frame and procedural flow

1. Communication and nomination: [December 2018 – April 2019](#)

The award will be publicly announced via home pages (EKFS and, when possible, scientific societies in the field of gene therapy) along with advertisements in selected scientific journals. Nominations accompanied by two letters of recommendation from leading researchers from two different countries will be accepted until April, 4th 2019.

2. Selection of a candidate short list: [April 2019 – June 2019](#)

After formal pre-screening of nominations by EKFS, an international award committee comprised of experts in the field will invite a maximum of 5 candidates to submit a full proposal, including a particular focus on the future experimental work intended.

3. In-depth external reviews of full proposals: [September 2019 – November 2019](#)

Submission of full proposals. External experts will be requested to assess the merits of the candidates' contribution to their specific field of research and to evaluate the scientific potential of future work.

4. Nomination of winner: [November 2019](#)

The jury shall propose the ultimate winner based on the reviewers' assessments. This recommendation must be confirmed by the Foundation Board ("Stiftungsrat").

5. Feasibility check: [December 2019 – March 2020](#)

6. Award ceremony: [June, 4th 2020](#)

A festive formal award ceremony and a symposium shall be held in Frankfurt, Germany on June, 4th 2020.