

DINGWELL NAMED 3rd SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL



Donald B. Dingwell
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Donald Bruce Dingwell will serve as the Secretary General of the European Research Council (ERC) for 24 months, starting 1 September 2011. The Secretary General is the permanent representative of the Scientific Council in Brussels. In this position he will be a vital link between the governing scientific council and the executing ERC agency. With Dingwell as the third Secretary General, a Canadian-trained geoscientist follows the geneticist Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker and the economist Andreu Mas-Colell in this post.

Set up in 2007 by the European Union, the ERC is the first pan-European funding organization for frontier research. It aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. The ERC, which is the newest, pioneering component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme ('Ideas' Specific Programme), has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013.

Dingwell holds the Chair of Mineralogy and Petrology at Germany's leading research university, the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, and is on partial leave of absence from his duties there. With experience as an external expert, a panel member and a grant research holder, he brings a unique background to the job. Combined with a decade of participation in European and national evaluation systems, he is preparing to embark on a campaign of internationalization of the granting system.

GEOCHEMICAL JOURNAL AWARDEES

The Geochemical Journal Award recognizes the most outstanding research article published during the current year, based on originality, quality, and the advancement of science, particularly geochemistry. Recipients of this year's Geochemical Journal Award are Dr. Jun-Ichi Matsuda of Osaka University and his colleagues, Dr. Takuya Matsumoto and Mr. Akihisa Suzuki. They published an "Express Letter" entitled "Helium in Old Porcelain: The Historical Variation of the He Isotopic Composition in Air." The paper deals with a long-standing debate on whether there is a variation of the atmospheric $^3\text{He}/^4\text{He}$ ratio due to the anthropogenic release of radiogenic ^4He contained in exploited fossil fuels. To confirm the temporal variation, capsules of paleoatmospheric helium need to be found and investigated. This is what the authors of this paper did. They nicely showed that vesicles in old porcelain could preserve old atmosphere. This paper provides additional insights into the anthropogenic effects on the chemistry and volatile content of the atmosphere. For the quality of the data, the significance of the results, and the novelty of the approach, this paper well deserves the Geochemical Journal Award of the Geochemical Society of Japan.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, Y. Sano (executive editor), Takuya Matsumoto (awardee), Jun-Ichi Matsuda (awardee), Mitsuru Ebihara (Geochemical Society of Japan president) and Bernard Marty (Goldschmidt 2011 Local Organizing Committee member)

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As for my friend's questions, I, like most people, cannot foresee where China will be more than 3 to 5 years down the road. But I do not believe that China will be a threat or challenge to the United States, militarily, economically, or scientifically. China has made a lot of progress, but unshackling the country from the burden of 2000 plus years of history is a challenge no less great than "moving the mountains."

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- Thomson Reuters (2011) Top 20 Nations in Geosciences. <http://sciencewatch.com/dr/cou/2011/11sepGEO>

Chen Zhu is a professor of geological sciences at Indiana University, USA, and an adjunct professor at the University of Oslo, Norway. He received his PhD from Johns Hopkins University and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. He was a guest professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Switzerland, in 2004 and 2008, and was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Oslo in 2009. Zhu coauthored with Greg Anderson the textbook *Environmental Applications of Geochemical Modeling*. He has served as an associate editor for *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta* since 2005.

Triple Point raises issues of broad interest to the readers of *Elements*, and explores different themes of our science (teaching, publishing, historical aspects, etc.), our societies, funding, policy, and political issues. Contact Bruce Yardley (B.W.D. Yardley@leeds.ac.uk) if you have an issue you would like to write about.