

Ministers

Bruton,

Sherlock,

President Sartori,

Dear colleagues,

ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the Ministers for being here sharing their priorities for the coming months.

Horizon 2020 has ambitious goals and well defined actions to help Europe raising its level of Excellence in Science Base, gaining Industrial Competitiveness and addressing Societal Challenges. To reach these objectives we need an appropriate funding.

I would like to ask your opinion on the ongoing negotiations of the MFF and its implications on Horizon 2020.

SMEs and Industry

In the current economic climate, it is essential that Europe's industrial base is strengthened. At the same time, industrial participation in Framework Programmes for Research has dropped significantly over the last few years. Similarly, Europe has difficulty in ensuring that research results are effectively converted into innovative products and services that reach the market. To counter these three difficulties, four areas have been amended: more incentives to industry participation in European projects, support covering the whole innovation cycle, facilitating the access of SMEs through a dedicated instrument for small to medium sized enterprises and finally standardisation built into technological development projects.

Excellence and Stairway to Excellence

We welcome the focus on excellence without any geographical or other preconditions.

It is also of fundamental importance that we encourage the first sprouts of excellence. In this respect, the concept of "stairway to excellence" will enable us to create the conditions for the participation of small units of embryonic excellence, such as small research groups and highly innovative start ups.

Synergies with Structural Funds

The second area that I believe deserves particular attention is that of the building of complementarity between Horizon 2020 and various European, national and regional financial instruments. Structural funds, of course, are of central importance in this respect.

Increasing complexity in the field of scientific research requires critical mass and has gone hand in hand with a rising need for expensive equipment.

Providing for this is a sphere in which the European Union can make a real difference. To further these ends, we require a multi-fund approach and strengthening of the bridges that link Horizon 2020 and other funds - with the structural funds to the fore.

Simplification

The last element that I should like to focus on is that of simplification. As some of you will already know, this is something of a crusade with me. Horizon 2020 includes the greatest part of the many recommendations that were made in my simplification report.

ITRE COMMITTEE - Presentation by Richard Bruton, Irish Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and by Sean Sherlock, Irish Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation with responsibility for Research and Innovation, Presidency-in-office of the Council of the European Union

European Parliament, 23 January 2013
Speech from Maria da Graça Carvalho

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, let me say that I now look forward to discussing these points in the forthcoming months and build with you a strong Programme for Research and Innovation in Europe.