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Let me begin by expressing my gratitude for this invitation to participate in this dinner debate.

My experience as a scientist working in the domain of European politics means, I feel that, my contribution can best be made in the following areas:

a) Overcoming obstacles (and particularly unnecessary red tape):

b) Advantages of EU level policies

c) Questions of funding and budgeting.

Let me take these different elements one by one.

A) In so far as the non-technological or policy bottlenecks are concerned, one of the major difficulties we face is the excessive bureaucratic complexity of applying for EU funding.

As an MEP, I was honoured to have been entrusted with the challenge of being the rapporteur for the simplification report. In my opinion, the current system - which is essentially based on cost analysis - should be replaced by a system that places greater trust in the applicants. Consequently, I have proposed a two-pronged approach aimed at rebalancing the evaluation procedure.

First, I set out to simplify the monitoring of the financial aspects of funded projects. Second, I looked to reinforce the technical and scientific assessment process. This presupposes a process of peer review and, with it, the application of excellence-based criteria for assessment.

Of course, all financial transactions involve a degree of risk, but excessive concern about controlling this risk through administrative supervision can actually increase the overall cost of the process.

We must strike a balance between trust and control - between risk taking and risk avoidance - in order to ensure the sound financial management of EU research funds.

The report on simplifying the implementation of the Framework Programmes for Research was voted on during the plenary session of the European Parliament and was adopted with an overwhelming majority and broad cross party support.

However, this development is only the beginning of a long and difficult road ahead. Now we must make sure that our recommendations are properly implemented. At the moment, we are actually monitoring 72 different aspects of the process. I have been gratified by the good will that the Commissioner for Research and DG Research have shown.

B) Secondly, with regard to the advantages of EU based policy

Dealing with the complexity of most of the scientific challenges we currently face requires critical mass and access to expensive equipment, something that is better achieved at European level. Indeed, the added value of European scientific programmes has been very widely recognised due to the critical mass and economy of scale that these programmes represent.

What is more, the sheer volume that working at European level involves actively promotes *excellence*. This is because a whole series of proposals and results are evaluated across the EU and not only nationally or regionally. In addition to promoting excellence as such, new programmes should also include the notion of a "stairway to excellence". This entails encouraging the participation of small units of embryonic excellence, such as small research groups and highly innovative start ups.

Lastly with regard how the EU can further research and innovation, one of the questions we have to resolve is the concrete architecture of the Horizon 2020 Programme. In so far as Chemistry is concerned. it will be important to define the exact role, place and funding for the KETs. The EU tends to come up with broadly defined "societal challenges" without really specifying what technological means will be required to achieve these ends. This requires further elaboration in conjunction with the Commission.

C) Finally, with regard to questions of funding or budgeting

As a Member of the European Parliament in the Committee of Industry, Research and Energy and as the permanent rapporteur of the EPP political group for research in the Budget Committee, I have been actively involved in questions of research funding and budgeting. At the moment, we are struggling to achieve a doubling of the Budget for the next European Programme for Research and Innovation as compared with the present programme. Hopefully, this will represent an increase from €50 billion to €100 billion. This figure was included in an amendment that I introduced and has recently been adopted by the European Parliament.

Since then, the European Commission has advanced an alternative figure of €80 billion as part of the post- 2013 7-year budget package. The next step will involve tough negotiations between the main three European Institutions, Parliament, Council and the Commission. A number of European countries, with Germany to the fore, support a figure at the higher end of this spectrum. It is to be hoped that other Governments will follow this lead especially those countries with a reputation for academic excellence such the United Kingdom. In research, as in other domains in life, you only get out what you put in!

So to sum up, I believe that the contribution that I can make falls into the spheres of

a) simplification and improving access to EU funds

b) the building up of critical mass and a culture of excellence at EU level along side defining the concrete architectural means to achieving broadly define societal goals

c) making a determined effort to secure more funding for research at EU level

Thank you very much.