

Research for Excellence at the European Parliament - a day with IMM
Brussels, 15 June 2011
Hosted by Maria da Graça Carvalho, MEP

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

Can I begin by thanking you for having taken the time to come to this seminar on the research for excellence in the European Parliament.

Our different guest speakers all come from the IMM. The IMM; based in Lisbon and attached to the Medical Faculty of the University of Lisbon, is one of the most prestigious research centres in Portugal.

The speakers will give their perspective on the future of biomedical research in Europe. They will discuss something of the barriers they have experienced in conducting their research but will also discuss how Europe can further excellence in the domain and about the way in which Portuguese research can best contribute at a European level.

This is a particularly crucial moment for us all as the Parliament, the Council and the Commission are already working on the FP8 and on the future EU budget, post- 2013. In my opinion, it is of paramount importance, at this juncture, that all of us pull in the same direction in

order to ensure that we obtain the best possible design, structure and funding for the future programmes.

Before handing you over to the speakers, I should like to briefly deal with three key aspects.

* Firstly, how I see the development of the FP8 or the CSF or whatever it will eventually be called.

* Secondly, the question of the budget provisions and the share of the budget that is devoted to research and innovation in Europe.

* Thirdly, the need for simplification in the domain.

So, with regard to the development of the FP8, one of my suggestions in the past - one that I am gratified to see has been taken up by the Commission - involved establishing three pillars:

1. A science driven pillar that includes ERC, research support activities such as Marie Curie and European research infrastructures;
2. A policy driven pillar that includes cooperative research projects addressing the major societal challenges, and joint programming.
3. An industry driven pillar that includes JTIs, SMEs, EIB;

These three pillars already represent a much simpler and more effective structure than in the FP7 and I should like to congratulate the Commission on the progress they have made in this direction.

Turning now to the question of the budget provision, I and a group of MEPs from the EPP group called for the doubling of the FP8 budget by comparison with the FP7 budget. This was included in the FP7 mid-term review report and was voted on and adopted in Plenary last week in Strasbourg. This proposal has been included in the EU Parliament draft report for the CSF. It has also been included in the future budget report although we have had to adopt the wording "a substantial increase"

(rather than "doubling") in this report. The report was also voted on in Plenary last week.

Lastly, with regard to simplification, it will not matter how sophisticated and elegant the CSF is, if we do not manage to build simplification into the new programme. This involves not only fewer instruments but also a radical overhaul of the administrative and financial rules.

As the MEP that has been responsible for the drawing up of the "simplification report" we have come up with no less than 71 separate recommendations. One third of these require changes to the financial regulations. To this end, I have introduced a series of amendments into the financial regulation report in order to ensure that the 71 recommendations will be implemented at the outset of the new framework programme.

This being said, let me hand you over to our first speaker from the IMM

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