

Basic Ideas:

- 1) How can the Planning of FP be improved:
 - 7 years is the best timeframe?
 - Plan everything in one go?
- 2) Is Joint Planning the best way of going about things.
- 3) How can the connections between Policy and research be improved.

1) *Improving the Planning of FP*

Strike a balance between long term planning and the ability of the programme to *react to new contingencies*. The main improvement required:

**introduce more flexibility* (ability to deal with particular problems such as Mad Cow Disease as they arise).

**increase funding for bottom up research* (not only in the research council but also across the board so that it includes such things as Health, Energy etc.).

2) *Improving Joint Planning*

Basic idea of joint planning is *laudable*. Creates critical mass; encourages excellence in one way or another. This being said it's; *admittedly, a nightmarish labyrinth of bureaucratic rules*; (27 different bureaucracies *topped by* another in the European Union itself).

There are a number of ways in which this might be improved. For those that are interested, I have written a detailed report on building the European Research Area in conjunction with M. R (which can be obtained on the Internet). This gives a much more complete description of possible improvements.

Let me give you three examples of possible improvements:

a) "***Joint financing***". We need to find more efficient ways of pooling resources. Member States and Regions could be encouraged to fund those *meritorious projects* that meet the criteria of excellence but cannot find funding due to the *simple lack of available funds*. States and regions could, for example, finance projects that have *passed a threshold of recognised excellence* - after European evaluation - but fail to achieve European funding. This is particularly the case for ERC and Marie-Curie.

b) "***Joint evaluation***". Need to create a system that is based in EU level evaluation but that is financed by States and Regions.

This will favour:

- * The financing of excellence
- * Capacity building
- * A transnational competitive environment.

In this respect, regions in particular are exposed to a European wide spectrum and gain a much better idea of *how they really measure up* by comparison with other projects at a European level.

c) "***Joint funding***" ***via a common fund***. I believe we should create a joint virtual fund (made up of contributions from the EU and the 27 members states) to promote collaborative EU research. This fund could be organised around the just return principal as is the case with the European space agency.

3) *Improving Synergy between Policy and Research.*

Organisation of research and policy agendas in parallel is self-evident. However, as I have already said in connection with improving planning of the FP, it is necessary to build in:

- * more flexibility
- * more bottom up research

Unfortunately, this is not the case now. In particular there is *a staggered effect* between decisions made in one domain and decision made in the other.

To give you an example:

- *The FP was drawn up in 2007 and will run until 2013.
- * Energy and climate change policy underwent *a radical overhaul* and became a key priority in 2008.
- * However, we cannot recognise this changed status for energy and climate change before the introduction of the Horizon 20-20 programme in 2014.

In other words, there has been a gap of six years! This can be partially remedied by introducing more flexibility and, in particular, by introducing more *thorough* mid-term reviews (up until now the mid-term reviews have tended to only *scratch the surface of things*).