

Good evening,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen

Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to the European Parliament, firstly, to our three speakers – Patricia Reilly, Michel Goldman and Peter Honggaard Andersen – and, secondly, to all our guests.

## *Horizon 2020*

### *General*

The general context of our discussion at this conference is to determine how best to promote innovation strong economies and to foster effective mechanisms that will allow Europe to bring

innovation to the market efficiently.

This is one of the central priorities of the new framework programme; a programme that I believe is a well-structured and comprehensive response to our current needs. In particular:

- the programme covers the whole cycle of innovation,
- a central place has been given to scientific lead approaches.
- and finally a real effort has been made to simplify access to funding

Indeed, one of the most important features of the new programme is that it aims to couple research to

innovation and hence to move from initial research to the market in a committed and determined manner. Significantly, this is the first framework programme to seek to supervise and fund the whole innovation cycle and, in this respect, IMI2 and the JTIs are fully in line with the new spirit of the programme that will come into effect from January of next year.

As for the current state of play concerning Horizon 2020, I am happy to inform you that the Horizon2020 reports were voted in last week in ITRE committee and the Specific programme report, for which I am responsible, was voted in with unanimous support.

*Horizon 2020 and Health*

The more specific goal of our discussion this evening is to examine something of the nature of future phases in research in a medical context. Here, the first societal challenge in the Third Pillar is devoted to “Health, demographic changes and well-being” and this challenge has the single largest budget in this pillar, amounting to a little over €9 billion.

I am optimistic that this will translate into continued, sustainable funding with a view to promoting excellent scientific responses to our health care needs. We know that against the background supplied by the general greying of the population, we shall require considerable more geriatric care whilst we simultaneously continue to care for other vulnerable sectors of the community, such as children

and the handicapped.

*Not Just Throwing Money at It*

However, if we are effectively to meet these needs, throwing money at research and innovation – whether it be in the healthcare system or elsewhere – is not enough. In this respect, the new framework programme Horizon 2020 should lead, by its very nature, to improving the use of funds alongside the planning and delivery of the solutions that we propose. To this end, we must *also* ensure, I feel, that we meet three further necessary requirements.

These are

~ Firstly, we must systematically foster *synergies*

*with the structural funds.* During the negotiations the Parliament sought to ensure greater complementarity between Horizon 2020 and various European, national and regional financial instruments. In particular, Parliament defended a multi-fund approach and a strengthening of the bridges that link Horizon 2020 and other, available funds and most particularly the structural funds. As such, the structural funds have a role to play – both upstream and downstream – with regard to the Horizon 2020 objectives. Upstream from Horizon 2020, the structural funds can be used for capacity building (i.e. equipment, human resource development, creation of and source of small grants, contribution to the funding of ERC, Marie Curie or collaborative projects). Downstream from Horizon 2020, the structural funds will help smooth the

passage from conception to market (i.e. the can be used to finance or co-finance the follow up to Horizon 2020 research projects and the valorisation of research results). An approach that actively sought to establish links with smart specialisation as this involved several cross-references to the structural funds was agreed upon.

~ secondly, we must aim to further a *more balanced geographical participation*. Excellence – without geographical constraints – is the primary criterion for participation in Horizon 2020. Against this background, a significant innovation is the creation of “stairways to excellence” concept. This involves teaming initiatives whose objective is to establish and reinforce partnerships between regional

research units, countries and leading international counterparts.

This will enable Europe to foster units of embryonic excellence, such as small research groups and highly innovative start-ups. Such stairways to excellence will be able to lever support from the Cohesion Funds and this will contribute significantly to the creation of critical mass from existing seeding grounds

~ *Simplification* Thirdly, we have to make sure that our funding programmes are as simple and as accessible as possible and that we reduce red tape and over-regulation, a concern that is particularly close to my heart as the rapporteur for the Simplification Report. Over the years, the framework programmes have grown in scope both in terms of their



applications and the size of their budgets. The swelling number of applications for funding has been met with a parallel growth in control mechanisms.

The unfortunate result is that it is increasingly difficult – for the various different entities that might contribute to the programmes – to find their way through a labyrinth of rules, procedures and ramifying red tape. It is for this reason that European Institutions have made efforts to replace the current system with one that places greater trust in the applicants as this entails much simpler financial and administrative rules. In response, my cry would be “simplify, simplify!”

## *The Innovative Medicines Initiative and JTIs*

Finally, let me say a few words about the Innovative Medicine Initiative and the JTIs. The work that we undertake in the European Union must necessarily be supplemented by active collaboration with the private sector and the Innovative Medicines Initiative represents Europe's largest public-private initiative.

The goal of this initiative is to speed up the development of better and safer medicines for patients and this Initiative has proved to be a powerful instrument in funding research whilst developing collaborative networks bringing together various stakeholders, industrial and academic experts, the

public and private sectors, the EU and the member states.

As such, IMI contributes to coordinating the different efforts of various key actors in innovative medicines. Although, coordination and structuring is important in all the domains covered by H2020, it is particularly important in the health sector.

To this end, the parliament has introduced a new element in the initial Commission proposal. This is setting a scientific led panel that will coordinate health research and liaise with the relevant initiatives are regional and national level. The tangible results will be much improved exchange of information, acceleration in the provision of the concrete benefits

that are to be derived from health research alongside greater economic efficiency.

Finally, more specifically with regard to JTIs, the Council and the Parliament are currently about to start preparing the reports on the JTIs and so today's event is particularly timely.

In line with one of the most significant developments in H2020, the JTIs have the advantage of covering the full innovation chain from frontier research to launching products on the market. Consequently, our discussion is an opportunity to examine the central role of JTIs and to consider the lessons learned and the information gained from the projects that have already been successfully

completed. This will then play a central role in planning the next phase of the JTIs.

### *Conclusion*

At this point, it only remains for me to express my sincere hope that the crucial work carried out by the researchers in the health sector will continue in the future with increased vigour and purpose and that Horizon 2020 and the work we undertake in the Parliament will actively contribute to this end.

On this note, I look forward to what I am sure will be a stimulating and fruitful discussion.

Our first speaker this evening is Patricia Reilly from the Cabinet of the Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn

Thank you very much