

Good morning,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the organisers for their kind invitation. This morning, my main purpose is to give you a brief overview of how I see the future of the different EU research and innovation programmes with particular reference to the social sciences and humanities. I shall also say a few words about the importance of the new EU budget for funding research and innovation.

You will, of course, be aware of the importance of EU funding in research and innovation across Europe. This is a particularly crucial moment for us all as the Parliament, the Council and the Commission are in the process of conducting the mid term review of the FP7; they have also already started 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.

As an MEP and member of the ITRE committee; I have been the rapporteur for the simplification of the EU research and innovation programmes. I am also the EPP permanent rapporteur for the research area in both the current Budget Committee and in the Future Budget

Committee.

In this capacity, I should like to speak about two main areas.

~ Firstly, I shall underscore the need for increased funding in the present and future budgets for EU research and innovation programmes.

~ Secondly, I shall present my perspective and recommendations concerning the major guidelines for FP8.

The Budget

The first point concerns the budget. In this respect, I have called for the doubling of the budget for the FP8 by comparison with FP7. To this end, I have introduced two amendments with the aim of ensuring that this actually becomes policy.

For the moment, a first amendment has been introduced into the report on the mid-term review of FP7. This amendment has been voted through at the committee stage within ITRE. I have also introduced a similar amendment into the future budget report in the SURE Committee although this has not yet been voted on.

Independently of differences about the overall size of the EU budget,

we should fight to increase the share given to EU research within the overall budget. Of course, I would like the overall budget to be increased but this is quite a difficult task to achieve in the current economic and political climate. In the meantime, we should struggle to ensure that research gets the possible deal.

Challenges

Let me turn now to my second theme, which is the general guidelines to FP8. As I see it, there are 5 key principles. The programme should involve:

~ Firstly, a trust based funding system.

~ Secondly, a chain from frontier research, to technological development, demonstration, valorisation of results and innovation.

~ Thirdly, a simpler FP with fewer instruments alongside a radical overhaul of the administration of the FP.

~ Fourthly, excellence based criteria for the FP in co-ordination with the structural funds for research capacity building.

~ And finally, enhanced international cooperation.

FP8 should strike a balance between bottom up and top down research. Top down research should focus on areas related to the "great challenges" agenda. These themes include:

Environmental challenges;

Energy Challenges and climate change;

Demographic changes;

Challenges for people and society;

New ideas about quality of life;

Social innovation

and Challenges for European industry in a globalised world.

The social sciences and the humanities evidently have a role to play in confronting these challenges. We live in a world that is undergoing enormous changes in the fields of the international economy, the global energy system, the greying of society and the list goes on. We need to identify the consequences of these changes and find solutions to them. The social sciences, in general, are crucial in this respect. My recommendations concerning an increased but also simplified and more flexible budget are as relevant to the social sciences as they are to the applied natural sciences.

Thank you very much for your attention. If anyone has any questions that

The future of social science and humanities funding in Europe

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they should like to ask, I will be happy to answer them in so far as I am able to.