

To begin with, let me introduce myself. My name is Maria da Graça Carvalho. As you will know, I am an MEP member of the ITRE Committee and a former Portuguese minister for Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

With regard to regional innovation and cohesion policies, in my opinion innovation is by nature, regional.

As I see it, scientific research is something universal and it requires transnational networks, large teams, and international funding initiatives.

Innovation, by contrast is much more a matter of regional level. This requires for example firstly a well oiled education and research system, favourable macro economic conditions, thirdly a minimum of "red tape".

With regards to the question of funding, scientific research is oriented towards excellence. This entails international competition, large scale funding and is best funded out of the international programmes, like the 7 FP of research.

By contrast, innovation, due to its regional character, requires less international competition more target funding in cooperation with regional/local authorities and stakeholders. This is best funded out of these structural funds.

Having said that, we should not exclude funding of scientific research from out of the structural funds. I am thinking in particular of the capacity building part of the scientific research. Capacity Building means scholarships, infrastructures and creating regional critical mass.

When I was Minister of Science and Innovation, I undertook a number of measures in what was then a difficult economic climate.

This meant we had to make some fairly hefty cuts in our budget and to establish key spending priorities. The decision we made was to foreground 2 key domains:

Science and Innovation in one hand and Information society on the other hand

Because of the cuts in the national budget that we had to make, it was of utmost importance that we made the best possible use of the structural funds.

This meant renegotiating our priorities with the European Commission.

As Minister, with regards to science and innovation, I was able to put in place a number of programmes such as:

- scholarships,
- reconversion of graduates with degrees in areas not particularly adapted to market demand

- A number of funding initiatives in the health education, research and training were negotiated.

With regards to research infrastructure, a major investment programme for new scientific equipment was set up.

In the sphere of regional innovation: we set up a number of clusters and we encourage a number of regional based research programmes.

With regards now to the information society domain we were also able to fund a number of key initiatives. These include: Wi-Fi broadband internet available in communities; Secondly we made it possible for universities and polytechnics to access international scientific data base. Thirdly, we set up a programme for the modernization of civil service, this meant, offering recent graduates traineeships and job placement programmes in the civil service in an effort to shake up the bureaucracy.