

WHAT FUTURE FOR RESEARCH IN EUROPE?

EPP GROUP HEARING ON THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Wednesday 1 June 2011, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Intervention from Maria da Graça Carvalho:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

In this panel, our subject is the implementation of the simplification rules with regard to the funding of research and innovation programmes.

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.

Our three speakers today are

Mr. Andrea Benassi, Secretary-General of the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

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Mr. Jan Van den Biesen, Vice-President, Public R and D Programmes at Philips Research

and finally Mr Dominique Ristori, Director-General of the Joint Research Centre.

I should like to thank them for having taken the time from their busy schedules to speak to us today. After they have all spoken, there will be a short question and answer session in which you will have the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have.

Before turning to our first speaker, let me begin by saying a few words about what *I* see as being the key aspects to this process. 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.

On 11 November 2010, the Simplification Report was voted on during the plenary session of the European Parliament and was adopted with an

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overwhelming majority. However, the report marks only the beginning of a difficult road ahead. Now, we have to make sure that our recommendations are properly implemented.

As things stand, a fair degree of progress has been made. Both the Parliament and the Council are fully committed to the success of this process and this meeting is living proof of this commitment. To achieve our joint goals as efficiently and quickly as possible, the EPP has set up a group of MEPs to monitor and encourage the simplification process. The Council has also set up a group of ministers to the same effect.

The report on "Simplifying the Implementation of the Research Framework Programmes" detailed 71 recommendations to be implemented. You will be relieved to hear that I will not be going through these 71 recommendations with you today. However, the handout that has been supplied gives each recommendation divided into four categories. These are:

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- Already implemented by the Commission;
- Proposed by the EP to be implemented with the Midterm Review of FP7;
- To be implemented within FP8 requiring a revision of the financial regulation;
- To be implemented within FP8 but not requiring revision of financial regulation.

In the category of measures that have already been implemented, the Commission brought in three reforms at the beginning of 2011. These had immediate effect on the management of EU research grants in the current EU research programme (FP7). They were:

- * more flexibility in the calculation of personnel costs
- * SMEs will be able to receive flat-rate payments for their contribution to work on research projects.

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* A new steering group of senior officials from all the Commission departments and agencies will remove inconsistencies in the application of the rules on research funding.

Each of these steps responds to concerns repeatedly expressed by participants and would-be participants in FP7.

Turning now to the category of the Midterm Review of FP7, Mr Audi and I have included a set of recommendations in the mid-term review report. These went through the ITRE Committee without the slightest difficulty and will be voted on in the Plenary in Strasbourg next week.

Thirdly, there are those recommendations to be integrated into FP8 that *require* revision of the financial regulations. In this respect, Mr Audi and I have included a series of amendments in the financial regulation report. These amendments, along with the recommendations that *do not* require revision of the financial regulations, will be included in the FP8 report. Taken together these measures should allow all the seventy-one

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recommendations to be implemented as soon as the FP8 comes into effect.

Well, I think that is enough from me. Let me hand you over to Mr Andrea Benassi: