

Ms.
Maria Carvalho Da Graça
European Parliament
Bât. Altiero Spinelli
08E142
60, rue Wiertz
B-1047 Bruxelles

30th April 2012

Dear Member of Parliament,

I would like to ask you to continue our constructive discussion which had begun on 20th March 2012 on the occasion of the hearing regarding the definition of Horizon 2020 at the meeting of the ITRE Committee and invite you to a parliamentary breakfast on 10th May 2012 from 08:30 to 09:30 a.m. The breakfast will take place in a salon of the European Parliament Members' Dining Room.

During the hearing, you raised the important question as to the means by which researchers in structurally weak regions in Europe could participate in European research funding more successfully – or, to put the question differently – as to the means by which top competitive research organizations in structurally weak regions could be organized.

This question cannot be answered easily. However, I can assure you that the Max Planck Society has recognized the need to introduce excellent research to the structurally weak and disadvantaged regions in Europe. Numerous researchers from the new EU member states work at the more than 80 Max Planck institutes and would like to return to their home countries where, however, they would not find the same excellent research conditions they had, for example, enjoyed at our institutes. As a consequence, innumerable talented scientists from the new EU member states settle in the USA or in emerging Asian states.

This brain drain must be terminated by calling the attention of those as yet less research-intensive regions to excellent research conditions as soon as possible.

With its expertise, the Max Planck Society could be of help with regard to the establishment of Max Planck Centers or the financing of partner research groups abroad. The Max Planck Society welcomes the idea of the European Parliament to only enhance excellent research in structurally weak regions in a competitive procedure if these regions commit themselves to creating an excellent framework by using structure and cohesion resources. The establishment of top research organizations in the new EU member states can only succeed in this manner.

A basic requirement is that structurally disadvantaged regions – acting on the basis of already existing research structures – consider which research fields they have that exhibit excellent potential. Against this background, the region can then draw up an operational program to apply for structural funds for the foundation of excellent research infrastructures. In this connection, renowned research organizations could already be of assistance. Subsequently, the structurally weak region could, in conjunction with the renowned research organization, apply for one of the Horizon 2020 funding programs as well as for research financing and adequate staff funding.

I would like to discuss this concept with you and other members of the European Parliament in more detail while having breakfast together on 10th May. I am looking forward to our discourse.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pib. SJ', written in a cursive style.

Peter Gruss