

State of play of H2020 reports

As things currently stand, H2020 has recently undergone the second consideration of various amendments in the ITRE committee. The different reports will be voted on at the end of November (on the 28th in fact). The report will then be voted on in Plenary shortly after.

Otherwise, the main content of my contribution today centres, *firstly*, on the way in which food, well-being and the environment has been dealt with under H2020 and, *secondly*, on a consideration of the different instruments that we will have at our disposal

in order to foster innovation and to encourage the valorisation of research in a commercial context. Finally, I should also like to make something of an appeal from the heart with regard to the current negotiations centring on the budget.

Food, Wellbeing and Environment

With regard to the specific questions of food, well-being and the environment, these concerns are widely covered by H2020. The treatment of these issues is covered in one of the Key Enabling Technologies in Pillar 2 but they are also taken into consideration in the 3rd Pillar concerned with societal challenges.

More specifically, one of the Key Enabling Technologies in Pillar 2 is Biotechnology, the specific objective of which is to develop competitive, sustainable and innovate industrial products and processes. This is intended to foster innovation in key European sectors such as agriculture, food, chemicals and health.

As for the sections in pillar 3 that touch on questions of food, well-being and the environment, there are three specific challenges that are of direct relevance. These are:

~ Soc Challenge 1: Health, demographic change and well-being

~ Soc Ch 2: Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the **bio-economy**

~ Soc Ch 5: Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials

At the moment, the parliament is pressing for greater emphasis on the “bio-economy” as a central aspect to H2020 and has suggested changing the name of the second societal challenge to "**European bio-economy challenges: food security and safety, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime research**"

Bridging Science and Industry through knowledge transfer

As for the different instruments that we have at our disposal, H2020 gives to a central place to several instruments that promote innovation and the valorisation of research findings in a commercial context. In particular, these include three bottom up funding instruments:

* Firstly, the SME instrument will enable us to provide simplified and staged support and its three phases will cover the whole innovation cycle. Transition from one phase to the next will be seamless provided that the SME project, in question, is deemed to be

worth further funding during the previous phase. In this respect there are three phases. The first phase is "concepts and feasibility assessment", the second is "R&D, demonstration and market replication". The last aims to facilitate access to private capital and innovation enabling environments.

* The second main instrument that we have at our disposal is the debt and equity facilities. These will provide access to risk finance for industry and special conditions have been envisaged for SMEs. In this respect, the goal of the SME window is to support research, innovation and growth in the environment of small and medium sized companies. This will allow, where appropriate,

the pooling of financial resources for those member states that are (correct in previous text) willing to contribute a part of their structural funds.

..* Finally, future and emerging sciences and technologies will foster radically new technologies by exploring novel and high risk ideas that are built on scientific foundations. Flexible support will be provided to goal orientated and interdisciplinary collaborative research on various scales. Innovate research practices will be adopted whose aim is to identify and seize opportunities for future economic and social benefit.

It is our belief that these instruments will supply a real response to the needs of innovators in a European context.

Budget

Before finishing, let me say a few words about the pressure that we are currently experiencing to revise the budget. As you may know, the MFF negotiations are still under way. In this context, the Cypriot Presidency has recently announced that “*all elements inside and outside the MFF, will have to be adjusted downwards*”. A decision on the final figures is expected for the third week of November (between the 22nd and the 23rd).

These “adjustments” will inevitably have a considerable impact on the whole structure – and for that matter on the viability – of H2020. It is to be hoped that the different governments – and not least those with a reputation for academic excellence – will make an effort to attribute an at least adequate budget for H2020.

Conclusion

H2020 represents a comprehensive response to European needs in the field of research and innovation. The programme covers questions of food, well-being and environment in two of the three pillars in particular. There may still be some

adjustments before the final text is adopted but we, in the European Parliament, have made an effort to ensure that the text combines social well-being and responsibility with Europe's current need to foster competitiveness and growth. Considerable work has also been devoted to ensuring that we have the necessary financial and funding instruments that will enable us to achieve this goal. However, budgetary considerations cannot be neglected. As in many other areas of life, what you get out depends very much on what you put in!