

Good afternoon

Ladies and gentleman

Today we are here to speak about Research and the next EU budget.

A properly funded research and innovation programme is essential if Europe is to compete on the international stage. This will enable us to face a number of major challenges, such as the ageing of the population, the fight against climate change or the security of energy supply.

Research and innovation are the foundation to economic development and job creation. Advancements in science are equally crucial to the improvement of our quality of life as this includes such things as good health and air and water quality. We cannot achieve these goals without a properly weighted budget that promotes the distinct advantages of research at European level.

Dealing with the complexity of most of the scientific challenges we currently face, requires critical mass and access to expensive equipment, something that is better performed at European

level. Indeed, the added value of European scientific programmes has been widely recognised due to the critical mass and economy of scale that these programmes achieve.

In addition to promoting excellence as such, the new programme should also include the notion of a "stairway to excellence" as this entails encouraging the participation of small units of embryonic excellence, such as small research groups and highly innovative start ups.

As the permanent rapporteur of the EPP political group for research in the Budget Committee and the ITRE rapporteur for the specific programme on Horizon 2020, I have been actively involved in promoting the doubling of the Budget of the next European Programme for Research and Innovation as compared with the present programme.

The European Commission has advanced a figure of €80 billion. The next step will involve tough negotiations between the main three European Institutions, Parliament, Council and the Commission.

It is to be hoped that other Governments will follow this lead especially those countries with a reputation for academic excellence.

In research, as in other domains in life, you only get out what you put in!