

Good Morning

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to you all for taking the time to attend this seminar. In particular, I should like to thank our seven speakers and my co-host Britta Thomson for all the effort that they have put in. Thank you also to those who have travelled to Brussels to be with us here today

The main purpose of our conference is to gather information from the experts. This is in order to improve the quality of our response to the Commission's proposal

with regard to Horizon 2020 as it now begins to go through Parliament. I shall of course give particular attention to the question of multidisciplinary research.

You will know that the Commission made public its proposal for Horizon 2020 in November of 2011. At present, we in the EU Parliament are in the process of assigning the different rapporteurs for the nine reports involved. There then follows the relatively long process of amending this legislation: This is a time when the Parliament can really make a difference.

To start things off, there are two main things that I should like to talk about today. The first is to briefly outline the key points involved in the programme. The second is to offer an initial assessment of the Commission proposal and to consider how we might best proceed.

Horizon 2020

In so far as Horizon 2020 is concerned, I would like to briefly bring out three aspects.

* The *first is its structure*. The structure is much improved by comparison

with previous Framework Programmes. It is simpler and it strikes a highly satisfactory balance between the three pillars of

- * Excellence in science
- * Industrial leadership
- * And societal challenges

* The second aspect I should like to cover involves *the question of funding*. Horizon 2020, as it stands, already represents a *substantial* increase in the budget available for research and innovation: €80bn; in fact, as compared with the €52bn under the previous

programme. Gratifying as this is, the EU Parliament has been pressing for an effective doubling of the budget directly attributed to the Framework programme, something that would effectively bring the new figure to around €100bn.

The Parliament would also like to see an increase of the share that is allocated to research and innovation within the structural funds.

* Finally, there is the matter of simplification. As some of you will already know, this is something of a crusade with

me. The new programme includes the greatest part of the many recommendations that were made in my simplification report.

These include:

- A single set of rules for all elements of H2020.
- H2020 accepts the different accounting practices that the participants have already adopted in their respective countries.

- Simplification in the time recording system.
- Direct costs will henceforward be reimbursed at a 100 percent, something that will considerably simplify the lives of all concerned.
- Importantly, VAT will be considered an eligible cost for institutions that cannot recover it from their own state fiscal systems.
- Finally, the new rules should facilitate the recruitment of staff to universities in order to work on H2020

projects. Hopefully, this will keep young researchers in gainful employment.

Assessment of the Proposal

As for my second theme, this morning: how are we best to react to the Commission's proposal?

Overall, the proposal represents a real step forward and H2020 is obviously the fruit of considerable commitment on the part of the Commission. It represents an excellent basis on which we can now build.

However, there are some details that still have to be filled in and some aspects that could, undoubtedly, be improved.

These include the promotion of multidisciplinary research. The most obvious difficulties here are bridging different scientific cultures and overcoming the feeling that *we* - I mean natural and social scientists, engineers and so on - are all speaking in different tongues.

Another difficulty is that whilst most research programmes are conceived vertically, multidisciplinary research

requires horizontal cooperation. The result is a clash of perspectives and of intentions. H2020 has made a real effort to deal with this problem - especially in the societal challenges pillar - but much can still be done in this respect.

Well, that's enough from me.

I am very much looking forward to what I am sure will be a rewarding and stimulating discussion.

Thank you very much.