

Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn,
Minister Sean Sherlock
Mr Dermot Curran.
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the organisers for their kind invitation: it is a great honour to participate in this opening session. Let me also take this opportunity of speaking to you in Dublin to express my appreciation for the effort that the Irish Presidency has shown in furthering research and innovation at a European level.

I should also like to acknowledge the dedication and conviction that Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn has shown as Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science. We, in the parliament, have particularly appreciated the zeal that Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn has displayed in pursuing an adequately funded, ambitious but simplified H2020.

As rapporteur for the Specific Programme Implementing H2020, my talk will be mainly devoted to the relationship between joint programming and H2020. I have divided my speech into two parts. First, I should like to give an overview of JPIs and their relevance to European research and innovation. Then, in the second part, I shall go on to enumerate five ways in which H2020 will impact positively, I believe, on the joint programmes.

Joint Programming

So, to begin with the JPIs and their role in furthering European research and development initiatives: evidently, JPIs should contribute to the creation of European jobs, to generating innovative ideas and to consolidating the importance of European

research in the international environment. This will help reverse the relative slide in Europe's position in the international environment for research and innovation.

Although we in Europe are still ahead in many aspects of science and innovation, unfortunately, the extent of our advance is diminishing. A significant cause of this is to be found in the increasingly important role played by *the emerging powers* in the global economy. Not surprisingly, the indicators for Science and Innovation in China have been growing very rapidly and this trend is most marked in the private sector. The manner in which we conceive of Joint Programming *alongside* Horizon 2020 is thus of real importance in restoring Europe to its formerly elevated position.

The Joint Programming process has been conceived in such a way as to combine and mobilise national R&D potential whilst tackling a wide range of major societal challenges. The role of the JPIs is to provide a common EU strategic framework for the funding of research and innovation. By taking into account the strategic research agendas of the JPIs, Horizon 2020 will have an important leverage effect on Member States' investments, on the European research and innovation landscape and more broadly, on cross-border operations and transnational research.

As such, national efforts and Horizon 2020 should mutually reinforce each other with JPIs representing a unique opportunity to strengthen the coordination of research programmes at EU and Member States level.

Five Ways in which H2020 will have a positive impact on JPIs

If much progress has already been made in this direction, there remains a number of areas in which further improvements might still be envisaged. In the second part of my speech, as a result, I should like to outline *five areas* in which H2020 will have a positive impact on Joint Programming. In speaking of these five

areas – where appropriate – I shall suggest some of the ways in which we might improve JPIs still further.

* **Firstly**, the goal is to enable Member States to align their national research programmes to joint Agendas, with particular attention to JPIs that correspond to national priorities. In this respect, we must enable greater *synergies* between H2020 and the different EU, national and regional programmes. Such synergies should be exploited to maximise the funding pool and to increase the efficiency of public spending – without losing sight of the need to deploy funds in a coherent and complimentary manner.

* **Secondly**, the European Parliament has proposed the creation of strategic panels within H2020. These panels are expected to have a beneficial impact on the inter-relationship between H2020 and the JPIs. *Strategic panels for joint coordination* will be open, multi-disciplinary and scientific led Panels, composed of top scientists and technology developers. The Strategic Scientific Panels will liaise between the different initiatives making up Horizon 2020 at the same time as they will ensure coherence between Horizon 2020 and the relevant, existing initiatives at regional and national level.

The Strategic Panels have three main objectives:

a) to help structure research within a specific sector, by creating bridges and synergies between projects and research activities and advising in the process of research priority setting;

b) work as a platform for exchange of information, data and best practices among scientists and technology developers;

c) allow for long term planning (by which I mean post-2020).

In this context, improved coordination at a transnational European level should tend towards accelerating the time it takes to move from research to the provision of concrete benefits for end-users. An example, amongst others, might be research in rare diseases where exchange of information is extremely useful since the research results are scarce and scattered.

* **Thirdly**, new measures that aim to *foster excellence and widen participation* are also required both at the level of H2020 and the JPIs. In particular, I welcome the current focus on excellence in H2020 without any geographical or other preconditions. However, it is also of fundamental importance that we encourage the first sprouts of excellence. I am optimistic that the "stairway to excellence" will enable us to create the conditions for the enhanced participation of units such as small research groups and highly innovative start ups.

By the same logic, within *the scope of the JPIs*, widening participation should be promoted whilst maintaining a clear emphasis on excellence. This being said, some Member States may not - for the time being – be able to engage as full partners for a number of reasons. Nevertheless, it remains the case that they may be in a position to make valuable contributions on the basis of the excellence of their competent experts. Why should we keep such experts out in the cold? It seems to me essential that the same principles of widening participation that are found in H2020 should be applied in the case of JPIs.

* **Fourthly**, it is essential that Europe's industrial base is strengthened and that *industrial participation* is given a key role in H2020. To this end, a whole pillar in the H2020 programme has been devoted to industrial competitiveness. In parallel to this, SMEs are central to reinforcing the competitiveness of European industry and

H2020 foresees the creation of a new instrument that is entirely dedicated to this sector of the economy. The Parliament, for its part, has insisted on raising the level of participation of SMEs to 20%.

In this respect, we should renew our efforts to find ways of incorporating key stakeholders – in particular industry and end users – while fully respecting the character of Joint Programming as a public-public cooperation platform. Once again, the same principles that have been employed in H2020 should be applied to the JPIs.

* My **fifth** point is a cry from the heart: simplify, simplify! Both the Commission and the Parliament have made a real effort to remove red tape and facilitate access to funds whilst striking a balance between trust and control – between risk taking and risk avoidance – in order to ensure the sound financial management of EU research funds. Similarly, in a context that is characterised by 28 different national administrative systems – not to mention the European Commission itself – it is absolutely fundamental to the success and effectiveness of the project that we radically simplify all the different procedures and structures involved in JPIs.

At this point, perhaps I could float an idea. My feeling is that it is still possible to further simplify the coordination of our activities at a European level. Two possible procedures that might be developed and incorporated in JPIs are:

* Firstly, make use of the European selection procedure for excellent projects in such a way as to enable the member states to take up where the EU leaves off.

* Secondly, top up a number of large-scale strategic projects that are only partially financed by the EU.

The goal of these measures would be to introduce much needed simplification into the construction of the ERA.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, let me briefly sum up the main themes that I have touched on. I see JPIs as key to furthering European research and innovation. If we are to maximise the opportunity that JPIs represent, however, we must ensure that these are as efficient and effective as possible. Amongst the revisions that I believe are necessary – sometimes at a structural level – there are five that stand out. These are:

~ ensure *as much in-built, effective, efficient and complimentary synergy as possible* between H2020 and the different EU, national and regional programmes.

~ ensure that the JPIs are deployed in such a way that they *reduce the time it takes* to move from scattered research results to *the provision of concrete benefits* for end-users.

~ apply the same principles designed to foster *excellence* that are found in H2020 to the JPIs.

~ apply the same principles designed to foster *participation* that are found in H2020 to the JPIs.

~ and finally, as with H020 once again, it is of fundamental importance that the architecture of the JPIs be as simple as possible. I am convinced that the manner in

which the EU and the member states interact could be further simplified to their mutual benefit.

If we bear these five principles in mind, I am sure that we will make real progress in ensuring the success and effectiveness of Joint Programmes.

Thank you.