

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen

It is, as ever, with great pleasure that I have accepted this invitation to speak before you to today. The main purpose of my speech is,

- Firstly, to outline the ways in which HORIZON2020 fits into European research and innovation policy in general,
- And secondly to give you a brief overview of the most pertinent aspects to the HORIZON2020 programme with particular emphasis on EPP input.

With regard to the way in which HORIZON2020 fits into European research innovation policy in general, I should like to stress the opportunity that H2020 represents to consolidate the European Research Area and overhaul European research and innovation. In this

respect, European research and innovation policy aims to promote European excellence in science whilst stimulating industrial performance and meeting a number of crucial societal challenges.

This supposes being able to consolidate a common research area involving as much cooperation as possible - - at a European, national and regional level -- so that structural capacities are enhanced, research networks are extended and individuals and ideas are able to circulate more freely.

As such, European policy, in general, should be designed in such a way that it recognises the difficulties that Europe is faced with and supplies a series of pragmatically conceived solutions. HORIZON2020 is a cornerstone of this policy. An increased level of investment will be evenly distributed between three fundamental pillars: “excellence in science”, “industrial leadership” and “societal challenges”.

However, HORIZON2020 is much more than a funding programme: it will be a fundamental instrument in structuring research and innovation in Europe over the years to come. In particular, it should be as simple as possible; effectively and adequately funded, include a comprehensive approach to the passage from research to market and be designed in such a way as to overcome fragmentation and to encourage collaboration across Europe and beyond.

Four Key Elements

Secondly with regard to the most pertinent aspects to the HORIZON2020 programme, there are a number of EPP political priorities in the area of research and innovation, all of which have been taken up by the European Parliament in its final negotiating position. This is a considerable achievement for the group.

These include greater emphasis on SMEs, enhanced industrial participation, emphasis on excellence alongside widening participation, improved synergies

with other funds, simplification, a cautious approach to open access and, finally, a more targeted approach to international cooperation.

Time prevents me from dealing with all of the different aspects to H2020 and, as a result, I should like to focus on three main aspects. These are a comprehensive approach to the cycle of innovation, widening of participation and synergies with other funds.

* The first aspect is that of a *comprehensive approach to the cycle of innovation*. HORIZON2020 aims to smooth what is often the long and expensive path from fundamental research to commercial exploitation. The whole innovation cycle should be covered as this will lead to greater participation on the part of European industry. At the same time, in recent years, industry involvement in European science and innovation programmes has tended to fall off. HORIZON2020 aims to counteract this tendency, notably by encouraging the active engagement of small and medium-sized European

companies. The European Parliament proposal increases the budget that will be made available for the SME instrument. It also increases the overall participation of SMEs from 15% (the Commission proposal) to 20%.

* Secondly, with regard to the *widening of participation*, HORIZON2020 places considerable emphasis on widening participation whilst maintaining excellence as a main driver and involving strong units of embryonic excellence such as small research groups and highly innovative start-ups. Widening participation can be achieved by fostering greater transparency, through simplification of rules and the development of instruments such as return grants and twinning schemes. This will enable SMEs and smaller organisations to play a much more active role in the European research and innovation environment.

* Finally, let me turn now to *synergies with other available funds*. Achieving, at once, scientific excellence, and industrial competitiveness --- whilst

meeting our societal challenges -- is beyond the resources of a single programme. At the same time, Europe's ambition to cover the whole cycle of innovation will inevitably require a multi-fund approach. For this reason, HORIZON2020 should be articulated with and complemented by other, parallel sources of European funding. In particular, European "structural funds" could be deployed both upstream and downstream from HORIZON2020 to enhance capacity building and to facilitate the passage from concept to market.

Conclusion

HORIZON2020 represents a rigorously conceived programme whose goal is to promote a flexible, inclusive and simple approach that will deploy diverse funding resources as effectively as possible. Aiming to support European industry, it also contains a concerted drive to promote excellence in science whilst meeting today's societal challenges.