

Good evening
Ladies and Gentlemen

As you know, the current economic climate is not particularly favourable. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to compete effectively within a globalized world.

If Europe is to maintain the standard of living, to which we have become accustomed, it is essential that we stimulate growth. To this end, the industrial sector in general, and the manufacturing sector in particular, has an absolutely central role to play.

This requires enhanced capacity for research and innovation.

FP7 and its successor FP8 are key instruments in catalysing research across Europe.

At the moment, the European Parliament is reviewing FP7 and will shortly start work on FP8.

It is crucial that the reforms we take in FP8 are adapted to the needs of European industry in a competitive globalized world.

The FP8 runs from 2013 to 2020. If we do not act with determination now, 2020 will be too late.

As for my own particular vision of where I think we should be going, there are 5 key principles.

We require:

Firstly, a trust based funding system.

Secondly, a chain from frontier research, to technological development, demonstration, valorisation of results and innovation.

Thirdly, a simpler FP with fewer instruments and a radical overhaul of the administration of the FP.

Fourthly, excellence as the criterion for the FP in co-ordination with the structural funds for research capacity building.

And finally, enhanced international cooperation.

What thought does a simpler improved FP actually involved?

At the moment there is a whole mass of programmes, sub-programmes and instruments. As I see it, this should be dramatically restructured. In fact, in my opinion there should be four main pillars:

Firstly, a science driven pillar - ERC

Secondly, an industry driven pillar - JTI's

Thirdly, a policy driven pillar - cooperative research projects addressing the great societal challenges

Fourthly, research support activities pillar - Marie Curie and European research infrastructures

It is also essential that we also encourage close cooperation between FP, EIT and CIP programmes.

Well, that is enough from me and let me hand you over to Marisa Matias who will be chairing the debate.