

Good Morning,
Professor Vlfsmith,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by welcoming you here today to the E.P. and to thank all the speakers and participants to have found the time to join us. The theme that I should like to develop is that of how best to further European research with regard to the biomedical domain and more particularly how to further collaboration between the Alliance for Biomedical Research - a unified voice for the biomedical community - and the EU institutions.

Whilst the question of the funding of research is, of course, crucial, another question that is no less critical is that of how best to actually structure and organise research at a European level. In this

respect, I believe that the creation of a platform that may act as an embryo of what might be called a "European Health Research Council" would be a real step forward.

There are two aspects to the question of how best Horizon 2020 may contribute to strengthen European research in the biomedical field. One is the funding aspect and the second is the structural effect of the programme.

1) Funding of biomedical research under Horizon 2020

As far as funding is concerned, within the allocation of resources, priority should be given to health research and more particularly, biomedical research. Indeed, in the doubling of the research budget that I have actively sought to achieve, I

believe that single largest item in the budget should be health. This is the position of many MEPs and the Commission proposal reflects these priorities.

Biomedical research is able to counter a whole range of health questions as these include areas such as cancer, respiratory diseases, cardiovascular and mental disorders; diabetes and respiratory problems. In Europe today, we are faced with a range of new challenges - one of the most prominent of which is the ageing of the population - and biomedical research will, of course, be of absolutely central importance in dealing with this. All of these different challenges are of such direct relevance to the well-being of European citizens that they really do deserve to be given as much support as possible. This is something that requires multi-disciplinary approaches, involving multinational and large scale research.

Secondly, given that bio-medical research requires a much longer innovation cycle than other forms of research - it requires about 10 years - it is necessary to take this into consideration when planning the different funding instruments that are required. Existing piece-meal funding is inadequate and, moreover, there is not one single funding instrument that can encompass, at once,

- the development of ideas into novel concepts,
 - the implementation of these concepts in clinical practice,
 - their adaption for the market
- and finally the assessment of treatment strategies and outcomes.

The development of funding strategies, in this respect, should include key research stakeholders

and, of course, the Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe.

To sum up what I have said about funding, biomedical research is of absolutely prime importance to the well-being of Europe's citizens. As such it deserves to be recognised as such when it comes to making budgeting decisions. However, it is necessary to develop these funding instruments in such a way that they are much more responsive to the requirements of the innovation cycle specific to this field.

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2) **Structure effect of Horizon 2020**

Finally, with regard to how best structure and organise European research in the field that interests us; I believe that it is essential that

* Whilst existing EU research programmes are geared to dealing with issues such as energy and ICT - and more generally technologically related matters - they are much less well-adapted to dealing with needs in the sphere of medicine and more particularly that of bio-medical research.

A related question is that of linking research results with clinical applications. The EU research programmes should foster a systematic involvement of the bio-medical community in the development of biomedical research strategy across all the different phases of the process. It is important that we find ways of furthering this.

Indeed, it is necessary that we - at a European level - work together and that we really make an effort to collaborate. The European Commission is particularly well-placed to facilitate this sort of

cooperation. This involves the "added value" that the EU can bring in furthering harmonisation and the development of a properly interconnected research programme alongside Europe's ability to facilitate the scaling up of research.

This being said, it is equally crucial that we avoid wrapping the whole thing in red tape and complicated regulations. Simplicity in access and structure remains the order of the day. Against this background,

*I feel that, dedicated structure for biomedical research would contribute powerfully to innovation and competitiveness in Europe. It would also serve as a springboard to deeper international cooperation.

This structure should obey the community principal, which is to say that it is created under the scope of the European Commission and, hence, is not an inter-governmental institution.

This is the time to really think about the form that such a structure would have given that we are in the process of elaborating the Horizon 2020 programme. If we do not manage to incorporate this structure - even in incipient form - into the new programme quickly we are liable to be unable to introduce it at a later point.

To sum up what I have said in this section, I feel that we need to make real efforts to further greater collaboration at a European level. The EU is obviously well-placed to achieve this goal and the creation of European Health Research structure would be a real step in the right

direction. To this end, it is necessary that we act quickly in order to ensure that at least an embryonic form of such a structure is included in the Horizon 2020 programme.

Thank you very much and I look forward to the discussion of today as I am convinced that the outcome of this discussion will constitute a valuable input for our work in the Horizon 2020.