

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Could I begin by welcoming you to Brussels and thanking you for making the effort to attend this EPP hearing on the future of research in the EU, in general, and how best to effectively implement the H2020 priorities, in particular. As some of you will know, I am the rapporteur for the Specific Programme Implementing H2020. In this capacity -- and by way of setting the ball rolling today -- I should like to briefly make a number of preliminary remarks of a general nature concerning H2020 as it currently stands.

At *a* time when growth is essential in order to counteract the necessary austerity measures being made across Europe, Horizon 2020 represents a ready made and rigorously conceived programme. I believe it should serve as a springboard to creating a dynamic, prosperous European economy.

The forthcoming Horizon 2020 programme will reinforce Europe's leading position in a domain in which Europe has lost ground in many areas. Horizon 2020 represents a real step forward in that it addresses our difficulties and seeks to supply a

series of appropriate solutions. The broad lines of Horizon 2020 might be summarised in the following four points:

- Horizon 2020 should be as simple and as well structured as possible and it should be equipped with appropriate funding.
- Excellence should be the main driver of Horizon 2020. This supposes that excellence is defined independently of any geographical or other precondition. In addition, I have been particularly keen to promote the widening of participation including the concept of “stairway to excellence” in my report.
- The ability to innovate but also to see innovation through to viable market solutions is central to competitiveness. The whole innovation cycle should be covered as this will lead to the enhanced participation of European industry. At the same time, industry participation should not be narrowly restricted to consideration under the Industrial Leadership pillar. I have actively sought to promote this in my report. Innovation flourishes best when it strives to attain excellence but also when it offers real solutions to existing societal challenges.

- Greater synergy between Horizon 2020 and the structural funds is urgently required. Whilst the main driver of Horizon 2020 remains excellence, the structural funds could be deployed both upstream and downstream from Horizon 2020 to enhance capacity building and to facilitate the passage from concept to market. My report places particular emphasis on the need for concrete actions that move in this direction.

It is precisely these four points that our experts will be addressing today.

Thank you