

## **Simplifying the implementation of the Research Framework Programs**

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President,

Commissioner,

Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning,

As rapporteur of the Simplification report in the EP, I would like to acknowledge the opportunity of being involved in this exchange of views.

To begin with, I would like to underline the extensive consultation that this report has involved and the positive response of the stakeholder.

The report is of real interest to the scientific and business community and more over is particularly timely in light of the interim evaluation of FP7 and the start of the preparatory phase for FP8.

I also want to thank the Belgium Presidency for the priority that it has given to this topic building up on the work of the Spanish Presidency.

There are three main aspects to the report that I should like to bring out:

1) Firstly the pragmatic shift towards administrative and financial simplification.

There are 2 aspects:

- a) General principles
- b) concrete recommendations

a) In so far as the General principles are concerned:

- simplification is in the interest of the stakeholders
- it is necessary to provide stability and legal certainty
- there is also a need for trust-based and risk-tolerant approaches without sacrificing procedural rigour.

b) As for the concrete recommendations, the main goal is to attain greater clarity, precision and simplicity. This involves:

For example, allowing beneficiaries to apply their usual management and accounting principles.

Secondly, funding rates and costs calculation methods should be identical across the different instruments.

Finally, clarity in the definition of such things as eligible costs and taxes is of utmost importance. It is just as important to promote consistency in the application of rules across all commission departments and audits.

2) Turning now to improvement in quality, accessibility and transparency. There are three points:

a) Minimizing time to grant is of course to be encouraged. However, it is important that Member States retain their power of scrutiny. In addition, I support the two-stage application procedure provided that evaluation is undertaken thoroughly in the initial stage.

b) I am in favour of a science-based approach. Such an approach promotes excellence whilst simplifying financial controls.

This being said result-based approach pilot tests should be carried out for research and demonstration projects in specifically challenging areas.

The second exception to my general preference to science based system is the "high trust awards" proposed by the commission. These are appropriated to frontier research, such as ERC.

Lastly, with regard to improved Synergy of programmes and instruments, we need to reduce the complexity of such programmes and instruments. This entails introducing uniform interpretation and application of rules and procedures. It also supposes harmonization across of all EU bodies involved. This will contribute to greatly enhanced synergy. The number of instruments should be reduced and greater coordination between them should be achieved.

The follow up to the Communication and the EP report is very important. It is necessary to define what needs to be changed (tolerable risk of error, financial regulation or even staff regulation).

We need to build a new era of trust among all the EU institutions and between EU institutions and the stakeholders and I am confident that we can count on the EP for this trust building process.