

Weaker participation of NMS by comparison with older members

\* I don't agree: not NMS v Old member states

but centres of quality research (possessing critical mass)

as opposed to peripheral regions

across the EU 27

e.g.

Portugal Lisbon ... Porto and Coimbra

Other regions not the case

Reformulate the question

Given this

two possible improvements

that should be undertaken in conjunction:

1) use national and structural funds for capacity building

to encourage competitiveness and critical mass

i.e. capacity building

Give examples:

2) In the design of Horizon 20-20

make sure that we crush sprouts of excellence due to lack of critical mass

sole criteria should be excellence for Horizon 2020

Excellence is not necessarily a question of critical size.

also possible specially in initial stages in smaller structures

Design programme and rules of participation and criteria for selection in such a way that the embryos of excellence are nurtured.

I call these two elements, when taken together, the stairway to excellence.

However, we should not confuse capacity building - as financed by MS and structural funds - with the funding of excellence even in the embryonic stage. Capacity building and excellence are distinct domains and excellence should be the object of the FP.