



Dear Professor Smith, colleagues and friends,

I really regret not being here with you tonight to attend this welcome dinner, as it would have been my wish. Although we are in frequent contact, this would have been a great opportunity for me to share with you, as leading members of the biomedical research community, and in a relaxed atmosphere, opinions, ideas and concerns for the present and future of research in this crucial sector.

As you can imagine, since last December when the European Commission presented its proposal for Horizon 2020 and I was appointed rapporteur for the European Parliament, my work has been concentrated first on preparing the proposal for Horizon 2020 that was presented last June and afterwards on negotiating it with the rest of the political groups to get it ready to be voted on in the ITRE committee on the 28th of November.

I am sure that in the proposal that finally will come out from the European Parliament, biomedical research will have the place it deserves in relation to its importance in Europe.

My colleague and friend Antonio Correira de Campos, also member of the ITRE Committee (and former Minister of Health in his country), knows the EU science system very well and is kindly attending the dinner. I am sure he will give you more information on how our work in the European parliament is progressing.

Let me just tell you that Biomedical Research will have a significant presence in the three priorities of Horizon 2020. In relation to the first, Excellent Science, let me remind you that the European Research Council has, since its creation, financed more than 1,000 research projects of Life Sciences, that at least two of the six FET flagship are devoted to biomedical research, and that the health research infrastructure has promoted the mobility of more than 6,000 European excellent researchers providing also, together with the Marie Curie actions, world-class training for a new generation of researchers.

In relation to the second priority, "Industrial Leadership", needless to remind you of the important role that Key Enabling Technologies (KETs), like biotechnology and nanotechnology, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are playing to underpin competitiveness in the sector.

And in relation to the third priority, "Societal Challenges", as you know, health is the number one. Here it is important to highlight that my proposal includes the establishment of a scientific Steering Board for strategic coordination of health research and innovation across Horizon 2020, which I am sure will contribute to increase the scientific and human capabilities in health research. And just to round off let me tell you what the European parliament thinks on the necessity not to reduce research investment, especially in times of crisis. A belief that I am sure we all share.

We believe that if we really want to prepare the EU for the next decade we need to translate the ambition of our EU2020 Strategy into the Horizon 2020. Only a strong research and innovation base will allow the EU to compete with our traditional and our new global competitors, who are, let me remind you, investing in this area much more heavily than we are. We strongly believe that underinvestment will not only affect the efficient performance of our research and innovation system, but will also have an adverse effect on our economic performance and social well-being.



In relation to this, I bring you here and now a strong message from the European Parliament: which is, our determination to ask for the doubling of the FP7 budget. I ask you not for your own support because I know we have it, but to lobby with your respective governments, as members of the Council, on this urgent matter.

It is very important that we all work together in the same direction. I wish you a very fruitful Annual Meeting.

With best wishes

Teresa Riera

Brussels, 14 November 2012