



Director Manuela SOARES

TITLE:

Framework for sustainable and responsible innovation.

Speech at

ENERO Workshop 20th Anniversary

'Boosting and securing eco-innovations through new partnerships'

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KEYNOTE SPEECH (as read)

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure to be here with you today and have the opportunity to inform you about the new developments in research and innovation policy at EU level.

But before my talk, I would like to congratulate the organisers, ENERO, for their 20th anniversary and to praise your work as a multi-disciplinary and multi-sector-based approach network. Inter-disciplinary research will overcome fragmentation of research domains and it is key in addressing societal challenges.

Today I would like to talk to you about the European policy context in the context of environmental research and innovation. I will talk about how our recent initiatives and proposals, including the proposal for a new research and innovation program, Horizon 2020, have been design to meet the requirements of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Europe's current crisis is, above all, a growth crisis, We need to put research and innovation policy at the heart of Europe's fight for jobs and prosperity. Our future depends on competitive industries that are able to create jobs. This means investing in research, in new technologies and in creating a climate that boosts

innovation. The Europe 2020 Strategy sets a clear research and innovation investment goal: 3% of GDP in R&D.

As you know well, we launched in October 2010 our Flagship Initiative, the Innovation Union¹ which contains a series of commitments to improve the basic conditions that allow researchers, entrepreneurs and companies to flourish. With this, the Commission will attempt to remove any obstacles that prevent innovators from transforming the excellent basic research that Europe does so well into new products and services that will be successful in world markets. We need, for example, faster standard-setting in Europe, cheaper and easier patenting, more public procurement of innovative products and services and better access to venture capital.

As also highlighted in the Innovation Union, Eco-innovation will help delivering the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

We have worked closely with our colleagues from Directorate Generals for Environment and Enterprise on the Eco-Innovation Action Plan (EcoAP)². You have heard the main objectives already from Mr. Makela (*). The plan boosts innovative solutions that reduce impacts on the environment, enhance resilience to environmental pressures, and allow for efficient and responsible use of natural

¹ COM(2010) 546

² (source: http://www.eco-innovation.eu/media/ECO_report-2011.pdf)

resources. It will bridge the gap between innovation and the market, focusing on the specific bottlenecks, challenges and opportunities for achieving environmental objectives through innovation.

Despite the opportunities that Eco-innovation can offer, more effort is needed. The recently published report by the Eco Innovation Observatory, 'Closing The Eco-Innovation Gap - An economic opportunity for business', concludes that gaps still exist when it comes to implementing eco-innovation. There are large differences between countries, sectors, and companies and there is still a tendency towards more incremental rather than radical change.

With the adoption of the Eco-innovation action plan and with the Horizon 2020 and the Partnering communication, that I am going to introduce in a few moments, we can contribute filling this gap between the potential for eco-innovation and the current state of eco-innovation activity in the EU.

The transition towards the so-called Green Economy will be possible, but will sometimes require radical changes in particular transformative and responsible innovation. This means that innovation should be radical and should go beyond the profit of the pursuit of economic profit, it should safeguard social and environmental goals.

The objective of the EU environmental research is to contribute to respond to global challenges by promoting groundbreaking innovation ensuring environmental protection, sustainable growth and European competitiveness.

Activities of the EPT (European Technology Platforms) are should closely follow this, , SusChem (³) is an example of this.

DG Research & Innovation, through the EU Framework Program for Research and Technological Development, plays a key role in implementing the *EU research and innovation agenda* in the fields of resource efficiency, raw materials and related eco-innovation technologies.

The work programs in the last years were designed to address pro-actively the 'Transformation to Sustainable Societies in a Changing Environment' while considering in particular the dimension of a 'Transformative and Responsible Innovation'.

- One of the objectives of the Work Program 2011 was, through research, to support eco-innovation for eco-efficiency in society with an EU budget of 50 Mio€.
 - In 2012 the Challenge on 'Improving resource efficiency' with an EU budget of 62 Mio€, focused on developing and strengthening European leadership in innovation including key environmental technologies. It pursues a broad concept of innovation, both research driven innovation and new business models, eco-design, services and innovation in policy, governance and consumption.
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- In 2013, discussions are ongoing with the Environment Theme Program Committee and the services of the Commission to focus on resource efficiency on the subject of turning solid waste into a resource through innovative technologies, processes and services, while also considering the possibility of supporting eco-innovative demonstration projects.

Horizon 2020 – our new framework for European research and innovation funding from 2014 - will make our support for research and innovation simpler, more efficient, and effective. I will deliver larger impacts needed to sustain growth and tackle societal challenges.

Horizon 2020 represents a radical break from the past Framework Programmes, Innovation starts with excellent research.

Horizon 2020's First Pillar is aimed at boosting excellence in Europe's science base. The proposed investment of over 24 billion Euro will enable the most talented scientists to carry out cutting edge research of the highest quality.

The Second Pillar of Horizon 2020 aims to boost industrial leadership, with actions to make Europe a more attractive place for businesses to invest in R&D and innovation. We will invest nearly 18 billion Euro under this pillar.

The Third Pillar focuses on tackling Societal Challenges, which will receive nearly 32 billion Euro of funding.

Among the Societal Challenges, one of the priorities will be "climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials". The aim of this priority is to achieve a resource efficient and climate change resilient economy that meets the needs of a growing global population within the natural limits of a finite planet.

We believe that research plays an important role in achieving these objectives, generating breakthrough technologies, as well innovative business models and consumer patterns. This will support the transition towards a green economy through eco-innovation⁴ that, as already explained, will provide the technological and societal changes needed for ensuring sustainable growth. Moreover, it will help delivering the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

But Horizon 2020 will support not only research into new technologies and solutions, but also their piloting, demonstration and market uptake. Facilitating the transition from research to market will help achieving the full impact of EU funding. This requires a broad, multi-disciplinary approach that brings together researchers, industry, public bodies and users to create innovative solutions that

⁴ (Source: Specific Programme Implementing Horizon 2020 - COM(2011) 811 final).

will meet peoples' needs. Networking among eco-innovators will enhance the dissemination of knowledge and better link supply with demand.

Horizon 2020 will develop closer synergies with national and regional programs that support research and innovation. A greater impact should also be achieved by combining Horizon 2020 and private sector funds within public-private partnerships in key areas where research and innovation could contribute to Europe's wider competitiveness goals and help tackle societal challenges.

And last, but not least the challenge-based approach will include establishing links with the activities of the European Innovation Partnerships.

A strong emphasis has been placed on joint approaches, where resources from Horizon 2020 will be combined with those from Member States or industry. These partnerships will create greater critical mass, removes costly duplications, and allow all players to gain more results from their investments

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen

Let me conclude by saying a few words about ERA, the European Research Area.

These days we are asking a lot of our scientists. We are looking to them to solve big, complex problems and to do so very quickly. To do this, they need to cooperate. Our Commissioner, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn has called for a "functioning ERA" (European Research Area) to avoid unnecessary duplication of research and infrastructure investment at national level. To support this we will not count only with funding from Horizon 2020, but also with the funding obtained from synergies established between the Structural Funds and Horizon 2020. The latter can trigger a process of so-called "smart specialisation" with more regions thinking critically about where their strengths lie and choosing to focus on those areas.

ERA is not about abolishing national research systems. It is about making them more inter-operable, more connected and more open to competition. The new ERA-partnership will be smarter, sharper and more focused. The Communication in June 2012 will identify a small number of items which are crucial for achieving ERA and will make a positive impact on the economy.

I want to say to representatives of key research organisations who are here today: you have a vital role to play in the accomplishing of ERA⁵. The Commission wants to work with you, as valued and equal partners, to achieve key objectives.

I wish you a very fruitful workshop.

Thank you very much for your attention.

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/partnership/partnering_en.htm