

3-001

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BRÜSSEL

AUSSCHUSS FÜR INDUSTRIE, FORSCHUNG
UND ENERGIE

ANHÖRUNG VON MÁIRE GEOGHEGAN-
QUINN

DESIGNIERTES KOMMISSIONSMITGLIED
FORSCHUNG, INNOVATION UND
WISSENSCHAFT

3-002

VORSITZ: HERBERT REUL

(Die Sitzung wird um 16.30 Uhr eröffnet.)

3-003

Der Präsident. – Meine Damen und Herren! Ich darf Sie alle recht herzlich zu einer sehr wichtigen Sitzung des Industrieausschusses begrüßen. Ich darf gleichzeitig die Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus dem Kulturausschuss begrüßen, der an dieser Anhörung beteiligt ist. Ganz besonders begrüßen darf ich die Kandidatin für das Kommissarsamt, Frau Geoghegan-Quinn. Herzlich willkommen hier im Industrieausschuss und bei den Kollegen des Kulturausschusses!

Sie wissen – dafür brauche ich keine langen Ausführungen mehr zu machen –, dass wir für diese Anhörung sehr klare Verabredungen haben, was die Anteile und die Dauer der Fragen angeht. Ich bitte Sie alle, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, und auch die Kommissarskandidatin dringend darum, diese Zeiteinteilungen einzuhalten, und zwar einfach deshalb, weil diejenigen, die am Ende der Liste stehen, auch die Chance haben wollen und sollen, ihre Fragen zu stellen.

Sie wissen, dass wir uns in dieser Anhörung mit einem wichtigen Thema befassen, nämlich mit der Frage von Innovation, Forschung und Technologie. Sie wissen wie ich, dass in diesem Bereich ein großes Aufgabenfeld für die Europäische Union besteht. Insofern haben wir heute hier eine große Aufgabe wahrzunehmen.

Alle haben die Unterlagen gelesen, so dass wir uns schon über die Person der Kandidatin, ihre bisherige Arbeit und auch ihre Vorstellungen für das neue Aufgabenfeld haben informieren können. Als Erstes wird das designierte Kommissionsmitglied die Chance bekommen, zehn Minuten hier vorzutragen, und dann haben wir alle, Sie alle die Gelegenheit, so, wie die Liste das vorsieht, die Fragen zu stellen. Seien Sie bitte nicht böse mit mir, aber ich werde heute in ungewohnter Genauigkeit auf die Einhaltung der Zeiten achten, und zwar weil ich finde, dass das eine Frage der Fairness gegenüber den anderen Kollegen ist.

Frau Geoghegan-Quinn, ich begrüße Sie noch einmal ganz herzlich. Sie haben die Gelegenheit, sich dem Ausschuss vorzustellen und das eine oder andere noch vorzutragen.

3-004

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Coimisinéir ainmnithe. – A Chathaoirligh, a chomhaltaí den Choiste ITRE, téann an fhreagracht agus an dialóg oscailte go smior sa daonlathas Eorpach. Dá réir sin, tagaim in bhur láthair inniu le dul i mbun comhrá libh agus súil agam go gceadóidh sibh mé a ainmniú mar bhall den Choimisiún Eorpach amach anseo agus freagrachtaí orm as Taighde, Nuálaíocht agus Eolaíocht.

Ba mhaith liom a mheas go sásóidh a bhfuil le rá agam libh anseo inniu na caighdeáin a mbíonn súil leo sa Teach seo.

Is polaiteoir mé atá paiseanta faoin Eoraip agus a chreideann go daingean sa daonlathas Parlaiminteach. Ba mhaith liom ar dtús, mar sin, cur síos a dhéanamh daoibh ar an bhfís atá agam, ar mo chuid taithe agus ar mo chuid prionsabal.

3-005

Since I first canvassed for a ‘yes’ vote to EEC membership in 1972, my political career has been intertwined with Ireland working at the heart of Europe, and of Europe transforming the hearts and minds of Irish people.

In my long career as an elected representative and Minister, the European Union’s ability to change the context of seemingly intractable problems has been an inspirational force for me. In my ministerial experience working for Ireland’s rapid transformation to a peaceful and progressive society and a creative knowledge economy, Europe has been the innovating force. As a longstanding Member of the European Court of Auditors, I have gained a deeper insight into the workings of the European Union.

I believe that, in times of crisis, those of us in public life have a public duty to optimism. This Parliament is living witness to the power of the political imagination to innovate, to reconcile and to overcome: Fifty years of peaceful coexistence; a single market; the euro; a peaceful post-Cold War reunification of our continent. Our Europe is a maker and shaper of change. At heart, our Union is an innovation Union. Integration is innovation.

In facing the steep political climb ahead to tackle recovery, climate change and a low-carbon economy, we should for a moment remember our achievements, and take heart for the road ahead. If approved, I would continue to uphold our European democratic, social, economic and ethical values.

With the Lisbon Treaty in place we need to move from a decade of debate about Europe to a decade of delivery for Europeans. The transformational agenda of President Barroso's political guidelines confirms this. The new proposed portfolio title of Research, Innovation and Science confirms his commitment to harnessing the power of knowledge to drive this transformation. Fundamentally, my task would involve moving research, innovation and science to the heart of European policy.

To achieve this, the European Union must become a true innovation Union. An innovation culture places change management and openness at the heart of all we do. A true innovation Union would support markets that are open to newcomers and incentivise investment. Research that tests frontiers, applies breakthroughs, deepens scientific know-how, connects researchers and delivers outcomes. Innovation means knowing when to cooperate and when to compete in a tough international workplace.

Knowledge, research and scientific excellence are a cornerstone of innovation. In the new economy, refined knowledge will replace crude oil as the economy's prime motive force. As part of an EU 2020 vision, the Commission would undertake a cross-cutting reform agenda that will connect up and speed up innovation along the policy chain from research to retail. Building on Janez Potočnik's impressive legacy, a common vision for research, innovation and science needs to be mapped out and delivered. From now on we should start by defining research policy challenges and then adapt our instruments accordingly.

These European research and innovation reforms would have two strategic aims: firstly, to deliver a single market for innovation and, secondly, to complete the European Research Area.

We must map out and address the barriers and missing links of innovation: a single market for innovation could be prepared and delivered by the European Commission in partnership with members of this committee; regulatory requirements, including patents, public procurement and standards merit review; learning from the successes financed by the European Investment

Bank; incentives for investment and finance marketing instruments for new ventures could be examined.

In the research pillar, if approved as a member of the European Commission, I would set out a research policy framework with three priorities: completing the European Research Area, addressing society's grand challenges, and creating an innovation research culture.

First, on completing the European Research Area (ERA), this means developing the five ERA initiatives of research careers, joint programming, infrastructure, knowledge transfer and international cooperation. We need to make the Fifth Freedom for the mobility of researchers, knowledge and technology throughout Europe a reality. Our researchers need to be able to travel and work in other Member States and enjoy fully protected social security and pension entitlements. We know that the 3% Barcelona target is very important, but, to achieve it, we need to enable a better investment climate for research.

The importance of encouraging frontier research through an independent European Research Council cannot be overstated. We must avoid fragmentation and duplication of effort through greater joint programming.

Secondly, we need to place the grand challenges facing our society at the heart of our research agenda. Climate change is *the* area where research has changed hearts and minds. Next, we need research to explore how climate change will impact on the lives of our citizens. On energy, we need to deliver the Strategic Energy and Technology (SET) plan and to invest in a wide and diverse range of solutions to address our energy needs. On healthy ageing, we need new medical approaches to transform people's quality of life in an ageing society. Communicating the benefits and outcomes of research to the public will be critical to public support for research policy.

Thirdly, creating an innovation research culture. Research, properly managed, can lead to incredible innovation. We need to fast-forward innovative research by supporting joint technology initiatives and preparing conducive market conditions in related lead markets.

The research workplace needs to evolve to empower more women to play their full part in science. We also need to address the increasing disconnect between science and society. Society must be familiar and at ease with the science underpinning its progress, its functioning and its survival. Science must belong in society.

The Seventh EU Research Framework Programme 2007-2013 is the largest public research programme in the world. Within a new research and innovation policy framework, the framework programme will be seen as an instrument and not as an end in itself.

I am fully committed to engaging with the European Parliament in the interim evaluation of FP7. The targeted

preparation of SMEs remains an issue of concern requiring determined efforts into the future. Simplifying FP7 financial and administrative procedures must be addressed. We need a proper use of funds, proportionate controls and professional management. We must maximise simplicity without compromising on audit or evaluation quality.

For our vital public private partnerships this means more innovation-friendly operating rules and conditions. Parliament has a critical role to play in securing an agreed and consistent international consensus in these matters. A world of zero risk is a world of zero innovation.

Finally, we need to look at how to leverage complementary structural fund resources.

Europe has entered the age of innovation. We can be followers or leaders. Europe is at its best when working in the future tense. Working in partnership with the European Parliament, and specifically with this committee, we can move forward.

Together we can make a difference; we need to make a difference.

(Applause)

3-006

Der Präsident. – In der Reihe der Wortmeldungen jetzt die berühmte Eine-Minute-Frage, Zwei-Minuten-Antworten und die Chance der Nachfrage.

3-007

Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE). – Señora Geoghegan-Quinn, quiero, en nombre de mi Grupo -el Grupo Popular Europeo-, darle la bienvenida a esta comparecencia ante la Comisión de Industria y, como tenemos poco tiempo, le formulo directamente la pregunta:

Creo que ha sido una gran decisión que Innovación esté con Investigación y con Ciencia. Creo que el Presidente Barroso ha seguido la estela de su preocupación por la innovación y por poner a la innovación en el corazón del progreso y del desarrollo de Europa.

Ahora bien, cuando damos un paso siguiente nos encontramos con que eso está en un área y, en cambio, las competencias están en otra. El Instituto Europeo de Tecnología está vinculado a Cultura y la programación en materia de innovación europea está vinculada a Industria, donde esperamos que pronto podamos contar con la *Innovation Act*.

¿Cómo va a afrontar esta situación de colisión de competencias entre la teoría de la innovación y los instrumentos para desarrollarla?

3-008

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – One of the important things to remember is, when President Barroso presented his political guidelines to

Parliament, what he put at the centre of political policy of the next European Commission was research and innovation going forward.

If we want to address the global challenges, if we want to take Europe out of the economic crisis in which it is at the moment, then we have to innovate. We have enormous talents from a research point of view; we have very large pieces of research that have been incredibly useful and incredible well done.

But we need to translate that into jobs at the end of the day. That is what it is about. We are all politicians here and I speak like a politician and that is what it means to me: taking the research and transferring it into jobs at the end of the day.

At the moment, and I suppose for quite a number of years, young people were encouraged to study and go into areas of the financial sector. That financial sector is now no longer useful to them. There are not the jobs there. So I am encouraging people: get into science, get involved and we can innovate from that.

As regards my role versus the role of other Commissioners: of course innovation goes right across every policy area in the Commission and it has already been decided by the President and indeed by the new Commissioners-designate that I will have the over-arching role for cross-cutting, for putting that innovation policy into place.

But I cannot do it on my own. I need all of you here. There will be many difficulties ahead in doing it. I need all of my Commissioner-designate colleagues who are working in different areas of innovation, whether it is in the digital economy, whether it is in enterprise, whether it is in employment: we all need to work together, and it is only by working together that we can deliver this policy at the end of the day.

3-009

Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE). – Creo que sigue habiendo un problema porque, si unos tienen la teoría y otros tienen el presupuesto y las competencias, es realmente problemático para poder llevar adelante un objetivo.

Éste es un tema que está sin resolver —simplemente— y que requiere, desde luego, una solución, porque, de lo contrario, se convertirá en un instrumento retardatario y no en un instrumento de avance, el hecho de que la innovación se enmarque ahora en Investigación y en Ciencia.

Creo que el problema está ahí y, por tanto, hay que abordarlo.

3-010

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I of course agree that there is a difficulty in doing it. The first step was putting together research, innovation and science into one portfolio, to drive this. I think it can be

driven politically. We need to do that, and we need to do it quickly.

We need to also enable public/private partnerships to develop. We need to ensure that the very good work that is done by the risk-sharing finance facility of the European Investment Bank can be pushed more into other areas: for example, small and medium-sized enterprises. They are the backbone of industry and provide the jobs, but I know your committee has forever been saying they are not allowed to participate, or they cannot participate, or the calls are not geared towards them participating.

So innovation requires very close cooperation between all the Commissioners, with every Commissioner ensuring that, in areas where there are bottlenecks at the moment, they do everything they can to remove bottlenecks and build bridges. We can only do that by cooperating, and I can guarantee you I will cooperate with all of my colleagues in doing that.

3-011

Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D). – Señora Geoghegan-Quinn, también en nombre de mi Grupo, bienvenida y enhorabuena por su presentación.

Usted lo ha dicho, y estamos de acuerdo, que la investigación y la innovación son dos factores clave para mejorar la competitividad y, por tanto, esenciales en la estrategia que estamos planteando para salir de la crisis. Pero hay otro aspecto que me gustaría destacar -que usted ha mencionado de pasada- y es el de la ciencia y la innovación como factores también esenciales para mejorar el bienestar y la calidad de vida de las personas, porque, en definitiva, éste debe ser siempre el objetivo final de nuestro trabajo político.

¿Cómo piensa que podría contribuir la Comisión a impulsar esta dimensión social de la ciencia y de la innovación para que realmente sirva, como usted ha dicho, para crear más y mejor empleo, para mejorar la salud, la educación, las condiciones de trabajo, la cohesión social o la integración de las personas con alguna discapacidad, dentro del modelo del espacio europeo de investigación que estamos construyendo?

3-012

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – We are creating a European Research Area for a number of reasons.

First of all, it is something that originally started off in 2000. It was a grand idea that people said we have to buy in to and we need to push. How do we do it?

One of the good things that happened as a result of the Lisbon Treaty – and as an Irishwoman I know a lot about the Lisbon Treaty at this stage – was that Article 180 of the Lisbon Treaty requires us to create the European Research Area, and Article 182(5) of course empowers us to create the European Research Area.

So out of that European Research Area developed the ERA-NETs. What were they about? ERA-NETs were about the coordination of research, because so much of the research that is done throughout Europe is excellent work, but at the end of the day it is done in very different areas and there was an awful lot of duplication. I can give you one example. In the safe food ERE-NET, the Commission found that there were 72 different pieces of research being carried out into the same salmonella bacteria. Now that is total duplication. It is not coordination. It is not working as a Union together to deliver the jobs that we need for the economy at the end of the day.

What can the private sector do? Under the European Research Area, we have, for example, since 2003 developed the European Technology Platforms. They are industry-led. They are all about the role of the private sector. They are all about creating jobs – 37 of them altogether – looking at and developing smart grids, looking at areas like solar power, forestry, all of the areas where there are potential jobs to be created to take us out of this economic crisis. So, from all of the different areas of the European Technology Platforms we ended up with the Joint Technology Initiatives, and you know as well as the members of this committee that we have five of those. I had the pleasure in the course of the preparations for this hearing of meeting the executive...

(The Chair cut off the speaker.)

3-013

Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D). – Señora Geoghegan-Quinn, se lo preguntaba más en el sentido de que este año es el Año Europeo de Lucha contra la Pobreza y la Exclusión Social y, en este contexto, la Presidencia española ha propuesto en su programa medidas para reforzar la dimensión social de la ciencia y la innovación.

¿Qué herramientas o qué iniciativas piensa que debería lanzar la Comisión en este sentido?

3-014

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – First of all I should have acknowledged, of course, that the Spanish presidency has made this one of its priorities in the whole area of research.

There are pieces of research being done that look at all the areas related, either directly or indirectly, to resolving and reducing poverty wherever that happens – be it within the European Member States or indeed outside. However, we have to focus that into the particular areas in which we need to deliver the solutions to reductions in poverty.

I believe we can only do this if we act in a political way. It is very easy to talk in theory, but practice is very important – being proactive, being involved in actions. That involves not just me, of course, but a range of other commissioners, and that is where coordination and cooperation is going to be very important.

3-015

Lena Ek (ALDE). – Min fråga rör två sidor av engagemanget i och nyttan med forskningspolitiken. Privata aktörer samarbetar med det offentliga i forskningsprojekt. Det är enormt viktigt för Europas framtida konkurrenskraft. För 15 år sedan kom 39 procent av deltagarna i ramprogrammen från den privata sektorn. Idag är den siffran nere i 25 procent. En starkt bidragande orsak är byråkrati, som håller på att kväva europeisk forskning. Med er bakgrund från revisionsrätten, vad kan ni göra åt byråkratiproblemet? Den andra delen rör engagemanget i de stora folksjukdomarna. Forskning på stamceller är enormt viktigt och har en stor potential.

3-016

President. – Only one question, please.

3-017

Lena Ek (ALDE). – Well, it is about the engagement and the use of the research policy.

3-018

En viktig del av användningen av forskningspolitiken är stamcellsforskning. Hur ställer ni er till den kompromiss som finns rörande stamcellsforskning i Europa idag?

3-019

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – First of all, you are quite right as regards public and private research and how we get more people involved. When President Barroso gave me this portfolio, he said that the whole area of simplification needed to be looked at very carefully. Perhaps he felt I was particularly suitable for this area as I have come from the Court of Auditors.

In a way, the Court of Auditors was in fact the first institution that recognised, when it gave its opinion on single audit, that there needed to be, perhaps, different error rates in different areas of policy within the Community, within the Commission. If we want to provide simplification in its proper form, there are a number of things that need to be done.

But let us remember that there are things that have already been done as regards simplification in the FP7 that we have now. For example, the time from when a person applies to the time that a grant is made has been reduced. We have a guarantee fund, which means that there is less need for audit certificates below a certain cost of programme or project statement. We have a unique registration facility so that, if you are part of several different research programmes, you do not have to enter all of the same information all over again on a regular basis. I can tell you that 15 000 people are already registered in this.

The Court of Auditors has also looked at another aspect which is very important from the simplification point of view: they have said that as a result of a Commission document we have to look at the tolerable risk of error. That needs to be looked at, but we cannot under any circumstances compromise sound financial management. But I think that can be done without compromising the

sound financial management, because fewer rules mean fewer errors. We need to simplify what we have, and that simplification will not just help what we have at the moment: it will also help SMEs get more involved.

3-020

Der Präsident. – Frau Eck kann vielleicht noch einmal nachfragen, dann haben wir die Gelegenheit, das zu klären.

3-021

Lena Ek (ALDE). – Jag ser det som ett löfte att arbeta kraftfullt mot byråkrati och underlätta och effektivisera europeisk forskning. Samtidigt måste jag be er att besvara den andra delen av min fråga, som rörde er fristående åsikt om nuvarande sätt att använda stamcellsforskning mot de stora folksjukdomarna reumatism, Alzheimer och diabetes.

3-022

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – There are so many pieces of research being done at the moment, one of them being into neurodegenerative diseases, Alzheimer's being one of those.

This is the kind of research that I think we need to innovate to provide better products. We are living longer and we need to live in a more healthy community. If we are going to do that, then we have to provide more research and we have to deliver that research to the companies that are delivering the drugs that ensure we live healthier lives; that we create a better society and that, at the end of day, for diseases like diabetes and Alzheimer's there is hope and good research that can deliver the products that can help people who have these diseases and, in turn, influence government policies throughout the Member States.

3-023

Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE). – Let me please extend a warm welcome from the Greens. We have particular sympathy for the candidate from the 'green' island, obviously. I was, however, a bit astonished to find that, in the written answers which you presented to us, and also in your presentation, you did not mention the concept of human-centred innovation. Does your vision for innovation and research policy include that concept?

It goes beyond focusing only on product innovation. It means an understanding of innovation policy that includes broad social and environmental objectives. What indicators can policies include to assess the net social value produced by our investment in innovation policies, and how can we ensure the social credibility of innovation policy?

3-024

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – Of course, innovation policy is going to address all of the great societal challenges – the grand challenges that all of us as members of the European Union and of the world face. What are the global challenges?

The one that you mentioned, of course – energy efficiency – has to be one. Climate change affects all of us; all we have to do is look outside our windows and see what is happening. Climate change is the one area where research has changed people's hearts and minds. It is a perfect example of how research can do that.

Efficiency and energy is achieved through a combination of research, innovation and smart regulation and the EU energy efficiency plan as you know is due to be reviewed this year. Therefore the recovery package, which was adopted by the Commission in 2009, set up public/private partnerships exactly in the areas that you are talking about – energy-efficient buildings, factories of the future, green cars. It is all about people and how we can live in a climate and on a planet that we support and that is sustainable – providing the energies that are not going to be here forever, providing sustainable energies, renewable energies, getting involved in the areas that will influence our future as people that will ensure a better and cleaner environment and a planet for not just ourselves and our children but indeed for our grandchildren into the future.

3-025

Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE). – Let me focus on the accessibility of research results. In that context FP7 included the idea of a 'knowledge bank'. Do you intend to continue supporting that sort of policy, which is vital to promoting the exchange and sharing of information relevant to innovation?

3-026

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – Of course I support knowledge-sharing but, in order for us to provide access to the knowledge that researchers in Europe are delivering, there are certain things that need to be put in place, and they do not involve me alone: they involve a number of other Commissioners as well. For example, we need to look at intellectual property rights, which are an obstacle towards the sharing of knowledge. We need to look at patents: for example, the cost of getting a patent in the EU is 20 times more expensive than it is the US and we have to tackle that.

We have gone quite a distance in 30 years, but there are issues that still need to be addressed. Provided both of us are accepted by Parliament, I intend to work with Mr Barnier to help him to go the distance – the final kilometre – to ensure that these blockages surrounding patents are done away with.

But, outside my own sphere of responsibility, there are areas in which I must work with other colleagues right across the Commission to ensure that we can transfer that wonderful knowledge all our researchers and scientists have put in place. If we are to live on a planet that is a better planet for us and for our children, then we have to share that knowledge and we have to make it easier for European researchers to be able to share that knowledge without endangering the result of the research.

3-027

Giles Chichester (ECR). – Mrs Geoghegan-Quinn, your emphasis in your remarks on cooperation with Parliament were and are very welcome. Nevertheless, can I emphasise that it is to the EU that we look for taking the initiative. The emphasis you placed on drawing on your experience at the Court of Auditors in terms of tackling this major issue of administrative burden facing researchers is very welcome. So are you going to be a Research Commissioner who comes up with the big idea, as some of your predecessors have done? Or will you be one who makes the instruments we have already work better? In doing that, will you maintain the principle of excellence?

3-028

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – First and foremost, I am a politician and not a civil servant – that is the first point. I am into action. We have done enough talking – the time is now for action. Therefore, am I going to keep talking about research, or am I going to deliver with the research that we have in the areas where it is badly needed? The second is correct: I am going to deliver that research. I am going to use, as you rightly called it, the instruments that are already there to ensure that we deliver to the areas where we need research to fix problems, and there are lots of problems in the Community that can be fixed if we use the research that we have.

But as I said, I think anybody can tell you – and there are a number of people I see scattered throughout the audience that will have known me as a politician in Ireland that will know – I am a doer; I am not a yes-woman. I have very strong views, I will be robust in pushing this forward, and you are dealing here with – I am sorry to say, maybe, I do not know how you feel about it – but you are not dealing with a civil servant. This is a politician who is in charge of doing things, who wants action and who wants delivery.

3-029

Giles Chichester (ECR). – In pursuing that, what will your attitude be towards some of the large projects that we have in hand? I have in mind Fusion and ITER and Gallileo, as important high-technology projects that are supported from the research budget. What do you think about them?

3-030

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I think the research budget, Mr Chichester, must support large and small projects. I am afraid the Chair is going to tell me I am running out of time again, but I will talk of one project – the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) project. This is a vital element of a long-term strategy that the Union has for sustainable energy supply and security.

It is not just, of course, about the Union. This is an international project in which the Union is the host, but we have other partners around the world that are equally involved and that we need to encourage. It is the only project, if I dare say, that is looking at a global challenge of clean energy at the moment, and it is important to

maintain it, although it cannot be maintained at all costs. What I have to do in the near future – if I am confirmed – is to look at all of the aspects. We are due to get a progress report and I have to look at what is in that.

There are questions, I think, that you would be aware of and the committee will be aware of in relation to cost estimates and over-runs. I do not have all of those details, because we do not have this report yet. As soon as I get it, I will sit down. We need efficient management of it, we need to have it managed correctly, and we need to ensure that the only project that we and our international partners have works well and is supported. It is my intention to do that.

3-031

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL). – Muito obrigada. Em nome do meu Grupo quero também dar-lhe as boas-vindas, Senhora Comissária indigitada.

Temos falado muito aqui de modelos, de investigação, de financiamento, de instrumentos, mas não falámos das pessoas e um dado que é absolutamente seguro é que tem aumentado muito a precariedade em termos dos investigadores na Europa. Há uma ênfase muito grande no número de investigadores que falta para cumprir os objectivos de tornar a Europa na sociedade do conhecimento mais competitiva do mundo e, contudo, essa ênfase traduz-se numa cada vez maior desprotecção, cada vez mais investigadores sem contrato de trabalho ou com contratos a prazo. Gostaria de lhe perguntar como é que acha que isto pode ser compatível e quais são as suas medidas para tentar combater este problema cada vez maior da precariedade que atravessa todos os países europeus, ainda que em moldes diferentes.

3-032

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – We need to encourage – I think I said in my opening statement – free mobility or free movement of researchers.

And, if we are to put in place a European Research Area that is fit for purpose at the end of the day, which is what we want to do, then we have to put in place a climate which encourages researchers to come into the system, to remain in the system and to be able to move throughout the 27 Member States at ease, without worrying about their working conditions, their pension rights, their entitlements and so on.

One of the things that I am interested in is that the Spanish Presidency has decided to have a Joint Ministerial Council which will include not just the research and innovation ministers but will include the employment ministers as well.

I think that is a very good initiative, because we need to work together in the same way as I need to work together with my colleague to ensure that the working conditions that militate against researchers being able to move freely throughout the 27 Member States are put in place.

We can do that together. It needs a lot of work. I need your support and help, with my colleague, to be able to ensure that we can put that in place.

3-033

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL). – Muito obrigada pela sua resposta. Quero colocar-lhe ainda outra questão que se prende com o seguinte: há uma tendência cada vez maior para a concentração no sistema de investigação europeu. Penso que o que se tem passado ao nível do Conselho Europeu de Investigação diz-nos muito acerca disso. Gostaria também que a Senhora Comissária nos pudesse dar algumas respostas do que pensa fazer para poder integrar melhor os pequenos países em sistemas de investigação em igualdade de circunstâncias e para definir qual é o papel dos pequenos países no sistema de investigação tal como o conhecemos, porque o sistema que temos actualmente é bastante desigual. Muito obrigada.

3-034

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – This is in fact one of the issues which was raised with me by a number of people who talked to me from this committee in advance of my hearing.

There definitely are, if one looks right across the 27 Member States, differences between the different Member States. What can we do to balance that? There is one thing that we certainly should do, and it should be done in the third-level institutions for research, whether they are institutes of technology or universities or research centres themselves. We need to modernise in the smaller countries that do not seem to be able to get the take-up that they need. But it is not just in my area that we need to do that under the Framework Programme. We also need to do that, I think, by enabling Structural Funds to be used as they were very effectively in the Member State that I know best: to build up a knowledge economy. So I think in using funds from the Framework Programme but also enabling the EUR 86 billion that is available in the Structural Funds area, I think we could do a very useful job of work in building up, not just the infrastructures, but also, of course, the capacities.

3-035

Νίκη Τζαβέλα (EFD). – Κυρία Geoghegan-Quinn καλωσορίσατε και σας εύχομαι καλή επιτυχία για τον διορισμό σας. Η ερώτησή μου ίσως αποτελεί συνέχεια της ερώτησης του κυρίου Chichester.

Αυτή τη στιγμή το θέμα της πυρηνικής ενέργειας για ειρηνικούς ή μη ειρηνικούς σκοπούς – δηλαδή προς έλεγχο – βρίσκεται στο επίκεντρο των διεθνών σχέσεων, για παράδειγμα, το Ιράν.

Όμως, εδώ και δέκα με δεκαπέντε χρόνια υπάρχει πλήρης έλλειψη επιστημονικού προσωπικού στον τομέα της πυρηνικής ενέργειας. Πανεπιστήμια έχουν κλείσει τις παραγωγικές τους σχολές και είναι ελάχιστη η έρευνα που γίνεται στην πυρηνική ενέργεια, γεγονός

που συνιστά πολύ σοβαρό πρόβλημα σ' αυτόν τον τομέα.

Τί προτιθέστε να κάνετε εσείς ως η νέα Επίτροπος στον εν λόγω τομέα, για να ενθαρρύνετε την πανεπιστημιακή έρευνα και τη λειτουργία παραγωγικών σχολών μηχανικών στην πυρηνική ενέργεια σ' αυτόν τον κλάδο;

3-036

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – In relation to nuclear energy, there is no silver bullet – I wish there were – but there is no silver bullet that is going to resolve the energy and climate problems that this global world has. EU research is involved in nuclear energy: for example, if one looks at the Seventh Euratom Programme, that Euratom is involved in both aspects of nuclear research, in both vision and fusion. As we know, the major part is involved in the ITER project. However, nuclear energy remains a technology of choice in many Member States. It is a carbon-free technology and it should be maintained – the research into all of this area should be maintained and developed as an option for those Member States who want and wish to pursue it. That is very important, and it is important for me to say that, coming from the Member State from which I come.

The Lisbon Treaty, though, makes it clear that energy mixes are a matter for individual Member States, and as a Commission we should not be involved or interfering in telling individual Member States what mix of energy or fuel they should be involved in. It is not our competence, and it is certainly not our role. But, as regards nuclear energy, it remains a technology of choice, and you can be assured that, under my stewardship, were you to confirm me, I will ensure that the research is maintained and developed as an option for those Member States that wish to pursue it.

3-037

Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI). – En primer lugar, quiero dar la enhorabuena a la Comisaria propuesta para ocupar este importantísimo cargo en la Unión Europea.

Yo quería preguntarle, señora Comisaria, si tiene previsto, en el próximo plan europeo de investigación, aumentar los recursos económicos para aquellos ámbitos de investigaciones, de saberes que no estén directamente relacionados con la rentabilidad económica ni con la vida de las empresas, la investigación -digamos- que podríamos calificar de una manera provocadora como una «investigación no rentable», teniendo en cuenta que, a veces, lo no rentable resulta ser lo más importante que se hace.

Yo me pregunto muchas veces, y me he seguido preguntando cuando he analizado los estudios que se están exponiendo aquí, si las obras de Kant hubieran podido ser financiadas por la Unión Europea. Quisiera saber su opinión sobre este punto.

3-038

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I tend to be, Mr Sosa Wagner, of the view that no matter what the research is it is always valuable. It can always

be used. It is up to industry, it is up to governments, it is up to partnerships, to decide how they can use the research that is available.

The Framework Programme that we have for research is the largest publicly funded research programme in the world and within that there are all kinds of pieces of research that are being supported right throughout the 27 Member States. And, as you know, in the next couple of months, we will be looking at an interim evaluation of FP7. That interim evaluation is going to look at all of the areas involved in FP7, all the aspects of research involved in FP7. That evaluation, and the results of it, will set out where there are difficulties, where there are problems, in whatever areas they might be, where we need to make a greater push, where there are areas maybe in which levelling-off is required.

I will look very carefully at the result of that interim evaluation – to look at whether there are changes that need to be made in FP7 immediately – but also of course I will be looking at the next Framework Programme and what needs to be changed, tidied up and pushed forward in a more determined way than what it is at the moment in Framework 7.

So you can be assured that no research is forgotten about, no research will be forgotten about, and we need to be told in the interim evaluation what needs to be fixed, and whatever it is then you can be assured that it will be fixed by us.

3-039

Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE). – Félicitations, chère Madame, pour votre dynamisme. On sent que vous voulez bien faire et, précisément, vous aurez un budget à peu près de neuf milliards. Ce n'est pas beaucoup d'argent pour tous les défis que vous exposez.

Je voudrais vous demander comment vous voyez la négociation des prochaines perspectives budgétaires en 2013, parce qu'au fond, aujourd'hui, au sein de l'Union européenne, la recherche se fait beaucoup dans les États membres. Est-ce que vous ne pensez pas que le moment est venu de communautariser la politique de recherche au niveau des financements?

Êtes-vous prête, vous qui avez été ministre et qui connaissez le problème des égoïsmes nationaux, à négocier avec les États membres pour avoir un budget recherche, à l'échelle communautaire, qui soit conforme aux défis qui sont les nôtres au niveau de l'Union européenne?

3-040

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – Of course I think it is important, because one of the things I learnt in preparing for the hearing was that we had all this diversification in research – in that diversification we lose opportunities. You do not have that with the people and the countries that we are in competition with. So we have to, by putting in place the European research area, ensure that we coordinate.

I do not like sending out a warning to countries saying, 'You must do this', and 'This is the only way you can do it'. I think we can do it better by coordination and by putting in place this European Research Area. I think there is a glorious opportunity for us to put this kind of coordination in place, so that we do not have that kind of duplication.

I think it is important in the financial discussions that are ahead of us. Mr Audy, coming as you do from the Budgetary Control Committee, you will not be surprised if I say that, when one goes into discussions on money, you are very much on your own – as a Commissioner, as a Minister, even as a Member of the European Parliament, I am sure, from time to time. But those discussions, I am sure, will be robust. I am sure that they will be difficult and challenging: I am up for the challenge. I have done it before in government and I believe that, if you can confirm me as a Commissioner, that similarly the Commission is a college and one has to fight for one's area of responsibility.

At the end of the day, the cake is cut as the Commission as a whole and as a majority decide it is cut, but I will be in there fighting to ensure that we get as much as we possibly can.

3-041

Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE). – Si vous craignez cette négociation avec le Conseil, appuyez-vous sur le Parlement, nous serons vos alliés.

Subsidiairement, sur le plan financier et notamment celui du contrôle des finances, je voudrais savoir, Madame la Commissaire désignée, si vous êtes prête, avec vos collègues, à mettre un terme aux problèmes de contrôle sur les fonds de recherche. Parce que les chercheurs sont exaspérés, à la fois de la complexité, mais également de l'application des règles par la Commission européenne, qui recalcule d'une façon qui n'est pas conforme aux normes internationales d'audit et demande des remboursements aux établissements de recherche.

Est-ce que vous êtes prête à défendre les établissements de recherche?

3-042

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I know that individual researchers and companies, particularly SMEs, who are trying to get involved in research activities through the Framework Programme tell me – and they have been telling me over the last few weeks – that they are driven mad by, as they see it, the compounding of financial restrictions on them.

One of the things that is very important to point out is that I do not want to do anything – nor do I think the Commission should ever do anything – that will compromise sound financial management. That is very important. We are talking about the money that belongs to our people and our taxpayers, and we have to ensure that it is spent in a legal and regular way.

Having said that, there are lots of areas under simplification that we need to look at, such as the single audit strategy that the Court responded to, where it is set out that, maybe, the time has come for looking at different error rates and different policy areas. Also, the fact that the Commission will bring forward the document on tolerable risk of error during this coming year, and will look again at how it can be managed.

You, in particular, will be of great assistance because you sit on the two committees that will be involved in this. You sit on the ITRE Committee here, but you also sit on the Budget Control Committee. Together, there are a number of actors: there is the Council, the Commission, the Court of Auditors and there are these two committees that have to work together to try and convince people that this is the way to go, and that you do need to look at the tolerable risk of error and put in place what suits the particular policy. One size does not fit all in this area, I think.

3-043

Catherine Trautmann (S&D). – Mme Geoghegan-Quinn, vous avez dit être une femme politique et nous avons entendu ce message. Je vais donc vous poser une question politique. Nous faisons le constat actuel que nous n'avons pas atteint les objectifs de Lisbonne et nos chercheurs dénoncent une précarisation massive, doublée d'une dévalorisation sociale, de leur activité. Nous sommes alertés sur le fait que, dans ce contexte, économie de la connaissance ne doit pas rimer avec marché de la connaissance. Alors comment comptez-vous remédier à ce risque? Comment allez-vous veiller à maintenir le caractère, structurant pour l'Union, de ce pilier de l'espace européen qu'est le septième programme-cadre alors qu'un certain nombre d'États membres expriment de plus en plus ouvertement leurs préférences pour des coopérations à la carte dans le cadre du processus de Ljubljana et pour ce faire, êtes-vous prête à remobiliser les chercheurs et universitaires, quitte parfois à entrer en confrontation avec les ministres?

3-044

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I think it is going to be incredibly important to mobilise researchers, and, perhaps, sometimes – as you said in your last comment – you get into conflict with Member States; sometimes, maybe, that is necessary. I would prefer for that not to happen, but one has to fight one's corner, and I think, when a Commissioner goes to a Council, it would be normal for the Commissioner to set out certain policies. Some Member States will be happy and others will not, and we have to live and work with that.

But we have to help and assist researchers so that we can reach the targets that have been set for research in the Framework Programme. We can do that in various areas: whether it is simplification, whether it is in trust and control, which I was talking to Mr Audy about, whether it is in areas of ensuring that the EU recovery plan, for example, is put in place and developed. We can do it by responding to private-sector involvement and

public-sector monies, and taking the best research that is available and applying that – taking the basic research and applying that to jobs at the end of the day, which we can do through innovation.

I honestly think that, in putting together and drawing together, as I have, this responsibility for an innovation policy for the Commission and the Community as a whole, I think there are various areas within that: in the mobility of researchers, the insistence of pulling together, cooperating together and coordinating the work that we do in all of the 27 Member States, I think that we can achieve a knowledge economy that can deliver for the future, to have a better society for all of us and deliver the jobs which we so badly need to help us to get out of the economic crisis that we are in now.

3-045

Catherine Trautmann (S&D). – Puisqu'il s'agit des chercheurs, puis-je vous demander quels sont vos objectifs? Pouvez-vous précisément les quantifier concernant la place des femmes parmi les chercheurs?

3-046

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – Women in science is an issue that reflects women in all aspects of society. However, confining things to science and looking at the position of women in science – as I have been doing in recent weeks – I can see that at the beginning there are a lot of women involved, but then perhaps they have a family and there are family reasons why they have to step back for a little while. It then seems to be incredibly difficult for them to get back into the workplace again.

What I want to do is to encourage more women to become involved. In fact, on the day on which, in the capital city of the Member State that I know best, there is the opening of the Young Scientist exhibition, which is for secondary-level students – both boys and girls – I would say that we need to start at the education level by getting women interested in science, moving away from areas like commerce, and getting involved in science, as that is where the jobs are.

We need to put in place the right working and living conditions. I also need to talk to those industries where women seem to have been very successful in remaining, and developing, in the research area and to learn lessons from them that can be put in place in other industries that do not seem to have been so successful.

This is a very important issue for me, as a woman who, in a way, pioneered for women. I do not believe in putting in place quotas, but I do believe in setting targets. If one sets targets, then you can deliver on those targets and you can also monitor whether those targets are being delivered on or not.

3-047

Angelika Niebler (PPE). – Herr Vorsitzender! Frau Geoghegan-Quinn! Ich würde gerne noch einmal das Thema Verwaltungsvereinfachung ansprechen. Erlauben Sie mir die Bemerkung: Sie waren die letzten neun Jahre

Mitglied im Europäischen Rechnungshof, und da war Ihre Hauptaufgabe, die anderen Europäischen Institutionen zu kontrollieren. Aber heute bewerben Sie sich nicht für das Amt der Haushaltskontrollkommissarin, sondern Sie wollen ja Forschungskommissarin werden.

Ich bin jetzt zehn Jahre Mitglied in diesem Ausschuss und zehn Jahre mit Vertretern aus der Forschergemeinschaft zusammen. Ich höre seit zehn Jahren das Gleiche, das Schwierigste in der europäischen Forschung sei die bürokratische Abwicklung der Forschungsprogramme.

Ich frage Sie: Wie können Sie, die Sie nun sehr lange als Rechnungsprüferin tätig waren, uns überzeugen, dass Sie Forschungspolitik nicht auf Kontrolle, sondern auf Vertrauen ausgerichtet praktizieren wollen? Sie haben hier schon auf Fragen der Kollegen ausgeführt, was in der letzten Zeit an Verwaltungsvereinfachung geleistet wurde. Das will ich ausdrücklich anerkennen. Meine Frage ist: Was denken Sie Neues? Wo können wir noch ansetzen oder was wollen Sie konkret in Ihrer Amtszeit vorschlagen?

3-048

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – On simplification: as I mentioned to Mr Audy, it was the Court of Auditors, in their response to the single audit, who were the first to talk publicly, in a document, about different error rates in different areas of policy in Community budgeting.

We are also looking at the tolerable risk of error, and a document on that will be forthcoming. We will issue a communication – I will issue a communication myself if I am confirmed as the Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science – quite early on in relation to simplification.

I think this interinstitutional debate has now begun on the common tolerable risk of error. I think that will be hugely important, and will give great support to what you and I want to do in this area. And indeed, as I understand from Mr Audy, this is also what the Committee on Budgetary Control would like to do.

There are, as I mentioned, and as you reminded me, a number of things that have been done in the area of simplification already. But there are also extra things that we need to do, and I think they will come to the fore once we have this interim evaluation of FP7. They will show us where there is still more work to be done in the area of simplification.

I always believe a very simple philosophy: if we have fewer rules we have fewer errors. Should we have trust? Yes, we should. Should we have lump sums? That is something that we have to look at and that is something which will be looked at in the course of evaluating FP7.

So I think we are on the right track, I think we can all work together, and definitely I need your support in

order to be able to do that in this interinstitutional discussion and debate that is, indeed, going on in the area of simplification.

3-049

Angelika Niebler (PPE). – Danke schön für Ihre Antwort, die mich sehr gefreut hat! Wenn ich Sie richtig verstanden habe, dann sagen Sie, dass man für kleinere Forschungsprojekte, an denen Sie ganz gezielt festhalten wollen, künftig vielleicht einfachere Regeln anwenden kann als bei den großen, komplexeren Forschungsprojekten, die eine größere Kontrolle brauchen.

Ich hätte noch eine Nachfrage zum Thema Industriebeteiligung: In den letzten Jahren ist auch die Beteiligung der Industrie an den Forschungsrahmenprogrammen massiv zurückgegangen. Meine Frage: Haben Sie dazu eine Idee oder Überlegungen, wie man die Industrie noch mehr motivieren kann, sich an den Forschungsprojekten konkret zu beteiligen?

3-050

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – Well it is very important to motivate industry, whether it is a small and medium-sized enterprise or whether it is a large enterprise that is looking at global problems, whether it is the joint technology initiatives which have been working very very well – and we have five of those. We have one for example, the medicine one, looking at innovative medicines, which is very important and vital. We have the Clean Sky initiative, which industry is very interested in, looking at the next generation of aircraft. We have one working on fuel cells, which is looking at replacing petrol in cars.

All of these initiatives have come from the technology platforms. They have been set out as a way of getting industry, whether it is large or whether it is the small and medium-sized enterprises, to involve themselves in the Framework Programme, getting involved in using the research.

Of course a lot of companies now externalise their research needs. They go elsewhere. They do not do the research within the companies. They go outside.

We need to encourage, I think, at a time of difficult economic circumstances. Maybe we can learn from Finland in the past, which decided that investing in research and development and technology was the way to go to, if you like, face the crisis that they had at that time.

This is the time I think we should be encouraging Member States to look at doing that. It is a knowledge economy. It is technology. It is investing for the future. It is providing research right down to the retailer. Providing research that can be used innovatively to provide jobs, at the end of the day.

3-051

Adam Gierek (S&D). – Pani Quinn! Skuteczna aplikacja badań uniwersyteckich do gospodarki zależy w dużym stopniu od tego, czy rozwiązane zostaną problemy własności intelektualnej. Należą do nich wysokie koszty ochrony własności intelektualnej, tzw. patenty zaporowe, blokujące rozwój małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw, zbyt długi w niektórych dziedzinach czas ochrony, nierozwiązany sposób silniejszej od zwykłych praw autorskich ochrony programów komputerowych, a także kwestia patentowania organizmów genetycznie modyfikowanych i farmaceutyków.

Pytanie: Jaką ma Pani wizję polityczną, która prowadziłaby do szybkiego rozwiązania tych problemów, zwłaszcza zaś unijnych praw patentowych?

3-052

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – When I spoke earlier, Mr Gierek, I identified the patent issue as a very serious obstacle and bottleneck that needs to be faced up to. We have come a long way in 30 years, but we have not come the full distance. There is a distance to go. This is not just in my hands. Patents are also a matter for my colleague Mr Barnier.

I will give a commitment to this House that I will work in close cooperation with Mr Barnier, if both of us are confirmed, to ensure that the final steps are taken in this area.

This issue is hugely important and significant for researchers. The cost of getting a patent in Europe is 20 times more than it is in the United States. Even worse than that, to maintain it afterwards the cost is maybe as great as 50 or 60 times more than it is in the United States. A way has to be found to break through the bottleneck, to open the door and to provide the support and protection that European researchers need. You can be assured of my being fully involved and engaged with Mr Barnier to ensure that the Commission can take the very final steps in this area.

3-053

Adam Gierek (S&D). – Problem jest oczywiście skomplikowany i trudny. Myślę, że trzeba po prostu, żeby Pani nie zabrakło odwagi namówić kolegów do tego, żeby się tym problemem zajęli, bo jest rzeczywiście trudny.

3-054

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner designate. – I hope that my past experience as a politician in Ireland would prove that I have some courage from time to time.

As I said already, I am not a yes-woman: I am a doer; I like action. I know that you have to talk, but there is a limit to all the talking that you can do. We have done a lot in the patents area, but we need to take this final step.

I will not just be talking about it; I will be working in close cooperation with Mr Barnier, if he is confirmed also, to ensure that this particular final bottleneck or obstacle to the good work of researchers in Europe is broken down and overcome, so that we can finally have

a European patent that people can afford, and which does not disadvantage European researchers as against researchers in the United States in particular.

3-055

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Comissária indigitada. Como mencionou, a construção do Espaço Europeu de Investigação é fundamental para o futuro da Europa. De que modo pretende a Comissão promover a construção do Espaço Europeu da Investigação, nomeadamente através da articulação entre os programas comunitários e os programas dos Estados-Membros, sem perder a dimensão europeia? Serão suficientes os instrumentos já existentes (já mencionou alguns, como as ERA-NET, mas também menciona o artigo 169.º)? Como vê o desenvolvimento futuro destes instrumentos? Pretende criar novos instrumentos para promover o ERA? E como antevê o contributo do Conselho Europeu de Investigação e do Instituto Europeu de Inovação e Tecnologia para a construção do Espaço Europeu da Investigação?

3-056

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – The European Research Council provides the excellence. That is what it is about. That is what it needs to get support for and that is what it will have my support for.

In relation to the initiatives to complete the European Research Area, you mentioned a number of them. Some I had mentioned myself already.

I think the instruments that we have are definitely not enough. I think we need more initiatives. We need more instruments. We need an Article 169. We have the great Bonus (Baltic organisations network of funding science) project which is involved in looking at research in all of the Baltic Sea area. That is very important. We have the HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria project, also an Article 169 project. They are on the public side.

On the private side we also need to be moving, if you like, in the same direction, and we have the joint technology initiatives. I mentioned a number of them before. They are very important. They are providing leading research for us in areas that will affect the global societal changes that are facing all of us as Europeans and indeed throughout the world.

We need lead markets. These are the markets for products that have not as yet been developed. What are we talking about here? We are talking about protective clothing, for example, whether it is for fishermen or firemen or whoever it might be for, we were talking about that in a lead-market area. Measurable energies, e-health – they are all instruments that came from the European technology platform through the joint technology initiatives into the lead markets.

We also, of course, have to remember that the EU leaders at the Council decided on a European recovery plan and under that European recovery plan there are three public/private partnerships. There is the ‘Factories

of the Future’, there is ‘Energy Efficient Buildings’ and there is ‘Green Cars’, and these are the areas, I think, where we can build this European Research Area, try and reduce the duplication that means loss of opportunity for Europeans and, if we do that, I think we can present a research policy that delivers jobs at the end of the day. And that is indeed what innovation is all about, after all.

3-057

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE). – Eu gostaria de insistir no papel do Conselho Europeu de Investigação na construção da ERA e de saber como encara a Comissão transformar este Conselho num organismo pan-europeu com a participação de fundos nacionais e regionais. Como garantiria, nesse caso, o papel fundamental da Comissão e do Parlamento Europeu neste organismo? E como vê o futuro do European Institute of Technology como catalisador das reformas necessárias para a modernização das universidades e dos centros de investigação?

3-058

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – The ERC, as I have said already, is about raising excellence in European frontier research. We are very lucky that in the ERC we already have two Nobel Prize winners. And that is what we want: to encourage more research, to encourage excellence, and to have more Nobel Prize winners.

An independent review of the ERC, its structures and its mechanisms, was carried out last year. It said – and I think this is along the lines that you, Mrs Carvalho, mentioned – that, even though it was highly successful, we had to do our utmost to ensure that that particular success of the ERC can be sustainable into the future.

There are actions that need to be taken to improve its governance and its operations and, indeed, improve – equally importantly – the regulatory conditions under which it operates. It is very important. It is all about excellence. It is about delivery. It is about ensuring that we put in place all of the regulatory and other support services that the ERC needs to deliver to Europe. You can be assured that my support will be totally for the ERC in doing that into the future.

3-059

Adina-Ioana Vălean (ALDE). – Coming from a country in eastern Europe, I have a question regarding research from this particular area. We do know that researchers and scientists in central and eastern European Member States are still confronted with higher barriers in accessing EU funds such as the Seventh Framework Programme, and in cooperating at European level.

What do you intend to do to make full use of brains from all around Europe to promote partnership, and to encourage researchers and scientists from central and eastern European countries to get involved in EU projects and engage in an enlarged European research area?

3-060

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I tend to look at the European Research Area as all of the 27 Member States, even though I am very conscious of the point you raised, that there are difficulties and problems.

First of all, on an infrastructure basis we can help, through the Framework Programme and by using some of the EUR 86 billion which is available under Structural Funds, to build up the infrastructure; but also to build up the capacity, because, if we build up the infrastructure, that is one thing; we also need at the same time to build up the capacity in the smaller Member States, whether they are in eastern and central Europe or in other areas of the Union.

Building the unified research area is core European policy and it is a policy where all 27 Member States need to work together. If you look at the research infrastructure, ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) identified 44 large projects, and 10 of those are in place. One of them is a perfect example of what can be done in smaller countries. For example, you have Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic working together to deliver extreme light infrastructures, lasers in other words. So this is an area where I think they can work together, smaller countries can work together; they can work with bigger countries perhaps, in the beginning, while we are building up the infrastructure and while we are building up the capacity which is so essential, because I do not want to make a distinction or a division between whether it is a big Member State or a small Member State. We are all Europe; all 27 of us need to work together in the research area if we are not to lose, to continue to lose, opportunities as we have been doing in the past by having too much diversification. We need coordination and cooperation, and we should not be afraid of that.

3-061

Adina-Ioana Vălean (ALDE). – I appreciate that you are aware of the problem, and I also believe that it is not about big or small countries or Member States in terms of research, because it does not depend on the population. However, there are states in which, as you said, infrastructure and capacities are well established, and others in which they are not. However, I appreciate that you are aware of the problem, and I hope we will have the opportunity to see something done in this respect in your mandate.

3-062

Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE). – You just expressed your clear view on the synergy between the Structural Funds, the Framework and, probably, the CAP. I would like to know how structural – how long-lasting – this approach might be? Is this a good approach for the post-2013 period? I think so, but can you give your vision whether this is just for the period to 2013 or later?

Second question: about SMEs. SMEs are lagging behind in participation, and this is in fact unacceptable. They create the employment; they are really implementing the

newest things. What will you concretely do on this, maybe in the mid-term review of the Framework?

Concerning SMEs, probably we have to be tougher. Do you need targets or quotas or whatever? Because, otherwise, you can change it. Can you give some glimpse of your ideas?

3-063

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – The small and medium enterprise sector is the backbone of the European economy. There are 25 million of them and they account for 66% of employees in Europe, so they are important for all of us.

We have to do our best to involve them to an even greater extent in the Framework Programme. How do we do that? You set the 15% target; unfortunately that target has not been met. We are only at 13.4% and it is a crucial priority of mine to raise that percentage from 13.4% during my mandate if I am to be confirmed.

I think we can do a number of things. We can look at the research calls; we can make them more appropriate to what SMEs are really interested in. That is one way I think that we could do it, and perhaps in the coming calls and work programmes we can specify – I would like to specify – and target calls particularly in the thematic areas that SMEs are really interested in. I think we have to engage in a wide consultation, because we have to learn from the key stakeholders that are involved what exactly they are looking for, where they see these blockages and how we can help.

Also we have to support them through the capacities element of the Framework Programme, because we are, for example, at the moment cofinancing jointly with SMEs the recently-started Eurostars under Article 169. That is for very high-tech SMEs. We also need to use the relationship that we have built up through the risk-sharing finance facility with the European Investment Bank. They are looking at very high-tech SMEs, and they are the ones that are involved and anxious to be involved. But I think there is a way of maybe involving the European Investment Bank in an even greater way, and that is something that I certainly would like to support. I would like to see a task force being set up, if I am to be confirmed as Commissioner, that would look at this whole area, where we can extend our cooperation with the EIB or with its venture capital arm, the EIF. I think these are the areas that can help to involve even more SMEs.

3-064

Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE). – I would just like come back to my first part of the question as to whether you can say something about the synergy between the funds. You know, this EUR 54 billion now from the Framework Programme, plus EUR 86 billion coming from the regional funds, from cities, regions and top regions which make us more competitive.

This is a combination which will enable knowledge and excellence to be reflected in production in the future too, making Europe stronger.

Can I have this commitment from your side to have this combination of funds? You said it just now to Mrs Vălean, but I wanted to have your commitment for the longer term.

3-065

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – We cannot deliver these kinds of policies to the Union as a whole unless we have a synergy, and unless that synergy is a continuing synergy.

I do not see this as something new. It is already there. We are working on it. We need to continue with it. We need to push it forward. This means that we do not come to 2013 and suddenly say ‘this is it’. This is something that both I, if I am confirmed, and the other Commissioners-designate, can work on together.

Structural funds are a huge area. If I look at the Member State I know best and at how it has used structural funds in the past to build up from being a very poor economy to a knowledge economy – to being an economy where it could do things and create wealth – this was done through sound and good use of Structural Fund money. That can be done again in the future. You certainly have my support for that, and on my side I will be completely supportive of that synergy continuing.

3-066

Judith A. Merkies (S&D). – I am very happy to hear your commitment on the SMEs since currently only one out of 10 is receiving the support of the framework programme, but since you have already satisfactorily answered that, I want to go into another question. I hear you a lot on research, I hear you less on innovation and for me innovation is really different to research.

What I really am worried about is the commercialisation of knowledge, of research into a product, into innovation. Innovation for me is bringing a product to the market. We, in the European Union, are very good at science and research. However, we are not so good at turning this into a product, and this is what is going to drive the green economy.

So if you are talking about jobs, we are talking about SMEs’ innovations related to the market.

3-067

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – Of course innovation is related to the market, and we are talking about research to retail. I think that is very important. We need to move forward the excellent research that has been done, and that has been supported, by bringing it to the market place, and helping companies that need the research to avail of it, access it and be able to use it in all of the global challenges that are out there – from energy, climate change, food security, health, medicines, to an ageing population. We need to provide the research that is there.

What we need to do is to commercialise the research to provide the products at the end of the day that are needed to deal with the various big societal grand challenges that need to be faced, but also to ensure that by doing that we build a better society into the future for our people.

We have to innovate. Innovation is not the responsibility of one Commissioner. It is not the responsibility of one Member State. It is an overarching, a cross-cutting policy in which everybody together from energy, to environment, to industry, to enterprise and to all areas, has to be involved, working together and using the excellent research that is there that can provide the products at the end of the day.

In doing that, we have to remove the obstacles I talked about earlier. Whether it is in the area of patents, whether it is in the area of intellectual property rights, all those obstacles need to be removed so that we can use the research, put it in place, innovate with it and provide the jobs.

3-068

Judith A. Merkies (S&D). – And yet you would be the Commissioner for Research and Innovation. My concern is that innovation should indeed be a horizontal issue within the Commission. Fortunately, Mr Barroso has said that innovation is one of his prime targets – his prime priority – and he is going to come forward in the spring of 2010 with an innovation agenda – an Innovation Act. Where does that leave you? Are you going to be directed by Mr Barroso, or are you going to direct the other Commissioners?

3-069

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I am sure Mr Barroso is very interested in my reply. Were you to confirm me, I will be a very robust Commissioner in President Barroso's Commission.

However, of course innovation is a cross-cutting issue. We have already mentioned the different Commissioners that are involved. I will chair the group of innovation Commissioners so that we together can bring forward the innovation policy for the Commission and for Europe as a whole.

We cannot do it individually but everybody is involved in different bits, like Neelie Kroes, who is involved in the digital area; like Antonio Tajani, who is involved in the industrial area; like Mr Oettinger, who is involved in the energy area. There are innovation cross-cuts in every area of policy, but it will be my responsibility to chair the committee of those Commissioners and to bring the policy together. That will be done in a tight framework, because I do not believe in talking shops. I do not necessarily like the idea of committees that go on and talk for ever and do not deliver or make change or have any action.

So I want action. I want to deliver. I want to make sure that we have to achieve our vision of EU 2020, and that

vision is how research and innovation can best contribute to the EU 2020 strategy.

So I will not be a mouse. I will not be quiet. I will be robust, but I will be collegial.

3-070

Michèle Rivasi (Verts/ALE). – Je suis très contente d'apprendre que vous vous définissez comme une femme politique, et j'espère que vous serez aussi une femme d'action écologiquement compatible.

Alors, il y a deux points noirs que je trouve important de souligner dans les orientations budgétaires du programme-cadre.

Le premier point noir, c'est le nucléaire. Contrairement à ce qui a été dit, le nucléaire bénéficie de sommes astronomiques. Il reçoit 63 % du budget recherche et développement dans le domaine de l'énergie – et de telles sommes sont uniquement accordées au nucléaire!

Et le deuxième, c'est les nanotechnologies. Je voudrais que vous soyez sensible au fait qu'il y a un développement et une dissémination des nanoparticules, à la fois dans les aliments et dans les biens de consommation, et que seul 1 % du budget est attribué à l'évaluation des risques.

Donc, ma question est la suivante: Êtes-vous prête à diminuer le budget du nucléaire, à le répartir, et à augmenter le budget attribué à l'évaluation des risques sanitaires dans le cas du programme-cadre sur les nanotechnologies?

3-071

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – A short answer to begin with: I do not want to reduce the budget in any of the areas for which I have responsibility. That is the first thing. However, it remains to be seen what happens when we get involved in a very detailed way in the budget discussions.

Nuclear energy for me is extremely important. It remains the technology of choice in many Member States. It is a carbon-free technology and we should maintain the research to develop it as an option for the Member States that wish to pursue it.

But the Commission should not be involved in telling Member States what mix of energy suits them. That is a matter for the Member States and that was set out very clearly in the Lisbon Treaty. And you need not worry; I will not be interfering with that.

On Euratom, if I look at Euratom for nuclear research and training activities, they have EUR 2.7 billion in their budget, and the areas that they are involved in are waste management and safety. So that will continue.

On nanotechnology – and this was something I had to learn about, because I did not really know an awful lot, if anything, about nanotechnology when I came in, or even what it was – its potential applications are very

important, as you say. It is important in medicine, in targeted treatments for cancer for example, which affects everybody, in energy for efficient solar cells, and in chemistry for cleaner chemical processes.

So nanotechnology is a key enabling technology which is of vital importance for the growth of European industry, which means more jobs for our people, and many of those are indeed relevant to SMEs and to start-ups.

So for me, to get back to your initial question, Ms Rivasi, it is not a matter of deciding that we need to cut down support in one area in order to increase it in another. It is a question of looking at the budget for the area as a whole and hoping that, if I am confirmed, I might be successful in retaining the budget as we have it, and that, with your support and the support of all of the people that are here, we can work towards maintaining what we have and maybe even pushing the envelope just a little further.

3-072

Michèle Rivasi (Verts/ALE). – Dans le contexte de la crise de confiance des citoyens vis-à-vis de la science, êtes-vous favorable à permettre le financement de recherches proposées ou pilotées par des organisations de la société civile dans le cadre du programme-cadre, comme l'avait fait votre prédécesseur?

C'est le financement, donc, de recherches proposées ou pilotées par les organisations de la société civile...

3-073

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – The support that Mr Potočník, my predecessor, gave and the substantial legacy which he left – you should be reassured from the point I made – will indeed be continued, supported and developed further where it is necessary. He did a significant amount of work in the area of research that I certainly would like to continue and support.

3-074

Evžen Tošenovský (ECR). – O významu výzkumu a inovací bylo již mnoho řečeno, protože jsme ve výboru, kde o výzkum a inovace usilujeme, proto nebudu opakovat, co již bylo řečeno, abych šetřil čas. Chtěl bych se zeptat na velmi významnou věc, a to je to, o čem jste už trochu hovořila, tedy boj o to, abychom jako Evropa byli konkurenceschopní. O tom rozhoduje inovační cyklus, který je bohužel v Evropě oproti asijským trhům a Americe pořád dlouhý. Několikrát jste zopakovala – a mně se to velmi líbí – že jako politička máte nápad, jak „zatřepat“ s byrokracií, která bohužel tyto inovační cykly velmi prodlužuje, a to skutečně faktický nápad, který tuto situaci změní.

3-075

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I think because research innovation and science is now being placed by President Barroso at the heart of European policy – a key element in helping Europe to come out of the economic downturn, as a policy that is going to drive industry, drive jobs, drive the recovery for

the European Union – then it is very important that, whatever needs to be done in the area of simplification – which I come back to again and again, because I think there is an enormous amount that we need to do quickly to be able to innovate, to be able to put in place an innovation policy so the industry can see that we are serious about innovation in this Union, we are serious about giving the support to transfer research into innovation, into jobs, whatever simplification measures need to be made, whether it is in the area of SMEs, whether it is in the area of the joint technology initiatives, whether it is in the area of joint programming on the public side – we need to help and put in place elements and instruments that can deliver innovation throughout the Union as a whole.

The Commission has a very serious responsibility in this regard to put in place very quickly and to look at all of the elements of innovation, under my leadership (if I am confirmed), and to put a policy in place that goes right across each of the areas within the Commission so that it can be done in a coordinated and cooperative way.

3-076

Evžen Tošenovský (ECR). – Jenom doplňující otázka právě na to, o čem jste hovořila. Jak vidíte možnost maximálně využít jeden z největších výzkumných a velkých projektů, jako je Galileo, právě pro takovýto posun v inovacích?

3-077

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner designate. – Galileo, as you know, is not my responsibility. I think we have had long debates, quite a number of audits and a lot of discussion on the whole Galileo project.

I suppose, at the end of the day, Mr Tajani, who has responsibility in this area, will be working as part of that cross-cutting Commissioners' committee that I told you I would chair, so that any inputs from that area can be inputted into the committee to allow us to use this big innovative proposal of Galileo – that took so long, that cost so much, that worried so many people here and indeed a lot of colleagues of Mr Audy in the Committee on Budgetary Control as well.

So we can use all of these instruments – and Galileo is another instrument, albeit an extremely powerful, an extremely well-known instrument – to help us to create an innovation policy that meets the needs of industry, responds to the requests of industry and shows industry that this European Commission is serious about involving industry and making it easier to do business in Europe. This will also tell the world that Europe is open for business: we might have been in an economic crisis, we might still have difficulties economically, but we are open for business and we want to encourage you to come here.

3-078

Piotr Borys (PPE), komisja CULT. – Szanowna Pani! Chciałem także podziękować za wcześniejsze wypowiedzi. Przed nami konkurencja światowa. Chcąc stworzyć najbardziej innowacyjną, dynamiczną

gospodarkę, bez innowacyjności nie będziemy w stanie oczywiście tego zrobić, mamy ambitne cele. Stąd moje pytanie sprowadza się do całego segmentu edukacji, która we wszystkich swoich obszarach powinna mieć elementy związane z kształtowaniem innowacyjności. I stąd moje pytanie: Na ile Pani zamierza również wspierać sektor edukacji pod kątem wszystkich innowacyjnych form?

Mam tutaj na myśli przede wszystkim wspieranie działań w komisji horyzontalnej związanej z brakiem wykluczenia informacyjnego, szerokopasmowym dostępem do Internetu, wielkimi portalami edukacyjnymi, e-learningiem, a więc edukacją na odległość, wymianą dobrych doświadczeń, wspieraniem edukacji przedmiotów przyrodniczych i matematycznych – a więc wszystkich tych aspektów, które mają późniejszy wpływ na to, aby w późniejszym elemencie gospodarka unijna mogła mieć wykształconych obywateli. W związku z tym, czy Pani zamierza wspierać działalność edukacyjną w zakresie innowacyjnym?

3-079

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – As you know, the area of education is the responsibility of my Commissioner-designate colleague, Mrs Vassiliou. We have already been talking – not officially, but unofficially – about ways in which the Research Commissioner might be able to help in this area. Because up until this new announcement of a new Commission, this area – Marie Curie, all of that area – was under the responsibility of the Research Commissioner.

It is very important, I think, to put science at the centre of education. Young people have been encouraged, over the last decade or more, to get involved in the commerce area, to get involved in financial services and so on. We all know what has happened in those areas. We all know there are no jobs in those areas anymore. Those areas are under pressure. So if young people want jobs, if they want to do research, if they want to travel easily throughout Europe, what areas should they be concentrating on?

I would like to encourage them to get involved in the area of science, and we – Mrs Vassiliou and myself, if we are confirmed – will have to work together to see what initiatives each of us can take in our own area to encourage young people from the time they go to primary school right through to second-level education, right up to third-level education, to get involved in this area. And when they graduate, to ensure that there are opportunities for them then to work right across the European Union; that we do not have the kind of obstacles that are currently there; that we ensure mobility for them; that they will have the same protections – whether it is in pensions, social security, working and living conditions and so on – that will encourage more people to get involved in science.

We should make science 'sexy', if you will forgive me for using that term, but I think that is what we have to

do. Do we have celebrity scientists? We should have, so that they can encourage young people to get involved.

3-080

Piotr Borys (PPE), *komisja CULT*. – Pytanie uzupełniające dotyczy kolejnej perspektywy finansowej, nad którą prace rozpoczęte zostaną już w następnym roku. Czy jest Pani zwolennikiem polityki spójności, która, jak wiemy, w swoim zakresie posiada także duży fragment środków przewidzianych na badania i rozwój? I stąd chciałem uzyskać Pani też jakby kierunkowe zdanie dotyczące utrzymania i kontynuacji polityki spójności, szczególnie z uwzględnieniem badań i rozwoju, które są także kluczowym elementem wspierającym te fundusze.

3-081

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, *Commissioner-designate*. – The debate on the next Financial Perspective I think will be robust, energetic and interesting. We will need the support of this committee and the Committee on Budgetary Control in looking at the various areas and what the allocation might be or could be. In that area cohesion policy is very important. We cannot leave anybody behind; we are in the business of bringing everybody together, bringing everybody forward. In doing that cohesion plays a very central role. Research, it seems to me, needs to be centrally involved in any fully comprehensive cohesion policy.

If I am confirmed by you, I will work with my cohesion colleague to ensure that we can move forward in a coordinated and cooperative way. What happens in the discussions on the Financial Perspective and the budget is another matter, and something which I cannot comment upon at this stage.

3-082

Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D), *Comisión CULT*. – Me ha satisfecho muchísimo que nos dijera que ha empezado a hablar ya con la Sra. Vassiliou, posible Comisaria de Cultura y Educación, porque mi pregunta va enfocada también en el sentido de la educación y la formación.

Creo que estamos todos de acuerdo en que la investigación es uno de los motores del crecimiento y del bienestar. Usted nos ha comentado que pondrá en práctica una estrategia clara, a nivel europeo, en los ámbitos de investigación, innovación y ciencia, con el fin de que la Estrategia 2020 pueda alcanzarse.

A mí me gustaría, si fuera posible, que nos señalara algunas acciones concretas sobre cómo se piensa estructurar la recalificación de los trabajadores, si se prevé impulsar algunos programas específicos, orientados a esta mejor formación y a las nuevas necesidades que las nuevas tecnologías nos exigen.

3-083

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, *Commissioner-designate*. – First of all I agree with the comment you made that research is the driving force for growth and, in particular in respect of the EU 2020 Strategy, research plays a very fundamental and important role.

The People programme will be under the responsibility of my colleague, Mrs Vassiliou. It will, however, be implemented by the Research Executive Agency which will be under my responsibility. That looks after the administration and the execution of the programmes.

She will have the European Institute of Technology. She will have the Knowledge and Innovation Communities. They are the instruments that need to be used in a coordinated way to be able to deliver the kind of results that you are talking about.

The research policies regarding universities and third-level institutions are an integral part of the European Research Area, which will remain within my area of responsibility, so it is very important and it is one of the reasons why we have been having these informal discussions already. It is very important that whatever we do – whatever she does and whatever I do – complements the two policies that were working together up until now and that we ensure that the cooperation that was there when they were in one directorate-general continues. That is very important. That can only happen if we have good communicative relationships between each other.

There are 4000 third-level institutions throughout Europe with 17 million students. We have to mobilise them. Quite a lot of them are involved in research; not enough of them are involved. There are issues there where both of us together can work towards encouraging more of them to get involved. Only 33 European universities are in the top 100 of world ranking.

3-084

Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D), *Comisión CULT*. – Como usted ha dicho, podríamos decir que hay muchísimos actores involucrados en esta cuestión. Me gustaría saber cómo piensa realmente poner de acuerdo a todo este sector, a todos los sectores involucrados, para que esto sea un éxito, para que realmente se logre una buena formación de los trabajadores, una buena formación de los nuevos estudiantes, para que puedan afrontar en buenas condiciones las nuevas necesidades que plantean las nuevas tecnologías.

3-085

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, *Commissioner-designate*. – I think the first thing to do is that we need to encourage them to get involved in this area of education. Not enough of them – I think all of us would agree – have gone into this area of education so far. We need to show them and to prove to them that this is an area where, at the end of their education, they can fulfil a very important role in society. They can get a job. They can be employed. They can use that education and training to go all over the 27 EU Member States to work in any one of them.

That is important, and it is important that we put in place all of the various issues that I talked about before, whether it is in the area of pension rights, working and

living conditions and so on. But we need to do that, as I said, in very close cooperation together.

I have not known Mrs Vassiliou for very long, but I think she is a person that I could work with very closely. I do not think we have a choice in these matters. In the Commission as a whole I think people have to work together. We can no longer afford to work in silos. We can no longer afford to have personal fiefdoms. We need to work collegially, cooperatively, efficiently and effectively together to deliver a policy for the European Union that it needs at a time when there is an economic crisis throughout the Union as a whole. If we do that, I think we can deliver for the Union. Certainly, from my point of view, I intend to ensure that we do.

3-086

Γεώργιος Παπανικολάου (PPE), επιτροπή CULT. – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κυρία υποψήφια Επίτροπε, σε σχέση με αυτά που ειπώθηκαν και προηγουμένως, πολλοί είναι εκείνοι οι νέοι επιστήμονες οι οποίοι επιθυμούν να προχωρήσουν και να εμβαθύνουν τις γνώσεις τους με έρευνα. Γι' αυτό αποτελεί καθήκον όλων μας να τους διασφαλίζουμε τις καλύτερες δυνατές συνθήκες, έτσι ώστε να αποτρέψουμε τη διαρροή εγκεφάλων από τον ευρωπαϊκό χώρο έρευνας, ζήτημα που αποτελεί ένα πολύ σημαντικό δεδομένο και το οποίο πρέπει πάντα να έχουμε κατά νου. Βεβαίως, πρέπει επίσης να καταφέρουμε να προσελκύσουμε ορισμένους λαμπρούς επιστήμονες που ευρίσκονται εκτός της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και οι οποίοι έχουν εκ των πραγμάτων μόνο θετικά να συνεισφέρουν στην ερευνητική προσπάθεια σε επίπεδο Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

Πώς σκοπεύετε να προωθήσετε τα παραπάνω ζητήματα, δεδομένου ότι η ευρωπαϊκή έρευνα στερείται ικανών πόρων χρηματοδότησης; Το λέω αυτό αναφέροντας συγκριτικά τους στόχους της Λισαβόνας: όλοι γνωρίζουμε ότι ο επιδιωκόμενος στόχος ήταν το 3% του ΑΕΠ· τελικά το επίπεδο που καταφέραμε να φτάσουμε ήταν μόνο το 1,9%.

Πώς νομίζετε ότι θα μειωθούν οι διαφοροποιήσεις μεταξύ των κρατών μελών στη χρηματοδότηση και πώς θα καταφέρουμε να αυξήσουμε τον αριθμό των νέων ερευνητών, των λαμπρών αυτών επιστημόνων, στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση;

3-087

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner designate. – I am very aware of the brain drain, as you are. If we want to keep young researchers and scientists here, we have to put in place the kind of working conditions that make it attractive for them to stay here. Those working conditions can be the issues that I raised earlier in relation to pension rights and working conditions and so on. But they can also be to remove blockages, whether it is in the area of intellectual property rights or whether it is in the area of patents: areas that make it more difficult to transfer the knowledge of these researchers.

It is sad that we have not yet managed to reach the 3% target, and we saw recently that the President of the United States, Mr Obama, has now set this as a target as

well. We have to look at where we are in research and development in the EU. We are still stagnating at 1.85%, so we have to find out what is causing that, where we need to increase that, and how we can increase it. If we look at the fact that it is divided into two components, the public component and the private component, it is very obvious that we need to push for an increase in the private component.

How do we do this? We do this by removing the blockages, the barricades, the difficulties by simplification, by all of the means at our disposal, to encourage the private sector, whether it is small and medium-sized enterprises, whether it is the large companies, or whether it is multinational companies that want to get involved. We need to remove the barriers and the blockages that are preventing their involvement at the moment.

You can be assured that this is a huge priority for me; it is important to retain the 3% target. I have heard some talking in the media and so on that we should reduce it. I think that would send the wrong signal entirely. What we need to do is to encourage people to increase their spend. At a time of economic crisis that is sometimes difficult. I think we can take the example of Finland, where they did it.

3-088

Romana Jordan Cizelj (PPE). – Spoštovana gospa Geoghegan-Quinn, vračam se k inovacijam, ki so v središču trajnostnega razvoja tako v obstoječi lizbonski strategiji in zagotovo bodo tudi v novi strategiji do leta 2020.

Danes smo govorili predvsem o tehnološki inovativnosti. Inovativnost pa je tudi sociološka inovativnost, inovativnost na področju organizacijskih ved in zanima me, kakšen je vaš pogled na celovito definicijo inovativnosti.

Druga stvar: kaj boste storili, da bodo ideje dejansko pozitivno vrednotene in da boste zaščitili intelektualno lastnino, ki izhaja iz idej?

In tretjič: če želimo povečati inovativnost, moramo uvajati ukrepe tako v finančnem smislu kot tudi v smislu ustreznih človeških virov. Tisti, ki take ukrepe uvaja, mora biti ustrezno nagradjen. In Evropska unija takšne ukrepe uvaja. Ali lahko danes zagotovite, da ostale evropske politike ne bodo ogrozile rezultatov, ki jih pričakujemo zaradi uvajanja spodbud na tem področju?

3-089

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – Innovation policy is in essence ensuring that the new ideas, the new discoveries, the new inventions that I talked about earlier, are brought to the marketplace in the form of the new products and services which the Union needs. Those products and services are going to improve the standard of living, the quality of living of people who are living for longer. So we need innovative products to be able to help us, whether it is ambient assisted living or medicines or whatever the area of

research. We need to bring that research to the marketplace in order to innovate properly.

The key point here, I think, is that politicians like us, businesses, and researchers, all have to have a common goal. And that common goal needs to be how we define innovation policies and priorities, and I suppose politicians have one view and all of the others have another view. It might be just slightly different or even more different. But there is a common ground that all of us together need to build on and that is investing in environmental technologies, investing in eco-innovation, for example. These are areas that are huge, grand challenges for the Union and for the world. We need to invest in them, we need to ensure that we get small and medium-sized enterprises and the larger companies involved in all of this area.

Ideas are valued and we have to ensure that we give the kind of financial support and human support to ensure that we prove that the ideas are valued and that researchers and people working in this area are rewarded in the same way as they would be if they worked in any other area of industry or development.

3-090

Romana Jordan Cizelj (PPE). – Nadaljevala bi z *innovation actom*, ki ga pripravlja *DG enterprise*, in želim, da bi vam resnično dobro uspela koordinacijska vloga med *DG enterprise* in *DG research*.

Akt naj bi bil objavljen pred pomladjo 2010, se pravi tega leta. Ali boste predlagali, da se ta datum pomakne v poletje, da torej prej dobimo evropsko strategijo 2020, ki bo vključevala tudi inovacijsko politiko?

3-091

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – The EU 2020 strategy is about setting a path out of the crisis and into a sustainable social market economy. So we need to look carefully at what we have to do. The Innovation Act, as you rightly said, Mrs Cizelj, is an important element of the work programme of the next Commission. However, that work programme has not been adopted yet, and therefore it is too early to discuss the timing of the initiative. I am not questioning that the initiative should happen; the only thing I am questioning at this stage is the timing of the initiative, because it is very important.

It is important, in bringing forward an Innovation Act, to listen to the stakeholders and to respond to their needs. We had this consultation on the EU 2020 strategy which finished in January. We had the public consultation on communication innovation policy. Now is the time for action and bringing forward the act. It will be part of the Commission work programme, but it is too early at this stage to say when.

3-092

António Fernando Correia De Campos (S&D). – Senhora Geoghegan-Quinn, o Presidente Barroso proclamou neste Parlamento uma revolução na investigação e na inovação para uma sociedade do

conhecimento. Todavia, a excessiva carga administrativa e burocrática, o descontentamento da comunidade científica e o desinteresse da indústria, de que existe abundante evidência, levam-nos a concluir por uma tendência declinante do interesse dos stakeholders. Como pensa ultrapassar esta situação? Bastará uma afinação dos instrumentos, que se revelaram anteriormente insuficientes, para concretizar a nova visão 20-20 para a União Europeia? Tem metas preparadas? Metas financeiras, metas materiais, metas políticas? Como vai convencer os Estados-Membros a atingirem os 3% da Agenda de Lisboa e como insere esta política no conceito de modelo social de mercado?

3-093

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I think it is too early for somebody who is only a Commissioner-designate to start setting out the benchmarks and where the money is going to come from, how much money we need, how we are going to do that.

But I can say this. It is a key and crucial and central part of the EU 2020 strategy, and it has been placed at the heart of Commission policy by Mr Barroso. And it will be my function and duty to deliver that policy within the Commission.

We can do that, as I said, by cooperating together, by coordinating what we do, by all of us working together to deliver the policy. And there are areas where there is a need for simplification of the structures that we have.

While we have done a number of things, there are even more that need to be done, and I will be helped in deciding what those might be by your committee, and no doubt by the interim evaluation that will be made of Framework Programme 7. Admittedly I am not privy to this; the committee has only just been set up, and indeed will only start its work I think next month, but I will be looking very carefully and evaluating very carefully what the proposals are in that mid-term evaluation.

This is because I think it will give us a road map as to where there are blockages, where there are issues that need to be tackled and changed so that we can deliver an innovation policy that will include all Commissioners who have responsibilities in this area – whether in industrial innovation, in digital innovation, or in enterprise innovation, wherever the issue of innovation is – so that all of those together in a cross-cutting way will work together to cooperate and to deliver the policy at the end of the day.

3-094

António Fernando Correia De Campos (S&D). – A Senhora Comissária indigitada, na sua resposta aos quesitos escritos, afirmou que irá recorrer ao Joint Research Center para definir políticas que apoiem o desenvolvimento de novas tecnologias de baixo carbono. Tendo em conta potenciais conflitos de interesses, acredita verdadeiramente que o JRC estará em melhores condições que outros para o fazer?

3-095

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner designate. – I think the JRC is a very important research institute that delivers research that is independent and respected and that is used by industry and by Member States because they are assured of the independence of that research. That is very important, because the JRC is not in the ownership of education or of industry or of any of the other pressure groups that are out there. It gives very independent advice that is used and has been used by industry and by Member States. Within the Commission itself, it does a lot of very positive and useful research that is used by the different policy areas to develop policy. It is important that this continues and you have my full commitment that I will support that continued independence.

3-096

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Ba mhaith liom i dtús báire comhghairdeachas a ghabháil leat as ucht gach a bhfuil bainte amach agat i do shaol polaitiúil ón am ar tháinig tú i ndiaidh d'athar go dtí an lá inniu.

3-097

Now in your written responses you state, and I quote, 'The EU can become a world centre of excellence in the fields of research, innovation and science'. I'm glad you used the words 'can become' because the OECD Science and Technology Report last year paints the real picture, which is, that the EU27 as a percentage of GDP spends on R&D 1.77%. The USA, a percentage more – 2.68%, and Japan, twice as much as us – 3.44%.

The disparity within the Union is even greater. A country like Sweden spends 3.6%; our own dear lovely Ireland spends a lowly 1.31% and some countries less than 1%. This gap needs to close if we are to create the jobs you have spoken about, especially the fancy terms used like the knowledge economy and smart economy. So how do you propose that we close the gap, particularly between ourselves and the US and Japan?

3-098

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I think, first of all we need to acknowledge – I need to acknowledge – that the United States is Europe's most important partner in research and development, from all points of view – from the point of view of the amount of mutual R&D investment, from the flows of researchers and scientists between both, from the volumes of all the cooperative activities that we are involved in and, indeed, the numbers of publications and patents that we have co-authored. So it is the top third-country partner in the framework programme.

Indeed we have strategic partnerships with the United States in a number of areas, such as the EU-US taskforce on biotechnology for example. We have the EU-US Energy Council, which was set up just a couple of months ago. But we need to strengthen those activities further, through the existing structures that are there, or indeed new ones that should be set up that are of mutual benefit to us and enable us to increase the cooperation.

I agree with you that, when one looks at the stark figures, in relation to the EU on the one hand and to the United States and Japan – and there are other players coming up like India and China and Brazil as well – we need to look very carefully at the position of the EU amidst all of these international partners that are out there. We need to strengthen our cooperation with them. Whatever needs to be done, whether it is through the existing structures or whether it is setting up new structures, like we did just a couple of months ago in the EU-US Energy Council, then I think we need to face that and we need to do it.

As regards the 3% target, I think one of the things that is important here is that I need to find a way to encourage the Member States and the private sector to look at ways in which they can increase their spend on research and development. It is always an easy target when there is an economic crisis, it seems to me, to reduce spend on research and development. Finland did not do that in the past and let us look at where they are now in relation to the spend on research and development. They are up there with Sweden, way past the target. We need to encourage other Member States to do that.

3-099

Seán Kelly (PPE). – You stated here today that you hope that we would have a research programme, the largest in the world. Will we judge you on that in five years' time, hopefully? Or is it a utopian ideal which might sound good but which is not realistic?

3-100

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – At the moment Framework Programme No 7 is the largest publicly funded research programme in the world. I am hoping that nothing will happen between now and the end of my mandate – if I am confirmed – to indicate in any way that the next Framework Programme will be anything but at the same level. In other words, I am hoping that it will still be the largest publicly funded research programme in the world.

If one looks at the two elements in Europe, you have the Framework Programme, which is over EUR 50 billion, but when you add in the contributions from the Member States we are looking at a spend of EUR 236 billion on research in Europe.

That is a phenomenal amount of money. I am sure all the researchers and scientists would tell you that it is not enough. Of course they would say that. They are entitled to say that, but the Framework Programme as it stands will be subjected to an interim evaluation later this year, in the next couple of months.

Mr Kelly, I will look very carefully at how we can learn from the recommendations that I am sure will come in that evaluation, maybe for changes in FP7. But it will also be very valuable for me, if I am confirmed, and for the Directorate-General of Research and Technology, to put in place the changes that are necessary for the next Framework Programme, in areas where perhaps we need to make changes, where we need to strengthen or

simplify. Whatever the results of the evaluation may be, they will be used by me.

3-101

Miloslav Ransdorf (GUE/NGL). – Commissioner-designate, historically a cheap labour force was the obstacle to innovation, and we know of many cases of this type from the past. Now, deep in the crisis we are facing the danger that our production will be delocalised to places with cheaper labour forces like China, India, Latin America or Africa. So, what are you planning to do to lessen this danger? What can you do against the danger of delocalisation of our production into countries with cheap labour forces?

3-102

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – This is a complicated issue because it involves not just myself, if I am confirmed, but a number of other people as well in the Commission, and a number of other policy areas where we need to work together.

What are we doing at the moment in the research area? Well, in the research area at the moment, we have recognised that there are huge competitors out there that in the past we may not have expected to become competitors in this area. Like the ones you mentioned. Like India, like China, like Brazil, like Japan, and they are areas that we have to look at.

What are we doing in those areas at the moment? Well, for example, we are cooperating in the area of biofuels research with Brazil. We are cooperating in India in the area of solar power. We are cooperating with China in the area of aeronautics. I think we have to be open enough to realise that these are real competitors, that maybe we might not have seen coming over the horizon 10 or 12 years ago, but they are now here. They are now very effective, very mobile, they are very aggressive, they are competitors of ours. We have to be involved – as we are – and to continue that involvement, and perhaps increase that involvement, and I think that will help us at the end of the day to ensure that we are not left behind.

There are areas where we were left behind, the United States for example, and others. In the area of nanotechnology we need to make sure that we are not going to be left behind there as well.

So cooperation is very important, and ensuring that we invest in the areas that are necessary in order for this not to happen.

3-103

Miloslav Ransdorf (GUE/NGL). – The recent crisis is another proof of the Kondratieff long wave theory. What can you do to provoke clusters of innovations in this complicated situation?

3-104

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – In relation to clusters, if we look at the Article 169 for example, we have already in this area created clusters within the EU. We have the BONUS project which

involves the Baltic Sea and involves a whole series of countries around and in the area of the Baltic Sea, cooperating together on all of the issues that are involved in relation to that area. That is one area.

The other area is an area which I talked about in relation to an answer to Mrs Vălean, I think it was, when I said that you have smaller countries working together in a cluster, doing research together in an area where perhaps none of them could do the research on their own. It is very important to encourage all areas of research. In doing that we have the instruments, I believe, which will be of benefit to us whether it is in the area of the FP7, whether it is in the area of creating the European Research Area, and whether it is in the area of simplification and ensuring that people know that Europe is open for business, that there are areas which we can develop and that we can put in place policies that will deliver for us at the end of the day.

3-105

Jens Rohde (ALDE). – Welcome to the committee, Mrs Geoghegan-Quinn. It is always nice to have a Commissioner-designate with a very clear voice as to where she stands. Maybe you can give a clear answer on this question too. Do you have any guarantees or hints from Mr Barroso that he will earmark a huge amount of new money for the research area in the coming years?

3-106

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I could be killed. I think, Mr Rohde, that you would appreciate that Mr Barroso is not in a position – in a case where he does not have a new Commission until after the hearings of this committee and all the other committees are over – to give guarantees about anything in relation to finance. This will only become evident when we get into the discussion on the Financial Perspective, when we start on the budgetary discussion.

I have already said that I do not think this will be easy. I think it will be difficult from every point of view, and I will need, in relation to my area of responsibility (if you confirm me as a Commissioner), your very strong support in maintaining what we have and, if possible, increasing it. But I know that there will be huge competition between the various members of the Commission to get as much financial support as is possible.

So the straight answer is: no. Mr Barroso gave no commitment in relation to what the money might be in the future, after the next budgetary discussions.

3-107

Jens Rohde (ALDE). – As we know, money does not always follow goodwill, and that is why I have to come back to your answer to Ms Rivasi that you will not cut down on any areas that you are responsible for. Does that mean that you will not reprioritise within your portfolio, or that you refuse to negotiate any move of money from one area to another? If that is so, we might as well stay at home.

3-108

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I am sorry if I gave that impression when I responded to Ms Rivasi. But, of course, within any area of responsibility, any budgetary area, one has to take stock of what is working really well, what is working only reasonably well and, maybe, what needs to be changed totally. That is something that we can only do when we have the evaluations of what we have already, when there is an assessment – which if I am confirmed I need to carry out – of all of the aspects within the portfolio in the run-up to the discussion on the next budgetary procedures, and that will be done, of course, in full cooperation, in full transparency, with this committee.

Because, in fairness, the people of this committee know an awful lot more about the portfolio that I would have responsibility for, were I to be confirmed, than I do at this stage. I am coming to it over a very short period of time. You have a very deep understanding of the different aspects of the policy area and you have different priorities in this committee, so I need to be open and transparent with you in those discussions and I need to be in listening mode to hear whether you think there are areas that need to be changed, where you think they need to be changed, how they need to be changed and how I should respond to that.

3-109

Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE). – Doamnă comisar desemnat, sunt convins că știți că încă sunt restricții pe piața muncii în interiorul Uniunii, inclusiv pentru cercetători. Pe de altă parte, Uniunea Europeană încearcă prin Blue Card să atragă specialiști din țări terțe în Uniune. Dumneavoastră, în răspunsul scris pe care l-ați dat Parlamentului, spuneți că veți aplica politici care să ducă la instituirea, în Europa, a celei de-a cincea libertăți - libertatea de mișcare a cercetătorilor, informațiilor, cunoștințelor. Care ar fi concret aceste politici care să ducă la instituirea unei concurențe corecte pe piața muncii din cercetare în interiorul Uniunii Europene?

3-110

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – As we all know, the Fifth Freedom is all about creating what might be termed the single market for research, transferring the knowledge that we have, ensuring that this is appreciated by all of us and that we work towards removing the barriers that prevent us from providing the Fifth Freedom.

Those barriers include areas within my own responsibility, whether it is in the simplification area, whether it is in encouraging the meeting of the 3% target. It also includes intellectual property rights. It includes patents and the final conclusion of the European Patent. They are areas which are the responsibility of other Commissioners.

But we have to work together as a team in providing and developing and eventually putting in place this very important Fifth Freedom. Almost as we did with the single market, we have to find out what the barriers are. Different Commissioners worked to get rid of those barriers, the obstacles and the blockages. And they built

bridges. We need to do the same, not just me if I am confirmed, but other Commissioner colleagues as well, to put in place the bridges that are needed in order for us to have a true Fifth Freedom, in order for us to have a true single market for knowledge throughout the European Union.

3-111

Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE). – Trebuie să asigurăm eficiența banilor comunitari investiți în cercetare, chiar dacă nu întotdeauna cercetarea duce la rezultate concrete. Ce părere aveți despre posibilitatea de a acorda finanțări pe baza potențialelor rezultate?

3-112

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – That is probably easier to talk about than to actually do or to put it in place at the end of the day.

But I think research that delivers results is very important. Unless we can get results delivered that can help our economy to come out of the crisis that it is in, then that research will be devalued. I am not in the business of devaluing research because researchers and scientists give us the tools. If we use those tools effectively and well, we can innovate for the market and create jobs. That is very important and it is important to support that.

3-113

Mario Pirillo (S&D). – Signora Commissario designato, il programma quadro per la ricerca e lo sviluppo tecnologico è uno strumento centrale della strategia di Lisbona per creare nell'Unione europea un'economia più competitiva basata sulla conoscenza. Importanti sono stati i risultati ottenuti dai diversi programmi, i quali hanno dato slancio e favorito una ricerca collaborativa tra *team* di vari paesi.

Il problema del cambiamento climatico, oggi di grande attualità, deve spingere la Commissione ad incentivare la ricerca in agricoltura. Non ritiene lei, signora Commissario, che la suddetta richiesta possa essere estesa anche ad alcuni significativi prodotti agricoli per i quali la comunità scientifica è convinta che contengano elementi con effetti curativi?

Speriamo che tali proposte potranno essere già inserite nei programmi di lavoro del settore agricoltura del Settimo programma quadro o nella preparazione della stesura dell'Ottavo programma quadro.

3-114

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – Climate change is one of the greatest global challenges facing the world at the moment. Quite a significant amount of research is being done in the whole area of climate change. Close to half of the budget of the framework programme is supporting research which is dealing with sustainable development. One of the key objectives of sustainable development is to combat climate change. The EU-funded research is leading the way in developing global climate change models and data which will enable us to better understand and predict climate change and its impact on ecosystems.

This is, in a way, what you are coming to and talking about in relation to agriculture. We also need to look at its impact on human activities and what we need to do.

There are quite a number of research projects going on in the area of agriculture, looking at the difference it makes if we have a two-degree rise in temperature. For example, a two-degree rise would be a quite different thing depending on whether we are talking about products or crops which are grown in this part of Europe, or crops grown in the south of Spain. So we need to have this research which is well-founded, which plots and plans the way forward for us in all of these areas so that we can have sustainable development. That research is very crucial and very key and it can affect and does affect the area which you have particular interest in, which is agriculture.

You know that we have the Strategic Energy Technology Plan, as I mentioned already, and the joint programming initiatives aim at bringing together Member States' activities in this area. They are also very important. One of the priority topics selected for the first joint programming initiative dealt with the impact of agriculture on climate change. So that is very important as regards any specific example of what is happening.

3-115

Mario Pirillo (S&D). – La ricerca riguarda diversi settori: le telecomunicazioni, l'energia, i trasporti, la salute, l'ambiente, e così via.

Ha già pensato a come coordinare le azioni di ricerca delle varie direzioni generali al fine di conseguire i migliori risultati possibili?

Pensa di snellire le procedure amministrative dell'Ottavo programma quadro per favorire la partecipazione delle piccole e medie imprese?

3-116

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – In terms of the coordination of research actions among DGs, DG Research itself does a lot of research for the various other Commission policy areas, and that is very important. This is done on a coordinated and cooperative basis, and efficiently. That has to continue. In relation to FP8, the first thing that I will need to look at, if I am confirmed, is the interim evaluation of FP7.

I have no doubt that in the evaluation report there will be various suggestions relating to SME involvement, because that seems to be an area where not just this committee, but indeed people outside this committee, have been talking about a lack of involvement, how we need more involvement, and what we can do to help SMEs and so on. I did say earlier, and I want to repeat, that in putting out the calls we need to target areas that SMEs have a particular interest in.

We also need to talk to the stakeholders and we need to listen to what they are saying. We need to, in a way, and if we can, get the risk-sharing finance facility – maybe in a different format – to help the regular SMEs. It is, at the

moment, helping very efficiently the very high-tech SMEs. We need to use all of these instruments in a way that helps towards more involvement of SMEs.

3-117

Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines (PPE). – Nosotros, en el Parlamento, habitualmente solemos apoyar a la Comisión, muchas veces frente al Consejo. Y nos estamos encontrando con que últimamente, en casi todas las direcciones generales, hay un intento por parte de los Estados miembros de «nacionalizar» los presupuestos. Y hay un intento, obviamente también en el Consejo, de «nacionalizar» el presupuesto del Séptimo Programa. En este sentido, me preocupa extraordinariamente la pérdida posible de la calidad y la pérdida de capacidad de Europa para tomar decisiones, con la aplicación del artículo 165 —antiguo artículo 169— que precisamente no está regulado cómo se va a desarrollar.

En el *Joint Program* que vemos que están formando, no han informado en absoluto al Parlamento del desarrollo de ese programa ni de qué dinero va a ir destinado a los Estados ni tampoco de si se van a nacionalizar esos fondos.

Por tanto, le pregunto: ¿está usted dispuesto a defender el presupuesto del Séptimo Programa en la Comisión Europea y que sea la Comisión Europea quien decida a quién se conceden los proyectos, incluso los del *Joint Program*, para mantener los criterios de excelencia?

3-118

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I will certainly defend the research framework programme within the Commission.

I think, if one looks at the diverse spread of research throughout the European Union, it has been a reason why we have lost opportunities in the European Union, as against states that we talked about earlier – the United States, China, India and so on, the other players in the market. I would not like to see us reverting back to lack of coordination.

As I said, when we looked at the safe food ERA-NET for example, it was discovered there were 72 different pieces of research being carried out throughout the 27 Member States on the same salmonella bacteria. That is an example of where we have lost opportunities, where Europe working together as 27 Member States in the research area can deliver more, can compete more and can do more. I would not like to see us reverting back to what you proposed could happen.

But I can see where there would be pressure from Member States – and also of course pressure within Member States – to reduce budgets on research and development. I think that would be a backward step. Certainly I will be defending the budget for FP7 within the Commission, if I am lucky enough to be confirmed by this committee.

3-119

Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines (PPE). – En esta línea, yo propongo y le pregunto si está dispuesta a venir a explicarnos cómo se va a desarrollar el artículo 185, cuál va a ser el control del presupuesto, quién va a tomar las decisiones respecto a los *joint programs*, cómo se van a seleccionar los proyectos y en qué medida se va a coordinar esto con el ERA, porque puede ser un ERA II, pero controlado por los países.

¿Está usted dispuesta –repito la pregunta– a venir a informar y a permitir que el Parlamento se beneficie de una mínima transparencia, de la que carece la Comisión Europea, de la misma transparencia que el Parlamento ofrece a la Comisión?

3-120

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – There is no question that this is a real partnership between you and me, and if it is going to work, if the research is going to be defended, if we are going to do things as a European Union together, then I need your genuine and real support.

That support is very important in whatever may lie in the future for us. And you represent all of the 27 Member States, so you know what is going on in each of the Member States. We need to engage together in coming to a conclusion and a decision in relation to the way forward, whether it is in the European Research Area, or in the evaluation for FP7 and the results of that, or in the discussions which start on FP8.

You, as far as I am concerned, you are my partner, my supporter, you have to be involved if we are going to produce the best possible framework programme and the best open European research area in the future.

3-121

Britta Thomsen (S&D). – I would like to return to the question on women and science.

Earlier you said that we need to get more women interested in science. But actually, in the last term of this Parliament, I made a report on women and science, and it shows that today more than 60% of university students are women, but only 30% of the researchers in Europe are women. When it comes to top positions at universities, the figures are much lower, all over Europe.

In my opinion, we cannot afford not using the total potential of talent in Europe in an era confronted with global competition.

Already in the Sixth Framework Programme there were some measures to raise the number of women researchers getting funding from the programme, but this is not the situation in FP7. Now we have ended in a situation where only 20% of the money in the research programme goes to women, and this is not in accordance with the EU road map – the Commission's road map for gender equality.

So my question to you is: will you improve gender equality in European research by ensuring that more women get access to EU funding?

3-122

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – The short answer is 'yes'. A second answer is that the situation is unacceptable – as you rightly said just now and also in your report. It is not just a question of equality. It is also a question of a waste of human resources and talents.

Firstly, if I am confirmed, I want the Commission, and in particular its research DGs, to lead by example. We have to ensure that we meet the target of 40% female participation in expert groups and in evaluation exercises.

Secondly, if I am confirmed, I want to push for modernisation of the management of research institutions. Good management should include gender management, and it should take into account women's particular needs as regards working conditions and status. Some time ago we talked about the pay gap. That was an innovative term – if you want to call it that – the employment pay gap right across the Union.

Perhaps the third area for me would be awareness and communication, a little bit like that pay gap campaign. We should have a specific communication campaign that would target young girls right through from primary school to secondary-level school and tertiary education, in order to put in place the kind of conditions that meet the needs of women.

I will also talk to those industries which seem to have been incredibly successful in retaining women in their industries, while others have not been so successful. I think we can learn from those who have done this successfully, and we should implement what we learn in the ones that have not been able to do it as successfully.

3-123

Britta Thomsen (S&D). – Just another comment. I think I am very happy with your answer, also because at the moment 400 000 European researchers are working in the US. This is a waste too. If we are going to fulfil the Lisbon target, according to the Commission's figures we will need 700 000 researchers in Europe. If we are not using the female potential, then this is again a kind of waste.

3-124

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I could not agree more with you. When we set targets the one thing we have to do is deliver on those targets. These targets have been set. They are not targets that are in the air somewhere. We have to put in place specific instruments, specific policies that will target that.

I really think that, in addition to what I have said, I cannot reinforce enough the fact that there needs to be awareness and communication for women as it is not just an equality issue, it is about a waste of talent.

3-125

Christian Ehler (PPE). – Frau Geoghegan-Quinn! Wir haben gerade die Auswertungen des sechsten Forschungsrahmenprogramms hier im Parlament von der Kommission bekommen. Der häufigste Grund von Hochschulen, Institutionen, kleinen und mittelständischen Unternehmen, an Programmen nicht teilzunehmen, war Bürokratie und die Zeitverzögerung bis zum Vertragsabschluss.

Sie haben vorhin sehr politisch mit fester Stimme und diplomatisch geantwortet, ja, Sie wollten hier etwas tun, aber man müsse natürlich auch das Geld der Steuerzahler und deren Recht darauf, dass es richtig ausgegeben wird, beachten. Das ist eine sehr diplomatische Antwort. Wir stehen jetzt vor der Halbzeitüberprüfung des siebten Forschungsrahmenprogramms, und wieder sagt die Vereinigung der europäischen Forschungs- und Technologieunternehmen: Das ist der Hauptgrund, warum das Programm nicht gut funktioniert.

Insofern hätte ich gerne noch einmal eine konkrete Antwort, inwieweit Sie bereit sind, im Rahmen der Halbzeitüberprüfung dieses Thema anzugehen, und wie Sie es angehen wollen?

3-126

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I am not going to rehash the various things that have been done in FP7 because, as you said, you are well aware of those. Concretely, in the very near future I will be proposing – if I am confirmed as a Commissioner – a communication to Parliament and to the Council on simplification. That is going to explore further options that may be available to us: new concepts for research funding, concepts like the systematic resort to flat-rate and lump sums, that I think another colleague of yours, Mr Ehler mentioned earlier.

That is recognised by the European Court of Auditors, and it is important to state that. I am committed to ensure consistency, because one of the things that I have been hearing as a criticism is, that you start a project and then suddenly, at some point during the course of that project, something changes, and people are very concerned about that. I do not think that should happen. I think we need to have the streamlining that you talked about, but we also need to have a consistency, and that will ensure further progress in the simplification of the research funding.

Apart from the communication on simplification, there are the other two Commission initiatives: the revision of the Financial Regulation (that will help, I think) and the proposal for a specific tolerable risk of error, which I talked about before. I have no doubt that will play a significant role. So they are the specific, concrete issues that, if I am confirmed by this committee, will be my top priorities in looking at this whole area.

3-127

Christian Ehler (PPE). – Eine Nachfrage: Wir haben auch über die Beteiligung von kleinen und

mittelständischen Unternehmen gesprochen. Eines der Hauptprobleme ist die Frage der Zeitverzögerung bis zum Vertragsabschluss, das ist nicht die Frage, wie man die Unternehmen kontrolliert, sondern es ist die Frage, wie die Kommission agiert. Im Vergleich zu anderen Programmen sind wir mit einem bis eineinhalb Jahren zwischen der Beantragung und dem eigentlichen Vertragsabschluss in einem Bereich, der für mittelständische Unternehmen nicht denkbar ist, für die Großindustrie nicht akzeptabel ist und für viele Forschungseinrichtungen auch nicht funktioniert. Was ist da Ihre Antwort?

3-128

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I accept totally your criticism in this regard.

Already, in FP7, there have been significant reductions in the time to contract, and that is something which has been appreciated, but of course that is not enough. We have to work harder to reduce this even more. If I am confirmed, then that will obviously become an immediate priority, on which I will work with the DG. I am sure this issue will be raised in the context of the interim evaluation of FP7, which we are expecting in the next couple of months. It is certainly a priority and a target, and it is something that we need to do to help engage SMEs in the framework programme.

3-129

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – Pani komisárka, vo svojom vystúpení ste uviedli, že navrhujete vytvoriť jednotný výskumný európsky priestor. Navrhujete vytvoriť piatu slobodu, t. j. voľný pohyb informácií a znalostí v oblasti výskumu a vedy. Kompetencie v tejto oblasti s nakladaním s duševným vlastníctvom sú však v rukách členských štátov. Jednotlivé vlády majú veľmi rôznorodé pravidlá v tejto oblasti. Chcel by som vedieť, ako plánujete túto prekážku zdolať?

3-130

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – In relation to the intellectual property rights, this has been a hugely controversial issue in the past. It is something, I think, that everybody realises is causing a difficulty and a problem. It is one of those blockages that I talked about that needs to be resolved, and it is something for which I do not have responsibility but which a Commissioner colleague, provided we are all approved by the Parliament, will have responsibility for. I need to work with that colleague, and together we need to work with your committee and with the Member States to see what we can do to raise the level of debate in this area, to prove and show that this is a real problem, a real obstacle for people to get involved in FP7, and that we need to deal with that in a coordinated way across the Union.

I think it is possible to cooperate on that basis. Maybe I am naive in thinking that, but it is something that certainly I will work on with my fellow Commissioner, if we are approved: to try and instigate a debate, a strong commitment. We can do that, and I can do that, if I have the support of the members of this committee, who, after

all, represent their own Member States and who will have enormous knowledge that can help us to break the blockages that are there and to build a bridge rather than having a blockage.

3-131

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – Súhlasím s vami, že je to komplikovaná otázka, ale v princípe vaša koncepcia, vaša predstava práve na tomto probléme stojí. A preto možno aj v rámci spolupráce s Európskym parlamentom, s vašim kolegom je potrebné vynaložiť veľké úsilie na dosiahnutie tohto cieľa. Len obávam sa, že z časového hľadiska to bude veľmi komplikované, a preto by som sa aj opýtal: Máte aspoň predstavu dokedy je možné tento problém riešiť?

3-132

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – If it were up to me – or up to you and this committee – I am sure the timeframe would be that we should have it immediately, as soon as possible.

But the timeframe involves other actors than just you and I. So we have to work – and you have my commitment that I will work with my colleague, and that we can work with you – to ensure that this particular IPR problem, blockage, obstacle, whatever we want to call it, will be dealt with in the shortest possible time. Those who at the moment find that IPR is the greatest obstacle to their participation to have the programme should then be able to obtain access, take part in the process and become involved in it.

3-133

Der Präsident. – Liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Wir haben alle Fragen, die vorgesehen waren, abgearbeitet. Wir sind mit den Fragen ein bisschen früher fertig geworden. Das muss aber wohl nicht dazu führen, dass wir jetzt noch mehr Fragen stellen. Ich bedanke mich für die disziplinierte Verhandlung, auch bei Ihnen für Ihre Antworten, und möchte am Schluss noch einmal der Kommissarskandidatin, Frau Geoghegan-Quinn, die Gelegenheit geben, wie verabredet zum Abschluss noch einmal etwas Zusammenhängendes vortragen zu können. Es war so verabredet, dass die Kandidaten zum Abschluss noch einmal die Gelegenheit haben, sich noch einmal fünf Minuten zu äußern.

3-134

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate. – I would like to say, first of all, that I approached the hearing today in a very focused way. I tried to do as much preparation as I possibly could and, on a personal level, it was like doing the final examination at second level in my country, but doing it when my sons did it rather than when I did it myself. Of course, it was much more difficult when they did it.

I believe, as I said at the outset, that accountability and dialogue are at the heart of our European democracy. We have had a debate across a wide range of issues, and indeed there are many more that we could also debate. I have learnt that we have many common concerns. I have listened carefully to those concerns and, for people in political life, as you and I are, research innovation and

science policy is about finding and applying intelligent solutions to our shared problems. So we have to deepen, we have to develop, we have to direct our resources to tackle Europe's most critical problems: driving economic recovery, tackling climate and diversification of our energy options for a low-carbon economy, accelerating solutions for healthy ageing, reinforcing international cooperation.

In the short term, that means, for all of us, innovation driving the recovery plan and using our 2020 vision to, as it were, re-fit our economy for a smart green future.

We will need to review and simplify the framework programme instruments. We need to make them more accessible, as everybody has been saying here, more inclusive and more user-friendly – especially for SMEs.

So it means many things: working in that cross-cutting way to prepare and deliver the Single Market for Innovation, as I said; working in partnership with the Parliament – and, for me especially, with this committee – to use our political capital together to complete the European Research Area, working closely with our Member States in joint programmes and effective governance, and working creatively with the private sector and other partners to mobilise investment in innovative markets.

I am looking forward to the challenge and hoping I that will be approved by Parliament, because putting together research, innovation and science for the first time at the heart of EU policy offers incredible opportunities for all of us. I know you take your work very seriously; I take my work equally seriously. That means working in partnership as politicians, because that is what all of us in the room are. I said that if you were looking for a civil servant or a technocrat or a bureaucrat, you have the wrong person. I am a politician, I am a doer: I want to deliver. I can only deliver if I have the support of everybody in this room. Innovation is fundamentally about our managing change together rather than allowing change to manage us. It is about developing a 'think-do' economy.

Working together in partnership with you, I hope that we can empower a new spirit of discovery, as it were, in Europe. A pioneering Europe for an ever closer and ever more innovative union.

I hope that today is the beginning of that deeper dialogue, and I guarantee you my support, my cooperation and my openness. I guarantee you also my independence of thought and of thinking. I am very conscious of the fact that I came before a parliamentary committee on two occasions previously, where afterwards, as on this occasion if I am confirmed, an

oath of independence was required. You can be assured, as Mr Audy and his colleagues have been in the past, that that is not in any doubt.

I have spent almost 10 years working as an independent member of a European institution. I hope that today is the start of a deeper dialogue and discussion and cooperative effort between two sets of politicians, as it were, and that in working together we can deliver what the people out there want. What do they want? They want jobs for their children and their grandchildren. They want a safer, cleaner environment. They want low-carbon green, smart technology. They want all of these buzzwords, but buzzwords can only be delivered with real policy, people working together.

Finally, I know that it has been the custom between the Commission and the Parliament for the Commissioners very often to wait to be called to Parliament. I would like to ask that on this occasion – as I get to know, if you confirm me, the policy within the two DGs that I have responsibility for, as I go to develop the cross-cutting innovation policy – that I would be able to come to the Parliament – not to wait to be invited, but to come to the Parliament – to ask you for your real input into these specific areas of policy that are going to be and need to be and have to be at the heart of the European economy and the drive for recovery.

3-135

– A Chathaoirligh agus a dhaoine uaisle, tá mé buíoch as ucht an éisteacht a fuair mé. Tá mé fíorbhuíoch as ucht an bhreis eolais a fuair mé féin mar Choimisinéir ainmnithe inniu. Tá mé ag súil go mór le comhoibriú le 'chuíle dhuine sa seomra seo as seo amach, sa gcaoi faoi cheann chúig bliana, má ainmníonn sibh mé, go mbeidh mé in ann a theacht ar ais agus a rá: Tá mé bródúil – ní as gach a rinne mise – ach as gach a rinne muide le chéile.

(Bualadh bos.)

3-136

Der Präsident. – Frau Geoghegan-Quinn! Ich darf mich im Namen aller Kollegen herzlich bedanken für eine lebhaftige Debatte, für eine klare Aussprache, für einen disziplinierten Umgang miteinander, für ein konkretes Antworten. Herzlichen Dank, das waren drei spannende, interessante Stunden. Ich wünsche uns jetzt weitere interessante Beratungen und Ihnen alles Gute. An die Kollegen noch einmal ein Dankeschön, es ist nicht ganz einfach, dass wir das so in der Zeit hinbekommen haben. Ganz herzlichen Dank, dass Sie dabei sehr geholfen haben.

(Die Sitzung wird um 19.25 Uhr geschlossen.)