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"In-search for Green re- search"

A seminar aiming at developing a policy on the FP7 for the Greens

Brussels, 24 January 2005

Foreword

Last 24th January the Green Group organised a seminar in the European Parliament in Brussels in order to try to discuss basic points that would lead to a common Green research policy.

The idea was to gather Green MEPs, MPs, politicians and staff to sit together with experts on important research topics such as energy, health, innovation, defence, agriculture, social sciences.

The outcome of this seminar will constitute the basis for a bigger Conference to be held next spring, and will for the first time ever set a Green position on the FP and research policy. The main conclusions of the seminar have also been incorporated in the text for a "Green Research Policy".

From these lines I would like to thank you all the participants to the seminar as well as to all staff from our group who have given us a very valuable input and, of course, to Laurence Van de Walle, Group adviser on Research who has organised all the work surrounding the Green Research Policy.

Warm regards,

David Hammerstein MEP (Spain)
Research coordinator for the Greens/Efa

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I - Introduction

David Hammerstein welcomed all participants and presented a draft text for a Green research Policy.

David explained that the FP7 will be the audible language of Lisbon. The broad objectives of the Program will define how the EU would like to mould future market, social and knowledge structures.

He explained that the Greens wish to address how economic activity fuelled by research can be built on social and environmental sustainability; how competitiveness can be intertwined in time and space with equality and ecology, as opposed to considering it a future "pay-off" upon attaining macro-economic success.

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Moreover, added David, the orientation and financing of the research program must reflect the growing intense dialogue between science and society, therefore we need clear channels for citizen participation

In essence, the financing of research projects by the UE is not the mere creation of hopefully functional instruments; it implies taking important decisions about our values and political objectives

The question that this seminar had to answer was what kind of research do we need to build a sustainable, social and competitive EU?

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II- Horizontal panel : Innovation in the context of Lisbon

2.1 - Susana Borras - Roskilde University, Denmark:

Her presentation went on the direction of innovation in the context of the Lisbon Process. She said that twenty years after the first EU-led Framework Program, Europe is still Europe is not good enough in innovation, namely, that good science in Europe is not turning into profitable commercial products.

Susana Borras analyzed from a critical point of view the Commission's Communication setting up the future strategy of research and innovation policy in the EU, specially focussing on:

- SMEs because they create real economic value. In opposition to the emphasis placed by the commission on Large "centres of excellence It is actually in those rich but small "millieux" where true innovation takes place. As a conclusion, **EU research and innovation policy shall become more cluster-oriented**, because it is precisely there where knowledge is transformed into innovation and job-creation.

- Technology Transfer and Open science:: The Lisbon strategy envisaged the creation of the Community patent as a crucial instrument to improve competitiveness and innovation in Europe, but let's don't overshadowed the importance of other means of technology and knowledge transfer from universities and public research organizations (PRO) to the industrial world, which might become even more crucial than patents in the generation of innovation

She added that it is necessary to keep a balance between open science and proprietary knowledge, in the knowledge co-financed by the EU and to explore the possibilities of Europe getting more involved in enhancing the other two mechanisms of knowledge transfer (organized pooling of knowledge and spill-overs).

Women in Science:

Beyond the promotion of female participation in FP7, the EU could **consider the creation of a specific number of chairs "ad-personam" to promising female scientists**, similar to the successful "Jean Monnet Chairs" program promoted by DG Education, to help women morally and economically in their mid-way career advancement.

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The environmental and social sustainability of science

Science shall also be “socially sustainable”. Our societies are today more aware and concerned with the risks associated with new technologies. A good dialogue between science and society requires that the scientific knowledge becomes more “socially robust”.

Both types of sustainability might require that in the FP7, more emphasis is paid to **bring on board non-expert groups and concerned citizens unto research projects and research networks**

2.2 - Ronald Janssen (ETUC)

He mentioned the concern of Trade Unions about the fact that policies are driven toward deregulation, worse working conditions, delocalization,

Instead of becoming bogged down over issues of low wages and steadily deteriorating working conditions, with the excuse that this is necessary in order to compete with developing economies, Europe must focus on innovation in goods and services. More specifically, it must define a strategy of quality, innovation and productivity based on investment in research and development (R&D) and on the priority promotion of well-paid skilled labour.

To remain competitive, Europe must have a correct understanding of competition
There is a need to achieve a REAL LISBON: which would means social aims in growth, to refocus on RD to launch Lisbon, basic research as intellectual not just competitive needs.

ETUC believes that European research policy1 must also strengthen basic research. In recent decades, in the name of the importance of research to industrial competitiveness, the focus has been on - and public funding has gone to - applied research and technological and industrial development, to the detriment of basic research. We need an agenda stronger on sustainability.

He also reminded that the Barcelona goals of a 3% on gnp on RD can produce 400 mil jobs hi quality, thus research as a powerful engine of consistent and convergent industrial policies within the Union, the research effort is a powerful factor in maintaining

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and developing the foundations of manufacturing and industrial production and services in all the key sectors in Europe. It is therefore crucial to employment.
In addition it can generate a knock-on effect in the production of goods and services, not only throughout the sectors that benefit from innovations and in the regions benefiting from its dynamism, but also from its ability to open up and support networks of relations and communication.

Other important points mentioned were:

- The need to avoid fragmentation by creating a European Research Area
- Address the shortage of researchers in Europe by improving the employment, status and working conditions of researchers and research assistants.
- Striking a fresh balance in research goals by shifting the focus towards social and environmental needs, guaranteeing the involvement of trade unions

Research is one of the main lines of all industrial policy and a critical asset for economic competitiveness. But the goals assigned to research must go well beyond their expected contribution to the Union's growth and competitiveness. They must comprise all of the resources aimed at providing a better response to social needs, combating exclusion and poverty, improving public health and the environment, and reducing inequalities within and between Member States (particularly where the new Member States are concerned).

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III - Thematic panels

3.1 - Renewable energy: Katharina Krell, Secretary General of the European Research Centers Association, Brussels

She welcomed the discussion on FP7 and call for a separate budget line for renewable energy sources within FP7. This is particularly, important she said, in view of the increased search for transparency.

Furthermore, she underlined the vast benefits of renewables in terms of contribution to security of energy supply, job creation, competitiveness and environmental protection.

"*An increase in budget for RES compared to FP6 as well as a clear earmarking for the RES budget is absolutely crucial as R&D in the field of renewables will lead to considerable cost reduction and will strengthen the competitive position of the European RES industry on the world market.*"

Krell said that in FP4, the budget for non-nuclear research, and within this for renewable energy sources, was clearly earmarked. This was not the case anymore in FP5 and FP6 respectively, leading to an overall decrease of renewable energy R&D funding.

Since the early 1980s, when public renewable energy research funding was at an all-time high, direct spending by the Member States of EU-15 has dropped by approximately 40-50% in real terms. It now accounts for about 15% of total energy research including nuclear research.

On the other hand, fossil and nuclear energy research accounts for about 60% of the total spend. The Bonn conference political recommendation also supported by the EU, points out that “governments have an opportunity to strengthen renewable energies by reversing the ratio of funds allocated for renewables versus those provided for conventional energy R&D.”

The launch of FP7 will present the EU with an opportunity to encourage the Member States to re -orient their national funding programmes in this way.

Without a clear allocation of a budget line only for renewables, the funding under FP7 will remain non-transparent and can lead to uncertainty amongst renewable R&D players. Therefore it is crucial to allocate a separate budget line for renewables in FP7.

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3.2- Defence and security : Frank Slijper, Campagne tegen Wapenhandel, The Netherlands.

Military developments in the European Union have recently gained unprecedented speed; this is the case especially with the incorporation of military issues in the Constitution and the creation of the European Defence Agency.

No less significant, but largely unknown for the general public, is the level of influence that military companies have had so far in drawing the European defence agenda. This is most visible in the area of the newly created budget for 'security research'. Industry's involvement has been encouraged by the European Commission that invites companies to help writing policy recommendations on the subject.

The so-called 'Group of Personalities in the Field of Security Research' (hereafter: GoP), initiated and chaired by the Commissioners for Research and for Enterprise and the Information Society.

One of the main recommendations in the GoP's report is that within a few years an annual one billion euro budget should be available for 'security research', that will first largely cover 'homeland security' related R&D, but will open up for weapons research within years, if the Commission-industry tandem gets its way. In support of that is the GoP's conclusion that boundaries between military and civilian research are artificial. This is a misleading and untrue perception that has widely rooted.

This development is a concern for civil society and others who are worried about corporate lobby power and the lack of democratic insight and control in general and the increasing militarization of the EU in particular.

Though not all security research spending is unnecessary, the annual one billion euro that is now suggested by the GoP very much exaggerates the current threats and denies the urgent need for non-military security research.

A more free market approach would guarantee more efficient use of research money as well as a less dependant industry. Ethics should prevail over industrial concerns.

The EU wins credibility if it would give less opportunity to backroom policy making and instead would show a more transparent, democratic face.

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3.3 - Environmental health: Professor Belpomme (ARTAC) www.artac.info

Professor Belpomme started by stating the existing confusion between science and technology. Science has become technology difference blurred. Furthermore, he mentioned that the 6th FP mainly focussed on industry and in financial problems, Health was ignored, although it should be priority.

As an example he mentioned that Cancer incidence is increasing a 25% due to smoking but there is a 75% linked to pollution and lifestyle and mutagenic factors. Children cancer has increase by 1% annually and breast cancer doubled while prostate cancer now is 1 in 3.

All the above proves that it is necessary to consider research in relation to health problems.

It is basic to practice prevention and precaution in health not just in of the pipe therapies, otherwise the number of cancers will never decrease. Cures only for small cancers have improved but no cure just life expectancy. Besides, all curative research is nothing if we do not take care of the public health.

Professor Belpomme also reminded the growing number of congenital malformations that lead to infertility increasing (15% couples infertile) 1/2 due to male.
1% decrease annual in sperm in intensive agriculture areas. Other important problem are the allergies, it seems that 20% of the EU citizens suffer of them, mainly due to chemical pollution.

Professor Belpomme referred to the Paris Appeal as the basis for a Green research policy, mainly: Research should focus on Health , need to develop toxicology and epidemiology, ecology should include economy, and risk assessment is not scientific

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3.4 - Science and Society : Christophe Bonneuil (CNRS and Fondation Sciences Citoyenne, France)

Christophe divided his intervention on a green strategy for FP7 in two parts:

a) develop expertise, research and innovation capacities in civil society

Why?: There is a need to improve citizens' involvement in science and policy Citizenship in knowledge-society Europe is not anymore only access to knowledge, it is, above all, access to knowledge production. Distributed knowledge production is a fuel for innovation, well being, wealth creation. To fulfil the Lisbon Agenda, it would be a waste not to tap into this dynamism.

A part of research should also be driven by non for profit logics. The commission talks about «the 'innovation triangle': science, society and the economy».

In FP6, there was much money and several policy instruments for enhancing academy-industry research partnerships (about 30% of FP6 budget to support industry research) … but nothing to enhance academy-non for profit organisations partnerships

How? 5% of FP7 money should be dedicated to enhance NGO-academy joint research and to strengthen civil society capacity to produce knowledge and innovation

As with SMEs' FP6 dedicated instruments (STREPs etc.) there is a need for NGOs dedicated instruments i.e. Calls for research projects (in all the thematic areas of FP7) including public researchers AND a non for profit NGO partner

Science and society dialogue: what about decision making?

1. Promoting scientific education and culture in Europe
2. A science policy closer to the citizens
3. Involving civil society
4. Producing gender equality in science
5. Research and foresight for society

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How to democratize priority setting in European Science Policy ?

5 key areas for research

Understanding the thoughts
Create an open access to the future learning processes
Long life good health thanks to prevention and living in security in a globalize world
Proper learning methods in an innovative society, knowledge for all in equal conditions.
Interdisciplinary; social problem led rather than high-tech-led

b) From « dialogue » to participatory science policy making

Using consensus conferences as keystones for democratizing priority setting in research policy

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IV - Debate on the Green research policy's priorities

One of the common concerns of all participants was the concern that ethical questions are always given little importance in the Framework programmes

There was also consensus in the fact that Lisbon can become a double edged sword. of big statements, and subsidy hunting goals. The participants wondered whether they were shooting themselves in the foot on other goals.

Regarding concrete aspects such as energy fusion, it was said that evaluating former projects, it was clear that the lobbies had been very powerful when influencing on this topic, in order to prevent that, the Greens should ask for concrete criteria.

There was also discussion about the "White elephants", and how to reduce them, some participants proposed to invest more resources in finding out how to obtain more money for the "small players", since this is a very important issue for the new member states.

Transparency was another concern, there is no way to assess how many projects and for what purpose, have been financed by the Commission, it is very important to ask them to have a single database of projects.

In general all participants agreed that there is a political opportunity if the Greens follow the path of proposals discussed during the seminar

All the conclusions can be summarised in the following 10 steps for research

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V -Ten Steps for Open, Social and Green Science Policy

1. Open science: Maximum sharing and transfer of scientific knowledge and technical information. More patents do not always mean more innovation. Patent thickets that can chill innovation in small and young firms must be prevented. And incentives for exploiting knowledge (not just patenting) should be fostered, for knowledge and technology transfer and for promoting the association firms, civil society and universities in linking research with the much needed economic and technological renovation of our economies. Academic research, industrial... For example, Software programmes are protected sufficiently by copyright. Another example is sharing animal testing data to protect animal welfare.

2. Science for the people and by the people. Scientists in open dialogue with normal citizens, non expert opinions and open debate on social and environmental objectives of research should be organised. In other words, public participation in science policy making should be put forward.

3. Small is beautiful: The funding of small laboratories, smaller universities and SMEs should be a clear priority in European programmes – they create greatest job and rooted economic stability. Clustering of small sized European-wide initiatives is better than concentration. Hi-tech parks can be innovation factories for SMEs to use and exploit knowledge. The networking of imagination is the way forward for young dynamic European businesses.

4. Less Bureaucracy and more Transparency: Clear and understandable public access to data on entire process of evaluation and financing of UE research projects. The European Commission must scale down costly administrative procedures that marginalise small research groups, firms and NGOs from European funding.

5. Back to Basics: Basic scientific inquiry should be strongly supported. European Science policy should not be dominated only by the stock market technological concerns of the largest transnational companies. Strong public support is needed for mid and long term basic scientific research with social and environmental objectives. Structural funds should be available for basic research infrastructures. Research and development can be more important than building more big roads and airports.

6. Research for Health: Massive funding should not exclusively go to pharmaceutical development and other “end of the pipe” treatment while precautionary research is marginalised. Public health and preventive medicine need much more funding for toxicological and epidemiological studies on the complex causes of many “modern” industrial diseases. Reproductive issues and children's preventive health need much more attention. Illnesses that affect the poor and Southern countries should not continue to be underfunded.

7. Science for a good climate: Climate change projects should be one of the centres of European research programmes. Research for renewable energy should be increased markedly at least to the level of Euratom and the ITER Fusion programmes (a “white elephant” that will not even produce 1 kw of electricity for decades).

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8. Social science is also science! Understand the world with its new problems, how to confront climate change, poverty, cultural clashes, conflict, many transversal and complex disciplines must work together to create data and knowledge about the challenges people, societies and economies confront. Needed for wisdom facing multiple crises in the world and crucial to be reflexive and critical with the direction of new technologies.

9. Independent European Research Council: a truly independent ERC aimed at the promotion of curiosity-driven projects of high scientific level should be fostered, especially within the emerging fields of science, taking into account the state of underfunding those ones are suffering from. Creating such an organism dedicated to funding long-term basic science in Europe will also represent a major chance for European research to recover its competitiveness.

10. Alternatives to GMOs: The funding given for GMOs should also be stopped, since it represents a waste of money, due to the fact that it is doomed to commercial failure. Money for alternatives should be, on the other hand, given in much bigger proportion.