



Conférence
des présidents
d'université

«Our commitment for higher education
and research-
CPU HRK KRASP questionnaire -
Response of UMP »

1/ In December 2012, the European Parliament requested a budget of € 100 billions to be allocated to Framework programme for research and innovation. In the context of a next revision of the Multiannual financial framework, do you continue to be in favour of an allocated budget for research up to € 100 billion in order to achieve a competitive Europe and how do you want to achieve this objective?

The H2020 budget allocation is fundamental to achieve a competitive Europe. The 70 billions euros devoted to the framework programme for research and innovation aim to unite the forces of the Member States to launch a joint investment in research and innovation to enable Europe to be precursor and remains in the global economic race in the up coming years.

The support to academic research is a major component of this programme. We wish to provide a faster and easier support to universities and to researchers. We want to provide better research conditions to highly qualified young European researchers. We encourage cooperation between universities and the private sector, and notably the companies in order to stimulate research projects in generating growth sectors. Finally, the centres of excellence and clusters should be developed to connect the regions and to set up European networks, in cooperation with universities.

It is certainly desirable to go beyond the budget of 70 billion, but is it possible and under what conditions? In the context of very tight budget situation, we do not want to make exaggerated and empty promises.

What matters, at constant, contribution is progress to better structure the European Research Area. Concretely, this presupposes an analysis of funding allocated to research at the three levels of public expenditure: the European Union, the member States and the regions. We propose an independent audit conducted by the European Court of Auditors and the 28 National audit offices of the Member States. This audit would be the basis of a debate between National parliaments, the European Parliament and governments to make public spending for research more efficient. In our minds, the audit should include H2020 and the European Structural Funds consumed in region.

We must proceed step by step: in 2016, we will proceed with the revision of the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020. The European People's Party, as you know, obtained this revision clause. Based on the results of the audit, and taking into account the evolution of public finances at that date, we will be open to a review of the EU budget for Horizon 2020 programme, to get closer to a target of 100 billion euros over the recalculated period 2017-2020.

Question 2: Expenditure of higher education and research from the member States are investments in the future of younger generations in Europe: because of this very nature, these investments should not be included in the authorized States deficit. The German, French and Polish rectors conferences defended this position toward the European Commission.

Are you ready to support this proposal, and to encourage investment in higher education and research?

Of course, investments in research are fundamental to build the future of Europe. Do not count them in the deficit appears, in the first approach, to make sense. But this raises two major problems. On the one hand, it is very difficult to define expenditures of higher education and research of the States, knowing the difficulties to make the difference between what is operating costs and investments. Moreover, and more importantly, the proliferation of exceptions in the calculation of the deficit would eventually lost the meaning of the 3% rule, which remains an essential reference for controlling public finances. Therefore, we are not in favour of such a change of the rules for calculating the public deficit.

To this end, should we establish bidding quotas for these investments, to move closer to the goal unanimously approved of the 3% of GDP devoted to Higher education and research ?

Following the research effort driven by Nicolas Sarkozy, the percentage of GDP devoted to higher education and research increased from 2.08 % in 2007 to 2.25% in 2012. But the slope is very steep to reach the 3% objective. Thus, the priority is to boost investments in research rather than introducing additional constraints such as quotas.

Question 3: Universities are at the heart of the science triangle of research, education and innovation. The Commission considers universities as institutions in the field of education.

How could universities in respect of their role in society, be better represented in the future in political and administrative structures of the Commission?

You're right : universities could be better involved in the future within the structures of the European Commission. For example, they could be further asked to conduct impact assessments upstream of the Commission's work, analyses that structure and support the development of EU policies.

How can universities be better involved in the territorial level, to Higher education policy, research and innovation?

By giving more autonomy to higher education, we will be able to better involve universities at territorial level. Their greater autonomy will allow them, for example, to develop strong local partnerships.

Question 4: The European Council calls for the completion of the European Research Area. How do you define the European Research Area (ERA) and what should be the process to its completion after the European elections?

To become the leading world power in the field of research and to increase by itself its competitiveness, Europe needs to establish its scientific and technological bases in a European Research Area where expertise and competences are pooled.

Area of free circulation of knowledge and researchers, composed of 28 Member States, the ERA provides a close cross border cooperation that maximizes European capacities in the field of research. Mobility facilitated by the definition of common standards and the removal of legal and fiscal obstacles, promoting clusters and favouring the public - private cooperation, assistance in financing projects involving several countries are examples of the construction of ERA.

This should be completed and consolidated on, the one hand by the coordination of National programmes and research agendas and development of research infrastructures, as well as by intensifying efforts to develop open access to the results of the public research.

Question 5 : should there be, in the European Framework Programme for research and in the European Higher Education Area, a minimum standards for the autonomy of higher education and what might be these standards?

The autonomy of higher education is a fundamental principle of the higher education systems of the EU, which can be found in Article 13 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU ("The arts and scientific research are free. Academic freedom is respected. ")

University autonomy gives them more reactivity and efficiency in the conduct of their programmes, allowing them to recruit the best talent more quickly, to offer new courses and to adapt themselves to the needs of students and of the society, and to create sustainable relationships with businesses sector to promote employability of the students.

That is why we think that the European Framework Programme for research and the programme for higher education should include minimum standards for the autonomy of higher education.

Standards could be based on the Flego report on the governance of higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area, which proposed three particular guidances for to respect of the autonomy of higher education:

- Defining the principles of transparent funding, making them accessible to the public and ensure that the programmes of direct and indirect funding do not unduly favour certain institutions of higher education ;
- Establish quality standards for the recognition of study periods, titles and diplomas ;
- Support the cooperation of higher education institutions as well as the students and teachers cross borders mobility.

Question 6 : In the meantime, the structures of the European Higher Education Area have been put in place, but their implementation is still on going. What to do to make mobility of students and young graduates across Europe more obvious?

Erasmus + is an ambitious programme with a budget of € 14.7 billion for 2014-2020. It

must be extended to a wider range of apprentices, secondary school pupils and teachers. This can only stimulate the mobility of young people across Europe.

On the other hand, it is vital to harmonize the educational and professional qualifications allowing a greater mobility of students and graduates in Europe. To achieve this objective, the support to the development of European curriculum (such as the creation of joint or bilingual degrees between European universities), the development of e- education and the recognition of diplomas of digital universities, are essential.

How can Europe help higher education to continue to promote the emergence of a sense of citizenship and solidarity among the younger generations, especially in these times of crisis we are facing?

To educate young generations to the citizenship and European solidarity, higher education could introduce a European education module. It would also be particularly interesting to write a manual of European history.

Moreover, the establishment of a European Employment fair in different European higher education institutions of the Member States would be relevant.

Finally, the strengthening of the Erasmus+ programme contributes to strengthen the identity and European citizenship, by fostering learning European languages and discovering other cultures. The creating of a Pass'Europe for 18-25 years people could complete this exchange offering discounts on transport, housing and offering free access of European cities museums.

7/ On several occasions, the European Union has recognized the need to increase at the level of higher education, cooperation with third countries. However, the financial means allocated to these cooperations in the ERASMUS + programme are very limited. What should Europe do in the future to make the higher education more attractive in Europe (for students, education institutions, companies) and to further develop the partnerships with third countries?

To increase the attractiveness of European higher education and to further develop partnerships with third countries, we propose:

- Creating centres of Higher education and research to make European universities, research and higher education centres better recognized at the worldwide level. It should, in fact, retain researchers in Europe by providing them with means to pursue their research.
- The full implementation of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area: European universities must offer various forms of education and offer flexible courses. More than ten years after the Bologna agreement, it is time to complete the harmonization and recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications through the States and institutions in the universities of the Member State.
- The matching of professional skills acquired at the university and requirements of the European labour market. To this aim, it's necessary to stimulate learning

and the opportunity to do internships by including them in programs of study. This requires in parallel to establish tax incentives for companies to encourage them to hire young people.