



Horizon 2020: EU's future depends on science and innovation, MEPs say

The role of research in building EU competitiveness, budget cuts in some EU research programmes and the possibility of using EU regional funding for research purposes, were the key issues debated at an Industry, Research and Energy Committee public hearing on Tuesday. MEPs, experts and other stakeholders assessed the likely impact of six legislative proposals for the EU's new "Horizon 2020" research and innovation programme.

Four panels looked at excellent science, societal challenges, industrial leadership and participation priorities respectively.

"There is a need to increase the budget for Marie Curie fellowships. There is also a consensus among political groups to ask for more funding for the Horizon 2020 programme, since innovation and research are, for the first time, in the same package", said Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D, ES), who chaired the first panel debate on ways to achieve and measure excellence in science. Ms Madurell is rapporteur on the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The second panel, chaired by Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL, PT), rapporteur on The European Institute of Innovation and Technology, focused on how the Horizon 2020 programme can tackle societal challenges such as health, food security and sustainable agriculture, green transport and climate change.

"The competitiveness of EU industry is a crucial issue in today's economic situation.. One of our aims is to increase the participation of SMEs and to strengthen private sector investment. We also need a multi-fund approach in which EU structural funds will play a leading role" said Maria da Gracia Carvalho (EPP, PT), who chaired the third panel, on industrial leadership and SMEs. Mrs Carvalho is rapporteur on the specific programme implementing Horizon 2020.

Peter Skinner (S&D, UK), rapporteur on the Euratom research and training programme, also stressed the need to facilitate SMEs' access to research funding.

In the fourth panel, on Horizon 2020 participation priorities, rapporteur Christian Ehler (EPP, DE), stressed the need to simplify participation rules for the EU's next research funding programme.

Watch the hearing:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/search?legislature=7&organ-code=&start-date=&end-date=&pageIndex=>

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