

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2388/05
by Reino Paasilinna (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Ideas: specific programme under the EU's seventh research framework programme to attract top-flight researchers back to Europe

Europe will need top-flight researchers, but at this point in time the dearth of researchers is already a fact of life in many Member States. Without creative new long-term research Europe will be in danger of remaining merely an imitator and falling behind emerging countries – China and India, for example – where science and technology are concerned. To enhance Europe's attractiveness, the Commission has proposed in its draft framework programme that a separate body be split up to finance basic research.

What practical steps will the Commission take to make the funding body (the ERC) a credible and persuasive backer and enable it to be as effective as possible in encouraging European researchers to return home and gifted researchers from non-member countries to do research in Europe?

How will the Commission prevent inordinate time being taken up in applying for funding and reporting on funding received? How will it ensure that assessment based on scientific excellence will continue to apply unchanged?