



EUROPÄISCHE KOMMISSION

Brussels, 18 SEP. 2009
C/2009/7021

Dear Mr President,

Thank you for informing us of the opinion adopted by the Bundestag relative to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: "Towards Joint Programming in Research: Working together to tackle common challenges more effectively" (COM(2008)468).

In line with the Commission's decision to encourage National Parliaments to react to its proposals to improve the process of policy formulation, we welcome this opportunity to respond to your comments.

Joint Programming is an innovative approach which follows a wide consultation launched in 2007 by the Green Paper on "the European Research Area, New Perspectives". It is a process in which Member States, on a voluntary basis, define a common vision and strategic research agenda, in order to address a major societal challenge for which the scale and the scope of their national programmes alone may not reach adequate proportions.

The concept of Joint Programming is in full compliance with the subsidiarity principle. It puts Member States in the lead for identifying areas where cooperation between their research activities is in the essence of being up to the challenges.

Joint Programming cannot be effective if there is no true involvement of the scientific and technological communities of the relevant Member States. Our expectations are high, therefore, that the national consultations launched in all Member States will lead to the selection of the appropriate areas for Joint Programming initiatives, and that these communities will be further involved throughout the process.

Joint Programming will not add a new Community research instrument to the European Research Area. The Strategic Research Agenda (flowing from the vision) will be implemented combining most effectively suitable regional, national, Community and/or intergovernmental research instruments among the existing ones.

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The Commission does not exclude the possibility to contribute to Joint Programming initiatives through its own existing instruments, if the participating States ask for it and if a clear added value is established.

Options for the 8th Research Framework Programme will be discussed as from 2010, and we can assure you that, in its preparation, due attention will be given to the evaluation at mid-term of the 7th Framework Programme, including of the ERC, while other initiatives such as the European Institute of Technology will see their role clarified in relation to our funding instruments.

I hope that these explanations are useful for the German Bundestag and remain available to provide any further information.

Margot WALLSTRÖM

Vice-President of the European Commission