

Question 1

In December 2012 European Parliament filed a petition that € 100 billion from EU budget be spent on research funding under the Framework Programme Horizon 2020.

In the context of the forthcoming revision of the medium-term financial framework, the important question is- whether you will support the achievement of the budget for the development of scientific research in the amount of 100 billion Euros, so that we can realize the creation of the competitive Europe?

How do you plan to achieve this goal?

PSL

We may not support, since this budget for the years 2014-2020 is at present accepted at the level 77 billion Euros.

European Framework Programme Horizon 2020 is much richer in terms of money as compared with the previous one FP.7 and intends to strengthen European Research Era and support the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy and Innovation Union.

SLD

SLD consistently opt in favor of increasing investments in research, treating them as a basis for economic development. Building every MTOs (medium-term budgetary objective) we shall support priority research funding. Also will be relevant medium-term assessment of resource allocation between indirect actions and direct actions in advocacy research that may result in the creation of new budget lines and changes within existing content. Also will be important relevant medium-term assessment of resource allocation between indirect actions and direct actions in research support that may result in the creation of new budget lines and changes within existing content.

PO

On the 3rd of December 2013, the European Parliament adopted a legislative package of Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for 2014-2020 - Horizon 2020. Its budget is 77 billion. It is the world's largest programme of its kind. Horizon 2020 replaces the so-called Seventh Framework Programme for Research, whose budget for the years 2007-2013 amounted to 53 billion euros.

Poland took an active part in the preparation of Horizon 2020. Important conclusions coincided with the Polish Presidency in the EU Council. Even before the publication of the draft legislation, our country, together with Germany and the Netherlands, conducted a series of international conferences, which raised the issue of the future Framework Programme. We were also an active member of the group for simplification, which completed its work during the Polish Presidency. It has developed a set of specific solutions to help beneficiaries use the instruments of Horizon 2020. Owing to the work of this group, we will use the simpler financial model, a faster path for assessing applications and simplified control procedures.

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education has appointed a team to increase activity and participation of Polish scientists and entrepreneurs in the EU's Horizon 2020 programme. In the effective competing for funding from Horizon 2020 Polish scientists will be also supported by the National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU and the ten regional points. Issues such as: mentoring, individual consultation and direct support for drafting and settling applications are reinforced here. A special portal, where researchers and

entrepreneurs will be able to find information on how to compete for the European funds and how to meet the requirements, will be established. Some regional conferences with the participation of experts, dedicated to acquiring financial means from Horizon 2020, are also planned to be held.

Question 2

The states spending on higher education and research makes for investments in the future of Europe's young generations; due to their very nature, such investments should not be included in the budget deficits allowed by the states.. The rectors of German, French and Polish higher education institutions defended this stand before the European Commission. Are you ready to support this stand and treat the investments in higher education and research as privileged? In order to achieve this, would it be proper to establish mandatory limits for this type of investments so as to come closer to the unanimously approved objective of allotting 3% of GDP on development of higher education and research?

PSL

The investments in the higher education, research and development in most of European countries are treated in priority, which results from European and national development strategies.

In EU allocation of an average 3% of GDP (gross domestic product) for research and development was the aim for EU at the turn of the century for realization in 2010 and now the identical aim is defined by the EU strategy "Europe 2020", this time for the year 2020. Obligatory limits are difficult to introduce: if 2/3 of this expenditure is supposed to come from the market it is difficult to plan in the budget. We can on individual basis - like in Poland - to put the aim (1,7% GDP in 2020) and work intensively towards its realization. Progressive augmentation of budget expenditure for science in the years 2015-2020 is a good solution (to the level of 0,85%, according to the aims of country development strategy until 2020). Unfortunately, excessive deficit procedure and budget tensions connected with current economic and political situation do not allow immoderate optimism.

The expenditure on higher education in Poland grew up in the past few years mainly in connection with salary raises for universities employees. Increase of expenditure is desirable but we have to take into consideration all circumstances.

Currently, there is not political wish in EU - according to my knowledge - to force in an obligatory way the increase of state expenditure for these fields.

SLD

We entirely support the statement of the Joint Declaration of the Rector Conference "The investment in scientific research and higher education is an investment in innovative potential of Europe". We agree that in the calculation of the budget deficit limit in states' budgets there should not be included the investments in modernization and development of higher education institutions, scientific research and innovations. Obligatory quota limits for such type of investments could be one of the solutions of achievement of the 3% GDP expenditure for the development of higher education and scientific research.

PO

Spending on higher education and research is crucial in terms of states' long-run innovation. In Poland, the priority given to science and higher education is statistically proved — a significant increase in expenditure on both these spheres of state activity has been seen in recent years. Budgetary spending on science (including the Fund for Polish Science and Technology) has increased from 3,791.6 million zlotys in 2007 to 6,879.5 million zlotys in 2013, i.e. by more than 80%. An upward trend has also been shown by expenditure on higher education that increased from 10,716.9 million zlotys in 2007 to 14,154.8 million zlotys in 2013, i.e. by more than 30%.

Special attention needs to be drawn to the fact that although the opportunities to increase the state budget burden are limited, due to the global crisis and the subsequent condition of public finance, the unprecedented in these circumstances decision has been made to implement a three-stage salary increase for employees of higher education in the years 2013-2015 (the second stage of the pay increase is being implemented this year). For 3 consecutive years, remuneration of employees of public higher education institutions is to increase at a nominal rate of 9.14% per year, which will mean a cumulative increase of salaries by 30 %, and the total expenditure earmarked for this purpose amounts nearly to 5.8 billion zlotys.

However, establishing mandatory limits for investments in science and higher education should be carried out with a view to the specificities of each country. When it comes to Poland, it should be taken into account that even in 2007, overall spending on R&D was around 0.57% of GDP. These expenses are being gradually increased while maintaining a constant growth of GDP, the highest among EU countries in recent years. Poland, according to the National Reform Programme, has committed itself to achieve the objective of 1.7% of expenditure on R&D in relation to GDP in 2020, which in the case of Poland is an ambitious assumption. Any growth rate adopted should correspond to the absorption capabilities of Polish science. It should, therefore, be systematically increased with attention to ensuring an adequate level of investment, research personnel development and increase of research results commercialization.

Question 3

Universities are at the very core of the knowledge triangle that includes research, education and innovation. The European Commission considers universities to be primarily educational institutions, however, they are centres where extremely important research is conducted.

How could universities, be better represented within political and administrative structures of the Commission in the future with respect to their significant civilizational, educational and scientific role?

PSL

Political and administrative structures in the EU are currently deriving competent representatives of the European sector of science and higher education. It seems that the member states care for a proper representation of universities on different fora of the European Commission. We should increase our efforts in order to enlarge this representation, especially the one from Poland in the context of quite numerous German and French representations.

SLD

Due to the necessity of prioritizing scientific research and with respect to necessity of comprehensive insight in the problem of research and innovations, it seems advisable to appoint the third advisory committee, which would be the European Committee for Innovative Potential of Europe. The European Commission, to a greater degree, should use the intellectual and personal potential which is the European Universities Association (EUA). A good, but insufficient example could be the Memorandum signed in July 2012 by EUA and the European Commission.

PO

First of all, there should be a better use of the existing instruments of university influence, especially of organizations representative for the academic milieu, on the activity of Union's institutions. One of the examples is - acting in the context of Open Method of Coordination - the Working Group ET 2020 for the modernization of higher education, which engages the experts originating from universities, and whose main goal is to support the European Commission in defining political directions and preparing law drafts in the higher education area. The universities and the conferences of rectors should be more engaged in consultations concerning the most important EU programmes in the area of higher education. The role of university should also increase by dint of increasingly stronger relations with social and economic environment.

Question 4

The European Council announces “completion” of the European Research Area (ERA) in 2014. How do you evaluate the European Research Area and how the process of the real completion of ERA establishment should look after the parliamentary elections?

PSL

The European Research Area was supposed to create up till 2014. We are, for different reasons, still a long way from this aim. In our view the process is still pending and political and economic situation of Europe does not support the accomplishment of this idea. Completing the ERA is rather not possible and it seems that the member states could and should give themselves some time. Sometime means maybe even till 2020.

SLD

The European Research Area is the main area of research and education policy methodologies in EU.

The coordination of policies of innovation among member states and also integration those policies with EU innovation policy is required. The open method of coordination has not proved very effective. It is imperative for the dynamic growth of ERA that new European directives are implemented, management tools at European level are improved and there is the consistent increase in expenditures on research and development.

PO

Indeed, the European Council called in its conclusions (2011, 2012) for the completion of the European Research Area by 2014. It is to be understood as a call to intensify work on the idea of the ERA, since in practice the EPB establishment is a continuous process, which since 2000 has been steadily developed and deepened.

On the basis of the Lisbon Treaty and the conclusions of the European Council, the European Research Area is defined as follows: a single , open to the world space research based on the internal market, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely, owing to which the Union and its Member States can strengthen their scientific and technological base, its competitiveness and its ability to jointly solve big challenges .

EPB is a political concept of the European Union, characterized by deepening of scientific and technological cooperation within the EU and social movement of the academia opting for the development of such cooperation. The pillars of EPB include, among others, mobility of researchers, free circulation of knowledge and technology, coordination of national R&D programmes, cross-border cooperation in the area of research (e.g. joint programming initiative), shared research infrastructure. The political significance of the concept of the ERA has risen upon publication of the Europe 2020 strategy and the flagship initiative "Innovation Union" being a part of it. Not without significance is the fact that the ERA is anchored in the Lisbon Treaty (Article 179).

Currently, the possibility of introducing legislation on the ERA (directive, regulation) is also taken into account. EU Competitiveness Council called for the preparation of the EPB 'Road Map' by the first half of 2015. This task is implemented by the Committee of European Research and Innovation ERAC, the expert group composed of representatives of the Member and Associated States, supporting the European Commission and the Council of the European Union.

In the case of implementing legislative concepts in the area of the ERA, the social partners, including the conferences of rectors should be an active participant in the process of consultation of the proposed act.

Question 5

Should the minimum standards of universities' research autonomy be included in the research Framework Programme Horizon 2020 and what could those standards be?

PSL

In the Program Horizon 2020 there are no such norms; the research autonomy can be the construction element of European Higher Education Area. The autonomy of the university in the field of research is worked out on individual basis by the university, it is difficult to put into the norms and even more to define then minimum standards. The research autonomy is regulated by the legislation of member states.

SLD

Research autonomy of the university is an independent value.

PO

H2020 does not establish standards for the Member States relating to the functioning of their national systems or for universities as to how they should operate. However, it may specify the conditions under which the funds will be awarded and which must be met by the entity in order to pursue a project funded by the H2020. An example of such requirements may be set by the ERA-Chairs competition, which indicates that financial means for employing a researcher in the project may be granted only in the case when the entity maintains all standards governing the employment of scientists recommended by the Commission, such as open recruiting. Impeding science through imposing standards of hierarchically created legislation seems unnecessary.

Question 6

The structures of European Higher Education Area have formally been established, although their implementation has not yet been completed. What should be done in order to make one of the crucial components of the Area —of student and graduate mobility in all of Europe – even more robust?

PSL

Mobility of students and graduates in Europe is the motto being constantly used in all the strategic documents of the European Union.

Mobility applies to free movement of students between countries as well as semester exchange e.g. in the framework of Erasmus+ programme. The mobility intensity may be increased by facilitating formal and administrative issues (e.g. visa) and allocating greater support from the European or national budget. In case of our country, greater number of students in Poland is - first of all - a result of wide availability of courses in foreign languages - mainly English courses. Mobility increase depends on this language offer. The offer has significantly increased in the recent years. The deregulation of jobs – simplified rules of access to jobs regulated, according to the European Directive, and comparative overview being conducted on jobs regulated in the European Union is one of the ways that facilitates mobility of graduates. In this context both the European and national policies are being implemented.

SLD

Mobility of students and graduates requires in addition to direct actions (national agencies of student mobility are necessary) also systematic work for strengthening education systems of member states, incentive systems for young scientists.

PO

The government of the Republic of Poland acknowledges the need to intensify mobility of Polish students and young scholars. Activities towards that aim should be focused mainly on removing major financial and administrative obstacles (among others, with regard to visa procedures), foreign qualification recognition issues and insufficient command of foreign languages.

The Human Capital Development Strategy adopted by the Councils of Ministers has it among its main actions to “increase mobility (including: international) of scholars and students,

which is expected to have a positive effect on the quality of education and will enrich, by way of international exchange, the extent of experience gained during the studies, and in the case of scholars, will enable joining in or establishing new networks of contacts that facilitate research projects.

Above all, it requires continuation, evaluation, strengthening old and creating new programmes to support mobility as well as establishing regulatory stimuli to support mobility. The Human Capital Development Strategy lists among its performance indicators “increasing the number of graduates who have completed at least three months of their studies, including placements, abroad” and the number of foreign students enrolled in Polish universities to 5%. Governments of member states emphasized in the conclusions concerning the higher education reform adopted in 2011 during the Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union that mobility is one of the factors contributing to the enhancement of quality of education, and that it may be improved in the following ways:

1. Embedding it “in study programmes that are being designed and making sure that ECTS points awarded by foreign universities are actually recognized by home universities by way of proper utilization of transparency tools such as European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), diploma supplement, quality assurance system and European Qualifications Framework”
2. Increasing universities’ accessibility to students, scholars and teachers from third countries (non-EU) by “removing administrative impediments to obtaining visas”.
3. Promoting expanded cooperation between universities in various countries by, among others, establishment of joined degree programmes “including those leading to double and joint diplomas and academic degrees”.

At the European level, effective utilization of funds under the Erasmus Plus programme, which has so far been one of the major driving forces behind the increase in student mobility in the EU, will be crucial. To date, 112 000 Polish students have benefited from the Erasmus programme, with almost 200 universities involved. Due to the fact that the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is a cooperation platform for 47 countries, it is also of great significance to make the best use of the funds provided for exchange programmes with countries that are not in the EU but belong to the EHEA, including Eastern Partnership countries.

Poland is a country where the number of international students has significantly increased in the last few years. In 2013, there were 36 000 international students in Poland that is 7 000 more than in the previous year. The government would like to see that number grow to reach 5% of all students by 2020. Nevertheless, opening joint degree programmes still poses a challenge for Polish universities.

Question 7

The European Union has on a number of occasions stressed the necessity to intensify, also with regard to higher education, cooperation with third countries. However, the funds allocated for this purpose in the Erasmus Plus are rather limited. What actions should be undertaken by the European Union in the future to make European higher education more attractive to students, universities, businesses and to develop partnerships with third countries?

PSL

Of course, cooperation with third countries is important. Both Europe-wide (e.g. European ranking of universities, Erasmus + Programme) and individual actions of the Member States are taken in this area. Some trends are historical; others are subject to current or strategic political or economic interests. There is no retreat from the intensification of efforts in this field.

SLD

In 2014, it is planned to allocate € 1.8 billion for the Erasmus + Programme. Given the limited financial resources, there is a need for actions that do not require financial outlays, but foster academic cooperation with third countries. These include visa policy of the Member States, relevant programmes for adaptation, and activity of the diplomatic services.

PO

Apart from efforts made by individual countries to boost the attractiveness of national education systems, the European Union also has an important role to perform. It mostly consists in improving transparency and perception of European universities, which are not satisfactory. Thus, the U-Multirank - a new tool for university evaluation whose development is currently financed by the European Commission – may turn to be a very important contribution to that end. The U-Multirank takes into account indicators of the quality of education and research, international relations, knowledge transfer and contribution to the economic development of the local region. The first edition of the ranking will facilitate university comparison in four definite areas: business studies, mechanical engineering, electronic engineering and physics. The project should grow to include further universities and knowledge areas.

In the context of improvement of national higher education systems' attractiveness, effective utilization of EU funds, both under the European Social Fund and Erasmus Plus frameworks, is of great consequence.

On the 8th of January of the current year, the Council of Ministers adopted a draft of the Operating Programme Knowledge Education Development (OP KED) for 2014-2020 which includes actions, among others, aimed at enhancing international openness and mobility in higher education:

1. Support of study programmes with foreign languages as the languages of instruction addressed both to Polish and international students.
2. Creating more opportunities for foreign students to study in Poland and more opportunities for Polish students and PhD students to study in international environment by, among others, international study programmes (including PhD) and international summer schools.
3. Increasing the number of international academic teachers with considerable achievements in their scholarly, professional and/or artistic work who will participate in curricula delivery in Polish universities.

4. Boosting visibility and improving perception of Polish universities by encouraging and supporting application for international accreditation of Polish universities and curricula.
5. Providing support for exceptionally talented students' participation in international competitions.

The objectives set in the OP KED should result in significant improvement of the attractiveness of Poland as a place where people choose to study.

It is worth mentioning that France, in its efforts to attract students from third countries, offers distance learning programmes, certificates and MOOC courses (Massive Online Open Courses) and to that end established the France Université Numérique (France Digital University).

Spain also offers around 170 MOOC courses addressed to South American countries; offer of the Netherlands is equally extensive. Altogether, in April in Europe there were already 500 such courses. However, creating MOOC courses and distance learning courses is very expensive and so far, only the countries whose languages are spoken in the third countries (usually, former colonies) have got involved. In Poland, not one MOOC course has been developed. The European Union could provide direct support for such initiatives.

Question 8

What are your suggestions for achieving an appropriate level of financing research from the budget (non-EU), in % of GDP, in accordance with the National Reform Programme and Strategy "Europe 2020", and what are your anticipated measures of monitoring and enforcing the achievement of the assumed outcomes?

PSL

Within the framework of the strategy we have set a target of 1.7% of GDP on R&D. The only real way to achieve this goal is to gradually increase budget expenditure (both national and EU) and encourage the progressive increase in economy expenditure. We are working towards a target of 0.85% of GDP from the budget and 0.85% of GDP from extra-budgetary means. Following the abrogation (probably in 2015) of the Excessive Deficit Procedure, it will be possible to raise annually the level of budgetary resources (such expenditures will grow partly due to engaging structural funds) and to establish the general tax relief for businesses investing in R&D. This is provided in the Enterprise Development Programme and the Strategy for Innovation and Efficiency of the Economy (2014-2020). Monitoring can be done at the level of formation/settlement of the annual budget and the analysis of GUS (The Polish Central Statistical Office) financial statements (with a 2-year lag). Enforcement of meeting the target will depend on the level of the government's determination to implement the strategic objective.

SLD

A statutory solution with a constant increase in expenditures on science and higher education in relation to GDP should be adopted. Furthermore, in order to raise non-budgetary funds, it is necessary to create support systems for budget entities in the field of fiscal benefits of different types of innovative activities, and "sharing" risk by creating funds for innovative budgetary projects. Change in law on public procurement, so as the level of innovation would be a chief asset during the bid selection, would also be a kind of stimulation in this respect.

PO

Following the commitments at the European level, the Strategy for Innovation and Efficiency of the Economy "Dynamic Poland 2020" (SIEG) predicts an increase in expenditure on R&D up to 1.7% of GDP in 2020. Half of these financial means will come from public funds, and the second half from private funds. The aim is ambitious but feasible, according to the most recent data. In recent years, Poland has increased budgetary expenditure on science in relation to GDP from 0.32% in 2007 to 0.44% of GDP in 2010-2012. The economic crisis that hit many European countries was not unimportant for Poland either and resulted in a growth slowdown of spending on science in 2013-2014. It is hoped, however, that it was only a short-term growth slowdown and economic forecasts for Poland and Europe provide the basis for believing that in the coming years it will be possible to return to the path of growth of expenditure on R&D in the years 2007–2012 so that in 2020 Poland would have achieved its objectives.

It is also worth emphasizing that there was a significant increase in total expenditure (public and private) on research and development activity from the level of 0.57% of GDP in 2007 to 0.90% of GDP in 2012. Thus, an increase in expenditure of the state budget by 0.11% of GDP in 2007-2012 resulted in an increase in total expenditure in this period by 0.33% of GDP. Therefore, a very strong and positive correlation between the increase in budgetary outlays and the accompanying increase in extra-budgetary expenditure on R&D can be seen. This leads to the conclusion that any additional amount spent on R&D coming from public funds entails twice as much commitment of financial resources for this purpose coming from extra-budgetary sector.

A method of monitoring and enforcing the described purpose, i.e. 1.7% of expenditure on R&D in 2020, has been defined in detail in SIEG. Implementation of the Strategy will be monitored by the Ministry of Economy on the basis of annual reports on the implementation and monitoring indicators. The reports will include a description of actions taken to adopt the Strategy, as well as potential problems with the implementation of the Strategy. Additionally, in the mid-term of the Strategy validity period, it is planned to conduct a mid-term evaluation.

Question 9

What is your opinion about the possible changes in the system of financing higher education institutions in the way they would be no longer “economically punished” expelling students who are not interested in studying or who do not meet academic requirements- which is the essential condition for raising the quality of education ?

PSL

Financing of teaching activity in higher education institutions employs an elaborate algorithm for calculating the amount of the stationary (principal) annual government grant. A simplified version of the algorithm can and must be developed that would not rely directly and to such a large extent on student headcount. Admittedly, finding adequate quality measurement criteria is not a simple task. Nevertheless, our main objective is to support quality of education and gearing our graduates up for the demands of the job market.

SLD

The system of higher education financing that relies mainly on the number of students is one of the major causes that impede enhancement of the quality of education. SLD has long been

emphasizing that the algorithm used for calculating the amount of the annual government grant for the university should be weighted in favour of quality rather than quantity.

PO

It should be highlighted that there is no possibility to determine the subsidy dedicated predominantly to educate students and regular doctoral students without taking into consideration the number of these students. A great variety of student numbers per particular universities can be observed within the group of academic institutions, e.g. for the University of Warsaw the algorithm of subsidies distribution provides for 30 thousand students, whereas for Chrzcijańska Akademia Teologiczna it is below 0.4 thousand students. The algorithm of the basic subsidy ought to take into account the differences between the size and potential of universities.

It is worth noticing here that the number of regular students and regular doctoral students is taken into consideration for distribution of the basic subsidy – within the student-doctoral student component – after calculating it through the cost effectiveness of study programmes and regular doctoral programmes. Therefore, mass education is not rewarded. The number of students and regular doctoral students is reflected only in 12% of the basic subsidy distribution. In relation to the above, the argument about “economic penalty” for removing students not interested in studies and those who do not fulfil minimum academic requirements seems to be unjustified.

It is also vital to observe that according to the rule of universities’ autonomy, a university is responsible for the quality of education it offers. The universities, by the resolutions of their senates, determine the study regulations, where they specify studies organization and course as well as the procedure of removing students from the students’ list. If universities maintain students who “do not fulfill the minimum academic requirements” or do not remove “students with no interest in studying”, they question their prestige, which in a long run affects the number of people educated at them.

It has to be mentioned that the Ministry of Science and Higher education has initiated works on the new rules of higher education institutions financing that would enable more profound reference to quality parameters. The new rules should also take into consideration restructuring of universities and transforming them into strong scientific centres, competitive with their counterparts in Europe.

Question 10

What is your opinion with regard to the possible process of development of a group of research universities in Poland (including the possible use of instruments of institutional consolidation of universities) with the imposition of an obligation to achieve, within a specified time frame, a predetermined improvement in the global universities ranking? Are you considering the possibility of financing such a process, and if so, how (e.g. with European funds)?

PSL

Universities represent a different level, and it seems reasonable to single out a group of research universities. In Poland consolidation is very rarely used to join forces and potentials, despite the fact that it is financially rewarded in the current legal regulations. It may be necessary to think about other incentives for universities, for example, a special ministerial

programme. The obligation to achieve a specific position in a selected ranking seems to be rather not viable.

The consolidation is also aimed at the creation of larger universities that better manage the educational process. It is necessary to bring up the issue of the size of public universities in some regions of Poland. The financial resources provided under Priority 10.2 of the Operational Programme Knowledge, Education and Development to improve the management process of universities may be partly allocated for this purpose.

SLD

The creation of research universities is necessary. It requires pooling resources, including research resources, and investments also in the international/foreign academic staff. It is necessary to change the profile academic activity of universities to include the leading position of scientific activity. Allocation of EU funding for this purpose should be considered

PO

The constitutional principle of autonomy of higher education institutions in Poland means that all activities of the consolidation depend on the decision of the university. Act - Law on Higher Education allows different instruments in order to consolidate the university, meaning not only mergers, but also formation of the university unions.

Consolidation of higher education institutions will be supported under the new EU financial perspective for the years 2014-20. Operational Programme Education Knowledge Development, the draft of which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8 January 2014, under the priority axis "Higher Education for the economy and development", provides co-funding of activities within the area of university consolidation. Detailed action proposals in this respect will be presented at a later stage of the programme.

Any use of the described instruments to create a group of research universities is a matter that needs to be thoroughly examined and consulted with the academic community.

In addition, the new financial perspective of the EU provides also for additional programmes like - Teaming for Excellence and the International Research Agencies — which will allow better identification and more effective rewarding of the best research centres.

As part of the budgetary funds (quality-focused grants), in turn, the National Scientific Research Centres will be consistently appointed in the coming years. Very soon, because on May 14 of this year they will be announced within the biological sciences, earth sciences and agricultural sciences.