

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

I have the ungrateful role and uneasy task to talk as the last speaker at this conference, in which we could enjoy extremely interesting and inspiring contributions and inputs. I will therefore be brief and try to summarize.

To start from the beginning let me explain, why the Czech Presidency decided to organize this conference in the first place. When selecting the priority lines for the Czech Presidency in the area of research and development some two years ago, we tried to focus on the most timely and urging topics which were identified within the public debate on the Green Paper of European Research Area, topics which we considered as pillars for the successful development of research in Europe. Undoubtedly the topics of research infrastructures and human resources belong to such areas which create the skeleton of research activities in Europe and their progress will reflect into the advancement of the whole ERA. That is why these topics create also substantial part of the ERA VISION 2020 on which the presidency, the current and future TRIOs, all member states and the Commission have been working over a year now.

The focus on improving research careers, work – life balance and adequate circulation of European scientific talents has been strong within the last years and a wide range of supporting initiatives has been implemented both at European and national levels. Nevertheless, the advancement has not been as quick and effective as would have been anticipated. A new view on this topic was brought by the Commission Communication "Better careers and more mobility; A European Partnership for Researchers", endorsed by the Council in September 2008. It implies on the Member states to elaborate by the end of 2009 their national action plans. The variable geometry of the action plans enables to focus on specific topics and problems which need to be tackled for the overall improvement of research careers and mobility in Member States.

The timing of this conference created ideal opportunity for first comparison of the human resource policies in different Member States and for presentation of good practices.

Let me just briefly touch the situation in our country. As the improvement of conditions for researchers is influenced both by the area of education and research, there are also two streams of reforms being prepared in the legislation of the Czech Republic. In March 2008 the Czech government endorsed the Reform of the research system which is since being implemented in a series of gradual steps.

The main objectives of the reform are to simplify the RD support, to reduce the number of budgetary chapters, to support excellence in research, to promote programme support based on cofinancing from public and private sources, to introduce more flexible organisational structure of public research, to ensure human resources for research, development and innovation and to engage the Czech Republic more intensively in the international cooperation in research, development and innovation.

The reform is projected into the new Act on public support to research and development, which was ratified just recently and in the future it will project into the new National research and innovation policy, which is being drafted as well as new Research and innovation programme. The reform focuses also on the evaluation of RD results. Each year the Research and development Council prepares an up-dated version of the Methodology of evaluation of RD results. The institutional support will be allocated to research institutions according to the results achieved over the past five years. Public tenders will be carried out by two agencies: the Grant agency of the Czech Republic for the basic research and Technology Agency of the Czech Republic for applied research. We also foresee significant simplification of administration.

As for the area of tertiary education, in 2007 an expert group started working on the White Paper on tertiary education, which is a conceptual document stating in which direction our tertiary education should develop

in the next 15-20 years. It reacts on the OECD Tertiary education review from the year 2006, in which an OECD expert group identified the main drawbacks of the tertiary education in the Czech Republic and suggested the framework for future reform steps. The white book also reflects on the final report on tertiary education of OECD countries adopted in Lisbon in April 2008. The White book suggests the changes of the structure of tertiary education system, the system of financing and the system of governance of universities based on more autonomy.

The White book gave ground for the preparation of the tertiary education reform and the new Tertiary Education Act which is currently being discussed on the expert level. The tertiary reform aims at increasing institutional diversification, support to excellence, intensification of private investments and motivation for more diversified investment as well as reinforcement of autonomy of universities based on strategic management. The new Act suggests various reform steps, such as unification of the tertiary education system reflected into identification of basic types of tertiary education institutions, establishment of new professional study programme and establishment of new type of institutions, etc. The Act envisages the intensified autonomy of universities, which brings higher degree of responsibility in financing and management and more balanced position of the main actors. It should bring changes in the accreditation system based on evaluation of the education institute.

But as I mentioned, this new Tertiary act is only in the stage of preparation and still a lot of discussions will be needed before it is finalized. What is definitely positive is that the tertiary education reform is being prepared in parallel with the RD reform and in mutual coordination.

To get back to the main topics of this conference, besides the discussion on the national action plans, which took place in the first workshop, we wanted to focus on the identification and support of research talents. Europe definitely needs more scientists and we cannot afford to lose a single talent for research – we have to depict talents in their young age

and nourish their fire for discovering the unknown, the quest for explication of the secrets of nature. This process requires also excellent and devoted teachers, who would make science education an adventure. We have to give these talented youngsters chance to develop their talent in afterschool activities, national and international competitions, summer camps, etc. and motivate them. In this hectic period we all have lack of time, but we, meaning teachers, researchers, scientists, have to make time to talk to these young talented people, to inspire them and let them discover the thrill of exploring.

In the process of education of young talents mobility should be acknowledged as one of the educational methods. Mobility is a powerful tool both in gaining and spreading knowledge and information and should be facilitated to as many talented young researchers as possible as an integral part of their research career. We are not reinventing the wheel – the tradition of gaining experience abroad was valid in Europe for centuries – in the past it was more on the practical level, now it is more on the theoretical or knowledge-based level, but the principle remains the same.

During the Czech Presidency, namely at the EUFORDIA conference, the ex-post evaluation of the sixth framework programme was officially presented. Within the framework programmes the Marie Curie activities are the largest community programme supporting the development of human resources and mobility and we had a very nice presentation of these activities in the second workshop yesterday. Now, when the mid term review of the seventh framework programme will soon be underway and future budget and activities will be planned, it is important to build on the information presented by the evaluation and statistics from the FP6 ex post evaluation and take measures also on the community level to improve the programme as to best contribute to the ideas of the Partnership.

Within the third workshop we wanted to focus on the extra educational

needs which more and more prove to be essential for the careers of researchers. Similar topic was brought up in the recent Commission communication "New skills for new jobs". Educational systems have to react on the emerging needs of the society, economy and industry and closer cooperation of all these stakeholders will definitely bring benefits to all of us.

The title of this conference is "Researchers in Europe without barriers". When we say the word "barriers" the word "mobility" comes immediately to mind, but it is not necessarily only the freedom of movement which can be a barrier as the concept of this word is much wider. In Europe we have already removed the barriers in the sense of frontiers between states, but a lot of unseen barriers still remain. The level of quality of research, the level of research funding, the status of researchers, the legislation which influences the position of researchers all these aspects vary significantly from country to country. It is now 5 years after the largest enlargement of the European Union, in which we now associate 27 states and it would be foolish to think that the conditions for researchers in various regions will match in due time. It will take decades, but what is important and highly positive is that there is a political will and strong support from the research community to create favourable research climate throughout Europe.

The latest communication from the Commission talks about Partnership, which is truly the right word for what we need to make the research environment in Europe more attractive. We need partnership at all levels: students – teachers, academia-industry, national policies – community policies to work together in dialog and not in isolation.

When talking about barriers we also have to remove barriers in people's minds, in the way they think. The community funding of research still represents only a fraction of the money that flows into research at national levels. If we truly want to have a unique and open European

research area we need to more open up our national research programmes and invite talents from all parts of the world to participate.

Political situation in the past created barriers to free movement in Europe, it is now high time for the politicians in Europe to make their contribution and to break down all barriers for free movement of knowledge - the fifth freedom and create single open market for researchers in Europe.

Before we conclude this conference, let me thank all of you for coming to Prague to participate in this event, let me sincerely thank all the speakers for their inspiring contributions and to all for their valuable inputs.

I hope you enjoyed these two days and that you will have a pleasant trip back home. Allow me to invite you to now to lunch and bid you good - bye.

Thank you for your attention.