**Συμβούλιο Ανταγωνιστικότητας**

**Βρυξέλλες 27\_05\_2016**

**Lunch**

**National Roadmaps for the European Research Area 2015-2020**

Dear Carlos,

First of all, Greece has recently submitted the National Roadmap for 2015-2020 describing the goals, priorities and the actions and measures to accomplish them.

The exercise was certainly enriching as many experts were mobilized both in academia and research centers. We are eager to disseminate this further, especially since a major overhauling of the legal frame for research is bound to start in the autumn. We consider the NR a perpetually working document, but I would not expect that anything fundamental will change in terms of main goals and priorities.

The main challenges we are facing regarding the national actions plans are not related to procedures (like the evaluation of programs, projects, research institutions and researchers) which in most cases follow established international standards. However, the improvement of open procedures that we try to promote is also subject to context: Greece has lost some 200.000 young and highly skilled individuals during the last few years. This means that it is quite a challenge to promote absolute openness for new research and academic positions that in anyway have been very sparsely created since the end of the 2000s.

The main challenge is the lack of funding resources that could support a national research strategy, i.e. resources that are not earmarked (like the structural funds which must follow the limitations of RIS3 or funds coming from Horizon 2020 projects that depend on the content of particular calls). The way we are trying to come around this problem –which is not new and dates much earlier than the recession years– is by establishing the Hellenic Research Foundation (following examples like the NSF or DFG) who will depend on an amalgam of national and private funds. Its mission will consist of funding the types of research which are not covered by other sources, and mainly blue sky research and pre-seed innovation. This project is well under way and should enter its pilot phase in the next couple of months, while the Foundation should be completely functional before the end of the year.

Regarding the monitoring role we expect the Commission to play in the advance of NRs, I would relate it to its function as the main embodiment of EU’s tentative political unification. This means that we expect the Commission to be aware and sensitive not only in terms of what the enhanced competitiveness from a successful progress of the ERA may entail for EU as a whole, but also in terms of regional disparities in this process that may be systematically detrimental for smaller and peripheral regions victimized by processes like brain drain that perpetuate their subaltern position in the geographic division of research labour. This concern should be within the scope of DG Research –and not left to others like DG Regio– since a socially and territorially cohesive Europe is, in our view, an asset even if we only consider economic objectives, and it is not something that can happen alone.

Finally, in terms of the gender issue –and following what Stefania (Italy) said earlier– gender equality –which remains a constant flagship objective for the Commission– still has a lot to achieve. Considerable progress may have been done for elite women groups, like in academia and research, but even those will continue to face glass ceilings if we persist of addressing the issue of women in science without addressing the issue of women in society. Input from the European Social Survey shows that values and attitudes concerning gender are quite distant from supporting unreserved equity, especially in lower and lower-middle social strata and in a considerable number of European regions.