

**Discours de Dainius Pavalkis, ministre de l'Education et de la Science, représentant la
présidence lituanienne**

Dear Madame Minister, dear Commissioners, dear colleagues,

I would like to sincerely thank you for inviting me to this launch event. It is a great honor for me to address you all here.

During the Lithuanian Presidency I had many nice occasions of welcoming different events or officially addressing different people. Now, when the Presidency is coming to an end, I can amend my speech and already share with you some of our results, especially as they are directly related and relevant to this gathering here. These are substantial European results, long awaited and positively perceived by everyone.

I'm very happy and proud of having been able together with my fellow colleagues research ministers during the Competitiveness Council on 3rd of December to adopt both the Horizon 2020 package and Erasmus+ programme. I'm also glad to mention that the first launch event of Horizon2020 programme immediately after its final adoption took place during the Vilnius Innovation forum 10 days ago.

Complemented by quite a few of other achievements, but mainly with the adoption of Horizon 2020 package, including the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, the Lithuanian Presidency has reached its major goals in the field of research. It is an effective and timely result of big efforts of several players and a good cooperation among them. We thank for that our trio partners, also Denmark and Cyprus, as well as the European Commission and the European Parliament, all who have been working hard towards common goals of open and growing Europe.

Horizon 2020 is a great promise for European future. Investing in research and innovation means a direct investment in our European future. Therefore it is very notable that in the new 2014–2020 financial period this area receives special attention with increased funding.

In the next Multiannual Financial Framework, 70,2 billion euros are allocated to the Horizon 2020 programme. Horizon 2020 provides the main framework for the European Union's funding for research and innovation activities, strengthens the European science and technology base paving the way for new growth and jobs in Europe. Investment in this area also leads to new business opportunities by supporting innovative products and services.

Today we are launching Horizon 2020 programme here, in Paris, in the University of Sorbonne, a noble institution that has long and deep both academic and scientific traditions. I would like to congratulate the French scientific community with this launch of the programme. I'm pleased to see so many people attending this event today. It gives us a very nice double sign – firstly, of how much continuity matters, and secondly – of how big interest there exists towards the future.

Because Horizon 2020 is oriented towards the future. And it is, indeed, a unique, highly competitive programme with a very strong European added value effectively contributing to the creation of the European Research Area.

And so researchers, academic and business institutions from all over the Europe as well as from outside are looking forward to responding to the first calls under Horizon2020, to the possibilities for participation in this programme - even if its increased budget makes only a small part of all European nationally spent money for research.

As you all perfectly know, the Horizon 2020 programme has a new structure, new simplified rules for participation, several new schemes. I would particularly like to underline an agreement among European Union's institutions to introduce some new so-called 'widening participation' measures. In my understanding, they could be able not only to facilitate the participation in the programme of those with modest experience, but also create new European partnerships, to wider open the doors towards those countries and their people that are excellent, but just less known. This would lead Europe to even further advances.

Dear colleagues,

Horizon 2020 programme is ready to be implemented, the calls are launched, and all the potential participants are eager to apply. As some predicting voices say, the amount of applicants for the new generation of the programme might strongly increase. I hope, this tendency will have a substantial part of positive energy in it and the programme will become more prestigious, it will unfold and support the brightest European projects, and with its best results will contribute to the European wellbeing.

I wish you all the success in bringing your ideas forward to Horizon 2020 and in implementing them!