



POLITICS OF THE EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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I. SUMMARY

Politics of the excellence in research was put forward by the European Community in the extension of the agenda of Lisbon 2000 asserting the strategic character of a development based on growth and use of the knowledge. If the ambition of the research supported by public funds is to be at the highest level, it appears that on the long term the preponderant use of the criteria of excellence for founding a politics of the research could contain bias and risks.

Several points are analysed in this statement:

- Pointing exclusively on scientific priorities may have a negative effect on the creativity of researchers
- The reduction or disappearance of recurrent resources instead of targeted funding could damage the activity of scientific working on non-priority thematic
- The successful discoveries are based on a pyramid of skills the utility and non-programmable character of which must be recognized
- Ethical behaviour is essential to the "excellence". Too much competition leads to excesses and loss of efficiency

The Comets formulates several recommendations to the research managers in charge of the research:

1. Any selection based on excellence criterion implies to use strong and transparent procedures of assessment.
2. Politics of excellence and the associated strong financial supports must be moderated by financial basic funding for teams, which are not strictly qualified as excellent.
3. High quality research is strongly related to a strong reactivity to the new topics out of the mainstream
4. The logic of the calls leads too often to look for well established thematic that obey often to effects of mode than to the exploitation of the resources..
5. The politics of excellence develops naturally individualistic behaviours. But the achievements of high-level performance are rarely due to individual research but to the collective work.
6. The competition generated by the race to the excellence might have as consequence the increase of inappropriate ethical behaviours in the institutions.
7. The outstanding researchers have special responsibility with respect to the community as well as general public for the popularization of scientific progress.

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