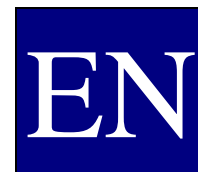




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Conclusions concerning various issues related to the development of the European Research Area

*3016th COMPETITIVENESS Council meeting
Brussels, 26 May 2010*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

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RECALLING

- its conclusions of 30 May 2008¹ on the launch of the "Ljubljana Process - Towards full realisation of ERA";
- its conclusions of 2 December 2008² on the definition of a 2020 vision for the European Research Area which is part of the first phase of the Ljubljana Process and serves as the basis for the development of the future ERA governance;
- its conclusions of 1 and 2 December 2008³ and its conclusions of 3 December 2009⁴ concerning joint programming of research in Europe in response to major societal challenges;
- its conclusions of 2 December 2008⁵ concerning a European partnership for international scientific and technological cooperation;
- the conclusions of the European Council of 11 and 12 December 2008⁶, which called for the launching of a European plan for innovation, combined with the development of the ERA and with reflection on the future of the Lisbon Strategy beyond 2010;

1 10231/08.
2 16767/08.
3 16775/08.
4 17226/09.
5 16763/08.
6 17271/1/08.

P R E S S

- its conclusions of 29 May 2009⁷ on the first steps towards realisation of the ERA Vision 2020 which called upon the Member States and the Commission to further engage in ensuring enhanced complementarity and synergies between Community policies and instruments;
- its conclusions of 3 December 2009⁸ on the future of ICT research, innovation and infrastructures;
- its conclusions of 3 December 2009⁹ concerning the guidelines on future priorities for European research and research based innovation in post-2010 Lisbon Strategy;
- the conclusions of the European Council of 25 and 26 March 2010¹⁰ regarding the Europe 2020 Strategy;

ACKNOWLEDGES the progress achieved so far in different initiatives of the ERA which has in particular been the result of fruitful collaboration in partnership between the Member States and the Commission;

WELCOMES the political orientations given by the new Commission and the European Council to research and innovation and in particular as regards their prominent role in contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy;

With a view to maintaining the political impulse of previous Presidencies towards achieving the ERA 2020 vision, to consolidating the steady progress made so far in this respect, and to taking stock of the recent debates on several aspects relevant to the ERA, ENCOURAGES the Commission and the Member States to make further progress in the development of the ERA in a fully functioning knowledge triangle in particular in the following areas:

1. Joint Programming

WELCOMES the Commission recommendations and state of play on:

- Agriculture, Food security and Climate Change¹¹
- Cultural Heritage and Global Change – A new challenge for Europe¹²
- A healthy diet for a healthy life¹³;

on the basis of which the Council will agree on Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs) as soon as possible in 2010.

WELCOMES the progress made in the High Level Group on Joint Programming (GPC), at its meeting on 4 May 2010, by identifying and substantiating a new set of themes for JPIs. These are the following:

⁷ 10615/09.
⁸ 17190/09.
⁹ 17189/09.
¹⁰ EUCO 7/10.
¹¹ 9585/10.
¹² 9387/10.
¹³ 9388/10.

- Connecting Climate Knowledge for Europe (Clik'EU);
- Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans;
- More Years, Better Lives - The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change;
- The microbial challenge - An emerging threat to human health;
- Urban Europe - Global Challenges, Local Solutions;
- Water Challenges for a Changing World;

and, INVITES the Commission, within the remit of its competence, to contribute to the preparation of JPIs which correspond to the themes identified and substantiated by the GPC, together with the state of play of research in the field of each of these themes, on the basis of which the Council will agree on JPIs;

WELCOMES the progress made by the GPC on the voluntary guidelines on framework conditions to support the development and implementation of JPIs, and ENCOURAGES the GPC to continue its progress on the framework conditions;

After taking stock of the experience gained with the first JPIs, EMPHASISES that for the success of the selected JPIs a due account has to be taken of the level of commitment of the participating countries as well as of the benefits of a lean governance structure and voluntary guidelines for the framework conditions, and INVITES GPC to take these key elements into account in view of the report to be made to the Competitiveness Council by the end of 2010.

2. EU Research Infrastructures

REAFFIRMS that the progress towards the implementation of the ESFRI Roadmap calls for an efficient process for identifying shared priorities among Member States, involving all actors and based on the scientific excellence, technological maturity and effectiveness, and UNDERLINES the need for an enhanced decision making on the site selection based on technical and scientific quality criteria, clear budget commitments and impact analyses, involving all relevant actors in particular the scientific community and the industry;

RESTATES the importance of e-infrastructures based on close interactions between the ICT providers and the community of users and WELCOMES the work of the e-IRG Group in this area; STRESSES that issues such as open access to data, standards and interoperability should be addressed in this respect and URGES the need for further development of computing infrastructures, such as PRACE and grids;

INVITES the Commission and the Member States to continue progressing towards the consolidation and development of European Research Infrastructures, including regional research facilities, along these orientations, by taking into account the work done by ESFRI as well as the potential of the ERIC Regulation¹⁴ and by reinforcing the partnership approach at European, national and regional level;

¹⁴ Council Regulation No 723/2009 of 25 June 2009 on the Community legal framework for a European Research Consortium (ERIC), OJ L 206, 8.8.2009, p.1-8.

3. Synergies between European, National and Regional policies and instruments in support of R&D&I

CONSIDERS that there is scope for further measures aimed at fostering the synergies of action between existing EU, national and regional instruments supporting research and innovation, and CALLS for joint efforts by the Member States and the Commission aimed at better coordination and cooperation between different policy areas such as Research, Innovation, Education (the knowledge triangle), Competitiveness and Cohesion with the view to fostering R&D&I along the lines and objectives defined in the Europe 2020 Strategy, thus bringing innovative activities towards the needs of the society;

REAFFIRMS that research and innovation-driven cluster initiatives may help to align regional and local priorities and instruments, as well as bring added value to local investments, and INVITES the Commission to explore new approaches for cluster support through enhanced coherence and interaction of different EU programmes and instruments, aiming at fostering trans-regional collaboration between clusters;

INVITES the Member States and the Commission to continue improving the articulation between their efforts in programming of and support for R&D&I, with a view to making further progress in realising the ERA 2020 Vision and the Europe 2020 Strategy;

STRESSES the necessity to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of the information available on EU instruments in support of R&D&I and the potential benefits for regions of their combination and INVITES the Commission to continue progressing in this direction, notably by improving, expanding the scope and upgrading the “Practical Guide on EU funding opportunities for research and innovation”, including the modernisation of the guide as a web-based comprehensive portal on R&D&I;

INVITES the Member States and the Commission to start a timely debate on the types of funds that would be needed for the next financial perspectives in view of better support to R&D&I in Europe, by taking particular account of the involvement of regions and their needs.

4. Public-private partnerships (PPP) for research and innovation

TAKES NOTE of the Commission communication entitled "A public-private partnership on the Future Internet"¹⁵;

WELCOMES the Commission's plans for the four public-private partnerships (PPPs) on Energy Efficient Buildings (EeB), Factories of the Future (FoF), Green Cars (GC) and Future Internet (FI).

STRESSES that PPPs, such as those launched as part of the recovery plan, as well as those created with the JTIs, are crucial to face grand European socio-economic challenges and have the potential to foster productivity and sustainability by focusing on a limited number of sectors selected on the basis of their potential contribution to European GDP and employment. At the same time, PPPs formed by transnational networks of leading firms incorporating SMEs, public research institutions and universities, would contribute to economic recovery through relevant research and open innovation.

¹⁵ 15279/09.

UNDERLINES that in order to maximise these impacts, which should be clearly identified and quantified from the definition, and to ensure efficient and transparent functioning of current and future PPPs, there is a need for a number of common criteria for all PPPs, notably:

- A common specific framework for all PPPs based on a clear set of conditions and rules and with simple and common procedures but that has the necessary flexibility to allow conditions, rules and procedures to be adapted to reflect the underlying industrial structures and sectors;
- A clear definition of private and public roles: The private sector should in particular identify technological research and innovation needs as well as advise on annual prioritisation lines. Besides contributing to the identification of research and innovation needs, the public sector should be responsible for the framework decisions and should lead the implementation of calls making a proper use of public funds based on widely recognised best practices and high quality. The role of public sector in managing public funds should be safeguarded. In this context, various funding options should be considered.
- Accessibility to the partnership, promotion of participation and dissemination of results;
- Representation of the Member States in the governance structures, in order to guarantee coordination with national initiatives.
- Monitoring of the implementation of calls, by using independent observers;
- A mechanism for evaluating the long-term socio-economic impact of the PPP and the activities it supports;

INVITES the Commission to:

- Analyse, in cooperation with the Member States, the progress of EU level R&D related PPPs, in order to take advantage of the lessons learned and evaluate the experience gained by the Commission and related non-profit associations, as test beds for the implementation of all PPPs.
- Swiftly implement the Future Internet PPP as a concrete initiative underpinning the objectives of the European Digital agenda and the Europe 2020 strategy.
- Ensure that the technological outcomes of the Future Internet PPP respect the principles that have made the current Internet a global success, notably interoperability, user driven innovation, fairness and openness, so as to allow the participation of all interested actors, in particular SMEs, during and beyond the implementation of the PPPs.
- Maintain the support to the PPPs on Energy-efficient Buildings, Factories of the Future and the European Green Cars initiatives in close cooperation with industrial partners and national public authorities, paying special attention to the due coordination among European and national technology platforms, relevant Commission services, and national, regional and local governments
- Report on a regular basis to the Council on the achievements of the PPPs;

INVITES the Commission and the Member States to:

- Provide long-term stability for the running PPPs;
- Informed on the results of the above analysis on the progress of PPPs, continue the debate, together with the European Parliament and relevant industrial stakeholders, on the way forward to implement PPPs under a common framework of simple and transparent procedures, including a debate on important areas for future PPPs;

5. The International Dimension of the ERA

ACKNOWLEDGES the progress made by the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) in further developing the European Partnership between the EU and its Member States so far, including its proposed initiative on information sharing as well as the pilot initiatives on enhanced cooperation with selected regions/countries and on specific themes, as being considered in 2010¹⁶, and REAFFIRMS its support to the work of SFIC;

INVITES the Member States and the Commission to:

- Consider ways and means to support the implementation of the coordinated and pilot initiatives by SFIC;
- Consider building upon the initiatives proposed by SFIC when developing future European strategy for international S&T cooperation and to work towards coordinated positions in view of research-related topics in international summits and fora;

TAKES NOTE of the work carried out in the framework of the EU-Africa cooperation, under 8th partnership dedicated to science, information society and space, and INVITES SFIC to consider its involvement in the preparation of the EU-Africa Summit to be held in November 2010.

6. Support Women in European Science and Technology

RECOGNISES that gender stereotyped working culture and environment are strong barriers to gender equality as regards learning, employment and career progress in particular in the field of science and technology;

ACKNOWLEDGES the work of the Helsinki Group on Women and Science and its position paper “Gender and Research Beyond 2009”, which renews its commitment to mainstreaming gender in research and highlights the concept of structural change aiming at suppressing barriers which today prevent equal scientific recognition and scientific careers progression between women and men, thus contributing to the improvement of the quality of research;

In this respect, SUPPORTS the concept that structural change should be part of the modernisation process of research institutions. Noting that the inclusion of gender issues in research is a resource to create new knowledge and stimulate innovation, STRESSES that this dimension should be taken into account while modernizing research institutions and in any structural and cultural change, designed to improve the effectiveness and impact of the research itself;

ACKNOWLEDGES the progress made by the Commission in promoting a more gender aware human resources management in research institutions, shortly called structural change programme, however, RECOGNISES that institutional change is a complex process requiring a long term strategy and sufficient funding, therefore, STRESSES the need for further progress in this direction, particularly through the reinforcement of the structural change programme for the modernisation of universities and other research institutions, together with the reinforcement of the integration of the gender dimension in European research.

¹⁶ First Report of Activities of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) (1354/10).

ENDORSES also the other recommendations proposed by the Helsinki Group in its Position Paper, such as the need for top level management support for change, the benefit to both persons and institutions of a more balanced life and the essential role of school science education, and ENCOURAGES the Member states and the Commission to further work in all these areas.

INVITES the Commission to consider the feasibility of a Communication on Gender and Research Beyond 2010.

7. The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

UNDERLINES the importance for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) to seek new ways to deliver innovation, notably through strong leadership, a results-driven approach and simplification of procedures, and through constant focus on generating impact and European added value.

ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts made by the EIT to timely and successfully complete the designation of the first three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), and URGES the EIT and the KICs to act without delay and ensure that KICs launch their activities and deliver first results as rapidly as possible.

ENCOURAGES the EIT to consolidate its activities in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the upcoming Research and Innovation Plan, so as to emerge rapidly as a world-class, internationally recognised player in the EU knowledge, higher education and innovation landscape.

URGES the EIT and KICs to make full use of the simplicity and flexibility offered by the financial rules governing the EIT, as well as their coherent implementation which is in particular important for the early stage of KICs."