

NANOSCIENCES AND NANOTECHNOLOGIES - Council conclusions

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

NOTING the communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee entitled "Nanosciences and Nanotechnologies: An action plan for Europe 2005-2009. First Implementation Report 2005-2007",

RECOGNIZING:

- That the role of nanosciences and nanotechnologies is crucial for the improvement of Europe's competitiveness and the quality of life of its citizens, and to achieve the economic, social, and environmental goals of the renewed Lisbon Strategy;
- The need to foster synergies and cooperation between all stakeholders, including the Member States, the European Commission, academia, research centres, industry, financial bodies, NGOs and society at large;
- That progress can only be achieved with the full involvement of the private sector, and that the European Technology Platforms and the ENIAC Joint Technology Initiative are valuable tools to bring forward the R&D efforts in the field of nanosciences and nanotechnologies;
- That greater private investment is needed to support the actions of the European Union, via the Framework Programmes for Research and Development, and those undertaken by the Member States;
- The potential of integrating the different scientific and technological disciplines within a converging approach to sustain the development of nanosciences and nanotechnologies in Europe, and to provide for seamless cooperation between the actors involved in the implementation of initiatives, encouraging joint calls within the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development;
- The need to support the adequate development of interdisciplinary infrastructures and the training of human resources;
- That conditions must be created for the development and further growth of European centres of excellence in nanosciences and nanotechnologies, so that these can attract and retain the best researchers in the world;
- That a safe and responsible development of nanotechnologies is essential, and noting in this context the review of current regulation undertaken by the European Commission and the open consultation it launched among the public and stakeholders on a possible code of conduct;

- And that currently raising world investments in nanosciences and nanotechnologies, particularly by the Union's major competitors, the USA and Asia, requires increased investment and political attention in Europe.

UNDERLINES that a more rapid and successful development of the nanoscience and nanotechnology sector is of vital strategic importance for European competitiveness, and requires stronger co-ordination of the energetic efforts already undertaken by a large number of public and private actors at European, national and regional level;

RECOGNIZES the need to support the adequate development of interdisciplinary infrastructures and the training of human resources, in order to create adequate conditions for the development of European centres of excellence in nanosciences and nanotechnologies, so that these can attract and retain world-class researchers;

STRESSES that not only the public and private efforts in research, technological development and innovation, but also the wider framework conditions for success of the nanotechnology sector in the European internal market require constant and careful attention;

UNDERLINES that a safe, integrated and responsible development and use of nanotechnologies is essential;

RECOGNISES that, where required, new or modified testing methods should be developed for the evaluation of potential risks of nano-projects to the environment or human health;

NOTES in this context the review of current regulation undertaken by the European Commission and the open consultation it launched among the public and stakeholders on a possible code of conduct;

INVITES Member States to provide input to the Commission in view of its regular reporting and to consider comprehensive and integrated approaches to creating the best competitive environment to advanced training and research, by stimulating national and international networks of competence in the fields of the nanosciences and nanotechnologies, involving industry and academia where appropriate.

INVITES Member States to encourage universities, research organisations and industry to cooperate in view of attracting to Europe the best talents in those fields and to boost improvement in industrial products and processes.

INVITES the Commission to:

- Continue monitoring nanotechnology development and use, and promoting the sharing of good practice in regulatory and risk governance issues, in order to keep nanotechnology research and implementation safe and responsible;

- Report regularly and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Council and the European Parliament on the state of European competitiveness in nanoscience and nanotechnology, and the role of Europe