



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

From: Research Working Party
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Preparation of Council ("Competitiveness") on 1-2 March 2010
- Preparation for the European Council on 25 and 26 March 2010: European Strategy for Growth and Jobs
- Exchange of views

1. Europe today is challenged with the task of economic recovery after the worst crisis in recent decades and science can be part of the solution. The institutions and the people working to achieve a successful European Research Area (ERA) are sensitive to the situation Europe is facing and are willing to play an active role in the challenge of recovery. From excellent frontier research to the most business-oriented technological development, all European science has something to contribute right here, right now. The quest for knowledge is a cornerstone of European culture and part of our values but, at the same time, science is crucial to address the grand challenges we face as civilisation.

2. Besides, science has collaterally generated a series of new “driven-by-science” products and markets that generate jobs and wealth and have huge growth potential. Men and women involved in research and technological development –both in the public and private sectors- struggle to make our companies more competitive in the medium term, but they also have ready-to-market solutions that can help those businesses hardest hit by the crisis, particularly SMEs. European science wants to advance hand-in-hand with the society that demands it, finances it and at whose service it is placed. Scientists and scientific institutions are acting responsibly in the face of the challenge of economic recovery, committed to pushing forward a more sustainable and knowledge-based economy.
3. As the current Strategy for Growth and Jobs cycle comes to a close, the EU is facing the challenge of defining the new EU Strategy, enabling us to develop a new model of economic and social growth: a strategy for a successful exit from the crisis and, at the same time, for addressing the grand challenges of globalisation. The new EU Strategy has to incorporate a clear message to society on our commitment to a Europe of knowledge and innovation; a message which must be specified, among others, through research and innovation-oriented objectives and indicators. .
4. It is time for translating political vision into actual progress. With the new treaty, ERA explicitly becomes a political objective of the Union, the development of which is shared between the Commission and the Member States. To position the ERA as a main focus of the European project demands greater coherence and alignment of the different instruments, promoting science and innovation at regional, national and community level. It is time that research and innovation programmes – whether Community-wide, national, regional or intergovernmental- get into action in the short term, responding to the grand challenges with which we are facing: energy, climate change, water, healthcare, ageing, among others. It is time that science and innovation have an integrated vision, a vision to instigate the innovation that Europe needs.

5. A limited number of key qualitative and quantitative targets and indicators are needed to measure the progress of ERA. The framing of these targets should result from a dialogue between Member States and the Commission to ensure full consistency, and at the same time to take into account the different starting positions. Efficient monitoring and surveillance mechanisms are key for the successful implementation of the 2020 Strategy.
6. The Spanish presidency strongly supports that growth based on knowledge and innovation should be at the heart of the 2020 reformed agenda, thereby notes that a contribution from Ministers responsible for research to the ongoing debate within the European Union would be of great value and is inviting the Ministers to have an exchange of views on the new 2020 strategy.

The Presidency is proposing that Ministers could focus their interventions on the following questions:

- To improve EU's productivity, how could we strengthen our R&D and innovation performance, increase our human resources and capacities and further develop the ERA in a smart and sustainable way?
- How –in practical terms– can Research Ministers contribute to the future EU Strategy on Growth and Jobs?