



*** Check against delivery ***

12 May 2009

INDUSTRY VIEWS ON EU RESEARCH, INNOVATION & EDUCATION INITIATIVES

SWEDISH BUSINESS SEMINAR BRUSSELS, 12 MAY 2009

OPENING COMMENTS BY DANIEL CLOQUET DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESSEUROPE

BUSINESSEUROPE warmly welcomes the fact that the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the Association of Swedish Engineering Industries and VINNOVA have organised this workshop in advance of the upcoming Swedish Presidency. I believe that this seminar is extremely timely given the numerous processes or initiatives which are developing at EU level and which include:

- upcoming Swedish EU Presidency project on reforming ERA (European Research Area) instruments.
- preparation of a new European Innovation Plan by the Commission.
- selection and implementation of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the EIT (European Institute of Innovation and Technology)

BUSINESSEUROPE will actively contribute to these processes and develop wider contributions for addressing four key challenges for Europe:

- Increasing investments in R&D and innovation at both EU and national level
- Enhancing performance through smart public policies
- Nurturing future talent and spirit of enterprise
- Stimulating demand and markets for innovative products and services.

We already had the opportunity to give views on the reform of the ERA at the informal "Competitiveness" Council on 4 May.

Given the call by Mr Kirsebom (Swedish Permanent Representation) for considering all the issues also from the point of view of practical instruments, I would like to briefly touch on three important issues for business, which could particularly benefit from our discussions today, given the expertise which is present in the room. This is by no means a structured or exhaustive issue list – we plan to deliver more comprehensive inputs at a later stage.



1. A first key issue is the vital need to strengthen linkages between research, innovation and education policies.

One of the main challenges is to develop the European Research Area into an effective base on which innovation can flourish. This requires stronger coordination at policy level, a task to be tackled by both Member States and the Commission.

Policies formed and implemented by DG Enterprise, DG Research, DG Info and DG Education all have an impact on the European innovation climate. Therefore, it is important that these policies and the instruments for research and innovation are designed using a more holistic approach. In this respect, business calls for more coordination between DGs which deal with innovation policy.

The same kind of holistic perspective is needed in Member States, where the organisation of research, innovation and education policies is often shared between different Ministries. It is important that both the Commission and Member States make sure that the barriers between different policy areas do not slow down the implementation of the ERA or stand in the way of increasing the ambitions for it.

2. A second key issue is the need to design future research and innovation programmes in a way that meets the evolving needs of companies.

As you know, companies work more and more with partners in global networks, according to the so-called "open innovation" philosophy. Open innovation strategies try to use in a smart way inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation, and expand the markets for external use of innovation. This collaboration takes place throughout the value chain, with companies working closely with universities and research institutes. In this context it is very important that policy-makers think about how future EU research and innovation programmes can support open innovation strategies of companies, be they large or SMEs. The message from European industry is very clear: we are willing to contribute to this work.

3. A third key issue is the need to ensure maximum use of industry expertise in the setting of R&D and Innovation priorities in the Framework Programme.

This is of course an obvious need for the definition of R&D work programmes that are of relevance for industry. In this regard, BUSINESSEUROPE is happy to see that the European Technology Platforms (ETP) have a lot of potential for generating high quality Strategic Research Agendas (SRA), thanks to the input of industry in particular.

Because of this good potential, we believe that the Commission could make broader use of the ETP methodology with a view to generating Strategic (Research) Agendas in other areas. For example, it would be worthwhile to explore to what extent the ETP and SRA methodology could be used for defining the strategic research agendas for the Knowledge and Innovation Communities to be set up by the EIT. Similarly, we believe that the ETPs could make an important contribution for implementing the EU Innovation Action Plan that the Commission is to propose later this year. The ETPs could also



offer an interesting potential for designing joint programming actions. When exploring these avenues, attention will need to be paid to how SMEs could be involved in the relevant networks, besides large enterprises.

Policy-makers should realise that European business has invested greatly in the development of European Technology Platforms (ETPs) and Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs). This investment has contributed to defining R&D priorities, timeframes, and action plans on issues where growth, competitiveness and sustainability objectives require major medium- to long-term research and technological advances. The momentum that has thereby been created at business level should not be lost.

Finally, we believe that attention should also be paid to that the role that ETPs and JTIs could play as tools helping the policy-makers to focus on synergies between different EU programmes and instruments.

This positive view on the Joint Technology Initiative model does of course not mean that everything is perfect with their implementation. The Commission progress report on the implementation of FP 7 recognises in a lucid way that the establishment of “Community bodies” linked to the JTIs is a long and tedious process. This will need to be drastically improved. It would be helpful if today’s conference could show some way forward in this regard.
