

NEWS – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Experts join to urge radical change in EU R&D and innovation

**5 groups of experts issue a joint statement urging the European Parliament and Commission to adopt a new approach to research and innovation policy in Europe**

BRUSSELS, 7 December 2009– Five advisory panels have come together in a joint statement to urge the European Parliament and the newly named Commission to rethink the way the EU organizes its support and policies for research, development and innovation.

The EU approach needs “radical improvement” and better long-term planning, the groups say in a statement released today. “The world has changed. Markets are global. Science is an increasingly competitive endeavour. Innovation is becoming the most important engine of growth and jobs in an emerging knowledge-based economy. But in the European Union, many policies governing research, development and innovation need radical improvement. “

The groups – four of them appointed by the Commission, and one an independent non-profit – are urging that future EU policy for research and innovation be organized around five main themes:

- 1) *Focus on our greatest societal challenges.* “We urge a fundamental reorientation of EU RDI policies and programmes towards solving these challenges” of climate change, alternative energy, healthcare for an aging population, security and social cohesion –and better long-term policy planning to deal with them.
- 2) *Encourage new networks, institutions and policies for open innovation.* The groups call for a common EU-wide patent system, mobility of researchers and other policies and programmes to make it easier for ‘open innovation’ among large and small companies, universities and research institutes, and others to collaborate on innovation.
- 3) *Spend more on research, education and innovation, in part through bolder co-investment schemes.* “Especially in these difficult economic times, it is the responsibility of government to support public innovation,” the statement says.
- 4) *Coordinate and plan RDI programmes better – within Brussels and among the member-states.* “We urge greater coordination among all the EU capitals, a reduction in paperwork, and synchronization of all aspects of RDI funding, regulation, and standard-setting to achieve our aim of solving society’s Grand Challenges.”
- 5) *Open competition should be standard in EU programmes.* “Excellence must be the watchword of EU research, development and innovation programmes. Only in this way can we compete globally.”

The statement was released at a briefing in the European Parliament today by representatives of the panels, including: Prof. John Wood, chair of Commissioner Potočník’s European Research Area Board; Prof. Luc Soete, chair of DG Research’s Expert Group on the Role of Community Research Policy in the

Knowledge-Based Economy; Gernot Klotz, a member of the European Technology Platforms Expert Group, and Richard L. Hudson of the Science|Business Innovation Board AISBL, an independent non-profit focused on innovation policy. Also represented was DG Enterprise's Business Panel on future EU Innovation Policy; its chair is Diogo Vasconcelos of Cisco Systems.

The presentation at the Parliament was co-hosted by two Members of the European Parliament: Maria da Graça Carvalho of Portugal, and James Elles of the UK.

Mrs. Carvalho said: "The European Union needs a new industrial narrative that will push the discussion and the agenda around innovation and knowledge. That narrative is just now emerging as industries across Europe begin to lay the groundwork for a post-carbon Industrial Revolution."

Mr. Elles, Co-Founder and Vice-Chairman of the European Internet Foundation, said: "While the US and China take long-term planning seriously, the EU still has no long-term planning system in place. There is a need to establish an inter-institutional system identifying long-term trends facing the EU. This would allow policy-makers to identify the key long-term trends underway and to develop the best responses to them. Long-term trends show that there is an urgent need to focus on research to remain competitive in global markets."

A copy of the full joint statement is available online at [www.sciencebusiness.net/experts](http://www.sciencebusiness.net/experts)

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Notes for Editors:

**About the expert groups**

The European Research Area Board – 22 leaders in academia, industry and policy convened by EU Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik to make recommendations on the long-term future of the ERA. First report, "Preparing Europe for a New Renaissance: A Strategic View of the European Research Area", released in October 2009. Further reports are planned with more-detailed recommendations. Web link: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/erab>

Business Panel on future EU innovation policy - 5 business leaders appointed by the European Commission's Director-General for Enterprise and Industry to provide inputs from a business perspective on priorities for future EU innovation policy. Report, "Reinvent Europe through Innovation", published October 2009. Web link: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/future-policy/business-panel>

Expert Group on the Role of Community Research Policy in the Knowledge-Based Economy – 17 economists and other experts convened by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research to make short-term recommendations for R&D programmes. Report, "The Role of Community Research Policy in the Knowledge-Based Economy," released November 2009.

European Technology Platforms Expert Group – 10 experts - five with ETP experience, two from civil society, three from authorities/member-states - convened to report to the EU's DG Research. A preliminary summary of their findings, "Strengthening the Role of European Technology Platforms in Addressing Europe's Grand Challenges," was published in October 2009. Web link: [ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/technology-platforms/docs/i652-etp09-flyers\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/technology-platforms/docs/i652-etp09-flyers_en.pdf)

Science|Business Innovation Board AISBL– An independent, non-profit panel of 10 leaders in European industry, academia and policy that make semi-annual recommendations on EU innovation policy. Reports include: "Stimulating Innovation," December 2009; "Towards a More Innovative Europe," June 2009. "Clustering for Growth," December 2008. Web link: <http://www.sciencebusiness.net/info/innovationboard.php>

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