

15141/03 (Presse 337)

**PROVISIONAL VERSION**

***THIS PRESS RELEASE COVERS ITEMS DISCUSSED ON 26.11.2003***

***- RESEARCH ONLY -***

2547th Council meeting

**- COMPETITIVENESS -**

**(Internal market, Industry and Research)**

Brussels, 26 November 2003

President : **Mrs Letizia MORATTI**, Minister for Education,  
the Universities and Research

of the Italian Republic

Internet: <http://ue.eu.int>  
E-mail: [press.office@consilium.eu.int](mailto:press.office@consilium.eu.int)

***For further information call 32 2 285 62 19 – 32 2 285 63 19***

15141/03 (Presse 337)

**CONTENTS**<sup>1</sup>

**PARTICIPANTS**..... 3

**ITEMS DEBATED**

IMPROVING COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH - Council Conclusions..... 5

EUROPEAN SPACE POLICY ..... 6

STEM CELL RESEARCH ..... 7

INTERNATIONAL THERMONUCLEAR EXPERIMENTAL REACTOR ..... 7

---

<sup>1</sup>

- *Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.*
- *The documents whose references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site <http://ue.eu.int>.*
- *Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the above mentioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.*

**PARTICIPANTS**

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

**Belgium :**

Mr Serge KUBLA

Vice-Minister-President and Minister for Economic Affairs, SMEs, Research and New Technologies (Walloon Region)

**Denmark :**

Mr Helge SANDER

Minister for Science, Technology and Development

**Germany :**

Mr Wolf-Michael CATENHUSEN

State Secretary for Research

**Greece :**

Mr Apostolos TSOCHATZOPOULOS

Minister for Development

**Spain :**

Mr Juan José COSTA CLIMENT

Mr. Pedro MORENES EULATE

Minister for Science and Technology

State Secretary for Science and Technology Policy

**France :**

Ms Claudie-HAIGNERÉ

Minister attached to the Minister for Youth, Education and Research, with responsibility for Research and New Technology

**Ireland :**

Ms Mary HARNEY

Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment

**Italy :**

Mrs Letizia MORATTI

Mr Guido POSSA

Minister for Education, the Universities and Research

Deputy Minister for Education, the Universities and Research

**Luxembourg**

Ms Erna HENNICOT-SCHOEPGES

Minister for Culture, Higher Education and Research, Minister for Public Works

**Netherlands :**

Mr Laurens Jan BRINKHORST

Minister for Economic Affairs

**Austria :**

Mr Martin BARTENSTEIN

Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Labour

**Portugal :**

Ms Maria da Graça CARVALHO

Minister for Science and Higher Education

**Finland :**

Mr Mauri PEKKARINEN

Minister for Trade and Industry

**Sweden :**

Mr Thomas ÖSTROS

Minister for Education

**United Kingdom :**

Ms Jacqui SMITH

Minister of State for Industry and the Regions and Deputy Minister of Women and Equality

\* \* \*

**Commission :**

Mr Philippe BUSQUIN

Member

**The Governments of the Acceding States** were represented as follows:

**Czech Republic :**

Mr Ludek STAVINOHA

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Estonia :**

Mr Margus RAHUOJA

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Cyprus :**

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Minister for Finance

**Latvia :**

Mr Eduard STIPRAIS

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Lithuania :**

Mr Rimantas VAITKUS

Deputy Minister for Education and Science

**Hungary :**

Mr Egon DIENES-OEHM

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Malta:**

Mr Edwin VASSALLO

Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs

**Poland :**

Mr Michael KLEIBER

Minister for Science

**Slovakia :**

Mr Martin FRONC

Minister for Education

**Slovenia :**

Mr Zoran STANČIČ

State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

ITEMS DEBATED

IMPROVING COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH - Council Conclusions

The Council adopted the following Conclusions:

**"The Council**

1. **RECALLING** the conclusions of the European Council meeting held on 16 and 17 October 2003 which highlighted, within the Growth Initiative, the fundamental role of innovation and research and development for the purposes of Europe's economic and social growth in the pursuit of the Lisbon objectives;
2. **NOTING** that the European Council meeting on 16 and 17 October 2003 invited the relevant formations of the Council, with a view to the European Council meeting on 12 and 13 December 2003, to make their own contribution to the establishment of the Quick-Start Programme identifying a list of projects in an enlarged Union based on transparent criteria, along with assessments of their significance for the integration of the internal market in the enlarged Europe, their economic and financial viability, their impact on growth and the leveraging effect on private capital;
3. **EMPHASISING** that it considers projects in the sector of innovation and research to be identified for the Quick-Start Programme should:
  - meet the criteria of complementarity and synergy with the thematic priorities of the Sixth Framework Programme, while actively pursuing its implementation, and ensuring full consistency of the objectives and implementing instruments for European action in the R&D sector;
  - maintain a character of excellence in the context of realising the European Research Area;
  - contribute to Europe's economic and social growth as outlined by the Lisbon Process;
4. **RECALLING** the preliminary exchange of views which took place at the Competitiveness Council held on 10 November 2003, on the basis of a number of considerations tabled by the Presidency regarding possible priority areas and quick-start projects for research and development;
5. **WELCOMES** the communication from the Commission on a European Initiative for Growth - Investing in Networks and Knowledge for Growth and Jobs<sup>2</sup>, and in particular, the criteria to be used in identifying projects for the quick-start programme, namely the maturity of the project, its transfrontier dimension, its impact on growth and innovation in an enlarged European Union and its benefits for the environment;
6. **CONSIDERS** that the areas proposed in the Commission's communication constitute a first list of R&D priorities; **NOTES** that the list of priorities is non-exhaustive and may be supplemented as and when necessary."

---

<sup>2</sup> Doc. 14893/03

**EUROPEAN SPACE POLICY**

The Council took note of the presentation by Commissioner Philippe Busquin on the Commission's White Paper on implementing the European Space Policy. It instructed the competent preparatory bodies of the Council with a view to enabling the Competitiveness Council to make an adequate response to bring the work forward rapidly.

In this White Paper, the Commission proposes the implementation of an extended European Space Policy to support the achievement of the European Union's policy goals. In particular, it is proposed to exploit the special benefits space technologies can deliver in support of the Union's policies and objectives: faster economic growth, job creation and industrial competitiveness, enlargement and cohesion, sustainable development and security and defence.

It is recalled that a number of Council resolutions and conclusions between 1998 and 2001 all pointed in the direction of developing a European space strategy. This culminated in the adoption by the Council in December 2001 of a Resolution entitled "Towards a European Space Strategy" *inter alia* inviting the Commission to present a proposal for a negotiation mandate for a framework agreement between the European Community and the European Space Agency (ESA). Following to negotiations conducted by the Commission on behalf of the Community with the ESA, a framework Agreement was signed on 25 November 2003 between the two Parties. This Agreement will have an initial duration of four years and will form an important basis for initially implementing the European space policy.

## **STEM CELL RESEARCH**

The Council heard the presentation of Commissioner Philippe Busquin on the Commission's revised proposal in the light of the opinion of the European Parliament. This revised text concerns the main conditions for the use of stem cells procured from human embryos for research activities funded under the Sixth Framework Programme specific programme "Integrating and strengthening the European Research Area".

After discussing this issue informally over lunch, the Council decided to meet again on 3 December with a view to taking a decision.

The Commission's proposal aims at establishing implementing provisions concerning research activities involving human embryos and human embryonic stem cells eligible for Community funding as envisaged by the Council/Commission statement at the time of the adoption of the specific programme "Integrating and strengthening the European research area" adopted on 30 September 2002.

## **INTERNATIONAL THERMONUCLEAR EXPERIMENTAL REACTOR**

The Council decided unanimously to amend the Commission's negotiating directives on the establishment of an international framework concerning the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) authorising the Commission to put forward Cadarache (France) as the European candidate site. The Council also decided unanimously that the ITER European legal entity will be located in Spain.

The negotiations on ITER are currently being undertaken by Canada, China, the European Union, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States.

The next meeting of the Parties to the ITER agreement will be held on 4 December. Three candidates for hosting this site, Cadarache (France), Clarington (Canada) and Rokkasho (Japan) have been put forward.