



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

From: Presidency
To : Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
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Subject: *Preparation of the Council ("Competitiveness") of 10-11 December 2012*
Communication from the Commission on enhancing and focusing EU
International Cooperation in Research and Innovation
- Exchange of views

I. INTRODUCTION

The European Union has been amongst the world leaders in research and innovation, currently representing almost a quarter of world R&D investment, and about a third of high impact scientific publications and patent applications. This is gradually changing though, as new important players beyond the traditional research and innovation leaders (Europe, US, Japan), rise at the global stage. Over the last 10 years countries like China, Russia, Brazil, India and South Africa have been rising fast in the world research and innovation scene, with their share of global R&D expenditure doubling in the previous decade.

As the research and innovation landscape is rapidly developing into a more globalised one, international cooperation becomes more important and more prevalent. Countries and businesses increasingly recognize their interdependence in addressing common problems, while new global challenges also emerge, which are significant drivers for research and innovation. In the globalised markets where the mobility of researchers is continuously improving, international cooperation is inevitably growing into a very important means for the pooling of talent and knowledge, thus boosting research and innovation.

The EU Framework Programmes have already played an important role in supporting research and innovation cooperation between EU members and countries outside the Union. However, as the mid-term review of FP7 reiterated, Europe's efforts towards the enhancement of international research and innovation cooperation need to be intensified and become more strategic.

In this context the Commission proposes a more strategic approach which aims at strengthening the Union's excellence and its economic and industrial competitiveness, tackling global challenges, and supporting the Union's external policies. This approach entails: openness of the Horizon 2020 programme to third countries; more targeted funding on the basis of specific priorities, the development of multiannual roadmaps and better use of international agreements; and the strengthening of partnerships with regions (e.g. North America, Mediterranean, East-Asia etc.). International cooperation is proposed to be used across all areas of Horizon 2020, through collaborative research and innovation projects and networks, as well as through joint initiatives with countries and regions outside the EU.

In the midst of the financial crisis, Europe's economy faces important challenges, which bring to the forefront the need to invest in knowledge and innovation wisely, taking into full account the global context and the opportunities this context offers for addressing challenges and strengthening competitiveness.

II. QUESTIONS FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

In the light of the overall context described above, the Presidency invites the Council ("Competitiveness – Research part") on 11 December 2012 to address the following questions:

- a) *Would you agree with the more strategic approach to international cooperation in Research and Innovation, building on the international cooperation strategies of the Member States and the European Union?*

 - b) *Would you agree with the proposed governance and implementation process of this strategic approach to international cooperation with the development of multi-annual roadmaps for cooperation with third countries and regions, fully utilizing the array of instruments available in Horizon 2020?*
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