



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

From : The Presidency
To : Delegations

Subject : Draft Council conclusions on the future of ICT research, innovation and infrastructures

Delegations will find attached the Draft Council conclusions on the future of ICT research, innovation and infrastructures.

DRAFT
**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE FUTURE OF ICT RESEARCH, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURES**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING:

- its conclusions of 30 May 2008 on the launch of the Ljubljana Process - Towards full realisation of the European Research Area (ERA)¹ aiming to establish an enhanced governance for the ERA based on a long-term vision on ERA developed in partnership with Member States and the Commission, with broad support from stakeholders and citizens;
- its conclusions of 2 December 2008 on the definition of a 2020 vision for the European Research Area² which is part of the first phase of the Ljubljana Process and serves as the basis for the development of future ERA governance;
- its conclusions of 29 May 2009³ on Research Infrastructures and the regional dimension of the ERA which called on the Commission to pursue sustainability, global connectivity, interoperability and unimpeded use of pan-European e-Infrastructures, and on the Member States to consider the role of e-Infrastructures in their national roadmaps and/or programmes for research infrastructures;

¹ Doc. 10231/08.

² Doc. 16767/08.

³ Doc. 10612/09.

- the conclusions of the European Council of 11 and 12 December 2008⁴ which agreed on the European Economic Recovery Plan and called for the launch of a European plan for innovation, combined with the development of the European Research Area (ERA) and reflections on the future of the Lisbon Strategy beyond 2010, encompassing all the conditions for sustainable development and the main technologies, including information technology;

EMPHASISING, in this context, the importance of ICT research, innovation and infrastructures:

1. WELCOMES the Commission's communications entitled "A Strategy for ICT R&D and Innovation in Europe: Raising the Game"⁵, "ICT Infrastructures for e-Science"⁶ and "Moving the ICT frontiers – a strategy for research on future and emerging technologies in Europe"⁷;
2. HIGHLIGHTS that ICT is one of the main drivers of economic growth and social change and, as such, plays a vital role in the economic recovery, enabling Europe to emerge from the current crisis faster and stronger than before;
3. EMPHASISES that ICT underpins innovation and productivity gains across the economy, brings unique responses to societal challenges, such as transition to an eco-efficient economy, and is necessary to progress in all major science and technology fields;
4. STRESSES that the digital revolution is still in its early stages and that a research and innovation capacity is essential to be able to shape, master and assimilate technologies and exploit them to economic and societal advantage;

⁴ Doc. 17271/1/08 REV1.

⁵ Doc. 7883/09.

⁶ Doc. 7432/09.

⁷ Doc. 9077/09.

5. NOTES that Europe has strong industrial and technology assets in ICT notably in telecommunication equipment and services, embedded ICT and business software and can build on its underpinning strengths including its scientific excellence, the exceptional standard of education of its graduates, high-quality infrastructures and the largest ICT market world wide;
6. RECOGNISES, however, that fragmented European markets, a fragmented ICT research and innovation landscape and under-investment in ICT research and innovation are major obstacles preventing Europe from taking full advantage of current and future ICT;

UNDERLINING the overall objective to establish Europe's leadership in ICT research, innovation and infrastructures:

7. STRESSES that Europe must identify and remove the barriers that hinder the emergence and growth of new business and markets for innovative ICT applications, must seek leadership in key ICT markets, technologies and sciences, and must improve the attractiveness of Europe to ICT investments and talents;
8. RECOGNISES the need for better integrated policies and actions bridging ICT innovation, skills development and research – from frontier to issue-oriented research;
9. STRESSES that better integration requires closer articulation between European, national and regional actions and implementation in variable configurations at different levels;
10. AGREES that a range of new opportunities exist for European leadership in ICT, that are driven by new scientific findings, by new technology development and by the innovative use of technology to address emerging challenges in areas such as the transition to an eco-efficient economy or sustainable health care for an ageing population;

11. SUPPORTS the important contributions of ICT to the public-private partnerships in the European Economic Recovery Plan on Green Cars, Factories of the Future and Energy Efficient Buildings;
12. In order to reinforce future and emerging technologies (FET) in ICT, RECOGNISES the strategic importance of high-risk, multidisciplinary research on new foundations for future ICT, to seed novel technologies and to open new research avenues that are essential for ensuring innovation and sustainable competitiveness of Europe;
13. RECOGNISES the critical role of e-Infrastructures in achieving scientific excellence, their potential for improving accessibility and their transformative impact on the way research is performed, as well as their role as innovation platforms and precursor markets for novel ICT, notably in computing;

CONSIDERING that a number of priority actions should be taken:

14. INVITES the Member States to:
 - amplify their support to ICT research and innovation in line with the increased commitments for ICT research in FP7, including through an extended use of public procurement of ICT research and innovations and a wider use of cohesion policy funds;
 - intensify their efforts in building research and innovation clusters in ICT through more coordinated investments in research infrastructures in critical areas such as Future Internet, high performance computing, advanced robotics, nano-electronics, photonics and embedded systems;

- pool their investments in high performance computing under PRACE⁸, in order to strengthen the position of European industry and academia both in the use and the supply of advanced computing products, services and technologies;

15. INVITES the Commission to:

- examine areas where public-private partnerships can accelerate innovation, create critical mass, and attract additional private and public investments, notably in the field of Future Internet, as well as to optimise the mechanisms to this effect;
- propose Europe-wide flagship initiatives in FET to tackle specific science and technology challenges at the crossover between ICT and other scientific disciplines;
- stimulate and support international research collaboration in FET, as it addresses global scientific challenges;
- prepare initiatives to empower research intensive SMEs and talented young researchers to step-up and take earlier leadership in FET;
- propose financial incentives for jointly developing and sharing research infrastructures between the Member States in ICT, in areas such as hexa-scale computing;
- explore how to extend the benefits of e-Infrastructures to industrial research and innovation and to public services.

⁸ PRACE (Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe) is an ESFRI project creating a persistent pan-European Research Infrastructure for High Performance Computing.

- explore governance models for e-Infrastructures that enable the provision of efficient, seamless and technologically leading public services.
- propose demand- and user-driven European-scale projects cutting across research, innovation and deployment to deliver ICT-based service infrastructures in response to societal challenges, including pan-European electronic identity management whilst ensuring appropriate data protection; and services in healthcare, energy efficiency, safe and clean transport;

16. INVITES the Member States and the Commission to:

- examine the need and the means to provide incentives for the wider use of pre-commercial procurement at local, regional national and European level to provide innovative solutions to the public sector, including for the deployment of e-Infrastructures and for the support to SMEs;
- better coordinate their efforts and share strategies in ICT fields that are essential for Europe, building on the experience in the ICT Joint Technology Initiatives, the Ambient Assisted Living coordinated programme and the GEANT high speed network;
- ensure that research infrastructure of major importance in Europe enjoy e-Infrastructure support both in terms of access to state of the art computing and data resources and in order to extend the benefits of their operation across Europe;
- continue to lift the specific obstacles that hinder the development of innovation-friendly markets;

- regularly consult standardisation and research stakeholders, in particular European Technology Platforms, to ensure that relevant European ICT R&D initiatives contribute most effectively to ICT standardisation activities, as well as encourage standardisation bodies to adapt their procedures, where necessary, in order to facilitate the timely production of ICT standards;
- [seek further incentives for the more rapid emergence of innovation-friendly markets, including an extended use of public procurement of innovation, support to pilot projects, and involvement of users at all stages of the innovation cycle;
- promote and facilitate closer cross-portfolio interaction between users, suppliers and investors, for instance through 'innovation platforms' for public service innovation, support to experience sharing between public procurers, networking of investors and SMEs;
- encourage business, academia and public authorities at all levels to help implement ICT projects across the innovation cycle]⁹;
- undertake initiatives, through the European partnership for researchers established on 26 September 2008¹⁰, to overcome the shortage of skilled researchers and to attract the world's best researchers to participate in ICT research, in particular FET, including through collaboration with global research leaders.

⁹ These paragraphs might be elaborated in light of the expected Communication on Innovation.
¹⁰ Council conclusions on better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers, doc. 13671/08.