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*(Information)***COUNCIL****COUNCIL RESOLUTION****of 15 June 2000****on establishing a European area of research and innovation**

(2000/C 205/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

EMPHASISES the significant role played by research and development in generating economic growth, employment and social cohesion,

RECALLS the objectives set out in the Commission's communication 'Towards a European Research Area' and the implementation measures outlined in 'First Steps Towards a European Research Area',

TAKING ACCOUNT OF the contributions to the debate resulting from the Research Ministerial meeting 'European Science beyond 2000', held in Lisbon on 6 and 7 March 2000, with the presence of eminent European scientists and the heads of major European research organisations, the discussions held at the Ministerial conference on the Knowledge and Information Society held in Lisbon on 10 and 11 April 2000, and the discussions at the Ministerial conference on 'Knowledge and Innovation for the Competitiveness of Europe' held at Noordwijk on 10 March 2000,

NOTING the resolution of the European Parliament of 18 May 2000, the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee of 24 May 2000, and the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 12 and 13 April 2000,

RECOGNISES the importance of a rapid implementation of the Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 24 and 25 March 2000,

TO CARRY FORWARD THESE CONCLUSIONS, THE COUNCIL:

1. ENCOURAGES the networking of national and joint research programmes on a voluntary basis, around freely chosen objectives, in order to take greater advantage of the concerted resources devoted to research and technological development in the Member States. To this end:

- (a) Member States will cooperate, in association with the Commission, in devising a simple means for improved information exchange, wherever possible using existing mechanisms, on research activities of strategic importance at European level;

- (b) Member States will bring forward work already underway with a view to developing mechanisms for opening progressively their national research programmes, including where appropriate the participation of non-national experts in evaluation panels.

THE COUNCIL INVITES the Commission to seek information and advice from all relevant national and European research actors and to report to it on this matter by June 2001.

2. WELCOMES the initial work undertaken by the Commission with a view to developing an open method of coordination for benchmarking national research policies in relation to following themes for identifying indicators aiming to assess the development of European research policies in relation to the development of research in the rest of the world:

- (a) human resources in RTD, including attractiveness of science and technology professions;

- (b) public and private investment in RTD;

- (c) scientific and technological productivity;

- (d) impact of RTD on economic competitiveness and employment.

The following areas could also be taken into consideration: promotion of RTD culture and public understanding of science, and overall convergence and balances in RTD within the European Union.

CALLS on the Commission, in collaboration with the Member States, to complete its work by presenting a full set of indicators and a methodology for benchmarking by October 2000.

3. NOTES the Commission's intention to establish an independent advisory body for research policy in order to strengthen the links between the research community, including industrial research organisations, national and European RTD organisations, and to reinforce the effectiveness of European RTD policies and keep the Council regularly informed, in particular on the role and constitution of this body.
4. INVITES the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States and in the context of the *e*-Europe action plan, and building on the progress already achieved in the Geant programme in creating a 2,5 gigabit/s network by the end of 2001, to present costed initiatives for setting up a very high-speed trans-European research network, progressively attaining speeds of the order of 100 gigabits/s, with the support of the European Investment Bank.
5. INVITES the Member States and the Commission to cooperate in order to identify and take action with a view to removing present obstacles to the mobility of researchers to facilitate the creation of a genuine European scientific community. To this end, the Council WELCOMES the Commission's intention to establish a working group of national experts in order to help prepare an analysis and first initiatives by June 2001.
6. INVITES the Commission to enhance the synergy and multi-lateral cooperation offered by existing mechanisms such as COST and Eureka; REQUESTS the Commission to examine the management and funding of COST in order to respond to the developing needs and activities of this organisation.
7. INVITES the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States and taking into account national research plans and policies, to present to the Council, before the end of 2000, objectives and a methodology, including indicators and peer review, with a view to mapping excellence in all Member States by the end of 2001.
8. INVITES the Commission and the Member States to take the necessary steps, in particular working closely with the European Investment Bank, to support the development of a globally competitive economy based upon a thriving SME and start-up sector through the exchange of best practices on technology transfer and innovation measures in respect of, *inter alia*, venture capital funds, incubators, promotion of high-tech start-ups.
- THE COUNCIL INVITES the Commission to report on this matter by the end of 2000.
9. WELCOMES the Commission's intention to bring forward proposals with a view to making available a Community patent by the end of 2001, as foreseen by the Lisbon Summit of March 2000.
10. INVITES Member States and the Commission:
- to take the necessary steps towards increasing the participation of women in science by accelerating the implementation of the action plan 'Women in Science',
 - to increase the attractiveness of science to young people and encourage their participation in RTD activities,
 - to promote closer cooperation between research institutions, schools and science centres at European level, to reinforce the scientific culture of European citizens and to increase the attractiveness of scientific and technological professions, by pursuing initiatives in setting up a framework for exchanges and joint action and by bringing the national and European 'Science Weeks' closer together,
 - to involve from the outset the candidate countries, the EEA states and the associated countries in the European area of research and innovation, and also to take the appropriate action to make it attractive to other non-Member States
11. WELCOMES the Commission's intention to develop, in the Guidelines document to be available in early autumn 2000, the possible contribution and preparation of future research actions of the Union (including the Framework Programmes) to the European Research Area, to allow Member States, the European Parliament and the Council to debate the subject during the second half of 2000.

12. WELCOMES also the Commission's intention to present further contributions on other themes identified in its Communication on the European Research Area such as:

- scientific reference for policy decisions,
- infrastructure for research,
- the regional dimension of research policy in Europe,
- opening the European Research Area to the rest of the world,

— the social and ethical aspects of research in Europe,

— the mobility of researchers.

13. CONSIDERS it necessary to review regularly European Science and Technology policies and assess progress made towards achieving a European Research Area. To this end, INVITES the Commission to present, after wide consultation, to the European Parliament and to the Council a regular report on the state of RTD in Europe to be forwarded annually to the Spring European Council as its contribution to the overall review of the progress achieved.
