

EU Economic Recovery plan: Commission and Industry agree on swift implementation of public private partnerships in Research and Innovation

On the eve of the G20, where the different plans for economic recovery will be discussed, EU Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potočnik, today agreed with high-level representatives of the automotive, construction and manufacturing sectors that smart investments in clean technologies should be made within a public private partnership framework. They recognized the importance of coordination of such investments at EU level.

Together, they have issued a Joint Statement to affirm their agreement to move ahead in the implementation of the research Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for the "Factories of the Future", "Energy-efficient Buildings" and "Green Cars" initiatives included in the European Economic Recovery Plan adopted in November 2008.

EU Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik, said: "*Making smart investments in research and innovation now is the recipe for tomorrow's success. The EU's sustainable growth and its leadership position on the global scene are at stake. By moving together in the same direction, we can make it. It is no time for a break in research investments!*"

The first steps for these partnerships will be the publication of joint cross-thematic calls for research projects by the end of July, funded by the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development of the European Commission.

To read the Joint Statement: see annex or visit the website (which contains also the press package on the Recovery Plan in research activities):

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=newsalert&lg=en&year=2009&na=ppp-310309>

Joint Statement

Commissioner Potočník, Commissioner for Science and Research, and high-level representatives of industry met in Brussels on 30th March 2009 to review progress and discuss priorities for the implementation of the research elements of the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for the "Factories of the Future", "Energy-efficient Buildings" and "Green Cars" initiatives included in the European Economic Recovery Plan adopted in November 2008 and have agreed upon the following joint statement:

"We believe that it is important to combine the short-term economic and fiscal measures in the Recovery Plan with longer-term "smart investments" in research and development to lay down a strong base for the future competitiveness of European industry, once we have passed through the current crisis. We need strong cooperation between stakeholders and a coordinated approach at European level to develop the sustainable technologies that will allow Europe to move forward towards a low-carbon, knowledge-based economy.

The three PPPs represent a powerful means of boosting research efforts in three large industrial sectors - automotive, construction and manufacturing -, which have been particularly affected by the economic downturn and where innovation can significantly contribute towards a more green and sustainable economy.

The Commission and the industrial partners undertake to work intensively together to develop the implementation plans for the three partnerships:

- 1) "Factories of the Future" initiative for manufacturing sector (€1.2 billion for R&D);
- 2) "Energy-efficient Buildings" initiative for the construction sector (€1 billion for R&D); and
- 3) "Green Cars" initiative for the automotive sector worth a total of €5 billion, of which €1 billion is for research activities.

The Commission foresees to provide a contribution of 50% to the total R&D budget from the budget of the 7th Framework Programme, with matching investment coming from the private sector.

In the PPP approach, we see the following advantages: (i) a leading role for industry in the definition of the strategic priorities and the implementation of the research; (ii) a multi-annual integrated work programme with a pre-defined budget, ensuring continuity and allowing industry to make long-term investment plans, (iii) a cross-thematic approach going from basic and applied research through to validation and large-scale demonstration, with an increased emphasis on impact and exploitation; and (iv) increased opportunities to support innovation in SMEs.

We are pleased that the first steps have already been taken to implement the new PPPs through the creation of ad-hoc industrial advisory groups facilitating the strategic dialogue between the Commission and the industry, which is setting up dedicated industrial research associations as the private part of the future partnership. To allow research on priority topics to start-up rapidly, first Calls for research projects will be published in July with deadlines at the turn of the year, which could allow the first projects under the PPPs to start in spring of 2010.

The experience gained with the first actions will be used to develop the longer-term strategy; in parallel the partners will explore other instruments to strengthen the public-private partnership. Industry hopes that these PPPs may lead to the creation of streamlined and lean Joint Technology Initiatives.

Support to research will be complemented by demand side activities, such as standardisation and public procurement, in an integrated approach and building on existing lead market initiatives.

European Commission

Janez Potočnik Commissioner for Science and Research

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¹ Manufuture= Future Manufacturing Technologies, ECTP = European Construction Technology Platform, ERTRAC = European Road Transport Research Advisory Council, EPoSS = European Technology Platform on Smart Systems Integration