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Member of the European Commission

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EVD(06) 950

Dear Ministers,

During the Competitiveness Council of 25-26 November 2004, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) was called upon to develop a strategic Roadmap for Europe in the field of Research Infrastructures.

After almost two years of intensive work, ESFRI has now presented us with Europe's first ever Roadmap for pan-European Research Infrastructures. You will have received ESFRI's Report and I trust you share my view that this has been a remarkable achievement.

Our next major challenge is to ensure that the 35 pan-European large scale Research Infrastructures proposed by ESFRI are brought to reality. The roadmap gives us good reasons to join forces and agree on concrete plans for capacity building in Europe thus contributing to the further development of the European Research Area (ERA).

As far as the Commission is concerned, we look forward to fulfilling our commitment to support the projects on the Roadmap in particular during their preparatory phase. We will also explore possible means of support for the actual construction of the 35 projects, for instance through our cooperation with the European Investment Bank within the framework of the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) under the Seventh Framework programme. Of equal importance could be some of the other sources of Community funding such as the Structural Funds.

However, the best part of the financing for these projects will be dependant on the Member States. Therefore, both for the use of Structural Funds and for the earmarking of other national funds by your governments, your continued commitment to these projects will be vital.

I believe that it would be very useful for us to exchange views on this subject and I hope that we will have the opportunity to do so during a forthcoming Competitiveness Council.

Yours sincerely,

