

 Content archived on 2023-03-07

Prioritise investments to safeguard growth and jobs, ministers say

The EU must prioritise investment in education, training, research (fundamental and applied), development and innovation as well as key technologies if it is to safeguard its sources of future growth and jobs, according to EU research and industry ministers. The recommendation...



The EU must prioritise investment in education, training, research (fundamental and applied), development and innovation as well as key technologies if it is to safeguard its sources of future growth and jobs, according to EU research and industry ministers. The recommendation is one of many contained in the conclusions on the 'Innovation Union'

initiative issued by participants at the latest Competitiveness Council, which took place in Brussels, Belgium on 25 and 26 November. The Innovation Union is one of a number of flagship initiatives launched under the banner of the Europe 2020 strategy.

In their conclusions, the ministers stress : 'Scientific excellence and basic and applied research, supported by world-class infrastructures, life-long learning, training and higher education, in particular in science and engineering, as well as incentives for commercialisation of results, are preconditions for an efficient innovation system.'

In another 'key message', the ministers call on both the EU and Member States to take a 'strategic and integrated approach to innovation', by aligning policies designed to contribute to innovation. In a similar vein, the ministers underline the importance of strengthening the 'knowledge triangle' and facilitating commercialisation and knowledge transfer.

At the EU level, the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (RTD), the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the Structural Funds should all 'focus more on the priorities of the Europe

2020 strategy'. Access to these funds should also be 'radically simplified' ministers underline. According to the ministers, ensuring access to finance for innovation activities, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) should be a 'top priority for action'.

Ministers welcome the idea of the European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs), emphasising that these structures should 'provide genuine European added value, address societal challenges, avoid duplications, and be based on flexible, simple and transparent governance associating Member States and relevant stakeholders'. The ministers go on to invite the European Commission to carry on developing the practical aspects of the EIPs, notably with regard to funding, selection criteria, governance, and legal issues.

The Commission, Member States and other stakeholders are invited by the ministers to launch a pilot EIP on active and healthy ageing in early 2011. In fact, the European Commission launched a consultation on this very subject on 26 November.

The ministers' conclusions on the Innovation Union end with a roadmap for actions. Among other things, the European Commission will present a communication on standardisation, an eco-innovation plan, a consultation on measures needed to achieve the European Research Area (ERA), and proposals on what is needed to achieve a genuine European Venture Capital Market.

Finally, ministers invite the European Commission to start work on the development of an innovation indicator. The indicator, which should be ready by 2012, would help monitor overall progress on innovation performance in all dimensions.

Furthermore, Commission, Member States and others are invited to launch an annual 'innovation convention' in the second half of 2011 and run awareness raising campaigns at the European, national, regional and local levels in order to 'stimulate and innovation mindset'.

For their part, Member States are invited to develop strategies to meet their national research and development (R&D) targets and improve the use of the Structural Funds for research and innovation.

Elsewhere at the meeting, ministers discussed the issue of a European patent. In a statement, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Michel Barnier said:

'As everyone knows, there is no unanimity in Council on the language regime for the European patent. Several Member States have today indicated their support to move towards enhanced cooperation. As soon as the Commission receives a formal request, we will be ready to take action quickly and seriously.'

'We need a European patent. The current system for the patent is too expensive; it costs 10 times more than in the United States. It impedes growth. And it is small and medium sized businesses - genuine sources of dynamism for the future - which are suffering most from it. We thus need to move forward quickly on this issue. The December Competitiveness Council will be the opportunity for this.'

Countries

Belgium

Related articles



POLICY MAKING AND GUIDELINES

Ministers move forward on EU patent

13 December 2010

Last update: 29 November 2010

Permalink: <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/32810-prioritise-investments-to-safeguard-growth-and-jobs-ministers-say>.

European Union, 2025