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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The European Council in Lisbon in 2000 set the strategic goal of transforming the European Union by 2010 into the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Nowadays, Science and Technology are assuming a strategic function on the effort for economical, social and cultural development of a country. Today it's impossible to think on sustainable development without a strong progress of Science and Technology. This development of Science and Technology is not possible in any country without public and private investment, especially in the areas of Research and Development (R&D) which need stronger investments to grow execution rates and results.

Worried about the EU's low overall R&D spending, the EU leaders decided in the Barcelona Council meeting to add another target to the list of Lisbon indicators: annual spending on R&D should reach 3% of GDP by 2010.

Although EU R&D spending is on a modestly rising trend, it remains well short of the 3% target. In 2002 the medium expenditure in R&D at the European Union was 1.99% of the GDP. However, if we compare the values with countries like the United States (2.67 % in 2002) and Japan (3.06 % in 2002) we see that there was still a significant gap of values.

Scientific achievement is not evenly distributed throughout the EU. Sweden (4.3% of GDP in 2002) and Finland (3.5% in 2002) are matching or even outperforming the US. This stands in stark contrast to Italy, where R&D spending is

low and falling (to just 1.07% in 2000, the last year for which it supplied data), Greece and Portugal.

Each Member State should rethink their R&D efforts in order to reach the 3% goal, preferably in a European context in order to take advantage of cross european experiences. This means that each Member State should implement new and more intensive measures like:

Fighting the delay:

- making an effort to qualify human resources;
- enlarging programmes of advanced scientific training and investments associated to R&D in growth proportion to the human resources;

To improve the quality and strength internationalisation:

- deepening the attention given to quality in scientific production internationally recognised;
- diversifying partnerships;
- strengthening the scientific and technological cooperation;
- participating in programmes of scientific and technological international organizations;
- bringing the research programmes in cooperation;
- promoting research exchanges and mobility of reseacher and scientific talents; creating a common platform and a network;

Reinforcing the scientific institutions:

- creating conditions of autonomy, stability and sustainable growth, in a framework of severe international evaluation;
- stimulating the growth of the capacity of employment generation at the scientific area;

Reinforcing the technological capacity and entrepreneur innovation:

- supporting R&D in public private partnerships;
- acknowledgement of the results of scientific research;

- stimulating the transfer of knowledge and technological competences;
- promoting programmes of advanced training which reply to entrepreneur's necessities.

YEPP stresses that a renewed sense of urgency is needed to achieve the goals laid out in the Lisbon Strategy. Spending money to fulfill the Lisbon Agenda must increase the EU's GDP and its level of Research and Development.

Prepared by JSD (Portugal)