European Research Infrastructure Consortium ERIC: legal framework

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The Council held an **exchange of views** on European research infrastructures on the basis of a questionnaire put forward by the Presidency in order to structure the debate.

The exchange of views provided with a valuable input to carry out further examination of the matter on which the Council will be invited to adopt conclusions at its forthcoming session on 28-29 May 2009.

Throughout the debate, delegations highlighted key features that pan-European research infrastructures could bring about, such as:

- the strengthening of links between universities, businesses and public administrations (the knowledge triangle), thus contributing to the competitiveness of Europe;
- the role that research infrastructures can play in contributing to the economic recovery in the context of the European recovery plan;
- the ways for achieving an optimal distribution of research infrastructures throughout the ERA, which would have to comply with criteria of scientific and technological excellence, as well as facilitate mobility of researchers across Europe and take advance of the best cost-efficient modalities.

Before the debate, ministers took note of an update on the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) roadmap. This roadmap is a list of priority infrastructures identified by the Forum, notably on the basis of a consensus on the scientific needs in Europe in the various research sectors. The list is not binding to the member states or other parties to undertake the construction of such infrastructures. These require separate decisions by those countries committed to participate in the projects concerned.