European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT): strategic innovation agenda 2014-2020

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The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Marisa MATIAS (GUE/NGL, PT) on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT): the contribution of the EIT to a more innovative Europe.

The Committee on Culture and Education, exercising the prerogatives of the associated committee, was also consulted for an opinion on this report pursuant to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure.

The parliamentary committee responsible recommends that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

Objectives of the Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA): Members consider that the SIA should outline the EIT's priorities **for the period 2014-2020**, as well as its operating procedures. It should therefore be **a key tool to steer the strategic direction of the EIT, while leaving it with considerable autonomy** in defining the ways and means to achieve the set goals. Among other things, the SIA should:

- facilitate the coordination of policies and coherence among their different instruments and create synergies with regard to innovation policy by adopting a truly holistic approach focused on the major societal challenges, making EIT act as an **"innovation catalyst", building itself as an internationally recognised and acclaimed world-class innovation institution**;
- be an EIT key tool for **innovation policy, for job creation and sustainable development**, for promoting the widening of participation to spread excellence across Europe;
- play a key role in providing answers in times of crisis, as it is essential to **attract young people to the new types of jobs** and to ensure that new and existing educational programmes promote access to the labour market for young people.

Headquarters of the EIT: the EIT headquarters shall be located in **Budapest**, Hungary. It is recalled that the agreement between the EIT and the Hungarian Government was signed in 2010. According to this agreement, part of the administrative expenditure is covered by the host country Hungary through provision of free of charge office space until the end of 2030, as well as an annual contribution of 1.5 million euro to the staff cost until the end of 2015.

The EIT, European institute and global reference: the EIT should contribute to the creation of a "science base of excellence":

- by fostering **mobility** across boundaries – between disciplines, sectors and countries;
- by adopting new principles and practices based, in particular, on **open and inclusive research**;
- by ensuring that research efforts are targeted, as a priority and effectively, at **issues of major public interest**; and
- by embedding **entrepreneurship** and a risk-taking culture in innovative post-graduate degrees.

The EIT and the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) should function as models for the **implementation of the knowledge triangle in the EU**. In this perspective, Members stipulate that the EIT should, among other things:

- have as its strategic goal to become more than the sum of its parts, therefore **cross-KIC coordination and cooperation** should be exercised by the EIT in order to ensure the creation of synergies;
- act as a **catalyst** with flexibility to test out new innovation models, nurturing talent across borders and creating an internationally recognized **brand of excellence**;
- consolidate and further increase its **role as an 'investor'** that develops and enables existing centres of excellence at all levels in research, business and higher education in Europe;
- encourage the creation of sustainable innovative **start-ups** and spinoffs;
- boost **technology transfer and commercialisation** and develop new ventures within existing business or creating new innovative businesses.

Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs): in the context of Horizon 2020, the EIT will develop the KIC concept further to support the development of European innovation culture in all Member States. **The first wave of KICs will be launched in 2014**. The EIT will select, in this first wave, up to four initial KICs out of five selected themes, respecting the following order of priorities:

1. Raw materials and bio-based economy - sustainable exploration, extraction, processing, recycling, material development and substitution;

2. Innovation for healthy living and active ageing;

3. Urban mobility, smart and sustainable development;

4. Food4future - sustainable supply chain from resources to consumers; and

5. Added-value manufacturing.

A second wave of KICs would follow in 2018. For this second wave, the themes suggested above that were not considered for the first wave will have priority. Nevertheless, Members consider that **certain indicative thematic areas** can be considered, such as: (i) smart secure societies; (ii) Marine - Sustainable use of the seas; (iii) Water, Woods and forests; (iv) Biomimetism; (v) Sustainable construction and zero-energy buildings; (vi) Health innovation; and (vii) people empowerment.

Programmes and activities in the field of education: as the only instrument in the framework of Horizon 2020 that lays a strong emphasis on education, the EIT should emerge as a **world-class provider of post-graduate education** by implementing different level training programmes for a new generation of world-class students – Master programmes, PhD programmes, summer schools, and specific training programmes.

KICs could develop **coaching programmes for young Europeans** by means of internships, school visits, grants for top high-school students and university students in Science, technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

Furthermore, the EIT should put in place a specific people scheme - **Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)** - to ensure that talent, such as students, researchers, teaching staff and entrepreneurs at all career levels, beyond the KICs and its co-location centres, will be connected to the EIT.

Cooperation within the Union and at international level: Members want the EIT to work in a co-operative and **complementary** basis – and not in competition – with the research and education institutions of all Member States, namely associations of universities, business, clusters and research organisations.

In addition, in close cooperation with the KICs, the EIT should develop a **strong international strategy**, identifying and liaising with relevant interlocutors and potential partners from within and outside the Union.

Allocation of resources: the EIT's budget for the 2014-2020 period will amount to EUR 3.1 billion (an amount unchanged from the Commission's proposal) and should be based on three main components: the necessary expenditure for consolidation of the existing three KICs, gradual development towards new KICs in 2014 and 2018 respectively, dissemination and outreach activities and administrative expenditure.

In its proposal, the Commission envisages allocating 4.4% of the EIT's budget to dissemination and outreach activities and not more than 2.4% to administrative expenditure. Members consider that **the budget allocated to the EIT's main activities would not be sufficient** if too great a proportion of the EIT's budget is devoted to dissemination and outreach activities and to administrative expenditure.