Prospects for European research and technology in the 21st century

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The Committee welcomes the Commission Communication, and the accompanying working document containing various remarks on the forthcoming 5th RTD framework programme. It regards this draft opinion as paving the way for the forthcoming opinion on the 5th framework programme, and accordingly, it attempts to do more than just respond to the contents of the above documents. The Committee therefore recommends: - a major search for innovative proposals capable of mustering the support and political will of all those involved in research around medium- long-term strategic objectives; - a new philosophy rooted in an integrated system which prevents scattering of limited resources by creating synergies between European research, Community research and major RTD projects where Member States consider joint action important; - going beyond cosmetic changes in the Community framework programme, which leaves its basic shape, management procedures, decision-making procedures and arrangements unchanged; - full implementation of Title XV of the Treaty on European Union, with particular regard to Articles 130k, 130l and 130n as an integral part of the framework programme; - a thorough overhaul of European research as regards framing strategic scenarios, identifying priorities, new structures, greater flexibility, improved access, clearer assignment of responsibilities and assessment of results, with improved management, simplified procedures and more efficient back- up arrangements; - the development of a financial/tax environment conducive to intangible investment in research and training; and calls for, inter alia: - the immediate implementation of a European technology and industrial assessment mechanism, and basic figures (Tableau de Bord);