Biotechnology and the White paper on growth, competitiveness and employment: preparing the new stage

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Following on from the recommendations in the White Paper entitled "Growth, competitiveness, employment", the Commission communication identifies a number of measures to stimulate the competitiveness of European biotechnology industries, while at the same time undertaking to guarantee maximum safety standards for man and the environment. The Commission is counting on the other institutions, the Member States and interest groups to throw their weight behind these measures. The Commission has therefore decided to: - improve the existing legislative framework by continuing to adapt it to technical progress while maintaining the present basic structure; - continue to work for the fast adoption of regulations to protect intellectual property and legislation on specific products and make provision for an evaluation of the environmental risks; - re-examine the regulatory framework governing biotechnology as and when new scientific knowledge and new regulations in the main countries competing with Europe on the international market so require; - strengthen the scientific opinions at its disposal; - promote the fast adoption of specific R&D programmes in this sector; - facilitate the development of small biotechnology enterprises; - make information on biotechnologies more accessible to the public; - clarify the ethical aspects of biotechnologies with the help of a group of independent experts; - organize round tables in order to stimulate an in-depth debate on the subject.