The first action plan for innovation in Europe

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In adopting the report by Mr Christian ROVSING (PPE, DK), Parliament welcomed the First Action Plan for Innovation in Europe as an initial basis for the discussion launched in the Green Paper on Innovation. It believed that innovation should be understood in the widest sense of the term and recalled that education and the enhancement of skills through vocational training and retraining were essential prerequisites for all investment in innovation. It emphasized that there was no standard model for innovation and recommended that measures be taken to ensure that new organizations or individuals involved in innovation were given maximum assistance, perhaps through tax incentives. It underlined the importance of proper financing after the initial creation process in new businesses and recognized the important role played by both the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund in creating employment. Parliament called on the Commission to: - give its action an order of priority; - make specific proposals on the financing of innovation, taking account of the non-homogeneous nature of SMUs, which required a flexible approach; - lay down rules on standards, trade marks and patents so that European products and services were compatible and interoperable; - define how the Community instruments (Framework Programme for Research and Development, regional and structural funds) could be used to improve the innovation capacity of the EU; - encourage research to be more innovative; - encourage pilot projects aimed at the internationalization of SMUs. It called on the Member States to: - continue reviewing courses and teaching methods; - improve links between the world of research and industry; - enhance the mobility of people between university and industry; - consider the use of tax incentives for innovative projects; - provide direct support for SMUs by strengthening their infrastructure for such businesses and to recognize that SMUs were essential in controlling the development of technology.