Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: more research and innovation, investing for growth and employment

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Pilar del **CASTILLO VERA** (EPP-ED, ES) on the Commission Communication entitled "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: More Research and Innovation - Investing for growth and employment: A common approach". It pointed out that Europe lags behind the United States and Japan in terms of growth, research and productivity, failing to capitalise on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) application or to attract R&D investment into Europe. Accordingly, Parliament urged Member States to promote entrepreneurship from the early stages of education onwards and to strengthen their support for life-long learning by encouraging ICT training amongst both employed and unemployed persons. It noted the Union's delays in implementing the Lisbon Strategy in the area of education and training, and appealed to Member States to take it on themselves to relaunch the Lisbon Strategy.

Parliament recommended several courses of action and, inter alia, stressed the need to do the following:

-to raise the profile of scientific career paths and to promote existing incentives and awards such as the Descartes, Aristotle and young scientist's awards;

-to provide greater support for the best European researchers, especially early-stage researchers, in the form of more attractive working conditions, the reduction of legal, administrative and geographical barriers and the equal treatment of European researchers with their foreign counterparts;

- to combat effectively the EU’s brain drain and to put in place all appropriate measures to attract excellence to its territory, among other things by promoting exchange programmes with third countries – Erasmus Mundus, for example – aimed at students, researchers, and teachers;

-to institute and promote European prizes for innovation;

-to promote the integration of products, processes and knowledge-based services and the introduction of different support systems into non-technological sectors;

-to support SMEs with regard to their research capacity; SMEs should also be provided with a framework of structural assistance to upgrade their knowledge management and technological resources, enabling them to play an active role in a demand-led innovation market and become involved in technological research and development;

-to support researchers in accessing pre-seed financing which would enable them to fund activities aimed at proving to investors that a new technology has a certain level of commercial and technical viability;

-to implement a tax credit system to encourage the service sector to take an interest in research findings and their implementation;

-to introduce a "single fund structure" to avoid the double taxation of investors located in one Member State investing through a fund in another;

Parliament noted that the objective of investing 3% of EU GDP in research by 2010 would probably not be achieved. It stressed that improved research and innovation policies must contribute to new employment opportunities through sustainable development, with a focus on eco-innovation and sustainable production (e.g. solar-hydrogen technologies, wind energy, fuel cells, biomass, plant based chemical industry), eco-efficient services (energy conservation, mobility services, re-use and recycling) and sustainable engineering and management methods (e.g. bionics, Integrated Product Policy);

Finally, Parliament noted the need for a Community patent and trademark, and for improved reciprocity between the European, United States' and Japanese patent systems. An integrated Community patent system based on democratic legal standards must be part of an innovation strategy, in which it is essential to ensure a balance between protection of industrial property, dissemination of technical knowledge and free and unrestricted competition. It underlined that the purpose of the protection provided by a patent is the safeguarding of an invention and not the controlling of market sectors. The Council was asked to end the stalemate over the proposed Community patent as far as the language regime is concerned.