



Final

RESOLUTION OF THE 15th EUREKA INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE
The Hague, 26 and 27 May

Conference theme: Commitment to the European knowledge economy,
the role and position of EUREKA

1. Introduction

At the invitation of the Parliament of the Netherlands, members of the Parliaments of the EUREKA member countries met in The Hague on 26 and 27 May 2005 for the 15th session of the EUREKA Inter-Parliamentary Conference with the theme 'Commitment to the European knowledge economy, the role and position of EUREKA'

The meeting was opened by Frans Weisglas MP, President of the House of Representatives, and Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, the Minister of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands. It was chaired by Pieter Hofstra MP, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs of the House of Representatives and co-chaired by Kris Douma MP. Janez Potocnik, European Commissioner for Research, and Philippe Varin, CEO of the CORUS Group, were the keynote speakers.

2. Conference theme: Commitment to the European knowledge economy, the role and position of EUREKA.

Since 1985 the EUREKA Initiative has stimulated market-oriented research and development to strengthen the competitiveness of European industry - a role complementary to that of the Framework Programmes of the European Union. EUREKA member countries share the general consensus in Europe about the urgent need to create a competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy as laid out in the Lisbon process and believe strongly that EUREKA must continue to play an important role in achieving these objectives.

In Lisbon in 2000, European leaders set the goal for Europe to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world in 2010. The Mid-term Review of the Lisbon process on the basis of the report by Wim Kok, former Prime Minister of The Netherlands, in November 2004 showed that over the past five years, progress and coordination of the Lisbon process have not been sufficient to meet this ambitious target.

The general consensus however, is that Europe needs to continue to work on the Lisbon objectives, focusing on growth and jobs in large and medium-sized

companies. Creating an innovative, knowledge-intensive economy plays an important role in reaching these goals.

In order to create such a knowledge-intensive and innovative society, public and private investment in R&D should be increased and improved. Investment in new technologies is essential for economic growth. For this reason, EU Member States set the strategic Barcelona goal of investing 3% of their GDP in research and development, of which two-thirds should come from the private sector.

The targets set at EU level illustrate the importance that governments of Member States place on working towards a knowledge society and a competitive economy. However, resources are limited and the European level of R&D investments is low compared with its competitors. A real sense of urgency should be reflected by the efforts to improve investments in R&D. In order to achieve the above-mentioned goals, we should strive for more coherence in national research policies and instruments, and stress the importance of commitment and ownership at EUREKA member-country level.

In addition to working on the national level, EUREKA member countries should collaborate closely with the EU at the European level. All legal and financial tools must be used to create a genuine European added value. EUREKA provides a unique form of co-operation because it coordinates national policies and funding. In a changing environment, EUREKA, through its positive effect on private investment in R&D, can play a significant role in establishing the knowledge economy of the future. The EU Framework Programme on the one hand, and EUREKA on the other, together provide the essential financial impetus and the necessary structures in order to achieve a true European knowledge economy that is strong in innovation.

The focus of the conference was on how to create more commitment among EU institutions and EUREKA member countries to mechanisms that could create a stronger leverage effect from our investment in knowledge and innovation, and on how to create more synergy between the different European programmes, also by exploring the possibility of strengthening their international dimension beyond the current borders of Europe.

3. References

Recalling

- the resolution of the EUREKA Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Copenhagen in June 2003 that looked into ways of providing stronger support for innovation in Europe at a political level, bringing together local, regional, national and European policies;
- the conclusions of the EUREKA Ministerial Conference in Paris in June 2004 that focussed on exploring concrete financing mechanisms for creating coherence between EUREKA and the EU Framework Programme, especially in the field of SMEs and European Technology Platforms;
- the conclusions of the Informal Competitiveness Council in Maastricht in July 2004 that stressed the importance of stimulating innovative and research-intensive entrepreneurship and strong public-private partnerships at the European level, taking into account the merits and positive experiences of EUREKA;

- the conclusions of the meetings of European Ministers responsible for industry of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership held in Malaga (2002) and Caserta (2004), that invited the Ministers present and the European Commission to exploit the synergies with EUREKA and to help Euro-Mediterranean industry to face the increasing international competition through cooperation in innovation and technology transfer.
- the conclusions of the Spring Council of 22 and 23 March that, on the basis of the Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon process by Mr Kok, acknowledged the importance of the knowledge economy for European competitiveness and the necessary political commitment for all policies focussing on knowledge for growth and employment;
- the letter dated 17 September 2004, addressed to Mr Kok as President of the High-level Group on the Mid-term Review of the Lisbon strategy, by the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, as the Chair Minister responsible for EUREKA, pointing out the important role EUREKA can play in creating a European knowledge economy and reaching the Lisbon targets;
- the conclusions of the Competitiveness Council on the Communication '*Science and technology, the key to Europe's future - Guidelines for future European Union policy to support research*' (COM(2004)03053) that underlined the importance of coherence and synergy between European programmes;
- the Report of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy of the European Parliament of February 28 2005 (A6-0046/2005), of which Mrs Pia Elda Locatelli was the Rapporteur, which supported these Council conclusions;
- the Commission's Communication on FP7 '*Building the Europe of Knowledge*' of April 6 (2005 COM (2005)119);
- the commitment to the development of an Article 169 SME initiative for research-performing SMEs supported by 27 EUREKA member countries during the informal HLG meeting in Schiphol, Amsterdam on 25 January 2005;
- the supportive letter, dated 11 February 2005, addressed to the Member of the European Commission Janez Potočnik, relating to the initiative for an Article 169-based action in favour of 'research performing SMEs', by the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, as the Chair Minister responsible for EUREKA, and the reaction of Mr Potočnik on 8 March 2005;

4. Recommendations

The Conference

1. Shares the concerns expressed in the conclusions of the Spring Council of 22 and 23 March, on the basis of the Mid-term Review of the Lisbon process by Mr Kok, about the fulfilment of the Lisbon and Barcelona goals. The targets set out are not a goal in themselves, however they underline the fact that significant action has to be taken to increase the competitiveness of Europe.
2. Believes that EUREKA can make an important contribution to achieving these European objectives. The 3% goal in particular will require a substantial commitment from the private sector. The EUREKA Initiative enjoys a high level of involvement by the private sector, from small and medium-sized enterprises as well as large industrial companies in the EUREKA Clusters. The public funds invested by the national governments through EUREKA attract a multiple amount of

private funding. EUREKA therefore is potentially extremely powerful in helping to realise the Barcelona objective.

3. Suggests that parliamentarians at the conference bring EUREKA to the attention of their national governments and to take up EUREKA in their respective national Lisbon Action Plans.

4. Acknowledges that the success of EUREKA is linked to the fact that it is a market-driven, bottom-up initiative with flexible non-bureaucratic procedures for generating high-quality R&D and innovative projects and programmes.

5. Invites the European Commission and EUREKA member countries to work closely together to provide an optimal policy mix to support innovation.

6. Invites EUREKA and the European Commission to promote technology transfer with third countries in order to maximize leverage and added value effects derived from international cooperation taking into account earlier commitments in this respect.

7. Strongly believes that research-performing and innovative SMEs will be amongst the drivers of economic growth for Europe in the future. It is essential that this group collaborates internationally. These SMEs need a bottom-up, non-bureaucratic, flexible and fast mechanism to stimulate their development and growth.

8. Stresses the importance of stimulating R&D and innovation in SMEs, and notes with satisfaction the efforts made by the EUREKA member countries and the Commission in setting up the article 169- based initiative, respecting the EUREKA principles and methods, initially for highly innovative R&D performing SMEs, and strongly urges EUREKA member countries, the European Commission and the European Parliament to support this initiative financially and upon all the conference participants to address this initiative actively in their respective national parliaments;

9. Underlines the importance of creating strong public-private partnerships at a European level in strategically important areas for Europe, and is convinced that the Joint Technology Initiatives should benefit from the wide experience and the achievements of EUREKA Clusters such as MEDEA+ and ITEA, and stresses the importance of the involvement of EUREKA through its Clusters and Umbrellas in the European Technology Platforms (ETP);

10. Stresses that EUREKA should be revitalised as a major European facilitator to develop technology and to convert technology to business; national governments should provide funding at substantial levels and make existing schemes easily accessible.

11. Recommends further involvement of the private sector in financing EUREKA projects and that public funding should be used to catalyse new methods of private sector participation. The conference calls on the incoming Czech EUREKA Chair to investigate new possibilities that could facilitate private investment in EUREKA projects, e.g. as offered by the EIB. It further calls upon the Czech EUREKA Chair to investigate innovative financial instruments, for example the possibility of a revolving mechanism for EUREKA projects on a national or common basis.

12. Stresses the importance of improving synchronisation between national programmes supporting EUREKA projects and increasing the effectiveness of the EUREKA initiative.

13. Stresses the importance of improving access to available general funds (where EUREKA projects compete with other projects), or for more dedicated national funds for EUREKA projects in line with the conclusions of the EUREKA Ministers Conference in Paris in June 2004, urges the conference participants to actively pursue this goal and calls on the incoming Czech EUREKA Chair to follow up this action.

14. Proposes that the European Competitiveness Council regularly evaluates the cooperation of the various European instruments available within research and innovation - in particular FP7, EUREKA and COST - to secure the progress of European competitiveness.

15. Requests the Dutch Chair to make this resolution known to the participants of the Industry Day in June 2005 and to ask representatives from Industry for their comments. The results of the dialogue should be referred to the EUREKA FORUM of the Czech EUREKA Chair in October and to the next conference of Ministers of EUREKA in Prague in June 2006.

16. Requests the EUREKA member states to follow up this Resolution of the 15th EUREKA Inter-Parliamentary Conference and requests the Dutch Chair of the conference to bring this Resolution to the attention of the European Competitiveness Council, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy of the European Parliament, the European Commission and other relevant European Union institutions.