



SECOND INTERNATIONAL NANOTECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

ON COMMUNICATIONS AND COOPERATION

Abstract

The EU Approach to Nanotechnology

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On 12 May 2004 the Commission adopted the Communication *Towards a European Strategy for Nanotechnology* in which an integrated, safe and responsible strategy was proposed. This aims to foster R&D and innovation while addressing any environmental, health, safety and societal concerns upfront. In this context, several needs were highlighted: increase investment and coordination of R&D; develop world-class competitive R&D infrastructure or “poles of excellence”; promote the interdisciplinary education and training of research personnel together with a stronger entrepreneurial mindset; provide favourable conditions for industrial innovation to ensure that R&D is translated into affordable and safe wealth-generating products and processes; respect ethical principles, integrate societal considerations into the R&D process at an early stage and encourage a dialogue with citizens; address public health, occupational health and safety, environmental and consumer risks of N&N-based products at the earliest possible stage; complement the above actions with appropriate cooperation and initiatives at the international level.

On 24 September 2004, the European Council welcomed the proposed integrated and responsible approach and the Commission’s intention to draw up an Action Plan for nanotechnology. The European Economic and Social Committee subsequently issued an opinion that supported the Commission’s proposed approach. All stakeholders were invited to provide their opinion on the Commission’s proposal via an extensive open consultation that closed in October 2004. Over 750 responses were received supporting the elements of the Commission’s proposal. This survey has been the largest of its kind in Europe.

On the 7 June 2005, the European Commission adopted the Communication *Nanosciences and nanotechnologies: An action plan for Europe 2005-2009*. This Action Plan defines a series of articulated and interconnected actions for the immediate implementation of a safe, integrated and responsible strategy for nanosciences and nanotechnologies, based on the priority areas identified in the above-mentioned Communication.

On 6 April 2005 the European Commission presented its proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning a *7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007 – 2013)*². The budget of FP7 depends on the decisions for the *Financial Perspectives 2007- 2013 of the EU*. The European Commission has outlined its detailed plans for implementing the 7th Framework Programme with the publication on 21 September 2005 of the proposed *Specific Programmes* that have been produced for each of the four main pillars of FP7: *Cooperation, Ideas, People and Capacities*. The documents are discussed with the European Parliament, before a final decision is taken by the Council. R&D in nanosciences and nanotechnologies will receive specific financial support.

¹ The present text does not engage the European Commission. Please refer to official documents.

² <http://www.cordis.lu/fp7>