



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 30 September 2008 (06.10)
(OR. fr)**

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**RECH 290
COMPET 368**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: Competitiveness Council on 25 and 26 September 2008

No. prev. doc.: 12853/1/08 REV 1 RECH 264 COMPET 311

Subject: Council conclusions on responsible nanosciences and nanotechnologies research

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on responsible nanosciences and nanotechnologies research as adopted by the Competitiveness Council at its meeting on 25 and 26 September 2008.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON RESPONSIBLE NANOSCIENCES AND
NANOTECHNOLOGIES RESEARCH**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING its conclusions of 24 September 2004 entitled "Towards a European strategy for nanotechnology" and of 23 November 2007 on nanosciences and nanotechnologies¹;

NOTING the Commission Recommendation of 7 February 2008 on a code of conduct for responsible nanosciences and nanotechnologies research² ("the Recommendation") and the Commission Communication of 17 June 2008 on Regulatory aspects of nanomaterials³;

REAFFIRMING:

- the important role and potential of nanosciences and nanotechnologies ("N&N") in many areas, such as health care, information technologies, materials sciences, manufacturing, instrumentation, energy, environment, security and space;
- that the role of nanosciences and nanotechnologies is crucial for the improvement of Europe's competitiveness and the quality of life of its citizens, and for the achievement of the economic, social, and environmental goals of the renewed Lisbon Strategy;
- that a safe and responsible development of nanotechnologies is essential;

¹ 12898/04 and 15967/1/07 REV 1.

² OJ L 116, 30.4.2008, pp. 46-52.

³ 11010/08.

- the need to foster synergies and cooperation between all stakeholders, including the Member States, the European Commission, academia, research centres, industry, financial bodies, NGOs and society at large;
1. ACKNOWLEDGES the progress made in Europe in N&N research and its contribution to the harmonious and coherent development of the European Research Area (ERA) and STRESSES the need to intensify efforts in this sector bearing in mind both the socio-economic benefits of this research and the need for management of possible health and environmental risks;
 2. NOTES that the established principles of responsible research, including ethical principles, are equally applicable to all research activities and, whilst acknowledging the principle of scientific freedom, notes that the innovative nature and the specific features of certain fields of research, such as N&N, merit particular attention in this respect.
 3. NOTES the Commission Communication of 17 June 2008 on "Regulatory aspects of nanomaterials", which reviewed the legislation in force and concluded, inter alia, that "Current legislation covers in principle the potential health, safety and environmental risks in relation to nanomaterials. The protection of health, safety and the environment needs mostly to be enhanced by improving implementation of current legislation";

4. ACKNOWLEDGES that measures for the prevention and management of potential risks should be implemented on the basis of the general principles of risk management (proportionality, non-discrimination, consistency), including the precautionary principle, and of a particularly careful and active monitoring of the results of scientific research in this area; WELCOMES the approach proposed in the Commission Communication of 17 June 2008, aiming to widen the knowledge base for risk assessment and risk management;
5. ENCOURAGES the development of research activities in areas underpinning risk assessment and risk management and the deepening of scientific knowledge of all relevant aspects necessary for determining the potential risks of nano-objects and nanoparticles to human health and the environment (including the understanding of fundamental biological processes, toxicology and eco-toxicology as well as the metrology of nano-objects and nanoparticles, whether natural or man-made), and CONSIDERS that the results of such research activities should lead to the establishment of detection methods validated for the products of nanotechnologies which could have, directly or indirectly, a potentially harmful effect on human or animal health;
6. UNDERLINES that, in the field of N&N research, the protection of researchers and workers potentially exposed to nano-objects and nanoparticles calls for particular attention and efforts;
7. ENCOURAGES the continuation of an international dialogue, in particular as part of the work of the OECD, towards an international framework of guidelines for N&N research with a view to facilitating international cooperation in this area, inter alia by providing all actors with a set of common rules and terminology both locally and globally;
8. INVITES Member States and other stakeholders concerned to take note of the Commission Recommendation in the light of the above considerations;

9. INVITES the Commission to:

- continue its efforts in supporting N&N research in Europe and in monitoring developments world-wide, with a view to promoting European competitiveness in this sector, improving the safety of researchers, workers and consumers, as well as protecting the environment and identifying good governance or regulatory practices for risk management issues;
- encourage public debate and foster public awareness through the dissemination of information on N&N research;
- collect information on the practices of Member States and other stakeholders with respect to responsible N&N research, paying particular attention to the need for a coherent and equitable development of these practices in Europe;
- review and, as appropriate, amend its Recommendation by February 2010 and regularly thereafter, in close consultation with Member States, while taking into account the above considerations as well as the state of European competitiveness in the nanosciences and nanotechnologies and developments in this sector at European and global level, and then report back regularly to the Council and the European Parliament;
- engage in the work carried out by the relevant international organisations regarding the terminology related to nanotechnologies so as to ensure coherence at European and global level in this respect.
