

The contribution to the public consultation on the future “EU 2020” strategy – from the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (ASCR)

This opportunity to make a contribution to the public consultation on the future “EU 2020” strategy is truly welcomed.

The future “EU 2020” strategy should take into consideration the last *Annual Report on research and technological development activities of the European Union*. It states that research has been a centrepiece of the Lisbon strategy since its launch in 2000. Community research policy underpins the competitiveness of the EU. It is a crucial policy domain for finding adequate responses to the challenges Europe is facing. The principal aims of Community research policy continue to be a strive for greater research excellence and enhanced socio-economic relevance. A failure to invest more in research and develop a world-class research system in Europe will cost future generations dearly and put our well-being at risk. Statistics on R&D investments reveal a persistent gap between the EU and the USA. Continuing to increase public investment in R&D is particularly relevant in the context of the financial and economic crisis, as it may have a countercyclical effect in a time when private R&D budgets are under pressure. Although the impact of the current downturn is difficult to predict, structural R&D policy reform continues to be crucial to mitigate the effects of the crisis and to consolidate recovery. R&D was therefore an essential part of the economic recovery package endorsed by the European Council in December 2008.

In connection with it, the following parts of the *Public consultation on the future “EU 2020” strategy* document are especially **appreciated** and their relevance should be **strengthened** in the document:

- *An efficient, effective and well-resourced European Research Area is an indispensable part of the EU 2020 vision. The EU needs to increase its research efforts by pooling resources, jointly developing major research infrastructures across the EU and raising research quality to world-leading standards. (Page 5)*
- *As public sector deficits are brought back under control, public expenditure needs to be reshaped in ways that enable us to reach the 2020 vision. Cutting spending in forward-looking areas such as education and research would make this more difficult to achieve. (Page 3)*
- *Even in a time of necessary fiscal consolidation, the Stability and Growth Pact allows room for investing in the future. This includes prioritising investments in R&D ... (Page 11)*
- *Position of research in the Key priorities for EU 2020, Creating value by basing growth on knowledge should be strengthened. (Page 4 and 5)*

The following items **ought to be clearly expressed** in the future “EU 2020” strategy:

- Continuing EU effort to meet the up to now (Lisbon) EU Strategy objective of devoting 3 % of its GNI to research through a substantially improved public finance effort and at the same time through improved conditions for mobilising private capital.
- EU Cohesion Policy increasing focus on research as a part of the EU Strategy (up to now Lisbon) priorities.

- Focus placed on activities which promote excellence of European strategic research efforts with setting of the future EU agenda for science driven frontier research by the scientific community.

The *future "EU 2020" strategy* should take into consideration that **strengthening competitiveness of the Member States with lower income levels requires ensuring the optimal deployment of research (in particular strategic research) potential in these Member States**. This objective should be pursued by supporting national and regional development strategies through the EU **cohesion policy** and through creating appropriate incentives within the EU **Research Framework Programme** for bringing those Member States which do not yet have adequate research capabilities closer to the top standards.