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To the

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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CONECTUS' COMMENTS:

COMMISSION WORKING DOCUMENT

CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE "EU 2020" STRATEGY

Brussels, 24.11.2009 COM(2009)647 final

Conectus as an industrial association very much welcomes the commitment to openly discuss the **FUTURE "EU 2020" STRATEGY**. Here Conectus presents its members' point of view as regards the key priorities for the coming years aimed at making our economy smarter and greener:

Conectus strongly supports an increased policy coordination to make the economy more competitive. The fresh approach to **industrial policy** and the proposed measures are welcomed by Conectus:

- targeted regulation (e.g. promoting energy-efficient products and systems)
- emission trading, tax reform, grants, subsidies and loans
- public investment and procurement policies and
- targeting our research and innovation budgets to this end.

Conectus acknowledges the interdependence between different policies and **welcomes the integration of different policy instruments** leading to stronger-linking institutional reforms, better regulation, new initiatives and public investment.

Conectus supports an integrated industrial policy that

- promotes competitive market mechanisms and better conditions for **entrepreneurship** with an emphasis on **new enabling technologies** and skills
- fosters the development of SMEs and supports their innovation capacity and sustainable growth potential

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Conectus welcomes measures for **administrative simplification**. Becoming more productive by reducing pressure on resources in a much wider sense also means reducing the administrative burden especially lying on the shoulders of SMEs.

In this respect **Conectus is sceptical** concerning the prospects for a substantially strengthened field of **public-private partnerships** including pooled public and private sources of growth capital, for example venture capital. Merging the public and the private sector will not help to make economic processes more simple and transparent. Instead, **Conectus favours stable, foreseeable and transparent framework conditions** which especially SMEs need as a basis for their commercial success. Let's avoid unnecessary administrative barriers !

Conectus strongly supports measures to promote a system of **intellectual property rights**, which allows for **efficient and cost-effective protection**.

In this respect **Conectus is sceptical** about the aim for 2020 to achieve a genuine European Knowledge Area that is believed "**to benefit from the free circulation of people, knowledge and technology**". No doubt, it is important to improve awareness and management of knowledge that is often spread all over Europe. In this respect the easy access to a European technology-oriented system of information brokerage supported by the EC may help speeding up innovative processes. But enhancing mobility cannot by itself be the solution to our problems. Especially SMEs as one cornerstone of EU's technological basis play an increasing role in knowledge diffusion and technology transfer despite having typically strong local or regional roots.

In this context **Conectus is also sceptical** about the specific role which the "**digital economy**" is anticipated to play in the EU's future. No doubt, the explosion of information & communication was one of the key drivers in the 20th century. However, today the **focus** is much **more on energy** questions related to both the **security of supply** and to the **climate change**. For example, the need for replacing half of the EU's existing electricity plants by 2030 will provide new opportunities. Already today we begin to face **new challenges** that are related to **raw materials** and their availability, utilization and recycling. Materials represent the only kind of resource that is definitely **neither extensible nor renewable** (other than knowledge or energy).

About Conectus & Superconductivity

Conectus is the association of leading European companies with the shared vision that full commercialization of superconductor technology will translate into significant benefits to Europe's economy and society. Conectus members seek to ensure that the opportunities of superconductor technology are fully realized by decision-makers in industry, academia and governments.

Superconductivity refers to the phenomenon that at cryogenic temperatures certain materials transport electrical currents with virtually no loss. This vanishing electrical resistance of "super"-conductors allows e.g. quantum-based electronic circuits or power components operating at current densities 100 times higher than copper. Superconductors offer ultimate performance characteristics and unique functions. System integration of this enabling technology is thus likely to become one of the key competences of the 21st century and can pave the way for sustainable solutions in many fields of current concern.