

HLG KET

3rd meeting of the High Level Group on Key Enabling Technologies
29 January 2014

Mr. Luigi Ambrosio, CNR, Italy

Dear Vice President Tajani,

Commissioner Hahn,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The importance of KETs in delivering sustainable growth, creating high-value jobs and solving societal challenges is paramount, has already been underlined by my colleagues.

We fully agree that a strong industrial base will be of key importance for Europe's economic recovery and competitiveness and that a strong commitment at the European and national level is the only way to ensure coherence and prioritization of all available instruments.

We acknowledge the significant progress regarding the implementation of this High Level Group recommendations by the European Commission but we believe that additional initiatives are required in order to create the successful conditions for KETs deployment with the needed impact and speed for Europe to remain in the global competition.

The recent communication 'For a European Industrial Renaissance', adopted last week by the European Commission, is specifically urging Member States to recognize the central importance of industry for creating jobs and growth, while promoting a more business friendly

Europe through actions to simplify the legislative framework and improve the efficiency of public administration at European, national and regional levels.

Actually, the European research and innovation landscape is fragmented across national policies and more coherence would help Europe to capture and deploy its research and innovation potential in all industrial sectors where critical mass is needed. At a time of severe constraints on public finances, KETs policy coordination between European, national and regional efforts in R&D&I, is therefore even more essential.

In this regard, several regions have already set Key Enabling Technologies as priorities for their research and innovation strategies. Many Member States, including Italy are strongly committed in this effort. As a member of the HLG, I have supported the collaboration between the Italian Association for Industrial Research and the National Research Council of Italy (CNR) for the establishment of a National Working Group on “Key Enabling Technologies”, aiming to assess their impact and define a vision on KETs at the national level: preliminary results of this activity have been presented at a dedicated workshop in December 2012 at the CNR headquarters in Rome and a working document was published in 2013.

Several other workshops have been organized in the last months in Bologna, Bari and Naples on the role of KETs for a competitive Europe and Italy and the appropriate use of regional, national and EU funding

to pursue innovation, investments and re-industrialization.

Industrial modernization must be pursued by investing in innovation and new technologies but also building and strengthen KETs skills. Europe must now urgently address both the existing shortage of skilled KET labor and the mismatch between supply and demand of skills in critical KET-based technologies and identify the interdisciplinary competences required for future industrial needs. The various European instruments dedicated to education and skills, beside the European Institute for Innovation and Technology, such as the European Social Funds and the European Research Council, must therefore coordinate their activities to rapidly address current gaps.

The forthcoming semester of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union is also foreseeing initiatives and actions to reverse the negative employment trends and to promote growth and jobs in Europe.

The key role of research and innovation and future skills will be also at the core of the main event on Key Enabling Technologies of the Italian Presidency, that will be held in Bologna at the end of September 2014, thanks to the co-funding of the European Union Seventh Framework Programme. I therefore take this opportunity to invite the Commissioners and all the distinguished colleagues to participate at the conference “Leading Enabling Technologies for Societal Challenges (LETS2014)”.

Thank you for your kind attention.