



How can Europe lead the next wave of innovation?

The role of the European Innovation Council

~Statement of intent by the High Level Group of Innovators~

Europe can and must remain at the forefront of global innovation. Europe's future will be created by entrepreneurs that integrate the worlds of bits, atoms, neurons, genes and art and create business models and social innovation in ways that bring substantial value to society, the economy and the environment.

Major scientific discoveries, developments in computing, 'deep tech' and digitalisation in general, are accelerating and reaching highly regulated and change-averse sectors. This will have profound implications for productivity and economic growth, and for society as a whole. As the EU is setting out on its path towards the future, innovation will be crucial to the success of its journey.

The pre-conditions of success in this emerging future are world class science, an abundance of talent and ideas, openness and diversity, strong industrial capabilities and a collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach to research, development and innovation: Europe is strong in all of these areas.

However, in order to deliver real value from these foundations, Europe needs to improve its regulatory environment, address excessive fragmentation in the single market and step up dramatically the access to capital for innovative projects. Europe needs to pull together resources, better coordinate its policies, stimulate patient capital and facilitate the scale-up of promising but uncertain innovations. Europe also needs to conquer its fear of failure and embrace risk-taking as an essential step towards success. Risk-bearing disruptive innovations that are the product of technological breakthroughs and which can create new markets need to be identified and rewarded. Political and societal support is critical in order to sustain innovations that create value.

The Group's ambition is that the European Innovation Council (EIC) is designed to become a pivotal policy response of the European Union to this challenge. The EIC should create a new standard of excellence and impact in the way Europe provides funding and other support to highly promising but also potentially risky market-creating innovations. The EIC should act as a catalyst to accelerate the next wave of innovation, to change mindsets, and to give Europe a fighting chance to lead at a global level. The EIC should be designed and implemented alongside a wider set of initiatives that should seek to improve the regulatory environment and market conditions for innovation.

As members of the Group we are keen to bring our experience, diversity, track-record, and confidence in the potential of Europe to the table. We all have "skin in the game": experience in building companies, managing investments, building ecosystems, developing cutting edge science and technology, managing diverse teams, dealing with regulation, navigating difficult funding environments and influencing policy change.

With this background, we will use our experience to advise the Commission on:

- How to identify and advance transformational and other market-creating innovation in all areas and at the interface of the digital and the physical;
- How to design agile funding instruments (loans, grants, blended finance) and other support in the next Framework Programme to accelerate scaling up and ensure a "value chain" approach where each instrument targets a different stage of company growth and private investment is leveraged;
- How to improve the innovation eco-system for scaling up, reducing barriers and enabling access to funding, talent, market opportunities and regulatory environment for innovation;
- How to maximise the visibility, communication and engagement of innovation communities in the development of an EIC;
- How to monitor progress and provide ongoing support to innovative firms participating in EU programmes, through real-time data collection and strengthening of mentoring and coaching schemes; and,
- How to make EU programmes more innovator-friendly, for instance through simplification, user-driven design and policy experimentation.

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Brussels, May 2017
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/eic/index.cfm>