



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



## **Council conclusions on the evaluation and impact assessment of European research framework programmes (FPs)**

*2945th COMPETITIVENESS  
(Internal market, Industry and Research)  
Council meeting  
Brussels, 29 May 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING Article 7 of the Decision no 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013)<sup>1</sup> and Article 6 of the Council Decision of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities (2007-2011)<sup>2</sup>, according to which the Commission has the obligation to continually and systematically monitor the implementation of FP7 and its specific programmes and regularly report and disseminate the results of this monitoring.

RECALLING the Council conclusions of 30 May 2008 on the on the Special Report No. 09/2007 by the European Court of Auditors concerning "Evaluating the EU Research and Technological Development (RTD) Framework Programmes - could the Commission's approach be improved?" (doc. 9096/08);

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 400, 30.12.2006, p.60.

# **P R E S S**

RECALLING the EUFORDIA conference held in February 2009 in Prague, as a discussion platform for the assessment of national and European impacts of FPs and its resulting outcome;

The Council:

1. EMPHASISES the importance that evaluation of results and assessments of impact have in confirming the need for efficiency and effectiveness of investments in research and development, as well as the strengthening of the evidence base to underpin policy development.
2. WELCOMES the report of the Expert Group, chaired by Ernst Th. Rietschel, on the ex-post evaluation of FP6 and the Commission communication regarding the response to this report<sup>3</sup>, and NOTES the progress made by the Commission in recent years in developing its approach to the evaluation methodology of FPs.
3. NOTES the conclusions of the report on the design, the implementation and the achievements of FP6 and WELCOMES the vision presented by the Expert Group as a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on the future of European research policy.
4. HIGHLIGHTS the need to optimise the collection, analysis and use of robust data on the FPs regarding the participation and results with a view to better measuring the achievements of programme objectives in terms of the outputs, outcomes and socio-economic impacts.
5. UNDERLINES that setting out the intervention logic<sup>4</sup> of the FPs in an explicit manner is a prerequisite for an effective evaluation of the results of public RTD spending and its European added value.
6. INVITES the Member States to:
  - further strengthen their collaboration in this field, including for example through the European RTD evaluation network, by exchanging "good practices" concerning issues such as methods for conducting research evaluation studies or the definition of appropriate indicators, in order to allow for comparisons to be made between the evaluations results of national research and development programmes and with those of FPs;
  - continue and extend efforts to conduct national studies assessing the impact of the FPs within the context of ERA with special attention to the structuring effect on their national research and innovation systems.

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<sup>3</sup> Commission communication on the response to the report of the Expert Group on the ex-post evaluation of the Sixth framework programmes (doc. 9372/09).

<sup>4</sup> Defined as "the conceptual link from an intervention's inputs to the production of its outputs and, subsequently, to its impacts on society in terms of results and outcomes", as referred to in the Special report No 9/2007 of the Court of Auditors concerning 'Evaluating the EU Research and Technological Development (RTD) framework programmes - could the Commission's approach be improved?' together with the Commission's replies (OJ C 26, 30.1.2008, p.1).

7. CALLS on the Commission to:

- analyse very carefully the concerns expressed in the report on administrative complexities encountered in FP6. While a number of new measures have been introduced in FP7 to improve the situation, the recommendation to consider a radical overhaul of the FP management procedures deserves full attention;
- take steps to establish a basis for "ex-post impact assessments" of FPs, including a database of project results (outputs, outcomes and impacts), which, to the extent possible, should be based on open access and be available so that independent experts can carry out further studies and analyses;
- set out the intervention logic for the different parts of its proposal for FP8 in the framework of the Commission's "ex-ante impact assessment". In addition to the findings of the FP6 ex-post evaluation completed in 2009 and of forthcoming FP7 interim evaluation, this "ex-ante impact assessment" could also take account, where appropriate, of the national impact assessments carried out by the Member States.

8. INVITES the Member States and the Commission to:

- carefully consider the recommendations made in this report, in particular regarding the need for further efforts to develop a coherent international strategy, to stimulate the involvement of industry, especially the SMEs, to boost the participation of women in research and to make scientific careers more attractive to young people, and to simplify the administrative and financial control procedures;
- focus also on other issues addressed by the report, such as the promotion of innovation, the support for European frontier research in a structured and independent manner, and the evaluation of the measures linked to the balanced development of the ERA;
- assess, in view of possible evaluation, the interactions of FPs, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the Structural Funds, the effect of synergy and impacts on both research outcomes and the building of research capacity, and reflect on the relations between FPs and national RTD policies;
- clearly and explicitly acknowledge, when designing new FPs the extent to which this work is based on evaluation results, foresight studies and impact assessments, in particular ex-post impact assessment."