

Brussels, 25 June 2007

Commission welcomes Member States' agreement on the European Institute of Technology

The Competitiveness Council today agreed on a general approach for the European Institute of Technology (EIT), proposed by the European Commission in October 2006. By combining the worlds of academia, research and business, the EIT will be a flagship for excellence in innovation, research and higher education. Subject to the European Parliament's agreement later this year, the EIT should be able to begin operations in 2008. It will be organised on the basis of 'Knowledge and Innovation Communities' (partnerships of universities, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders in the innovation process), and coordinated by a small governing structure.

Welcoming the Council's agreement, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso said: *"This is a very important step forward, bringing the EIT closer to lift-off. By strengthening Europe's capacity to bridge the innovation gap with its major competitors, the EIT will help drive a Europe of results. It will help us boost jobs and growth in a lasting and environmentally sustainable way. The Commission is grateful for the German Presidency's strong support for the EIT proposal and looks forward to working with the future Portuguese Presidency and with the European Parliament to reach a final agreement and to get the EIT operational as soon as possible."*

The EIT aims to integrate and boost innovation, research and higher education by pooling the best resources available at European level and beyond.

For the first time, Europe will promote the development of "Knowledge and Innovation Communities" (KICs), partnerships of universities, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders. These will perform innovation activities, cutting-edge and innovation-driven research, and postgraduate education and training activities. Each KIC will develop activities in an area of key interest for businesses and citizens. For the selection of initial KICs, priority EU policies, such as renewable energy and climate change will be taken into account.

The involvement of business at all levels, both strategic and operational will be a cornerstone of the project. Business will be strongly represented on the Governing Board of the EIT.

The funding of the EIT will come from a variety of sources, including a contribution directly from the Community budget – an amount of € 308.7 million. This will cover the costs of the EIT's governing structure and the European dimension of the project, notably the costs of coordination and mobility that are necessary to sustain the KICs.

Once the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers reach a final agreement and adopt the Regulation the EIT Governing Board will be appointed and the EIT structure and secretariat established. The selection of the first KICs will take place no later than two years after the appointment of the Governing Board.

For more information please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eit/index_en.html