

Check against delivery!



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AAAS High Level Panel

Boston

15 February 2008

Ladies and gentlemen,

In his question, David rightly refers to "balance". Because clearly we need both, competition and cooperation. Before coming to the question of how to get the balance, I want to make clear that both are "heavy weights".

Competition is good. And natural. It is as natural for scientists as it is for entrepreneurs, and as it is for children in the school playground.

Competition is healthy. It helps us to correct mistakes. That is crucial. In order to advance, we need to be ready to make mistakes. Schumpeter has called it creative destruction. It means that the very basis of economic growth is admitting that mistakes will be made – and subsequently redressed.

Competition is needed. It promotes excellence and fosters progress. History is full of examples. To name just one: the race between international public and private sector research groups to map the human genome.

Cooperation is good. And natural. This very strange and yet so very loveable creature called human beings only exists in the presence, in the recognition of "the other".

Cooperation is healthy. Quite similar to competition, it helps us to correct our mistakes.

And yes, cooperation is needed as it promotes excellence and fosters progress. Two heads think more than one, five more than two. It also maximises the output achieved with scarce resources.

Now, to answer the question about how to achieve, how to keep a balance between competition and cooperation, we need to be clear about what is happening in the room in which this balance is standing - our globe: a globalising globe.

Globalisation is decisive both for our competition and cooperation strategies. Because everything is becoming faster. Everything and everybody is becoming interdependent, for good and for bad. Bi-polar, uni-polar models are out, multipolar models are in (the facts are so clearly visible, that you can accept this statement even if it comes from a European). To give you one example in the field of science: The Triad US, EU, Japan has dominated the scientific production for long. But China has suddenly appeared among the ten most active countries - and with an increasing citation rate. Other emerging scientific nations have led to a relative decline of the Triad's former dominance in terms of scientific production.

What does this mean for competition and Europe's policy for competitiveness? We have to look at it from three angles – and I am grateful to my friend Richard Lester from whom I am taking these categories: people, companies, places.

People have always been in competition – but now this is no longer local or regional: it is global.

The same is true about companies.

And if you now make the link, it becomes clear that today you can only design a good strategy if you are aware that competition is also about regions. Companies and people will go to places where the work will be done best. For Europe this means the following: Peace and stability remain the "raison d'être" for the European Union. But the economic reasons for European integration have never been as compelling as today: people, companies, places. And, by the way, this is also the explanation why investment in research is stagnating in Europe at the same time when, finally, European firms are closing the innovation gap with the US by sharply increasing their R&D investments: Places.

And what does globalisation mean for cooperation? We need more. Simply because of the interdependence and global nature of the challenges we are facing. Climate change and energy are obvious examples, as is global security and migration, demographic changes and the increasing instability of systems, be it ICT, biodiversity, financing or social security.

Now to our strategy in Europe. Our objective is clear – and untypically immodest: Europe wants to have the world's most competitive knowledge-based economy. Yes, we want the US crown! But – no surprise in a global, multipolar world - so does Japan, and China, and India... And that is alright. That is exactly what is needed. Because competition is good, and natural and healthy.

To reach our objective, we need to take action across a whole range of policy areas and at various levels, national and European. And we need consistency and coherence.

We need to press ahead with investing in people and modernising labour markets at the same time as unlocking the business potential of our SMEs and investing more in research and education. We need to look at flexicurity, child care, life-long learning, reducing red tape and modernising public administration at the same time as increasing the mobility and career prospects of researchers by modernising universities. Strengthening competition in Europe's services sector is as much part of our policy as pushing ahead with a new generation of research infrastructures. All matter.

More specifically on research, my objective is to introduce the fifth freedom in Europe. Today's Europe is built on the four freedoms of goods, services, capital and people. The knowledge society of tomorrow needs the freedom, the freedom of movement of knowledge.

Now to cooperation. Internationalisation of science is often taken for granted. There are indeed powerful forces supporting it, I have already mentioned some of them. Nevertheless, there are also opposite forces: innovation policy keeps a strong national dimension; tacit exchanges of knowledge require proximity; there is inertia of personal and institutional networks. In other words: there is a policy task for international scientific cooperation.

For EU policy, I start with the – relatively – easy part: I have radically opened our funding programme, with a double strategy:

- Full association of our neighbour countries, with focus on those who have a perspective to become Member States
- Full participation of researchers all over the world. Every researcher is eligible as partner in a European research team. For all but the rich countries, eligibility equals funding. That is quite a step. We also fund the researchers from rich countries if this is what is needed for the scientific excellence of the project.

In all this, cooperation is rarely controversial, because it is about pre-competitive knowledge. We have rather clear IP rules, allowing to distinguish background and foreground and to enable all partners to use, under fair conditions, the new knowledge created.

Beyond EU funding – and I am coming to the part where we still have to do more – we are looking at ways to gradually act not as 27 different EU Member States, but as one, in some key areas.

Moreover, we are increasing the linkage of our research efforts to our international relations policies, notably our development aid and neighbourhood instruments.

Our cooperation with the US in particular is rich and varied. My vision of the future of EU-US research is of strong partners addressing global challenges and mutual benefits. There is more that we can and should do:-

- in the areas of energy and climate change, like energy efficiency, renewable energy, and carbon capture and storage;

- in the fields of biotechnology, nanotechnology and information and communications technologies, where there is already a strong basis for joint work;
- and in the domains such as shared research infrastructures, encouraging transatlantic mobility of scientists and addressing the systemic – often legal – barriers to further collaboration.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Competition is natural and necessary - in science as in life. But I also believe that no region or section of the world can be left behind if we want to achieve lasting peace and prosperity for all.

We all stand to gain if we work together to solve our common problems. So it is my firm conviction that competition and cooperation in science are both absolutely vital for human progress.

Rational self interest **and** altruistic concern say that we must do both.

...Because science - like life - is not a zero-sum game...

Thank you very much.