



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 13 April 2007

DS 321/07

LIMITE

**Elements for
Draft Council Conclusions on Life Sciences and Biotechnology**

RECALLING that the European Strategy on Life Sciences and Biotechnology¹ aims at facilitating the development of biotechnology applications and represents an important step towards a competitive and sustainable European knowledge-based bio-economy, in accordance with the objectives of the renewed Lisbon strategy;

RECOGNISING that life sciences and biotechnology is a key enabling technology with a significant impact on many economic sectors as evidenced by the *Bio4EU* study²; thus enhancing Europe's overall competitiveness and contributing to the modernisation of European industry;

RECOGNISING that life sciences and biotechnology is crucial to the discovery and development of diagnostics, medicines, vaccines and advanced therapies that are of considerable benefit to the quality of life of citizens in Europe, to the competitiveness of European industry, and to address global health issues;

ACKNOWLEDGING the new dimension that life sciences and biotechnology offer for eco-efficient innovation, in particular in the food and nutrition, feed, chemical, paper and pulp, textile, and energy sectors;

¹ OJ C 55 (2.03.2002), p.3.

² The "Bio4EU" study can be found on <http://bio4eu.jrc.es>.

NOTING that the dedicated European biotechnology industry consists mostly of SMEs and needs favourable framework conditions to improve its growth and innovation capabilities;

NOTING that the uptake of biotechnology depends upon its societal and market acceptance;

THE COUNCIL:

1. **WELCOMES** the Communication from the Commission “on the mid-term review of the Strategy on Life Sciences and Biotechnology”³ and agrees with the broad lines of its analysis; in this context **RECALLS** the importance of an integrated approach addressing the economic, societal and environmental issues involved;
2. **SUPPORTS** the Commission’s proposal to establish a harmonised collection of data and statistics to monitor the economic, social and environmental impact of life sciences and biotechnology in order to enable an informed societal debate;
3. **SUPPORTS** the Commission’s proposal to develop schemes to promote the establishment of integrated pilot plants to demonstrate the potential of bio-based applications and facilitate their uptake on the market; **INVITES** the Commission to propose further steps for the creation of lead markets in the area of eco-efficient bio-based products;
4. **WELCOMES** the Commission's intention to come forward with proposals on the establishment of Joint Technology Initiatives, in particular on Innovative Medicine;
5. **SUPPORTS** the Commission’s proposals to foster competitiveness by facilitating knowledge transfer from the science base to industry; to consider specific incentives for Young Innovative Companies; to promote the use of public funds to leverage more private co-financing for research and innovation; and to support the integration of Biotechnology clusters and regional networks;

³ doc. 8343/07 + ADD1.

6. **STRESSES** that modern biotechnology has a significant economic and environmental potential for European agriculture, including for non-food or non-feed applications, such as industrial transformation and molecular farming, provided that these can be used safely for the environment and human health, in an economically viable form and in the respect of the consumers' right to make an informed choice;
7. **SUPPORTS** the Commission's proposals to improve the implementation of the legislation and its impact on competitiveness, and improve policy coordination, especially on cross-cutting issues; **ENCOURAGES** the Commission and the Member States to reinforce the existing networks to monitor and ensure a coherent implementation of the Strategy and address regulatory obstacles to competitiveness;
8. **ENCOURAGES** a strong commitment of the Member States to contribute actively to the implementation of the Refocused Life Sciences and Biotechnology Action Plan and to timely carry out actions where Member States have a central role.