

European Institute of Technology

The proposal to establish a European Institute of Technology was first put forward by the Commission in its 2005 Spring Report as an integral part of the revised Lisbon Strategy which has placed innovation, research and education activities at the top of the Growth and Jobs Agenda. Building on extensive consultations with European stakeholders, Member States and the general public during 2005 and 2006 the Commission adopted two Communications on the EIT (22 February and 8 June 2006 respectively) outlining the ambition, scope and organisational elements of this institute. The March and June 2006 European Councils recognised that the EIT will be an important step to fill the existing gap between higher education, research and innovation. In fact, the June European Council went further and called on the Commission to come forward with a formal proposal, to be presented in autumn 2006. In response to this invitation the Commission has put forward on 18 October 2006 a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Institute of Technology. The proposal is accompanied by an impact assessment report.

The EIT will contribute to bridge the innovation gap between the EU and its major competitors by promoting further the integration of the three sides of the knowledge triangle in a mutually-supportive manner and providing a world-class innovation-oriented critical mass at the EU level. The EIT will encourage and promote innovation through trans- and inter-disciplinary strategic research and education in areas of key economic or societal interest and by exploiting its knowledge outcomes to the benefit of the EU.

To achieve its mission the EIT will set up excellence-driven strategic long-term partnerships in critical areas between all actors involved in the knowledge triangle. Such an initiative would offer European companies a new relationship with education and research.

Furthermore, the EIT will seek to become a symbol of the integrated European Innovation, Research and Education Area, as well as a reference model that will inspire and drive change in existing education and research institutions in the EU.

The Commission is proposing an integrated, two-level structure of the EIT that combines both a bottom-up and a top-down approach:

- A governance structure which is based on a Governing Board (GB). The GB will be responsible for setting the overall strategic priorities of the EIT. It will also take charge of selection, evaluation and coordination of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities. It will comprise a balanced, representative group of high-profile people from business and academia, supported by a small number of administrative staff.
- Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs): The KICs are the defining characteristic of the EIT; they are joint-ventures of partner organisations representing universities, research organisations and businesses. They will act autonomously to perform their tasks by fully integrating the innovation, research and education dimensions.

The proposed regulation on the EIT will be discussed both in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers in accordance with the co-decision procedure. The target is adoption by the end of 2007 or early 2008. In this case, the EIT would become operational in 2008, with the first two Knowledge and Innovation Communities in place by 2010-2011.