



The Director General of European Funds, José María Piñeiro, takes part in a Symposium on the Future of Europe and its commitment to science

"The future Cohesion Policy should be centred around productivity, innovation and technology"

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- To foster the global competitiveness of European economies, one of the goals of the 2010 Europe Strategy is to step up investment in Innovation and Development

1 June 2012. The future regulatory system for the Cohesion Policy and the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 should give even greater impetus to efforts to make productivity, innovation and technological intensities top priorities. This was the opinion expressed today by the Director General of Community Funds, José María Piñeiro, at a symposium on "The Future of Europe and its commitment to science", held at the Carlos Amberes Foundation, where debates have been taking place on the role of RD&I as a means of combating the crisis, the distribution of European funds for the coming years and negotiations for establishing a new financial framework.

According to the Director General, measures implemented with a view to the future Horizon 2020 should, more than ever before, be based on principles such as transparency, better governance and public policy management, with a clear focus on results. "The 2014-2020 period will constitute an important challenge for Spain and the European Union, as we find ourselves at one of the most critical moments in our recent history and for this reason all economic sectors, public, private and EU, are trying to promote changes in trends and models.

It should be remembered that to foster the global competitiveness of European economies, one of the goals of the 2010 Europe Strategy is to boost investment in Innovation and Development. In relation to this, Piñeiro said that for the upcoming period, debate needs to continue on the cohesion-competitiveness dilemma, with a focus on targets for growth, jobs and competitiveness.

To strengthen the bond between cohesion and competitiveness, the Director General believes that changes need to be made to the current design of the policy, which for a start would mean improving the regulation of the instruments, adapting the European Rural Development Fund (ERDF), for example, so it could finance RD&I projects which are very different in nature from the usual civil works projects. Moreover, he believes there is a need to simplify management, as - he said - the burden of the Cohesion Policy in recent years has been the supervision and control system which has become more interwoven, for greater flexibility with regard to investments and more options available to countries that are still lagging behind the most technologically advanced and competitive countries.

He acknowledged that Spain still had a number of important challenges to achieve in terms of productivity, innovation and technology and proposed that the debate on the future Horizon 2020 should include other criteria in addition to scientific excellence, such as efforts made or technological and innovative excellence.

José María Piñeiro also explained during his speech at the symposium that the EU budget, through its various expenditure policies, could help to get us back on the road to growth and competitiveness and stressed that in Spain the Cohesion Policy has been changing direction over time to better ensure these objectives are achieved.

"Today the Cohesion Policy is becoming an increasingly integrating policy aimed at all the EU regions. Its objectives have changed, aiming to achieve not only economic, social and territorial cohesion but also growth and competitiveness in all the nations of the EU". He also explained that Spain's investment priorities for the current 2007-2013 period, place greater emphasis on R&D, Innovation and Information Society activities.

The 5th symposium in the series hosted by the Carlos Amberes Foundation "Europe debating", included a total of nine speeches divided into two blocks: 'Europe as a solution: budgets and innovation (2014-2020)' and 'Investment in R&D. Science as an economic driver'. It was attended by experts from a number of different European institutions and members of the European Commission.