

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'The role of technology parks in the industrial transformation of the new Member States'

(2006/C 65/11)

On 10 February 2005, the European Economic and Social Committee decided to draw up an opinion, under Rule 29(2) of its Rules of Procedure, on: *The role of technology parks in the industrial transformation of the new Member States*.

The Consultative Commission on Industrial Change, which was responsible for the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 23 November 2005. The rapporteur was Mr Tóth and the co-rapporteur was Mr Kubíček.

At its 422nd plenary session of 14 and 15 December 2005 (meeting of 14 December), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 127 votes to none with six abstentions:

1. Introduction

1.1 At its March 2005 session, the Council of the European Union relaunched the Lisbon strategy by refocusing on growth and jobs.

1.2 In conjunction with the integrated guidelines, the Council, in its June 2005 Recommendation 10667/05, set out proposals for the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines (BEPGs) for the 2005-2008 period.

1.3 The eighth of these guidelines calls for facilitation of all forms of innovation in the Member States. The EESC would point out that industrial parks, which are the subject of the present opinion, meet all the Council's criteria for instruments to facilitate innovation, and that parks can be considered as 'innovation poles', which fall under the second category of instruments in the Council list; as they fulfil the requirement to bring together universities, other research institutions and enterprises in all Member States, they integrate regional and local levels, and thus help to bridge the technology gap between regions.

1.4 The EESC would also point out that industrial parks already make a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of Guideline 10 given that their constituent elements form part of the 'industrial fabric' which the Council deems necessary for Europe, and that their exceptional competitiveness serves to strengthen the EU's industrial base.

1.5 The industrial parks situated in the new Member States are structured on similar lines to those in the fifteen 'old' Member States and in many other parts of the world. In legislative texts and terminology, such organisations are variously designated; industrial park, science park, technology park, technopole, research park, business park, innovation centre and technology incubator are some of the terms most frequently used. However, the basic idea remains the same: facilitating interaction between science, technology and economic develop-

ment and creating synergies through cooperation between business and research institutions, thus facilitating market access. In addition, parks operate by providing high-quality, specialised services, with particular emphasis on business incubation, spin-off activities and networking.

1.6 Legislation on industrial and technology parks has been adopted by the two future Member States which have begun accession negotiations, Bulgaria and Romania.

1.7 Industrial parks provide a comprehensive framework and instruments to facilitate, stimulate and develop innovation and regional development. Their activities usually include business incubators, promotion of technology transfer and 'business angel' programmes. Industrial parks offer excellent opportunities to prepare and execute venture capital transactions. They make a substantial contribution to the operation, development and implementation of EU programmes with the same or similar objectives. They are effective partners and can also function in networks

1.8 Up till now, establishment and development of industrial parks in the ten new Member States have generally involved the practical application of environmental principles. In the case of new parks, strict environmental standards are in place from the beginning as a result of harmonisation to comply with accession conditions. In the case of parks set up in response to reorganisation and industrial change, the start of park operations is often the first step towards environmental solutions.

1.9 The phenomenon of parks reflects a combination of various development trends. These include a regional (local) as a response to globalisation, a desire to overcome various cultural, national and ethnic problems, and the pressing need to bridge the wide gaps between divergent levels of development.

1.10 Park-related solutions have proved their worth in boosting employment and creating many new jobs (over 140 000 in Hungary since 1997). Other benefits include attracting businesses and preventing de-industrialisation (since 1997, over 2 500 companies have set up in Hungarian industrial parks). Jobs which have been created in this way tend to be connected with higher-level technologies and require greater know-how in order to meet the challenges presented by restructuring.

1.11 In the more developed EU countries, the fifteen 'old' EU Member States, institutional, legal and financial systems for regionalisation have been built up over decades, together with structures and designations of industrial development appropriate to changing conditions as a result of economic growth and evolving aid arrangements at European and national levels. In the countries which joined the EU in 2004, attention has focused on efforts to overcome significant backwardness in these areas and catching up with the rest of the EU. Industrial parks have played a prominent role in these efforts, given that they enhance competitiveness, while helping to overcome unemployment and the gap between divergent levels of regional development. Characteristic of the situation is a certain duality of economic and social structures existing at the time of accession: long-established administrative, institutional and financial elements are still present, although to a large extent these are losing ground, whereas newly developing structures of administration and governance are playing an increasingly important role.

Industrial parks have been set up in the accession countries as an expression of new aspirations for economic and industrial policy as well as regional development.

1.12 This own-initiative opinion seeks to discuss the potential contribution which parks can offer and how they stand in relation to each other, from the perspective of the tasks facing the EU, given that they promote activities which are conducive to economic and social cohesion in the post-accession context, and thus merit particularly close attention in connection with industrial change. It should be emphasised that it was the emergence of an internal regulatory order in the European Union which boosted the role of industrial parks in EU countries, and many of the new Member States and accession countries already responded to this shift in emphasis many years ago. At the same time, in some cases there was a lack of economic strategies capable of addressing the complex nature of opportunities offered by industrial parks and of providing leadership which took the needs of international integration into account.

1.13 In European Commission document IP/05/1252 the Commissioner for enterprise and industry, together with the Commissioner for science and research, pointed out that innovation and research are at the heart of business. In this respect,

innovation poles as well as research-driven and industrial clusters are of relevance. Point 3.2 of the accompanying action plan calls for promotion of such organisations and for Member States to make full use of Structural Fund resources (MEMO/05/366).

1.14 Industrial parks, technology parks, science parks and other organisations referred to by similar terms function as innovation poles and thus contribute to achieving the priority objectives which have been set for the current phase of the Lisbon process and for the 2005-2008 BEPGs. The aim of the European Economic and Social Committee in drawing up this own-initiative opinion is to promote the development of such organisations in the fifteen 'old' EU Member States and the ten 'new' ones and to encourage co-operation between them. In addition, it aims to enhance the accessibility of aid from the European Commission and other EU institutions to industrial, technology, science and other similar parks in all Member States.

2. Parks as innovation poles: types of park, and international trends

2.1 Types of park

Based on international experience, and also on the preceding remarks, it can be concluded that no two industrial parks are alike. It is also natural for a particular park to undergo constant change over time. The networks which are developing are a clear demonstration of this **diversity** of parks and their **adaptability** to changing needs. With the above remarks in mind, in the following analysis the activities of '**innovation poles**' are understood not only in the stricter sense relating to innovation in industry, technology, science or other areas, but as encompassing a **spectrum of activities generating added value**.

This approach ties in with the European Commission's definition of innovation and competitiveness poles as close cooperative association between enterprises, training centres and public- or private-sector research institutes within a defined geographical area. Such poles run innovation-centred joint projects generating various synergies between local players. Such cooperation is concentrated in particular fields of technological or scientific activity and is intended to create a critical mass enabling competitiveness and international visibility to be achieved.

2.2 Depending on their function (tasks), parks can be categorised as science parks, technology parks, innovation centres and business parks.

Technopolises, technology poles, technological districts, entrepreneurial zones and meta-districts can be considered as more comprehensive organisational structures.

Depending on how they are set up, two basic categories of parks can be clearly distinguished: green-field parks and reconstruction-type parks.

2.3 In a process of continuous change, parks pass through various stages of development. There is a tendency to move away from monumental industrial infrastructures to more sophisticated production facilities suitable for products from the higher end of the value chain, with increasing emphasis on ICT and a broad spectrum of innovative services provided by park operators to companies based in the park.

3. A review of the situation in the new Member States

3.1 In the ten countries which joined the European Union on 1 May 2004, it can be observed that industrial parks generally match the types described in point 2.1. In Cyprus there are several so-called 'Enterprise Incubators', co-financed by the government. These are private organisations dealing with specific projects.

3.2 In the Czech Republic, 82 industrial zones were set up through CzechInvest, the government agency to promote investment, in the framework of the governments programme to support the development of industrial zones. In 2001 further sub-programmes on *Regenerating industrial zones*, *Building and regenerating leasable properties*, and *Accreditation of industrial zones* were added.

3.3 There are several types of industrial park in Estonia, denoted and defined in various ways. Some of them have been set up with the support of local/regional authorities and other organisations; primarily concerned with research and development, they operate in cooperation with major universities. There are currently two such parks, in Tartu and in Tallinn. Industrial parks set up by private initiatives are profit-making companies, which are mainly active in logistics, services, commerce and other industrial sectors.

3.4 Most 'industrial parks' in Poland were set up over the past few years. At present, their economic impact is negligible, primarily because the main channels for investment, and foreign investment in particular, are the 14 Special Economic Zones (SEZ). These zones were set up by government acts in 1995-97 for a period of 20 years in industrially underdeveloped regions or regions in need of industrial restructuring, as part of support for regional development. Initially they offered investors 100 % exemption from corporate tax for the first ten

years, and 50 % over the next ten years, together with full exemption from property tax. On 1 January 2001, these incentives were brought into line with EU legislation. Given that the special status of SEZs will expire by December 2017 at the latest, the quantity, role and land area of industrial parks is likely to grow.

3.5 In Latvia parks are referred to as 'business parks', and they attract companies by means of favourable infrastructure and administrative conditions. The Latvian Innovation Act provides for a national research and development programme.

3.6 In Lithuania, decisive government efforts aimed at stimulating development of labour-intensive, relatively high-value-added industries (automotive electronics, electronics) and knowledge-based industries and services (biotechnology, IT, laser technology) have significantly contributed to industrial restructuring. The programme, launched in the late 1990s, to build 'industrial parks' with proper infrastructure near cities, was designed to develop Lithuania's economy, focusing as it did on industrial development in the immediate vicinity of urban centres, in view of the availability of skilled labour there.

3.7 In Hungary, the government has been operating a system to develop industrial parks since 1997. Individual parks submit their long-term development plans for assessment by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and if they are of a sufficiently high standard, they are awarded the title of industrial park. The objectives of industrial parks are to enhance competitiveness, to create jobs, and to put in place the conditions for environmentally friendly industrial activity, as well as logistical and other services which comply with EU standards. There are approximately 2 500 companies, both multinationals and Hungarian small and medium enterprises, with over 140 000 employees, in Hungarian industrial parks.

3.8 In Malta, economic statistics from recent years show that industrial manufacturing makes a relatively substantial contribution to the economy. Malta Enterprise, a company whose objective is to promote investment, has set up a Business Incubation Centre to support pioneering projects in fields such as IT, telecommunications, mechanical and electrical engineering design, industrial design, renewable energy sources and biotechnology. The Incubation Centre provides facilities for investment or financing, together with a wide range of infrastructure services, to companies operating in the above sectors.

3.9 Support for industrial parks in Slovakia is regulated by Act No 193 on support for industrial parks, adopted in 2001 and amended in 2003 and 2004. This act defines an industrial park as an area designated in the spatial plan in which one or more enterprises is engaged in industrial manufacture. Local and regional authorities can set up industrial parks on land owned by them; the Act also provides for joint establishment of industrial parks on the basis of a contract between two or more authorities.

3.10 In Slovenia, parks are referred to as 'technology parks'. Their purpose is to act as a catalyst for business ideas making use of state-of-the-art technology and a high degree of scientific know-how. In addition, they put in place the physical and intellectual infrastructure for such initiatives with particular attention to the needs of small and medium enterprises, and liaise between businesses and institutions of higher education. The Ministry of Economic Affairs defines a technological park as a legal entity which assists in the execution of projects, in contrast to incubators, which are also legal entities, but only create the starting conditions for projects.

4. Strategic aims and models

4.1 Parks — however much they differ from one another — eventually tend to form networks, whose activities are embedded in the economic, industrial and innovation policies adopted by the government of a particular country in pursuing its goals. Based on an analysis of government priorities, policies can be categorised as mission-oriented — i.e. thematic, with an emphasis on government resources — or diffusion-oriented — focusing on results and synergies, or as a combination of both.

4.2 The two models cannot always be sharply distinguished from one another on the basis of global objectives, given that, to take one example, promoting high technology in one region by means of industrial parks not only benefits that region, but also helps to propagate innovation in general. The difference is one of emphasis.

5. The Lisbon strategy and industrial parks

5.1 The Lisbon Strategy identifies promotion of the dissemination of innovation and technology, as well as the application and commercial exploitation of R&D results as priority tasks, in the interests of growth, employment and sustainability. Industrial parks and the accompanying organisational structures are playing an increasingly important role in helping to fulfil the organisational, financial and legal conditions for this to happen.

5.2 Industrial parks have a key role to play in promoting **innovation**. For this reason, it is not enough for industrial parks to form networks on the basis of purely industrial or agricultural considerations; it is becoming increasingly important to mobilise the intellectual resources of universities, if economic objectives are to be achieved. It will only be possible to enhance competitiveness, make the economy more flexible and tap the benefits of human resources by **mobilising intellectual resources** and promoting innovation.

6. Knowledge transfer and innovation

6.1 Innovation centres and transfer agencies

6.1.1 Rather than operating in one specific area, these entities act as a bridge between science and society by providing services (on either a commercial or non-profit basis) to enterprises in a given region or country. The types discussed here can be distinguished primarily according to whether they function more as agencies providing services (donors) or as (recipient) enterprises. Information centres and transfer agencies act as mediators by encouraging and helping companies to make use of research results. By contrast, organisations providing R&D services include research institutes, which in some cases are combined with recipient enterprises into a single unit.

6.1.2 The main services provided by innovation centres and transfer agencies are as follows: providing consultancy, enabling technology transfer, running a business information database, organising business meetings and trade fairs, recruiting specialists, servicing infrastructure used for experiments, providing support for spin-offs, linking up with business angels and networking.

6.1.3 These organisations mainly provide business consultancy services. A mediating role is played, for example, by innovation centres in the Netherlands and the network of R&D attachés in Norway. By means of the services which they provide to companies, these organisations help to disseminate research results and encourage their adoption. In Germany transfer centres and agencies follow a more direct approach to technology transfer by offering such services on the same lines as processing industry service centres operating in the USA. Their services include loans of researchers funded by government programmes, with the provision of financial assistance to companies employing university researchers by covering part of their salaries.

6.1.4 Usually such agencies are established by government initiatives (or, in the case of Germany, initiatives by chambers of commerce and industry), given that, for the beneficiaries of such programmes, technological development can only be made really effective and thus benefit the long-term interests of the economy with external support, which in most cases comes from the government. At the level of finances, the situation is more varied: for example, innovation centres in the Netherlands are funded by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and offer some of their services free of charge (for example the first 16 hours of consultancy sessions). The work of Norwegian R&D attachés is also government-funded. By contrast, in Germany and the United States support for such centres comes from a special fund, and diminishes over time: over three years in Germany, and six years in the USA, starting from a level of 50 %. Some services are provided on a commercial basis and others are on a non-profit basis.

6.2 Organisations providing R&D services

6.2.1 The characteristic features of these more highly structured agencies are that they work to bring science and industry closer together, unite industrial and other types of research institutions and companies in networks, and also, with the help of government funding, provide R&D services on a contractual basis, mainly to small and medium enterprises. Although their activities are to a large extent linked to universities, we can still distinguish them from university agencies and parks.

6.2.2 The latter organisations are also set up by means of government initiatives, and in some cases they are also state-run. They are commissioned by clients from the private sector (industries) and public sector (e.g. ministries) to publicise scientific innovations. Funding arrangements for such organisations vary considerably, from 10 % to 100 % of project expenditure.

6.3 Types of cooperation between academia and industry in the form of parks

6.3.1 These parks are sited in the vicinity of knowledge generators — usually universities or research institutes — and stand in a contractual relation with them; in some cases they function as part of them. Hungarian examples include the Info-Park or the INNOTECH Innovation Park of Budapest Technical University. However, the requisite backing comes from national or local government resources. Thanks to high quality technical infrastructure, they ensure that an increasingly wide range of conditions for innovation are in place. With the help of technological transfer, more and more phases of the innovation process can be covered and the range of activities taking place within a single industrial park can be expanded to include the

creation of market-ready products, mass production, and even the establishment of new industrial sectors.

6.3.2 Many science and research parks have underpinned prosperity and diverse scientific opportunities in the areas where they are set up. There are many such areas in France (e.g. Lyons). In the case of other French parks, the '**technopolis**' model plays a key role, and is seen as a unique **new urban concept**. The first Japanese parks were set up in a similar way, but within the framework of a programme, based on a similar version of the 'technopolis' model to the French one. The best known of these is Tsukala, a green-field development which was established as an entirely **new science city**. Nowadays, technopolises are set up by local initiatives. In the USA, it was in areas such as these that the first innovation parks were sited (for example Silicon Valley and the vicinity of Route 128 in Boston).

6.3.3 Today, innovation parks exist in all the countries of the European Union, from Lisbon to Athens. The parks discussed so far are the most complex of the innovation-oriented organisations and have the greatest organisational potential, given that, in terms of promoting innovation, they offer the benefits outlined above.

7. Recommendations

7.1 In the EESC's view, the European Union should play an active role in promoting the establishment and development of industrial and technological parks as innovation poles in EU Member States and regions, thus enabling full integration of new and old Member States in the enlarged single market, which is one of the key elements of the new partnership for growth and development envisaged by the re-launched Lisbon strategy. The ultimate goal is:

- to boost the competitiveness of the new Member States and to reduce regional disparities, thus ensuring better overall economic performance in the EU;
- to boost competitiveness at regional and local levels, enabling more effective management of industrial restructuring, of the re-use of natural, financial and human resources, and of a strategy capable of responding to the complex nature of the economic and technological opportunities and challenges presented by European integration and the global market;
- to ensure that full use is made of the opportunities offered by completion of the enlarged European single market, for example through networking of technology parks and industrial parks at trans-regional levels based on their global goals;

- to raise general standards in research and innovation, and commercial application and market launches of research results, by means of even closer links between SMEs, the scientific sphere and research, training of highly qualified personnel at both operational and organisational levels, modernisation of public administration and the accompanying legislative framework, and capacity building for all players participating in the parks' decision-making processes, thus helping the European Union to become the most dynamic region in the world, while spending 3 % of GDP on innovation;
- to use European networks of technology and industrial parks to stimulate interaction between industry, the services sector and the financial sector, at the same time as enhancing technological links and building up the capacity to take on and propagate new knowledge, thus boosting innovation and competitiveness and ensuring that objectives such as growth, competitiveness, employment, sustainable development and equal opportunities are compatible with one another and achievable through interaction and consensus;
- to monitor and evaluate the performance, effective technical capacities, actual achievements and other beneficial effects of industrial and technology parks; this should be done on a regular basis and in reference to standardised criteria laid down in advance;
- to ensure compliance with the EU legislative framework, including competition and state aid rules, while taking into consideration the continuing development of such rules.

7.2.1 In the EESC's view, policies to promote networks of industrial and technology parks must be developed at three levels, i.e. European, national and regional/local, in full compliance with the subsidiarity principle enshrined in the Treaties and with EU legislation, including competition law.

7.2.2 The EESC advocates a global, integrated approach encompassing the Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities, European Investment Fund (EIF) and European Investment Bank (EIB) funding, the European growth initiative, the Structural Funds, the multiannual programme for enterprise and entrepreneurship, the new partnership policy instrument, the competitiveness and innovation framework programme, and Community programmes in the fields of education and training, while taking into account the broad economic policy guidelines for 2005-2008. Adopting such an approach will ensure flexibility in choice of instruments, close coordination, consistency and simplicity, thus facilitating participation in programmes and enabling proposals to be approached from a variety of perspectives. All of this would benefit the development of pan-European networks by supporting integrated cooperation programmes between industrial parks, technology parks and industrial districts at inter-regional and trans-regional level.

7.2.3 Concerning the mechanisms of the new competitiveness and innovation framework programme (see INT/270, study group), the EESC would propose that the 'Entrepreneurship and Innovation' and 'ICT Policy Support' programmes explicitly mention the development of networks of industrial parks, technology parks and industrial districts, with particular reference to promotion of such networks providing funding for the initial stages and facilitating access to venture capital, and measures to promote the introduction and more effective use of information and communication technologies through the e-Europe and i2010 initiatives. The new mechanisms of the competitiveness and innovation framework programme must include support for networks of industrial and technological parks and districts; this should also help to boost SME participation in the Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities.

7.2.4 With regard to individual programmes included in the seventh framework programme, particularly the 'capacities', 'people' and 'JRC' (Joint Research Centre) programmes, the EESC would make the following recommendations:

- stronger support measures are needed for SMEs, particularly with regard to research, and organisations and associations of SMEs; it should be acknowledged that the pan-European network of industrial and technology parks and clusters and industrial districts are fully eligible to submit research proposals;
- measures should be taken to enhance the research and knowledge potential of European regions, to support the development of industrial and technology parks and clusters as well as European and pan-European networks of parks and clusters, to finance 'Foresight' participatory technology activities with a view to formulating medium and long-term plans and strategies, together with Foresight activities relating to the theme of 'socio-economic sciences and the humanities', which is part of the 'capacities' specific programme;
- financial and human resources envisaged by the 'industry-academia pathways and partnership' action included in the 'people' specific programme, and in particular researchers who recognise the special concerns relevant to the development of SMEs, should be made available to meet the needs of industrial and technology parks and clusters;
- the expertise of the Joint Research Centre must be made fully accessible to industrial and technology parks and clusters, by funding their participation in indirect activities with regard to networking, promoting training and mobility, and establishing technology platforms; in doing so, they should take advantage of the high European added-value offered by the JRC and its research institutes, in particular the IPTS in Seville.

7.2.5 With regard to the EIF, the EIB, the growth initiative, and Structural and Cohesion Funds, action should be taken to follow up the conclusions of the March 2005 European summit by creating more and better synergies in the field of research and innovation between Community funds, the EIF and the EIB. The European Council also pointed out that regional and local players must be given much greater ownership of the Lisbon strategy, with its three pillars (economic, social and environmental). The EESC recommends stepping up efforts to develop cohesion policy — which promotes convergence, competitiveness and territorial cooperation — and concentrating more resources on the development of innovation and the knowledge-based society in such a way as to anticipate and stimulate economic changes tending to enhance competitiveness and economic competitive advantages; it also recommends enhancing the vocational skills of the labour force, especially in the new Member States. To this end, activities and networks of industrial and technology parks and clusters should be developed, through European territorial cooperation and public-private partnerships (PPPs) and funding programmes such as the EIF's Innovation 2010 initiative.

7.2.6 The fifth multiannual programme for enterprise and entrepreneurship and the European Charter for Small Enterprises highlight the need for development of the education and training of entrepreneurs, measures to enable cheaper and faster start-ups, more modern legislation and regulation, better availability of skilled labour, easier access to online services, improved fiscal and financial conditions, strengthening the technological capacity of SMEs, and accessibility to successful e-business models and best practice. The EESC has always been strongly in favour of Community action with an impact on industrial and technological parks and clusters.

7.2.7 The EESC feels that it would be useful if the New European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, and in particular that part of it which was previously covered by action areas 2 and 3 of the INTERREG programme, were to include measures concerning industrial and technological parks and clusters in its funding for inter-regional, trans-regional, European and pan-European networks.

7.2.8 The EESC advocates cooperation in the Member States with job centres and with all institutional players at EU level with an interest in job creation to ensure that parks remain in

a position to generate new jobs, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by networking. Representatives of business, trade unions, local authorities and NGOs must be involved to ensure that jobs involving significant additional high-quality (tacit) knowledge are created. Employees working in parks must be enabled to participate on an ongoing basis on training and retraining adapted to industrial restructuring. In line with EESC opinion CESE 1073/2005 adopted on 28-29 September (CCMI/019), it should be emphasised that social dialogue and employee participation are crucial in preparing for industrial change and channelling the process in the right direction.

7.2.9 The EESC advocates measures aimed at improving European training and educational systems and developing new paradigms of production and environmentally friendly consumption, by means of educational and training activities to assist in the development of networks of industrial and technological parks and clusters. The new training and educational programmes in such parks and clusters could also contribute to making highly skilled professions in industry and technology more attractive for young Europeans.

7.2.10 In keeping with the conclusions adopted by the EESC on this subject in earlier opinions — and in particular in opinion 374/2005 of 6 April 2005 on European industrial districts — the EESC would emphasise that it is vital to develop industrial parks and industrial districts as innovation poles and European platforms (European Platform for Innovation Poles), enabling a joint strategic vision and capacity-building activities and cultural development of the trade unions together with professional associations, in cooperation with the relevant players of organised civil society. In doing so, full use must be made of all appropriate instruments for promoting innovation and knowledge transfer: exchanging best practice, setting basic harmonised requirements for identification, taking joint training measures, providing direct access to JRC expertise, developing common terminology and classifications, as well as exploiting and creating potential synergies between the resources of industrial parks and clusters in various countries, with a view to enabling them to take direct part in Community programmes and initiatives. At the same time, common systems for the evaluation, monitoring and benchmarking of European industrial and technological parks and clusters and industrial districts must be put in place.

Brussels, 14 December 2005.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Anne-Marie SIGMUND
