



## Contribution from the Coimbra Group Universities to the Discussion on the European Institute of Technology

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The Coimbra Group supports the Commission's desire to create processes that stimulate the creation of world-class research, world-class young researchers and the contribution of both to innovation in the economy and society. Whilst applauding the motives that lie behind the proposal for a European Institute of Technology (EIT), the Coimbra Group is concerned that the objectives for an EIT have not been clearly articulated, and that the processes that have so far been suggested are not designed to maximise the benefits that might flow from it, and might fundamentally undermine it.

The Commission's proposals have stressed the importance of the "knowledge triangle" of research, education and innovation. We concur with this focus. However, given that this will inevitably require a productive relation between the EIT and universities, we believe that the proposal for the EIT groups to be seconded from the collaborating institution and to become part of a legally separate EIT is a damaging one, for three reasons:

- It will be strongly resisted by the universities, and will be a source of conflict.
- The specific research areas of the EIT must have the potential to evolve as the research progresses. It is very difficult to predict the trajectory of research development, and the EIT must have the capacity to adapt its approach through the infusion of new blood. The enormous breadth of capability in a modern research-intensive university would facilitate this through uninhibited interaction between the university and the EIT. There must therefore be an effective partnership between the university and the EIT.
- If the EIT is to stimulate educational activity, it must again be based on partnership between the universities, which have major commitments, experience and capability in that domain, and the EIT.

We suggest therefore

- a) That staff in the elements of an EIT located in a university should have joint membership of both;
- b) That the EIT should not be legally separated from the partner university, but that they should be bound together in a joint association;
- c) That students should receive their degrees from the partner university;
- d) That the EIT should focus on postgraduate work, and should therefore contribute primarily to postgraduate studies, although some of its members may contribute to undergraduate degrees.

We are also concerned about the significance of the word "technology" in the EIT title. Modern economic development is about innovation, not technology, though technology may be implicated. This distinction is particularly important in that most modern economies, including those of Europe, are dominated by service sectors and not manufacturing. It is for this reason that the Commission should consider broadening the scope of any EIT beyond the technological domain to include the arts, humanities and social sciences.

Tartu, 19 May 2006  
Coimbra Group Executive Board

