

Joint Business Statement

The need for EU funding based on open competition and excellence in the future European Competitiveness Fund for a globally competitive Europe

We are fully committed to the European Union's (EU) objective of achieving a more competitive Europe, based on the findings and recommendations of the Draghi report. The next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will be key to deliver on this ambition, and we welcome the European Commission's proposal for a more flexible and simplified budgetary framework, as well as the increased focus on competitiveness through the next framework programme (FP10) and the proposed European Competitiveness Fund (ECF). The central role of these programmes, and the strong link between research & innovation (R&I) and markets and deployment could provide a vital support to the EU's innovation capacity and strengthen its industrial resilience.

In order to truly deliver on our ambitions and make the FP10 and the ECF real vehicles for European competitiveness and deployable, market-oriented, breakthrough innovation, we believe there is a need to put excellence at the forefront of the programmes. To bolster global competitiveness for European companies, it is crucial that ECF funding be allocated through open competition, prioritising projects by following *the criteria of excellence, impact and quality as well as highest relevance for European competitiveness*. This principle should serve as the cornerstone for all funding decisions.

We therefore propose to the Council of the European Union (the Council) to introduce a new article setting general award criteria in the *General Provisions Chapter* of the ECF Regulation. The other ECF articles should be aligned with the new article and modified accordingly. The work programmes could set additional or complementary award criteria; however, the general award criteria would have to be applied. Some exemptions could be needed, but these would have to be as limited as possible.

We suggest introducing the following article on general award criteria and procedure:

European Competitiveness Fund

SECTION 2

Single Rulebook

General award criteria and procedure

"The ECF funding shall be based on open competition and the main award criteria should refer to excellence, impact and quality as well as competitiveness highest relevance for European global competitiveness."

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