A Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party convening in Palermo, Italy on 23-25 November 2011

Whereas

- The European Commission presented the Green Paper "From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding";

- Higher education, research and innovation play an pivotal role in establishing the European Union as a leading knowledge-based economy;

- One of the headline targets of the EU2020 strategy is to raise the percentage of Research, Development and Innovation investment to a minimum 3% of the EU's GDP (public and private combined);

- The interim evaluation of the Seventh Framework Programme confirmed its vital role in building and sustaining European networks;

- The interim evaluation of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme confirmed its highly relevant objectives for EU-level intervention;

- The latter evaluation also highlighted the important role of the financial instruments in support of SMEs, the Enterprise Europe Network, the eco-innovation market replication projects and the demand-driven pilots for ICT and biotechnology innovation;

Therefore

- Underlines that the evaluations also identified a number of shortcomings and deficiencies, in particular the lack of a whole-chain approach to research and innovation, the complexity of instruments, over-bureaucratic rules and procedures and a lack of transparency;

- Agrees with the Council position to focus future EU funding programmes more on Europe 2020 priorities, addressing societal challenges and key technologies, facilitating collaborative and industry-driven research, streamlining the instruments, radically simplifying access, reducing time to market and further strengthening excellence;

- Highlights the importance of programmes that focus on the promotion and recognition of excellence in European research and
that use a peer review system when selecting projects and fellowships;

- Underlines that EU research and innovation funding should provide the glue (funding) for cross-border collaboration;

- Warns that linking additional EU funding to the financial capacity of the Member States, rather than to the intrinsic quality and critical mass of the research, development and innovation potential available in Europe, risks damaging the scheme;

- Calls for stimulation and further integration of the European research area.

- Calls on the ELDR Bureau to organise a workshop on the matter taking into account multi-layered aspects and tangible approaches.