

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by welcoming you all to Porto and by saying that it is a great honour for me to chair the EIN Workshop on Research and Innovation. I should also like to express my gratitude to the speakers, the rapporteur and all of you who are participating in this meeting today.

This is the second meeting of the EIN working group for EU Innovation Policy. The EIN Group aims at bringing together EPP Members, policy makers, European Foundations and EPP Study Groups. The Working Group seeks to develop action on how best to unleash the potential for EU competitiveness through innovation.

This EIN summer university is dedicated more particularly to examining the potential for greater collaboration between Europe and the Americas. My feeling is that the two Americas have tended, in recent years to concentrate on the Pacific coast. It is important that we encourage renewed interest in trans-Atlantic cooperation at the same time as we in Europe devote more attention to our Atlantic coast as well.

Against this background, the main objective of this workshop as I see it, is to discuss concrete ideas for policy makers with regard to how best to develop an Atlantic pact for growth and how best to ensure that research and innovation feed directly into this pact.

Often consideration of trans-Atlantic cooperation tends to concentrate exclusively on trade issues. However, we require a wider

scope for such cooperation, particularly in so far as this concerns improved policy coordination, increased regulatory cooperation and standardisation.

With particular regard to research and innovation, such trans-Atlantic cooperation should be constructed in such a way that our already strong ties are reinforced. This should enable us to learn from each other and benefit from each other's acquired expertise. Europe, for example, leads in the number of scientific publication published each year whilst the USA is much better than us at turning ideas into marketable products.

Despite remaining weak in the passage from research to market, there are nevertheless many sectors that Europe leads in - I am thinking of aeronautics, automobiles and chemical engineering - and there are sectors in which the United States is ahead of us, such as ICT and biotech. As for South America, Brazil stands out - to name but one country in the region - in the fields of energy, agriculture and in aeronautics.

Another of the strengths we have in Europe is the way in which EU cohesion and regional development policy has contributed to stimulating research and innovation across Europe whilst closing the gap between the different regions making up Europe. Portugal serves as an example in this respect. Portugal is a country in which all the indicators for research and innovation is growing the fastest out of the 27 member states. This is directly due to the application of European regional funds in the education, research and innovation sectors.

This being said, the point that I should like to stress is less the differences between Europe and the two Americas. It is more a question of how we can learn from each other and build on our existing ties and on-going negotiations - such as the current negotiations around the EU-US and Canada trade agreements. This will allow us to create a springboard to renewed growth for the West in general. Indeed, it is urgent that we find ways of facing the challenge that China and other countries on the Pacific Rim represent. This must involve greater collaboration and a sense of common purpose shared between the two Americas and Europe.

By way of conclusion, could I just say, before handing over to the rapporteur, Mr. Richard Hudson, CEO & Editor of Science/Business, that from now on Mr Hudson will introduce the speakers and conduct this debate as an open dialogue. For my part, I look forward to a stimulating and thought-provoking debate.

Thank you very much.