

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen

Let me begin by saying what a great honour it has been to have been invited to host this meeting this afternoon.

I should like to thank Mr. Hudson for all the effort he has devoted to organising today's event. I should also like to thank all the people who will be speaking for having taken the time from their busy schedules to contribute to today's proceedings.

Purpose

The subject of today's meeting is the future of the EIT.

This is particularly timely given that

* the outcome of the EIT independent evaluation was published on the first of June and based on this evaluation, the EIT board and the Commission will come up with the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda in the near future.

* an open consultation on the future of the EIT has just come to a conclusion today in fact.

Against this background, I hope that today's discussion will serve as input for the Commission and the EIT board in their design of the SIA. Before discussing the future of the EIT, it is important to address the question of whether EIT is on track to achieve the objectives that it initially set itself. These include: the development of the EIT

brand, the attraction of top class talents and funding from third parties, the production of research and innovation breakthroughs and so forth.

Beyond this, there are a number of questions concerning the synergy between the EIT the FP and the CIP that remain to be clarified. Two problem areas stand out in particular. These are,

- * firstly, the future areas into which the EIT is expected to expand (potential KIC themes)

- * secondly, the inevitable, thorny question of the budget. In the EU Parliament report on the future budget - something that has already been adopted in Plenary - the Parliament called for an increased budget for the EIT. Yesterday, the European Commission proposes a budget of 2.8 billions euro for the period 2013-2020.

It is of course important that all the stakeholders involved share their respective points of view and that the Commission in particular takes our points of view into consideration when formulating policy.

Well, that is undoubtedly enough from me. Let me hand you over to the moderator for today's session, Mr Hudson.