



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## COMPETITIVENESS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS



09.10.09

**[COM\(2009\) 512](#) - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Preparing for our future: Developing a common strategy for key enabling technologies in the EU"**

Over the next 5 to 10 years the shape and potential of industries worldwide is expected to be transformed. Although a significant part of the goods and services that will be available in the market in 2020 are as yet unknown, the main driving force behind their development will be the deployment of key enabling technologies (KETs). KETs are knowledge intensive and associated with high R&D intensity, rapid innovation cycles, high capital expenditure and highly-skilled employment. They enable process, goods and service innovation throughout the economy and are of systemic relevance. They are multidisciplinary, cutting across many technology areas with a trend towards convergence and integration. KETs can assist technology leaders in other fields to capitalise on their research efforts.

Those nations and regions mastering these technologies will be at the forefront of managing the shift to a low carbon, knowledge-based economy, which is a precondition for ensuring welfare, prosperity and security of its citizens. Hence the deployment of KETs in the EU is not only of strategic importance but is indispensable.

Currently the EU has very good research and development capacities in some KET areas; however it is not as successful in commercialising research results through manufactured goods and services. Improving this situation requires a more strategic approach to research, innovation and capitalisation. Moreover, until now, there has been no shared understanding within the EU on exactly what should be considered to be a KET.

Thus, this Communication tries to launch a process of identifying the KETs that strengthen the EU's industrial and innovation capacity to address the societal challenges ahead and it proposes a set of measures to improve the related framework conditions. As such, it forms part of the development of EU industrial policy and of the preparation for the new European plan for innovation.