



Competitiveness and
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Strand 1 - Competitiveness and Innovation

The need to boost the competitiveness of the European economy is said to be the number one priority of the European Commission under Jose Manuel Barroso. Yet growth in core Europe remains low, while unemployment remains stubbornly high. Competitive pressures from both Asia and North America mean that Europe cannot afford to sit still, yet many fear that the drive to make Europe's economy shine will come at the expense of worker's rights and will spell the end of Europe's cradle-to-grave welfare states.

Through its 'Competitiveness and Innovation' strand, The Centre is working to focus minds and stimulate debate on some of the key issues at stake as Europe struggles with the challenge of economic and social reform.

Below are some of the events hosted by The Centre since the beginning of 2004 in its Competitiveness and Innovation Strand:

December 7 2006: Gathering Storm or Breaking Dawn? New Opportunities for EU-Asia Scientific Collaboration



This was thesecond in a series of three events organised at The Centre in Brussels around the project the Atlas of Ideas, a major 18-month study by the leading UK think-tank Demos of science and innovation in China, India and South Korea, with a focus on opportunities for collaboration with Europe.

A report last year from the US National Academies of Science, apocalyptically entitled *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, warned that "for the cost of one chemist or engineer in the US, a company can hire about five chemists in China or 11 engineers in India", with the result that the US "could soon lose its privileged position" in science. Such concerns are by no means unique to America. In Europe, the language may be more measured, but there is no disguising the concern felt by some policymakers, scientists and business leaders in response to the growing R&D strengths of Asia.

But retreating into a scientific version of protectionism is not a solution. Science and innovation are not zero sum games: more in Asia doesn't mean less elsewhere. To pretend otherwise is to misunderstand the nature of innovation; the way in which the work of one team builds on the successes and failures of others. Speakers included James Wilsdon, Head of Science and Innovation at Demos and co-author of the Atlas of Ideas, Upton van der Vliet and Pierrick Fillon-Ashida of DG Research, and Jian-ji An, Mission of China to the EU. The discussion was chaired by Simon O'Connor of The Centre.

This event was supported by AstraZeneca, BT and Qualcomm.

December 4 2006: Anthony Giddens lecture on 'Europe in the Global Age'

Anthony Giddens gave a lecture for the launch of his book 'Europe in the Global Age'.

Europe's social model - its system of welfare and social protection - is regarded by many as the jewel in the crown. It is what helps to give the European societies their distinctive qualities of social cohesion and care for the vulnerable. Over recent years, however, the social model has come under great strain in many states within the European Union - unemployment, for example, remains stubbornly high. The resulting tensions have fuelled dissatisfaction with the European project as a whole, culminating the rejection of Europe's proposed new constitution.

Reform of the social model is therefore a matter of urgency. It has to go hand in hand with the quest to regenerate economic growth. The author argues that the traditional welfare state needs to be rethought. We have to bring lifestyle change into the heart of what 'welfare' means. Moreover, environmental issues must be directly connected to other citizenship obligations. These innovations have to be made at the same time as Europe's competitive position is upgraded.

November 9 2006: Is Multinational R&D Heading East?

This roundtable marked the first in a series of three events organised at The Centre in Brussels around the project the Atlas of Ideas, a major 18-month study by the leading UK think-tank Demos of science and innovation in China, India and South Korea, with a focus on opportunities for collaboration with Europe.

We used to know where new scientific ideas would come from: the top universities and research laboratories of large companies based in Europe and the US. While production was dispersed among global networks of suppliers, it was assumed that more knowledge-intensive tasks would stay at home. All that is changing fast.

Speakers included Charles Leadbeater, Co-author of the Atlas of Ideas and Kurt Vandenberghe, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Janez Potocnik and Ashutosh Sheshabalaya, Author of 'The Rising Elephant'.

The discussion was chaired by Martin Porter of The Centre.

This event was supported by AstraZeneca, BT and Qualcomm.

October 12 2006: Europe's Knowledge Economy

This was the first in a series of four seminars The Centre is organising with the Work Foundation , during which specific aspects of their major three-year research programme on the knowledge economy was presented and discussed.

This first seminar sought to define the knowledge economy. It looked at what it is and what it is not, identify key features, and made a first attempt to identify measurable definitions of the knowledge economy in practical, and policy relevant terms for the knowledge industries, knowledge workers and what we mean by the knowledge economy.

October 11 2006: Who should be responsible for Online Consumer Protection?

Rising levels of internet penetration, and the proliferation of online services and content are creating new opportunities for consumers, and new areas in which consumers need protection. To date, different approaches to online consumer protection have had varying degrees of success, as regulators balance this priority with practical hurdles and with the need to foster and promote innovation online.

The discussion was introduced by Philip Graf, Chair of Content Board, Ofcom.

October 10 2006: Health Tourism in Europe

What is 'health tourism' and how is it encompassed in European policies? What developments do European policy makers see in European health tourism services? Can Europe compete at a global level as an attractive health tourism destination? These were some of the issues that will be explored during the roundtable discussion.

This roundtable was organised in collaboration with Dr. Jorgo Chatzimarkakis MEP.

October 3 2006: Pamphlet launch of 'The Governance of the Euro'

This study is the result of six months' work by a Federal Trust working group under the chairmanship of Sir Stephen Wall. It recognises that the euro offers opportunities for "deepening and accelerating the general process of European integration" but acknowledges that "substantial political and economic barriers exist to any rapid restructuring of the eurozone." The study is a critical review of the most important factors and arguments likely to influence the eurozone's evolution.

The debate focused on the recommendations resulting from the report. Panelists included Iain Graham Bishop of Bishop and Associates and Brendan Donnelly, Director, the Federal Trust.

[Click here to download the report](#)

June 14 2006: Seminar on Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Supply Chain Management (SCM) has become one of the most critical areas for businesses. This seminar looked in detail at the environmental and social issues arising within global supply chains, and best-in-class practices used to manage the supply chain. Organised with the Centre for Sustainable Design.

May 30-31 2006: Buy Bright Initiative

An information platform with a networking event that will look at practical ways to encourage public purchasers and procurement officers to make the right investments concerning energy efficient lighting technologies. Organised with the European Lamp Companies Federation (ELC), in partnership with Energie-Cités, CEMR, WWF and CELMA. The event is supported by the European Commission Intelligent Energy Europe Programme.

December 8 2005: The Criminalisation of European Law

Panel discussion on the possible effects of the recent ruling of the European Court of Justice, which widened the possibility for the European Community to propose the use of criminal sanctions in a number of industrial fields of EU law. With John Temple Lang, Cleary Gottlieb, Brussels (Chair); Michel Petite, Director General of the Legal Service of the European Commission, Brussels; Louise Hodges, Partner, Kingsley Napley, London; and Anne Weyembergh, Assistant Professor at the Institute for European Studies, ULB and Co-ordinator of the European Criminal Law Academic Network, Brussels.

December 7 2005: Patients sans Frontières?

Roundtable on cross-border healthcare provision in Europe. With the British Medical Association. This event was chaired by Dr Edwin Borman, Chairman of the BMA's International Committee. The keynote speaker was John Bowis MEP.

November 24 2005: The Draft Anti-Monopoly Law of the People's Republic of China

Closed seminar that explored the impact of the draft Chinese anti-monopoly law, discussing issues such as market definition and abuse, remedies and the role of intellectual property rights in effective anti-trust enforcement. With participants from DG Trade, DG Competition and the International Bar Association.

July 5 2005: European Budget: The Poisonous Budget Rebate Debate

The Centre hosted the launch of this [report](#) by Jacques Le Cacheux, published by Notre Europe, with a discussion chaired by Pascal Lamy.

June 23 2005: Working lunch with Anthony Murphy on the UK Presidency

Anthony Murphy is Director, European Strategy and Better Regulation, Europe and World Trade Directorate, DTI.

April 26 2005: Seminar on Competition Policy for Officials of the new Member States and Candidate Countries

With the Irish Institute for Public Administration.

April 26 2005: Think, Imagine, Create - Roundtable on World Intellectual Property Day

With André Heitz, Director, WIPO Brussels Office, and Horacio Gutiérrez, EMEA General Counsel, Microsoft.

April 5 2005: Slovenia - one year after EU accession

Seminar with H.E. Ciril Štokelj, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the EU; Janez Potoènik, European Commissioner for Science and Research Alojz Peterle MEP; Boris Cizelj, Director of the Slovenian Business & Research Association; and Marko Voljè, Director General for Central Europe, KBC

March 21 2005: Seminar on the EU's Financial Perspectives 2007-2013

With Professor Iain Begg of the London School of Economics, author of a new Federal Trust report on this subject; and Vasco Cal, of the cabinet of Financial Programming and Budget Commissioner Dalia Grybauskaitė.

Download Professor Iain Begg's report here -



[Begg_Report.pdf](#) [882.48 Ko]

March 3 2005: EU Accession and Economic Competitiveness

Launch of a report by the Group of Applied Economics (GEA) and the Romanian Centre for Economic Policies (CEROPE) on the economic benefits of EU accession and the contribution of the acceding countries to achieving the EU's competitiveness goals, with a special focus on Romania. With the Romanian Information Centre in Brussels and the British Embassy in Bucharest.

November 19 2004: Lunch with Will Hutton on the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy

Will Hutton, Chief Executive of the Work Foundation, attended a working lunch to discuss the conclusions of the High Level Group on the Lisbon Strategy, chaired by Wim Kok. Will Hutton was rapporteur of the High Level Group's report, [Facing the Challenge](#).

November 3 2004: Dinner with Wim Kok, Chair of the High Level Group on the Lisbon Strategy

The Centre hosted a dinner for Wim Kok, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands and Chair of the High Level Group on the Lisbon Strategy, on the eve of the presentation of the Group's report to the European Council.

June 15 2004: Seminar and lunch with Philip Lowe, Director General of DG Competition, European Commission

The seminar focused on the interaction between competitiveness and competition policy, the impact of other policy areas on competition regulation, as well as the role of the Competition Commissioner in the next Commission. Philip Lowe also discussed some of the conclusions raised in a paper entitled 'Problems and Process; EU Merger Review and How To Use It', written by Mathew Heim (see PUBLICATIONS).

June 3 2004: Breakfast with Erkki Liikanen, European Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society

Commissioner Liikanen, who was about to leave Brussels to take up the post of Governor of the Bank of Finland, gave a fascinating insight into his experience of interacting with business during his two terms as a Commissioner.

March 16 2004: Lecture by Will Hutton - 'An Unfashionably Positive View of Europe's Competitiveness'

On March 16, The Centre hosted a lecture by Will Hutton on Europe's competitiveness. Will is Chief Executive of the Work Foundation and author of 'The State We're In' and 'The World We're In', as well as the writer of an influential weekly column in The Observer. A staunch defender of Europe's economic and social model, in his lecture he called upon Europe to recognise that its core values ('stakeholder capitalism', the importance of the public realm, mutuality of respect and the social contract) make us better and not worse equipped to meet the challenges of globalisation.



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