

## **President Barroso's Video Message**

### **Biotechnology Benefits Event - 9 December 2010**

#### ***The role of Biotechnology in Europe's responsible innovation***

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*Let me first of all congratulate you for organising this event which aims at demonstrating and explaining the manifold benefits which the European bio-industry sector can bring to society. And I want to pass a particular word of congratulation to those winners of EuropaBio's most innovative awards.*

*'Doing things smarter and doing things more sustainable is a key message of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Today's conference addresses both aspects, certainly not by coincidence.*

*Our common goal is to turn Europe into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. EU 2020 shows ways how the EU can come out from the crisis stronger by delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.*

*Industrial biotechnology is a key enabling technology in the transition to a environment-friendly, low carbon and resource-efficient economy. I thus count on your industry to provide a crucial contribution to delivering on our Europe 2020 agenda.*

*The life sciences and biotechnologies already play a vital role in the competitiveness of the European economy: from health care and pharmaceuticals to industrial processing, agriculture and food.*

*But biotechnology also plays an important role in tackling challenges such as an ageing population, global warming, overdependence on fossil fuels, and guaranteeing food security.*

*I welcome that Europe has major strengths in the field of biotechnology: it is the world's leading producer of enzymes, for example. We see that Europe's chemical industries are showing increasing interest in the potential of industrial biotechnology.*

*Nearly 70% of the estimated €230bn in R&D expenditure worldwide is spent by European firms. This strength is no accident. Europe has supported biotechnology research for over 20 years. But we cannot afford to be complacent. While a recent Eurobarometer survey shows that 53% of Europeans believe that biotechnologies will have a positive effect in the future, there are important knowledge gaps and an increased need for communication.*

*Policy decisions must be based on evidence and sound science. But also industry has its role to play. The ethics of responsibility not only applies to us politicians. The more responsibly you act and inter-act with society, the bigger the public acceptance for your industry will become.*

*While public concerns exist concerning some biotechnologies, such as GMOs and the production of biofuels, biotechnology itself may actually offer new innovative solutions that*

*help address these concerns: I am thinking of, for example, new industrial biotechnological processes that facilitate the conversion of biomass from woody material and agricultural waste into fuel. This will hopefully soon remove the conflicts on fuel production at the expense of food. Or biotechnology research, some supported by the Commission, that helps quantify the risks and benefits of the various uses of GMOs.*

*And, of course, we can use biotechnologies to explore completely new areas, such as within marine environments. Here, biotechnology is a tool to explore the huge potential of ocean resources for producing innovative industrial and environmental applications. But these are just a few examples out of a vast variety of fields of action in biotechnologies.*

*Biotechnology research is a priority of the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research, where, in addition to health biotechnology, we currently finance some €200 million in projects specifically channelling biotechnology and know-how into industrial deployment. Participation of SMEs and large industry is substantial, accounting for 25% of partners in such projects.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*I wish your conference smart debates and sustainable outcomes. Europe needs an innovative, R&D oriented and responsible biotechnology industry. An industry which is rooted in the middle of our societies, because it offers concrete solutions to its many challenges, because it offers high quality employment, because it drives economic growth.*

*Thank you very much.*