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## The European initiative EUREKA: The Concept and Aims of EUREKA

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## TECHNOLOGY POLICY

# The European Initiative EUREKA

**The European initiative for cooperation in research and development, known as EUREKA, began to take shape at the conference of 18 European countries and the EC Commission held in Hanover at the beginning of November 1985. Lutz G. Stavenhagen, Minister of State in the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Otto Wolff von Amerongen, President of the German Industrial and Trade Association, discuss below the aims of the EUREKA programme and assess its chances of success.**

## The Concept and Aims of EUREKA

by Lutz G. Stavenhagen, Bonn\*

**T**he second conference of Foreign and Research Ministers of the 18 countries which, together with the Commission of the European Communities, support the European initiative for co-operation in research and development, known as "EUREKA", was held at Hanover on 5 and 6 November 1985 under German chairmanship. Seventeen countries – the 10 EEC members and the prospective members Portugal and Spain as well as Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland – and the EEC Commission had attended the conference in Paris on 17 June 1985 at which EUREKA was established. Turkey joined them and took part in the preparations for Hanover.

The Ministers had set themselves two tasks: to discuss the EUREKA concept and adopt a declaration of principles relating to it and to present initial examples of EUREKA projects. Both tasks were fulfilled.

A preliminary German draft of the declaration of principles relating to EUREKA had been discussed by the Group of Four, which had been set up by the Paris ministerial conference and comprised representatives from the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Luxembourg as EEC President and the EEC Commission, and at two subsequent meetings in Bonn of the High Representatives of EUREKA a final draft declaration was worked out more or less unanimously. The two meetings of the High Representatives were attended by senior officials delegated by the

Governments of all countries participating in EUREKA and by the EEC Commission. The key role played by this group in preparing the second ministerial conference will continue to fall to it. As stated in the declaration of principles, this group will assist the Conference of Ministers in carrying out its tasks and preparing its meetings and keep it informed of the creation of projects. The High Representatives are to promote the necessary flow of information in their own country, arrange contacts between enterprises and institutes, and point out to other High Representatives sectors, technologies, products or services for which there is an interest in co-operation. They are to discuss with other High Representatives solutions to any problems and exchange views on project funding. The High Representatives may, of course, meet in smaller groups to discuss specific projects.

### **Priorities and Criteria**

By adopting the declaration of principles relating to EUREKA, it proved possible in just over three months to define clearly the EUREKA concept, whose outlines were still vague at the Paris conference; in so doing, differing interests of the countries and institutions involved were largely reconciled. The declaration of principles defines the goals, priorities, criteria and basic conditions as well as the method of project implementation and co-ordination; furthermore, EUREKA was incorporated into the framework of existing technological co-operation in Europe. The programmes of the European Communities, activities in

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\* Foreign Office.

connection with COST (scientific and technological co-operation between EEC countries and European OECD nations, with a secretariat in Brussels attached to the EEC Council), projects of the European Space Agency as well as other bilateral or multilateral co-operative projects and their further development are not to be replaced, but where possible be supplemented or extended by EUREKA.

Whereas co-operation and co-ordination within the framework of the "technological community", which the Dooge Committee first called for in late March 1985, cover a wide area and are primarily geared to pre-competitive research, EUREKA focuses on selected high-technology projects in line with market needs. Senator James Dooge from Ireland was chairman of the ad hoc Committee on Institutional Affairs of the European Communities, which was set up by the European Council at Fontainebleau in June 1984 and whose proposals serve as a basis for the ongoing negotiations of the European intergovernmental conference. The central aim of EUREKA is to bring companies and research institutes in Europe together for increased transboundary co-operation in the field of high technology so as to develop products, systems and

services with a world-wide market potential. One of the criteria of EUREKA projects is that this transboundary co-operation holds out the promise of tangible benefits and substantial technological progress. Since the aim is to mobilize all of Europe's high-technology potential, both large and small enterprises and institutes should become involved. Particularly in Germany we have every reason to count on the considerable innovative capacity of our small and medium-sized enterprises.

### Characteristics

EUREKA is characterized by the fact that neither governments with national assistance programmes nor a multilateral institution with a supply of manpower and physical resources lay down criteria according to which companies and institutes should apply for funds or make use of other forms of assistance. EUREKA is based on a different approach: governments facilitate and promote direct contacts between European industrialists and researchers and eliminate any obstacles. The industrialists and researchers themselves conclude the essential agreements, determine the type of co-operation and establish the form of project management and funding.

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V E R L A G W E L T A R C H I V G M B H - H A M B U R G

Above all, EUREKA does not imply that governments should influence entrepreneurial decisions by, say, forcing companies to conclude contracts or to co-operate; such attempts would prove abortive in our legal system. Governments can, however, ensure a comprehensive flow of information during the emergence of projects. The countries participating in EUREKA can, through national or joint efforts, set the general framework within which individual initiative evolves, without any control or instructions being imposed from above. With government control there is the risk of initiatives being stifled and creative forces being diverted to other fields of activity.

In close collaboration with the Commission of the European Communities, those parts of the declaration of principles concerning general conditions still have to be given greater substance. The declaration states: "The establishment of a large homogeneous, dynamic and outward-looking European economic area is essential to the success of EUREKA". EUREKA should lead to an acceleration of ongoing efforts to elaborate joint industrial standards and to eliminate existing technical obstacles to trade caused, *inter alia*, by the fact that inspection procedures and certificates are not yet mutually recognized in Europe. On its own, EUREKA will not bring about new European company law, but EUREKA projects will highlight the need to make greater efforts to that end.

#### **No Central Fund**

All the participating countries are in agreement that EUREKA will not have a central fund from which projects are financed. It is up to governments to assist EUREKA projects nationally where public funds are needed as a secondary source of support for the creation of projects. Chancellor Kohl said at Hanover that European companies must be given a fair chance in competition with their foreign counterparts who have the benefit of generous, state-sponsored programmes. Selective government assistance and financial support for projects would have to be taken into consideration. The Federal Government was therefore, he said, also willing to make financial contributions to EUREKA; it would provide financial support for interesting, selected projects from the federal budget. It would also use its influence to secure the involvement of public service enterprises in EUREKA. The Chancellor expressed his conviction that such supplementary public funds would "form a substantive basis for the German contribution to EUREKA".

Apart from agreement on the principles governing co-operation under EUREKA, another important result of

the Hanover conference was the presentation of ten exemplary projects meeting EUREKA criteria. Companies and/or institutes agreed at least on the start of the definition phases of these projects, and the governments of the countries where the companies or institutes are domiciled pledged their support, usually in the form of co-funding. These ten projects include industrial projects (e.g. EUROLASER), infrastructural projects (e.g. the EURONET research network) and projects for solving transboundary problems (e.g. EUROTRAC for measuring the spread and conversion of ecologically relevant trace substances in Europe).

The Federal Government, which presented these projects, was thus able to demonstrate what is meant by EUREKA projects. The laser project shows that EUREKA is implemented not only by large companies, but by small and medium-sized ones as well. Even very small and in some cases newly established companies, which possess excellent know-how in this area of high technology, will take part in the project. The European research network project illustrates how scientists can enter into a dialogue with their data processing systems: hitherto scattered scientific capacities in Europe are to be pooled, thus creating a community of European scientists. The EUROTRAC project shows that the well-being of people in Europe is to be at the forefront of EUREKA projects. Our continent will survive only if it is able not only to secure economic prosperity, but also to tackle and solve the problems that modern technology poses for our society.

#### **Multitude of Project Concepts**

German industry will participate in another interesting project that has been proposed by France: in the manufacture of amorphous silicon for the cost-effective conversion of solar energy into electrical power. The other six projects involve France, Britain, Denmark, Italy, Portugal and Spain in various configurations. The other countries stated that they were interested in participating in one or more projects. This shows that on a decisive point, namely the commencement of projects, the EUREKA concept has fallen on fertile ground in industry and science in all participating countries, including the small ones. None of the Ministers who took part in the Hanover conference had to return home with the feeling that his country is not taking part or unable to participate in Europe's technological development.

It was important to all EEC countries involved in EUREKA that the Commission of the European Communities participated constructively in preparing

the conference and elaborating the EUREKA concept; the Commission is also a party to the EUROTRAC and EURONET projects.

Britain has suggested that it organize the next ministerial conference in the first half of 1986. The British Government thus assumed, upon completion of the Hanover conference, the chairmanship of the group of High Representatives and responsibility for the preparation of the third ministerial conference. Apart from examining all existing project proposals and concepts (at Hanover, 300 project concepts of varying degrees of development were submitted), one of Britain's immediate tasks now is to bring about consensus on the structure and location of a small EUREKA secretariat. The ministerial conference stipulated that the High Representatives should reach agreement by 31 January 1986. One proposal has

already been tabled: after the Franco-German summit in Bonn on 7 November 1985, President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl announced that they intended to suggest to the other participating countries and to the Commission that Strasbourg be chosen as the site of the secretariat.

EUREKA's progressive development will in future depend less and less on the momentum imparted to it by governments. What matters is that the top echelons of companies and research institutes should adopt and disseminate the EUREKA idea. If EUREKA helps to bring about scientific, technological and entrepreneurial solutions enabling the Europeans to effect the process of adjustment necessitated by the "third industrial revolution" in an appropriate fashion and on the basis of our system of values, then this political impetus will have been worthwhile.

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## The Prerequisites for a Spectacular Programme

by Otto Wolff von Amerongen, Bonn\*

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**T**he EUREKA programme, which made headlines for weeks on end, began as an idea discussed over breakfast by a German minister and his French counterpart but soon led on to a major conference in Hanover and the rough outline of research projects. The objective of the research policy formulated under the EUREKA banner is to increase the competitiveness of European industry. We now know that the projects under discussion are to involve not only products, systems and services with a worldwide market potential but also public sector infrastructure. Some of the projects to bear the EUREKA name are therefore market-oriented, while others come under the heading of basic research.

My views on research initiatives that transcend the bounds of the Community and are also partly state financed are well known: research should be carried out first and foremost in the corporate sector and by

individual firms. State assisted schemes, possibly coupled with government grants, can never play more than a supporting role. Projects initiated and funded on a co-operative basis can make sense in areas where research is beyond the financial means of individual firms; such initiatives are to be welcomed where there is a demonstrated need for basic research.

In the light of what I have just said, I believe that the free-market orientation of EUREKA projects requires firms and the state to play a different role than in infrastructure projects and basic research. EUREKA offers an opportunity for international co-operation on projects that individual countries would possibly not have been able to complete on their own.

As far as the funding of market-oriented projects is concerned, the participating countries should adhere strictly to the statement in the declaration of principles that enterprises should finance projects from their own

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\* German Industrial and Trade Association.