

“SET-Plan summit conference”
Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)
Madrid, 3 and 4 June 2010

NOTES for the opening of Day 1 (3/6).
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INTRODUCTION AND GREETINGS

- Thanks from the Spanish Presidency to the participants in the round tables, speakers and attendees, who have come to share their views with us on the evolution of the SET Plan, and particularly on the European Industrial Initiatives, the main focus of this first day.

PURPOSE and OBJECTIVES OF THE THIRD SET PLAN SUMMIT

- Following the previous conferences in Paris in 2008 and Stockholm in 2009, this is the third conference organised to inform on the progress and advances taking place within the SET Plan, the Strategic Energy Technology Plan. However, this conference is different as it marks the first time that two conferences will be held in the same year. This is something that has not happened by chance, but rather reflects the interest of the Member States in charge of the rotating European Presidency, in including on their political agendas such an important subject as the coordinated technological progress necessary to achieve a low carbon emissions economy.
- The coordinated decision of the European Commission and the Spanish Presidency of the EU to propose and carry out this event during the first half of the year stems from the need to publicly express political support, particularly for the launch of the first European Industrial Initiatives and the activities carried out within the European Energy Research Alliance (EERA), as well as to prepare the way for the launch of the other Initiatives identified in the Technology Roadmaps of the SET Plan.
- This political impetus also arises from the conclusions of the Council of Transport, Telecommunications and Energy, held on 12 March 2010, on the European Commission Communication on “*Investing in the development of low carbon technologies*”, which sets out the objectives and implementation mechanisms of the SET Plan. I would like to stress some very relevant points of these conclusions, which highlight the enormous importance of both the work to be carried out over the next six months and the results of this conference.

- In its conclusions, the Council stresses that it is essential to move forward from “planning to action” and agrees that we must launch all the European Industrial Initiatives (EIs) without delay, and by 2011 at the latest. In the session following this opening event we will have the opportunity to find out more details about the four EIs to be officially launched at this conference: CO2 Capture and Storage, Solar Energy, Wind Energy and Electricity Grids. This is without any doubt one of the main reasons we are here today. But aside from this significant launch, what else does it mean to “move forward to action”? It means carrying out the other actions proposed by the Council in its conclusions, at European, national and regional level:
 - ✓ Firstly, to adopt the Implementation Plans (2010 - 2012) proposed for the European Industrial Initiatives, viewing these as a living working tool for planning and programming future research activities in the energy sector.
 - ✓ To identify the interests of all the stakeholders, be they Member States, regions or even research organisations or industries, in order to commit to those Industrial Initiatives that are of greatest relevance and to actively participate in implementing them. Actively participating also means getting involved in defining governance models in order to settle on the most suitable one for each case. It also means acting flexibly with a view to possibly adapting financing instruments and seeking the most effective formulas to implement these as quickly as possible, guided by the overarching need to simplify the growing number of initiatives, schemes and instruments that currently make up the European R&D&I scene, thereby preventing gaps in coordination, overlapping of content and, in short, even greater fragmentation and complexity for the stakeholders involved, both participants and public administrations.
 - ✓ To establish close collaboration at national level between all the ministries and regional governments involved in potentially financing activities related to the SET Plan (Industry, Research, Environment, Economy, etc.). This should serve to guide the activities carried out by each of these sectors towards the same end. On this point, I would like to highlight the actions taken in Spain, which might be similar to those in other Member States, as a possible example for how to act on this. The aim of these actions is to set up an inter-ministerial working group devoted to monitoring and planning activities linked to the SET Plan. This group includes a large number of the national stakeholders involved in financing projects and actions aimed at achieving a low-carbon economy. Also represented in the group are all the stakeholders participating

in European programmes related with the SET Plan (such as the Framework Programme, Recovery Plan, CIP and NER300).

In order to be able to carry out these initial and extremely important tasks, we believe we must - as set out in the Council conclusions - highlight the important role of the SET Plan Steering Group. The Member States must reconsider the importance of each of the meetings of this Group and the decisions that must be taken in order to be able to make progress in this implementation process. It is also important that the “committed” Member States provide appropriate human resources for the recently-formed EII Teams, which are responsible for the programming and planning level of the EIs.

Although the main focus of this conference, which is about to get underway, revolves around the European industrial initiatives, we must also consider the great importance of the activities of the EERA and other research activities that are far more removed from the market, but which have strong future potential. On the second day of the conference, we will be able to see the progress that the EERA has made since the Stockholm conference and we will witness the launch of the first joint research programmes in the areas of wind, photovoltaic and geothermal energy, as well as the electricity grids.

As you all know, the objective of this Alliance is to enable Europe’s most advanced basic research centres to join forces in the area of energy. Its role is clear and fundamental. However, we need to clearly identify its complementarity with the Industrial Initiatives to which it must provide with all possible support. Communication between the two sides must be as fluid as possible, and work must be done to establish effective mechanisms for collaboration. The aim is to ensure close coordination between the Work plans of each side, in order to promote research and development in the renewable and clean energies that Europe needs so much in the present context.

However, as we all know, we are today facing a difficult situation and going through a harsh economic crisis that paints a discouraging picture with regard to future public investments, particularly in technological research and development. Therefore, it is right now that we need a coordination process at European level in order to maximise investments. The current status of the Initiatives laid out in the SET Plan means it will be easier to achieve this coordination. Now is not a good time to create new tools or make additional funding available, but it is a good time to try to make the very best use of existing resources. The SET Plan must mark out the way forward, and each financing entity must understand this route and make a decision to follow it.

Lastly, as a representative of the Spanish ministry for science and Innovation, I would like to acknowledge all the great work and

enormous effort made by all the stakeholders involved in the activities related with the SET Plan - industries, national and regional governments, European institutions, the academic and scientific community, professional associations, technology platforms, etc. - for it to start bearing fruit. Today marks the end of an important stage, but also the start of an even greater challenge - making the objectives of the SET Plan a reality, thereby contributing to achieve the EU's ambitious targets on energy and climate change. I hope you will find this conference interesting and I encourage you to participate in it actively so that its results and conclusions can make a contribution to guiding the future steps to be taken by the SET Plan.

PRELIMINARY