



THE EMF INNOVATION MANIFESTO

(adopted by the 97th EMF Executive Committee on 7th & 8th June 2004)

Industrial policy

The aim of the EMF's industrial policy is to improve the future development of the metal industry in Europe. The focus of that industrial policy is on sustainability, employment and competitiveness. In particular, the aim is to adopt an extended principle of sustainability (understood in its various aspects: economic, social, environmental and democratic) that may act as a point of reference to incorporate our notion of industrial policy into the broader European social model and should lead us to sustainable growth. This item has to be integrated into the European social dialogue structures.

The European metalworkers are in favour of change but expect a proper management of restructuring processes. Agreeing with change, or anticipating change, means taking part in it, participating in the decision-making process, respecting the various interests of all parties involved. Dismissal must be the last resort after social partners have jointly committed themselves to seeking all the solutions in terms of the retention, retraining and re-placement of employed workers and their vocational skills.

Innovation

Innovation is an important driver of change and necessary to improve the future development and growth of the metal industry in Europe. The European metalworkers are therefore in favour of innovation. In this paper, innovation is mainly understood as a commercial application of something new: a new product, a new process or method of production, a new market or a new form of commercial, business or financial organisation.

But "innovation goes beyond technological innovation"¹. A crucial factor for the future competitiveness of the European industries is social and organisational innovation, both in the workplaces and companies and in the outside environment. Trade unions exert remarkable influence on the future development of these structures. Innovation is therefore a central issue for the long-term trade union policy. The EMF is both a promoter and a major player in the innovation setting of the EU.

As a main stakeholder in the enterprises an obligation for a trade union is both to actively support innovation in companies and sectors and to maintain employment by safeguarding uninterrupted employability and workers involvement. Therefore the EMF is interested in taking an active part in defining and making concrete contributions as to where, how and when R&D projects could enhance the impact of R&D activities under these common goals. EMF and its affiliates will continue their own innovation activities for the improvement of the competitiveness of European metal industry companies and their operational environment.

FEM30/2004

¹ 2505th Council meeting, Brussels, 13 May 2003, s. 11

Innovation policy

A system of innovation is made up of the actors that influence the direction and speed of innovation and knowledge diffusion within the system. Innovation processes are essentially interactive activities. Enterprises seldom innovate in isolation, but draw heavily on interaction with other organisations like other firms, universities, research institutes and public authorities and so on.

Innovation policy is then any action to lubricate the innovation system to make it work in a better way. The enterprise is the central actor in the innovation process and therefore innovation policy must have its ultimate effect on enterprise behaviour and their prerequisites for development. A lot of policy areas are important like promotion of the use of ICT, R&D policy, education policy, competition policy, trade policy, employment policy, regional policy, environmental policy etc. Innovation policy should also bridge the gap between research infrastructure and enterprises.

Innovation is an area where EU is lagging behind the USA and Japan. The EMF proposes the following points to stimulate the European innovation process:

1. The EMF opens a systematic new path of actions by bringing the question of innovation to the Social Dialogue tables, in discussions with CEEMET (WEM) and other employer organisations, meeting its own responsibilities in promoting innovation.
2. The EMF supports the technology development and increased R&D input in the metal industries. The target of increasing R&D financing to 3% of GDP by 2010 must be seen as a minimum level for the future competitiveness of the European industry. To achieve this level, we need:
 - increased financing for the special policy themes and target areas vital for the improving competitiveness of the European industry (esp. avant-garde European programmes),
 - increased investments in R&D from the enterprises themselves, especially from companies operating in the "old" branches of the metal industry,
 - increased public R&D financing on the national level (target 1% of GDP), especially for the ICT and metal industry,
 - increased efforts on the Commission's side to coordinate existing R&D and industrial policy (and related policy areas that might obstruct innovation), generating new actions where there are market failures or lack of industry interest in order to create added value for the whole European metal industry,
 - increased efforts to promote the economic and social transformation in the ACC countries by using growing EU funding through structural funds for strengthening respective countries' innovation structures and for wide dissemination of the EU innovation and R&D results.
3. The EMF together with its affiliates is interested in active promoting of the above-mentioned policy objectives on company, local, national and European levels. Special attention must be given to the needs of the SMEs in their implementation.

The EMF wants to especially stress the importance of and need for organisational and social innovation in managing restructuring where it has generated its own competencies, both in the framework of the overall management of the ongoing change and in the framework of companies going through and adjusting to that change.

Trade unions are one of the best suited actors in the field - and "agents of socially responsible change" if wanted. It should be one of the priorities of the Commission to take this in account and give the social partners the task of innovating and developing new tools for the management of this challenge.

- The EMF proposes that the Commission invites the social partners on central and on sectoral levels to establish a European innovation framework for the socially responsible management of change.
 - The EMF asks the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and interested research organisations to conduct research focused on the restructuring issues and to launch pilot projects on the management of change in those industry sectors experiencing fundamental changes like steel, the automotive industry or shipbuilding. In this context, the EMCC should be instructed to follow current development in the field.
 - The EMF continues to back up and initiate trade union research projects in the fields important for the competitiveness of the European metal industry such as education and learning, health and safety at work, organisational development and productivity improvement.
4. The EMF urges its Company Policy Committee to take the issue of innovation to the European Works Councils in the metal sectors.
 5. The EMF is interested to know more about the future development visions in the different metal industry branches. Our experts are already represented in the steel research platform of the European Commission's DG Research. This same principle should be extended to other respective research platforms and Commission bodies, projects and research programmes involving the metal industry, especially its future production technologies.

Next Steps for immediate EMF actions

Representatives of DG Research are invited to the next meeting of the Industrial Policy Committee.

The EMF Industrial Policy Committee discusses and adopts the EMF Innovation Manifesto at the March meeting 2004.

The EMF Innovation Manifesto is handed over to the European Council meeting in Ireland, to the European Commission (DGs Enterprise and Research) and to the European Parliament.

The EMF Innovation Manifesto is discussed with ETUC and ETUI in order to guarantee joint actions for trade union involvement in European research policy.

An EMF agenda is presented to DG Research in order to strengthen mutual contacts. This agenda should include the following proposals as a minimum:

- Setting up continuous contacts between the EMF Secretariat, the Select Industrial Policy Working Party and DG Research (Cabinet of the Commissioner).
- The EMF and DG Research will jointly organise a couple of working seminars on the present European frontline research in the metal and ICT industries in order to define common interests and clarify the EMF role in promoting these interests.
- The EMF and DG Research agree on the participation of the EMF experts in the new sectoral research platforms that DG Research is setting up.
- The EMF Industrial Policy Select Working Party starts preparations to secure EMF involvement and participation in the evaluation of the current 6th Framework Programme and in the preparation of the next Framework Programme.

Contacts with DG Enterprise will be developed on the basis of the agreed agenda and the issues of the European innovation policy and R&D are discussed in this context, too.

The Dublin Foundation and the EMCC is instructed to organise a European Innovation Forum in 2005 bringing together all relevant parties to discuss how the European innovation record could be improved.