Declaration on Future Policies for Science and Technology

OECD Legal Instruments

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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Background Information

The Declaration on Future Policies for Science and Technology was adopted on 19 March 1981. The Declaration recognised the essential contribution of science and technology to the economic and social development of both industrialised and developing countries. Accordingly, it called on Adherents to integrate policies for science and technology with other aspects of government policy, particularly economic, social, industrial, including energy, education and manpower policies. The Declaration was abrogated on 1 July 2017 as it has been out-dated.

MINISTERS responsible for policies concerning science and technology in the OECD Member countries[1] and in Yugoslavia, meeting in the framework of the Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy of the Organisation;

RECOGNISING the essential contribution of science and technology to the economic and social development of both industrialised and developing countries;

RECOGNISING that common challenges now face Member countries, such as the slow-down in economic growth, high levels of unemployment, low rates of productivity increase, persistent inflation, structural imbalances in their economies, increased energy prices and environmental problems;

RECOGNISING that science, technology and innovation have a vital role to play in the resolution of these difficulties and in responding to the needs and aspirations of society;

RECOGNISING that fundamental research plays an indispensable role in the generation of ideas and new knowledge, including those needed for future technological innovation;

RECOGNISING that national policies have an important influence on the vigour of the scientific enterprise and innovation;

RECOGNISING that progress in science and technology depends upon many forms of international co-operation and on the widest possible circulation of ideas and new knowledge between scientists, between institutions and between countries;

RECOGNISING the value of continuing international consultation on the formulation, implementation and assessment of policies concerning science and technology;

DECLARE:

1. That it is necessary to integrate policies for science and technology with other aspects of government policy, particularly economic, social, industrial, including energy, education and manpower policies;

2. That the following require attention in the formulation and implementation of policies for science and technology in Member countries and in Yugoslavia:

A. With regard to technological innovation, steps to:

1. Promote innovation as an objective within the framework of economic, social and regulatory policies;

2. Assign priority to investment in research, development and innovation so as to ensure that short-term pressures do not jeopardise the sources of future economic growth, higher levels of employment and structural adjustment;

3. Develop favourable conditions for innovation, including the openness of markets, and encourage risk-taking in innovation in the public and private sectors;

4. Give particular attention to the innovative potential of small and medium-sized firms;

5. Stimulate research, development and innovation to increase the effectiveness and quality of output in the public and social services sectors;

6. Stimulate research, development and innovation related to worldwide problems in such areas as energy, raw materials, environment, food, urban conditions, health and the work environment;

7. Promote the diffusion of technological information.

B. With regard to long-term research, steps to:

1. Maintain the strength and continuity of fundamental and long-term research to increase the stock of basic scientific and technological knowledge throughout the range of disciplines;

2. Reinforce the research capacity of the universities and other relevant institutions, having appropriate regard to problems of their funding, administration, research facilities, staffing, and their links with industry and the public sector, and with other sectors of society.

C. With regard to the social, economic, cultural and political effects of technological change, steps to:

1. Take due account of the social and cultural implications of new technologies, in respect of the employment, mobility and training of the labour force;

2. Monitor the introduction and spread of new technologies while attempting to assess their possible future implications for the economy, the environment and society;

3. Facilitate public participation in the definition of major technological orientations, particularly through public access to information concerning their foreseeable long-term impacts, and through fostering public understanding of science and technology.

D. With regard to international co-operation in science and technology steps to:

1. Stimulate the exchange of scientists, engineers and students between Member countries, facilitate the exchange of scientific and technical information, and encourage the flow of technologies;

2. Explore new opportunities for co-operation in areas of common interest, with a view to making more effective use of human resources and major research facilities, to sharing of costs, to obtaining more rapid results, and to mounting large-scale efforts where these are necessary for an effective attack on problems;

3. Encourage at the international level measures conducive to an improved scientific basis for regulations in areas such as health, safety and the environment;

4. Pursue a broad range of activities in co-operation with developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capabilities, and contribute to the implementation and assessment of these efforts.

Ministers further DECLARE that OECD should:

1. Give increased emphasis to the integration of scientific and technological factors within the activities of the Organisation and, in particular, within its work on the various aspects of economic policy;

2. Improve the understanding of factors underlying the innovative performance of Member countries, and of the effects of international transfers of technology;

3. Assist the less-industrialised Member countries as they tackle the problems of increasing the contribution of science and technology to their economic and social development;

4. Continue the exchange of experiences and information among Member countries concerning policies for science and technology, and facilitate the definition of such policies;

5. Facilitate the assessment by Member countries of the consequences of technological change upon economic growth, rates of employment, productivity increase, structural changes in the economy, upon the environment and upon society at large;

6. Facilitate the identification by Member countries of both research areas in which they would wish to co-operate and arrangements conducive to such co-operation;

7. Facilitate the efforts of Member countries to strengthen the scientific and technological potential and capabilities of developing countries.

[1] The mention of "Member Countries" is deemed to apply also to the European Communities.

About the OECD

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

The OECD Member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union takes part in the work of the OECD.

OECD Legal Instruments

Since the creation of the OECD in 1961, around 460 substantive legal instruments have been developed within its framework. These include OECD Acts (i.e. the Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the OECD Council in accordance with the OECD Convention) and other legal instruments developed within the OECD framework (e.g. Declarations, international agreements).

All substantive OECD legal instruments, whether in force or abrogated, are listed in the online Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments. They are presented in five categories:

- **Decisions** are adopted by Council and are legally binding on all Members except those which abstain at the time of adoption. They set out specific rights and obligations and may contain monitoring mechanisms.

- **Recommendations** are adopted by Council and are not legally binding. They represent a political commitment to the principles they contain and entail an expectation that Adherents will do their best to implement them.

- **Substantive Outcome Documents** are adopted by the individual listed Adherents rather than by an OECD body, as the outcome of a ministerial, high-level or other meeting within the framework of the Organisation. They usually set general principles or long-term goals and have a solemn character.

- **International Agreements** are negotiated and concluded within the framework of the Organisation. They are legally binding on the Parties.

- **Arrangement, Understanding and Others**: several other types of substantive legal instruments have been developed within the OECD framework over time, such as the Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits, the International Understanding on Maritime Transport Principles and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendations.