

Transatlantic Economic Council



EU-U.S. cooperation on nanotechnology: How can the TEC add value?

The EU and the U.S. are both developing their regulatory approaches to this emerging technology.

In the EU, the European Commission (EC) is preparing a communication on regulatory aspects of nanomaterials and information regarding nanomaterials on the market, including their safety aspects, as well as a Commission recommendation on how to define nanomaterials. Work on implementation of legislation, i.e. the development of guidance, standards, risk assessment tools, the generation of data and the like, is making steady progress.

In the U.S. an interagency group under the leadership of United States Trade Representative (USTR), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Office for Management and Budget (OMB) has developed regulatory approaches to emerging technologies, including nanotechnology. In addition, the U.S. government (USG) has recently completed work on regulatory principles specifically for applications of nanotechnology and nanomaterials.

There is, in principle, mutual interest in exploring upstream regulatory cooperation. The EC and the USG are currently developing a common inventory of existing transatlantic cooperation on nanotechnology, which will span a wide range of sectors (food, pharmaceutical products, cosmetics) and work streams (regulatory approaches, standards, risk assessment, labelling, research, EHS).

Businesses' views will be critical to help identify areas where TEC involvement would be most beneficial. Working group chairs of the nanofutures platform are thus invited to inform their members of this forum and the opportunity to submit observations, if possible, by 15 September 2011.

Background:

The Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) relaunched in 2010 provides a political platform for EU-U.S. cooperation on a wide range of high profile regulatory and strategic issues, with a view to furthering trade and investment and, ultimately, growth and jobs. The TEC meets once a year at the level of U.S. cabinet members, heads of agencies and EU Commissioners, but work continues throughout the year to advance cooperation on the various issues. The TEC process seeks to address possible future non-trade tariff barriers at the source, i.e. *before* they become enshrined in legislation. The value of this proposition can be understood when looking at a recent study¹ conducted for the European Commission, which concludes that the GDP of the EU and the U.S. would increase by around 160 billion Euros and exports would grow by 2.1% and 6.1 % respectively if only half of the non-tariff measures and regulatory differences were removed.

When furthering upstream regulatory cooperation and coherent outcomes the **TEC is in particular concerned with promoting innovation and emerging technologies**, such as electric vehicles, ICT services, e-health, nanotechnology and other areas, which are important for the competitiveness of our economies at global level. Stakeholders from both sides of the Atlantic play a core role in informing and driving the TEC process, and are encouraged to present consolidated proposals to regulators, which principals may consider at their annual meetings.

For more information on the TEC, its December 2010 meeting, as well as all related documents please consult the website of DG TRADE at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/countries/united-states/>

¹ See study by ECORYS "Tariff Measures in EU-US trade and Investment – An Economic Analysis" (December 2009), financed by the European Commission;
http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/december/tradoc_145613.pdf