

Parliamentarians with a background in or dedication to Science and Technology are at the forefront in the efforts to encourage and support all those concerned with ensuring that the high quality R&D undertaken in the UK is put to the best possible use, be it fundamental research or applied science.

It is probably no surprise to UK and EU Parliamentarians with S&T backgrounds that the German economy has recently rebounded so rapidly, when compared with the UK, as so much effort is placed not just on "Blue Skies" research but also on those areas where the results of fundamental research are applied directly to ensuring that the industrial base, and especially manufacturing, are both fully supported to ensure global market competitiveness.

Unfortunately, the UK currently generally recognises only one internationally accepted level of attainment in science, and not surprisingly that is where those with the ability to do so have for obvious reasons naturally tended to direct their full attention. Those with the ability to turn new discoveries into economic benefits for the whole of society on the other hand, normally do not receive anything like the attention or recognition devoted to their pure science counterparts.

Martin Rees, the outgoing President of the Royal Society has however made an enormous contribution in advancing the cause for long term planning for R&D in the UK backed up by some of the best scientific brains the world can muster, many of them based at the UK's world class Universities.

How can we begin to put this matter right before it is too late if our economy is to be prevented from sliding down a slippery slope? Who will be primarily responsible for ensuring that the full integration of science, technology and engineering takes place throughout the UK's educational and industrial landscape?

History has shown us with painful results for every one of us that reliance on service industries alone, including high risk banking, will not, as previously thought, provide the basis for a stable long term future for Western style economies. The US and UK have both been vulnerable in this respect.

Much attention is currently being devoted to investigating the need for and future development of Technology Innovation Centres as a way to ensure that the UK considers all the options before us. There is both an urgent need and new opportunity to help supply the Developing World with the products they require from us and to help manage their increasing demands for improved infrastructure and their burgeoning human populations. This is one important area where a new generation of Technology Innovation Centres based in the UK could really make a difference if we get the funding and structures right.



Andrew Miller MP
Chairman, Parliamentary
and Scientific
Committee

SCIENCE IN PARLIAMENT sip

The Journal of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.

The Committee is an Associate Parliamentary Group of members of both Houses of Parliament and British members of the European Parliament, representatives of scientific and technical institutions, industrial organisations and universities.



Science in Parliament has two main objectives:

1. to inform the scientific and industrial communities of activities within Parliament of a scientific nature and of the progress of relevant legislation;
2. to keep Members of Parliament abreast of scientific affairs.

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