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# Foreword

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In this issue of *Estratégia* are published the papers that were prepared within the framework of the IEEI project, *The Lisbon Strategy in a Knowledge Society without Borders*.

The Lisbon Strategy, which was adopted by the European Union in 2000 and is based on a broad diagnosis and a strong desire to prepare Europe to enter the emerging knowledge society, provides general guidelines for action so that cooperation between regions and countries can be seen in a new light. The international challenge in the economic, environmental, social and political arenas is of such a large scale that new solutions and instruments must be found that can promote and develop cooperation in all the relevant fields. In order to increase competitiveness in a world governed by global competition, it is necessary to remember that knowledge is, perhaps, the determining factor that will shape the positioning of each country or region in the international system. The way in which that knowledge is managed, above all the way it is given incentives or blocked, the speed at which knowledge circulates, has a decided impact on the ability to ensure that countries or regions play an influential role in the international system.

This dimension is therefore present in the development of relations between all countries and regions of the world, and the way in which each of these actors behaves as a knowledge society will determine the evolution of bilateral or bi-regional rela-

tions. Thus, when the European Union approved the Lisbon Strategy and determined that knowledge is the fundamental cornerstone to increase its international competitiveness, this political orientation will have an impact at all levels of Union external action and on the way that other countries and regions see Europe.

This project emerged when it was observed that, to date, the conception and application of the Lisbon Strategy have been regarded as domestic issues. There is an external dimension to the Strategy, however, which has not been sufficiently taken into account in the documents and debates on this issue, and which has not been sufficiently reflected upon. The reinforcement of European economic competitiveness cannot occur in a closed space and through an inward looking perspective, a position that contradicts the dynamics of a knowledge society. It is essential to take into account the interaction with other central actors in the international system, so as to effectively manage relations of competition and cooperation between different actors in a context of an evolving system of global governance.

Our intention, then, was to compare the perceptions of the main external actors about the Lisbon Strategy, and about the impact of its implementation on bilateral relations between the EU and the relevant actors. Given their importance in terms of innovation and of the development of the information society, Brazil, China, the U.S.A., and Japan were selected as case studies. Further, there is an analysis of the potential impact of the Lisbon Strategy on the definition and application of Union foreign policy, particularly toward its closest neighbours, namely in the Mediterranean.

We decided, precisely because of the theme of this number of *Estratégia*, that the issue should be published in English, so as to make it accessible to a broader audience, and thus contributing to a wider dissemination of an issue that, of itself, is an integral part of a knowledge society without frontiers.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the support of the Portuguese Programa Operacional Sociedade do Conhecimento [Operational Programme for the Knowledge Society], which was essential to carry out the project and to publish this issue.

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