

# TESTIMONY OF THE INTERVENTION



## PANEL II – INVESTMENT, GROWTH AND CORPORATE COOPERATION



### Fernando Alfaiate

Moderation: Simeon Ries

*“Our resource is a scarce financial resource, as in the whole economy obviously, but it is important to support and encourage public policies and programs that seem to be the future, the way forward for business and companies.”*

**Moderator: Are SMEs and innovative ideas, which are nowadays the national stage, framed with what is intended to foster and motivate with the competitiveness of companies?**

“The main objective of COMPETE is to increase competitiveness of companies and the national economy. It is therefore, a matter of concern to the importance of the Structural Funds in the current incentives.

Namely in this context and in the need that we have due to the budgetary restrictions, with respect to the GDP, not being able to have a leverage of public investment to obtain economic growth. What happens is a major effort by companies to occupy the space truly important for the economic growth of a country.

This is a reading I also do at that level. Now we are with COMPETE 2020, but we have already had a course in the structural funds that gives us a perception of this evolution.

For example, when we moved to the NSRF, which was the previous financial period of the Structural Funds, and we started to introduce a condition of access relative to the presence of international markets, it was somewhat difficult at first to support this position. It could be said that more than 50% of the companies were left out because they did not comply to this condition.

Today, at this stage of COMPETE 2020, we are talking only about investments, projects and transactional activities. This component and concern of being in the global market is a concern of all companies today. Even small businesses, which are now easier to reach the global market, through a more digital economy or other mechanisms that exist. But this is a more widespread concern and more present in all companies.

Then in the aspect of cooperation, not all companies have the ability to have design department or research and development department.

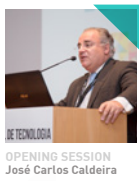
This is because innovation and research are key to achieving competitiveness. The company to be competitive, has to invest in innovation, has to do research and



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development on their products and this is a good first step.

But this step alone is not everything.

If a company does not have the capacity or size to support R & D centres, design offices or highly qualified resources, partnerships must be established at the enterprise level.

This will provide you with support to prepare your internationalization and innovation based on partnerships in the business environment. Nowadays, we are in a more favourable position for this to happen.

This initiative in which we are today is an example of this. It is a collective action that calls SMEs to qualify, to interact and to create networking, and then, more easily, to have a successful presence in the market.

Obviously, all the initiatives in the international market have a higher risk because they need more investment. At this level, COMPETE has also helped to disseminate some very interesting internationalization and training initiatives.

Initiatives are what take companies or some sectors, to the presence in fairs, promotion actions or collective actions. Or even through a business association, where there is a prior knowledge of the market before companies start their presence in those markets, thus helping to mitigate the risk of investment linked to internationalization.

Another aspect, also present in our support in the area of training, is related to professional training linked not only to the managers of the companies, but also to their employees. This is a strand, which also happens in partnership with business associations, namely, regarding training actions or actions on the field. These are more linked to more individualized investment plans for companies with a broader concern at this level. They are also a very interesting help in non-reimbursable incentive support, which exists and needs to be leveraged by companies.

The concerns we currently have, from the point of view of the targeting of the available funds, are related to the preoccupation with some designs, namely the industry 4.0.

We have made some initiatives. We started with a diagnosis and planning, so that we can identify with COTEC's help, what is the industry 4.0. We are talking about a fourth industrial revolution, but, in the end, that is not what concerns us.

What concerns us is to transmit to companies this need to look at this reality of the digital economy. So, we can convey this message well, at least by receiving the number of candidates that we have had to run for the competitions we have opened in this component.

Then we look at the projects and draw the conclusion that in reality, companies are already moving towards this, as is the case in the circular economy. Sometimes they are "buzz words" that we have around something, which even seems very complicated, but deep down this path is being followed. Being obviously a vanguard, it is interesting that companies invest and worry.

These areas will also be a concern of ours in terms of targeting support. We must always have a concern for selectivity.

Our resource is a scarce financial resource, as is the case across the economy, of



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CONCLUSIONS

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course, but it is important to support and encourage public policies and programs that seem to be the future, the way forward for business.

Giving these signals, about the global economy, internationalization, the tradable sectors, industry 4.0, or the circular economy, are some of the concerns we have had. All this is done with cooperation, with partnerships between the business environment, universities, centers of knowledge, business associations, working with companies succeed in making this transfer of knowledge, obtaining more competitive companies in this world economy. "

### **Moderator: Will COMPETE have more work beyond 2020?**

"With regard to continuity and after 2020, these are situations that are now starting a broad discussion, with the objective of defining the priorities and listening to stakeholders' opinions on this matter.

This involvement is important, however, there are some constraints, such as the ones we have talked about, that we should already take into consideration, such as the digital economy, the circular economy or the tradable sectors.

These will be situations that, from the point of view of priority, we will have to take into account. These situations and the concern for the competitiveness of the economy will be the goals to consider in the future of this preparation, after 2020. "