

PRESS RELEASE

ICSTI CALLS FOR STRONGER LINKS BETWEEN SCIENTISTS, TECHNOLOGISTS AND PUBLIC POLICY

The Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI), in a new statement on *Science, Technology and Innovation Culture*, has highlighted the need for scientists and technologists to become more involved in public affairs.

An increasing number of the opportunities and challenges facing our society revolve around the application of science and technology. Business and employment opportunities are arising from developments in technology. But so are difficult issues, for example, from advances in genetic engineering. In order to sustain a viable economy and develop a vibrant culture into the 21st century, Irish society needs to develop greater confidence in dealing with the opportunities and challenges which science and technology present.

“The media have an especially important role to play in facilitating mutual understanding between scientists and the public” says the Council. “While media coverage of science and technology has increased in recent times,

there is a continuing need - and demand - for more information and discussion on science and technology.”

In addition to the major changes needed, in the view of the Council, in the area of education – revised content, improved teaching methods and the introduction of practical assessment for all science and technology subjects at 2nd level – it seeks for the Government to immediately commission a plan for regional science centres, with a view to securing EU and other funds for its implementation.

“A network of science centres around the country, each with its own specialist area and with its own outreach activities for schools, would be an invaluable support for science education and for the promotion of greater awareness of science and technology” says the Council.

The Council also urges the professional bodies representing scientists, engineers and technologists to establish a forum to co-ordinate public awareness initiatives. The Council goes on to say that: “Science and technology are an integral part of contemporary culture and will play an even more important part in the culture of the next century. In recognition of their contribution to the shaping of the 20th century and of their likely impact on the 21st century, science and technology should be

represented in the cultural activities being organised to mark the new millennium.”

ENDS.

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