

Commenting on today's Government White Paper 'Innovation Nation', TUC General Secretary, **Brendan Barber**, said:

"The TUC welcomes 'Innovation Nation', which includes a number of very positive ideas designed to improve the competitiveness of UK plc in the age of globalisation. The White Paper quite rightly says we must become more productive, improve our skills base and increase the number of employers investing in training. We welcome the commitment to encourage the number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships. The aim to make the UK the leading place in the world to be an innovative business is a valuable one. Modern trade unions make invaluable partners for business in helping to make companies more innovative and successful.

"The thoughtful analysis and progressive policies set out in this White Paper stand in contrast with yesterday's disappointing and shallow Enterprise White Paper from BERR.

"We look forward to the publication of a Science and Society Strategy in the Autumn and we welcome DIUS's commitment to maintain the growing investment in UK science. We also welcome the commitment to increase the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics students in higher education.

"But we remain concerned at the shortfall of £80m in the budget of the Science and Technology Facilities Council, which has alarmed the physics community and could result in the loss of highly skilled scientists in UK laboratories. This shortfall could also send a negative message to the young people that we wish to attract into science. We hope, even at this late stage, that funding can be found to keep these scientists, whose skills are so important for our economy and society."

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