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Sommario/riassunto	Public institutions, academic researchers and financial analysts among others hail nanotechnologies as one of the most promising sectors of social and economic development. Calculations predict that it will become a trillion euro industry by 2015 and that it will bring about economic change of at least the same magnitude as the industrial revolution. Nanotechnology is recent, younger by some thirty years than biotechnology, but it appears at a point in time in human history where there is a convergence between the globalization of access to information and increasing awareness of the import