



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

**Research and technological development activities of the European Union
2003 Annual Report**

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This Report relates, in principle, to the period from January 2002 to March 2003.

2002 was the last year of the implementation of the Fifth Framework Programme for R&D (“FP5”). It saw also the successful and timely conclusion of the negotiations for the Sixth Framework Programme for research (EC and Euratom) (“FP6”), the specific programmes implementing them, as well as the Rules of participation and dissemination relating to them. This was the result of the very good collaboration and the consensus existing among the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. It is important to note that there has been no recourse to the conciliation procedure for the co-decided acts of the EC FP and the Rules for participation and dissemination relating to it. Actually, the Rules, that for the first time had to be adopted by co-decision, were approved already at first reading.

This has greatly facilitated the timely launch of the implementation of the Framework Programme. By the end of 2002, the Commission adopted the work programmes for the Specific Programmes and published the first calls for proposals.

A first also in terms of its use was the proposal put forward by the Commission under article 169 of the EC Treaty. This Article allows the Community to participate in research programmes undertaken jointly by several Member States, including participation in the structures created for the execution of these programmes. In the course of 2002, a number of potential topics were identified. In the context of FP6, one formal Article 169 proposal about the poverty-related diseases (AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis) in the developing world was put forward by the Commission. It was swiftly adopted in co-decision by the European Parliament and the Council. Here, again, the broad agreement among the three European institutions was evident. This first-ever practical application of Article 169 constitutes one of the major innovations of FP6 with direct bearing on the creation of the European Research Area.

An interesting new point was the examination of the main trends of the national R&D policies in Europe. It showed the common drive towards certain priorities and it confirmed that the creation of the European Research Area is necessary for Europe to avoid fragmentation of its research efforts.

On top of these very welcome developments in the domain of the Sixth Framework Programme, major efforts have been undertaken towards the creation of the European Research Area. The Heads of State and Government agreed at the Barcelona European Council to raise investment in research and development from 1.9% of gross domestic product in 2000 to approach 3% by 2010. The Commission launched a debate on the issues to be tackled and policy measures required to realise the Barcelona goal.

OUTLOOK

The implementation of the Sixth Framework programme is well on track. The large number of the responses from the research community to the first calls has shown its important role in the promotion of the European research efforts.

Further, the active endorsement of the Action Plan for the “3%” objective by the Member States brings a new momentum in the efforts to achieve the goal of an increase in R&D spending in Europe by 2010. Together with the Open Method of Coordination, they will prove potent tools in this effort.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

More details are included in the Commission Working Document that accompanies this Report. For further information, the following are publicly available:

- Annual Monitoring Reports published each year for the Framework Programme and each specific programme, which provide a concise, independent summary of the progress and quality of the measures taken to implement the programmes.
- Five-year Assessment Reports published every fourth year, both for the Framework Programme and for each specific programme, which present an independent retrospective evaluation of the relevance, efficiency, results and impact of the European Union RTD programmes during the previous five years.
- The European Report on Science and Technology Indicators, which contains descriptions, statistics and detailed analyses of European and national RTD activities in the world context.
- Research and Development: Annual Statistics (Eurostat): an annual publication containing comparable international statistics on R&D budgets, R&D expenditure, R&D personnel and patents in the Member States, broken down by region.
- R&D and Innovation Statistics for the Candidate Countries and the Russian Federation (Eurostat).
- Statistics on Science and Technology in Europe, published as part of the “Panorama of the European Union” collection (Eurostat).
- Statistics in Focus under the theme “Science and technology” (Eurostat).
- The Commission’s annual budgetary documents, i.e. the preliminary draft budget, the budget, the consolidated revenue and expenditure account and the balance sheet.
- Studies and analyses published in connection with the Community RTD programmes and addressing issues specific to the fields of RTD which they cover.

Most of these documents can be obtained or ordered from the Commission’s Internet sites:

- The Commission’s general EUROPA site: <http://europa.eu.int/>
- The CORDIS site containing information on the RTD Framework Programme: <http://www.cordis.lu>
- The site of the Commission’s Directorate-General for Research: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/research>
- The site of the Commission’s Directorate-General for the Information Society: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/index_en.htm
- The site of the Commission’s Directorate-General for Enterprise: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/enterprise/>

- The site of the Commission's Directorate-General for Energy and Transport: http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy_transport/index.html
- The Joint Research Centre (JRC) site: <http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int/>
- The Eurostat site: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat>

Extensive information on European Union policies can be found on these sites, including — on the CORDIS site, which is devoted to the RTD Framework Programme, and on the sites of the Directorate-General for Research and of the other relevant Commission departments — all the reference documents, the texts of calls for proposals and a host of other information, in line with the Commission's transparency and information policy.