

European RTD policy: budgetary planning and evolution of the priorities

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1 Long-term budgetary planning: financial perspectives

The financial perspective forms the framework for Community expenditure over a period of several years. The multi-annual frameworks define the maximum amounts (ceilings) and the composition of foreseeable expenditure, and are divided into headings reflecting the various policy options revolving around the main political priorities adopted for the period in question. Under the interinstitutional agreements the institutions involved in the budgetary debate (Parliament, Council and Commission) undertake to respect the various ceilings set in the financial perspectives. To date, three interinstitutional agreements have been concluded: 1988-1992, 1993-1999 and 2000-2006. Recently, the preparations for the fourth multi-annual framework (2007-2013) were started.

2 Short-term budgetary planning: annual budget

The annual budget is essential for determining the actual level of expenditure under the financial perspectives' ceilings and for dividing appropriations between various budget headings. The Council and the European Parliament share budget authority. The budgetary process is as follows:

- Establishment of the preliminary draft budget by the Commission and transmission to the budgetary authority
- Establishment of the draft budget by the Council
- First reading by the Parliament
- Second reading by the Council
- Second reading by the Parliament and adoption of the budget

3 DG Research budget execution

The Framework Programme is the medium term planning instrument for Community RTD policy. In it are determined the S&T priorities as well as the financial scope of Community activity in the field of R&D. Changes in the structure for allocating budget appropriations also reflect the evolution of priorities. The Framework Programme is implemented through "Specific Programmes" adopted by the Council in consultation with the European Parliament. Each specific programme is implemented through a "Work Programme". They comprise detailed descriptions of the activities (thematic priorities, instruments used, evaluation procedures and criteria, deadlines, roadmaps) and are revised at least annually. The work programmes provide all information essential to launch calls for proposals.

Calls for proposal invite interested parties to submit project proposals. A legal text defines the necessary specifications to prepare and submit a proposal, i.e. thematic priorities, instruments used, address and other technical means for submission, deadlines etc. Calls are published in the Official Journal of the EU in all Community languages. They are also published on CORDIS, together with detailed guides for proposers, submission forms and an electronic proposal submission tool (EPSS). The processes for proposal evaluation rest on a number of well-established principles common to all proposals (equality of treatment, quality, transparency, etc.). Each proposal is evaluated against the relevant criteria independently by at least three experts (Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence need minimum five experts). Each expert fills in an evaluation form giving marks and providing comments. For each project proposal a consensus report is prepared. A panel discussion may be arranged including a hearing with the proposers on specific issues. The coordinator of each proposal receives the Evaluation Summary Report. It reflects the consensus reached between the independent experts, the panel results on each block of criteria, overall comments and a final score for the proposal. After the proposal selection, a grant agreement is made between the Community and the participants concerning the performance of an indirect action establishing rights and obligations between the Community and the participants on the one hand, and between the participants in that indirect action, on the other hand. After the contract has been signed, the project is run.

4 Characteristics European RTD funding

- **Partially top-down, partially bottom-up:** project funding is partially top-down, partially bottom-up. The thematic orientations of the Framework Programme are defined (top-down), but within the thematic areas researchers can identify those subjects and partnerships which are likely to yield the greatest mutual benefit (bottom-up). The Framework Programme does not direct these links, but instead helps to set the framework within which such links can be made.
- **Collaborative research projects:** the minimum number of participants established by the Work Programmes can not be fewer than three independent legal entities established in three different Member States or associated States, of which at least two must be Member States or associated candidate countries.
- **Awarded on competitive basis:** 95 per cent of the project funding is allocated on a competitive basis.
- **Evaluation criteria:** proposals are evaluated against a set of criteria (Relevance, Potential impact, S&T excellence, Quality of consortium, Quality of management, Mobilisation of resources). This set varies between instruments and can also be further specified for each thematic priority or activity. The place to look for the actual set of criteria for a given call for proposals is the work programme.
- **New instruments:** the specific aim of FP6, is not just to fund good research, but also to have a structuring and coordinating effect on the European research landscape. This requires the application of new types of projects bringing together a critical mass of resources and leading to lasting integration of research capacities. The three new

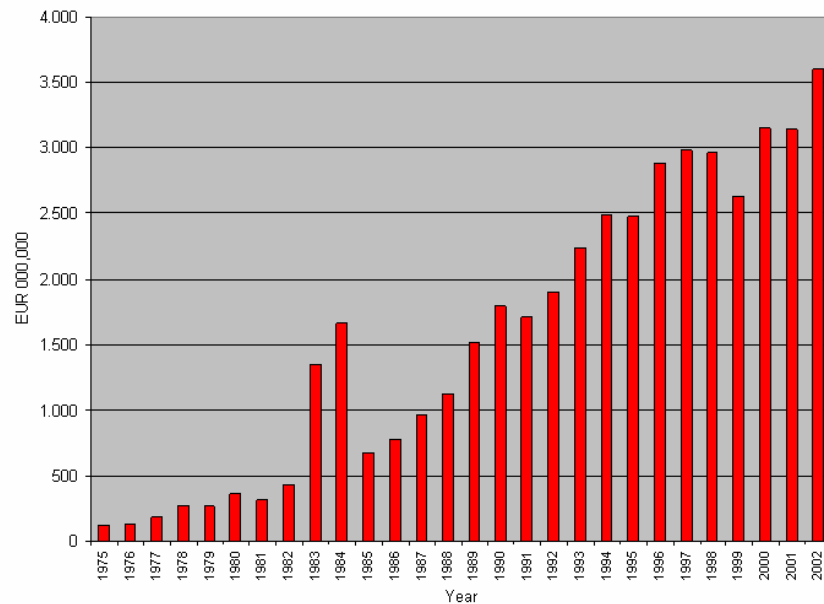
instruments are *Integrated Projects, Networks of Excellence* and *Programmes implemented jointly by several Member States* ("Article 169")

- **Integrated Projects** will be projects of substantial size, designed to help build up the “critical mass” in objective-driven research with clearly defined scientific and technological ambitions and aims.
- **Networks of excellence** aim at progressively integrating activities of network partners thereby creating “virtual” centres of excellence.
- **Article 169 of the Amsterdam Treaty** explicitly foresees the EU’s participation in research programmes undertaken by several Member States.
- **Traditional instruments**
 - **Specific Targeted Research Projects** aim to support research, technological development and demonstration or innovation activities of a more limited scope or ambition, particularly for smaller research actors.
 - **Coordination actions** aim to promote and support the networking and coordination of research and innovation activities.
 - **Specific support actions** refer to actions the Commission wishes to take in support of the Framework Programme. They can comprise studies, input to policy, showcasing research results, conferences and seminars, groups etc.
 - **Specific projects for SMEs** to promote their participation.
 - **Specific actions to promote research infrastructures** aim to mobilise a large number of stakeholders in a given class of infrastructures by combining within a single contract networking, research teams in universities and other public research organizations, industry and equipment manufactures (e.g. SMEs).
- **Marie Curie actions:** the main objectives of the Marie Curie Actions on training and mobility are to provide broad support for the development of world-class human resources in the European research system, taking into account the inherent international dimension of research. These actions provide a variety of possibilities for individual researchers in different stages of their career as well as for institutions acting as hosts for these researchers.
 - **Host-driven actions:** global grants are given to research organisations and enterprises for the provision of transnational training and mobility schemes for individuals.
 - **Individual-driven actions:** these actions give support to individual researchers to encourage transnational mobility and to complement individual competencies.

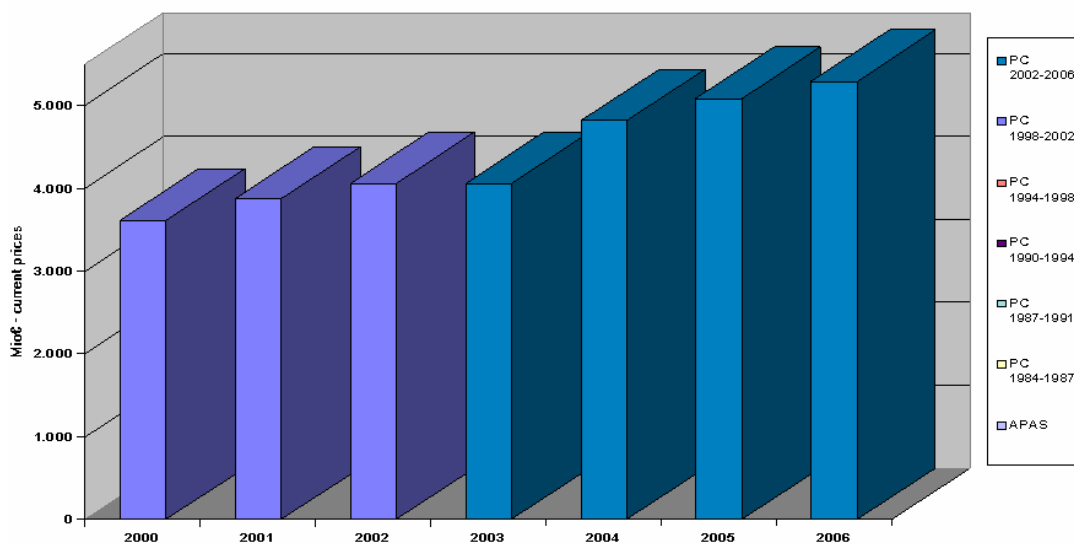
- **Excellence recognition:** focuses on the promotion and the recognition of excellence in European research thereby increasing its visibility and attractiveness.
- **Return and reintegration mechanisms:** actions which are directed at researcher which have completed an EU funded mobility scheme or to European researchers who have carried out research outside Europe for at least five years.

5 Evolution European RTD Framework Programmes

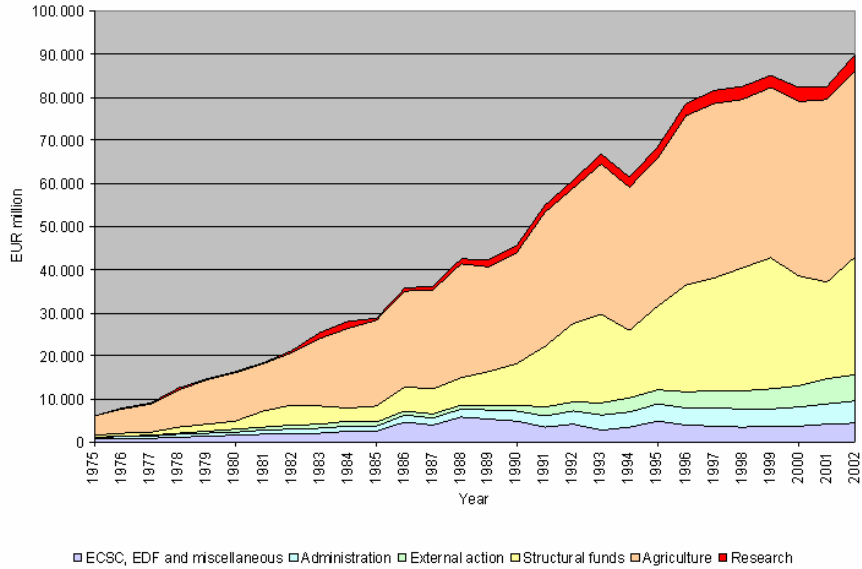
5.1 Community expenditure on research, 1975-2002 (current prices)



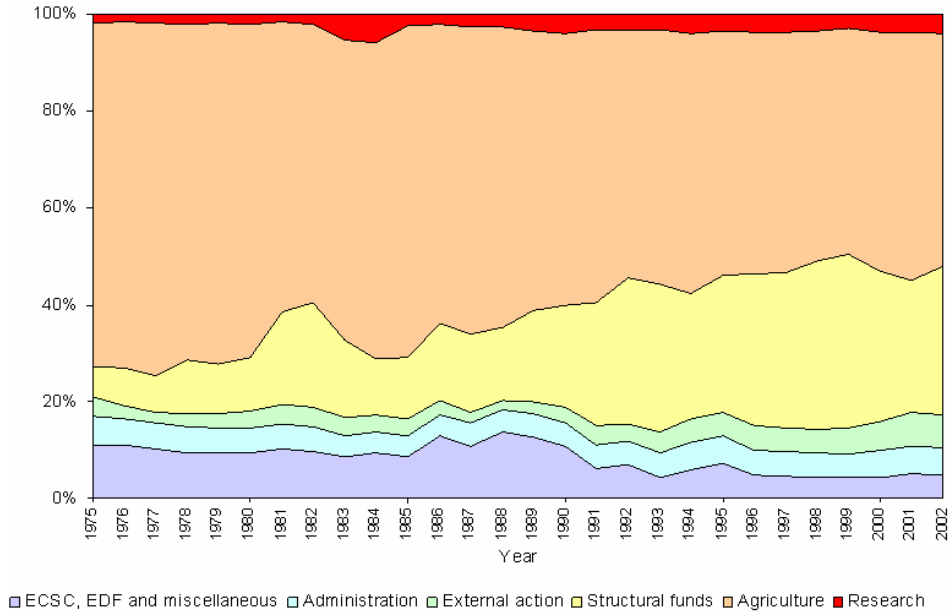
5.2 Evolution of research 2000-2006 – Commitments



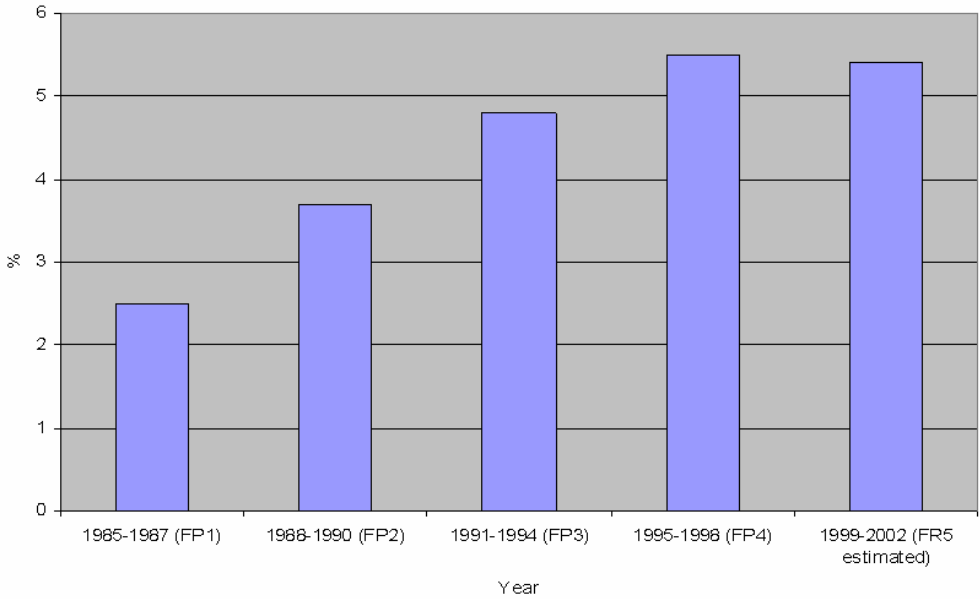
5.3 Community expenditure, 1975-2002 (current prices)



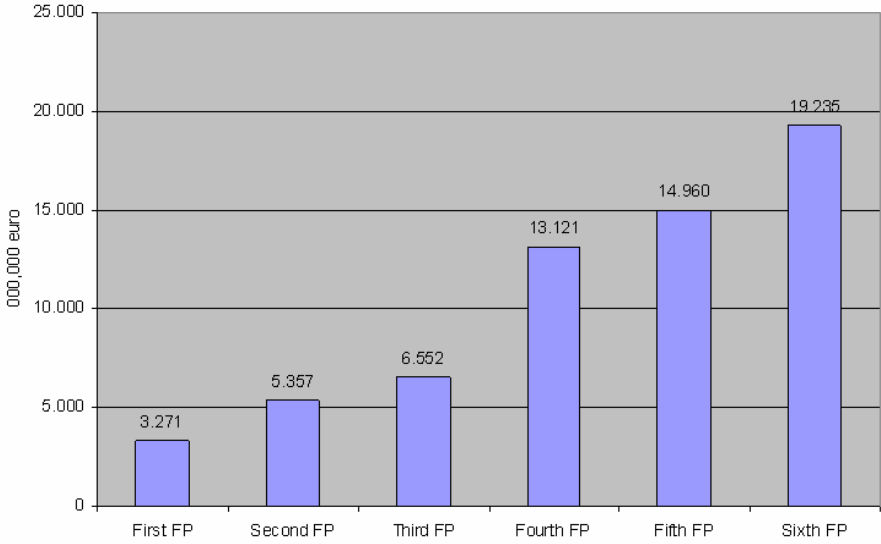
5.4 Community expenditure, 1975-2002 (%)



5.5 European Commission R&D Appropriations as % of total (civil) EU government appropriations for R&D



5.6 Evolution of Framework Programme size



5.7 Evolution of Framework Programme priorities

