

PUBLIC FUNDING OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
IN THE COMMUNITY BETWEEN 1968 and 1972

The figures for public spending on research and development in the Community between 1968 and 1972 pointed up the great importance which continues to be attached to the defence, nuclear, space and industrial technology sectors despite the much-voiced political moves in favour of more aid to the health and environmental sectors.

This stagnation, which tends to hold up any attempt to reallocate priorities, emerges very clearly from a detailed study of the report compiled by statisticians from the Member States of the Community under the Working Party on Scientific and Technical Research Policy which the Commission has just published under the title: "Public funding of R&D in the Community countries (1968-72)" (this report is on sale at the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, PO Box 1003, Luxembourg).

1. For the Community as a whole, public spending on research and development has grown as follows between 1968 and 1972:

	<u>Funds</u> ¹	<u>Increase over preceding</u> <u>year in%</u>
1968	3,800	5.1
1969	4,007	7.2
1970	4,437	10.6
1971 ²	5,013	12.9
1972 ²	5,685	10.9

¹ in millions of u.a.

² provisional figures

On average this represents an increase of 47.2% over five years, although the rise in prices over the same period (over 25% on average) should also be borne in mind, of course.

2. On an individual country basis this average increase breaks down as follows:

98.1% for Belgium
 77.3% for Germany
 62.9% for Italy
 58.2% for the Netherlands
 19.2% for France

3. Broadly speaking, the trend of public R&D spending indicates no great change in priorities, despite the general consensus on the need for action in the health and environment fields.

If an exception is made of the "general dissemination of knowledge" (which is assessed differently from country to country and thus produces figures which are difficult to compare), the sectors which soak up by far the greatest amount of funds are:

- defence,
- the nuclear sector,
- industrial productivity.

The defence, nuclear, space, data processing and industrial technology sectors have evolved as follows (as a percentage of total public spending on R&D):

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1972</u>
West Germany ¹	50	49
Belgium	41	39
France	65	59
Italy	45	48
Netherlands	29	23
Community	55	50

¹Provisional figures

The health sector has grown as follows (as a percentage of total public spending on R&D):

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1972</u>
Germany ¹	2.2	3.2
Belgium	15.4	16.9
France	2.7	3.0
Italy	2.2	3.1
Netherlands	5.6	7.1
Community	5.6	6.6

The "human environment" sector (construction, housing, transport, telecommunications, etc.) has grown as follows (as a percentage of total public spending on R&D):

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1972</u>
Germany ¹	0.8	1.3
Belgium	1.6	1.5
France	3.3	4.5
Italy	2.4	1.6
Netherlands	3.0	3.9
Community	2.2	2.5

4. This relative lack of change in priorities clearly indicates the level of administrative inertia, which affects research as much as other fields and hinders the translation of the highest political designs into actual deeds.

¹Provisional figures

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