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Research and Development in the EU  
Research and development as a common  
policy of the EEC

Lecture 3

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# Research and development as a common policy of the EEC

## Lecture 3

### In this lecture you will learn about:

- How research and development became a common policy of the EEC
- The initial setup of the common R&D policy
- Shift of focus of the common R&D in the 1990s

### Research and development as a common policy of the EEC

The first amendment to the Treaty of Rome was enacted with the adoption of the **Single European Act** in **1986**.

#### Signature of the Single European Act (Luxembourg, 17 February 1986)



Source: CVCE

The Single European Act *elevated some policies to the level of common policies*. Among these was research and development (together with regional and social policy, and environmental policy). So, from this viewpoint, we can say that **research and development policy was introduced at the European level ‘as soon as possible’ after the Treaty of Rome**.

The commitment towards research and development appeared in the *amplification of the Preamble* with the following:

*“DETERMINED to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for their peoples through a wide access to education and through its continuous updating”*

Then, **Articles 163-173** cover ‘*Research and technological development*’.

## The initial setup of the common R&D policy

The *objectives, tools and conditions* of the new, common European R&D policy were laid down in the **Single European Act**.

### Excerpts from the Single European Act

#### Article 163

1. The Community shall have the objective of strengthening the scientific and technological bases of Community industry and encouraging it to become more competitive at international level, while promoting all the research activities deemed necessary by virtue of other chapters of this Treaty.
2. For this purpose the Community shall, throughout the Community, encourage undertakings, including small and medium-sized undertakings, research centres and universities in their research and technological development activities of high quality; it shall support their efforts to cooperate with one another, aiming, notably, at enabling undertakings to exploit the internal market potential to the full, in particular through the opening-up of national public contracts, the definition of common standards and the removal of legal and fiscal obstacles to that cooperation.
3. All Community activities under this Treaty in the area of research and technological development, including demonstration projects, shall be decided on and implemented in accordance with the provisions of this title.

#### Article 164

In pursuing these objectives, the Community shall carry out the following activities, complementing the activities carried out in the Member States:



- a) implementation of research, technological development and demonstration programmes, by promoting cooperation with and between undertakings, research centres and universities;
- b) promotion of cooperation in the field of Community research, technological development and demonstration with third countries and international organisations;
- c) dissemination and optimisation of the results of activities in Community research, technological development and demonstration;
- d) stimulation of the training and mobility of researchers in the Community.

#### Article 166

1. A multiannual framework programme, setting out all the activities of the Community, shall be adopted by the Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 after consulting the Economic and Social Committee.

The framework programme shall:

- establish the scientific and technological objectives to be achieved by the activities provided for in Article 164 and fix the relevant priorities,
- indicate the broad lines of such activities,
- fix the maximum overall amount and the detailed rules for Community financial participation in the framework programme and the respective shares in each of the activities provided for.

2. The framework programme shall be adapted or supplemented as the situation changes.

3. The framework programme shall be implemented through specific programmes developed within each activity. Each specific programme shall define the detailed rules for implementing it, fix its duration and provide for the means deemed necessary. The sum of the amounts deemed necessary, fixed in the specific programmes, may not exceed the overall maximum amount fixed for the framework programme and each activity.

4. The Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt the specific programmes.

*Source: Single European Act*

Of the provisions on the **common R&D in the Single European Act**, the highlights are discussed below.



In terms of the **objectives**:

- The prior objective of the common policy is to *strengthen the scientific and technological bases of Community industry* and to *enhance its international competitiveness*.
- *Promoting all the other objectives of the Community through commonly executed research* has also been the objective of the common R&D policy.

The common actions under the policy **target**: *firms (including SMEs), research institutions and universities*.

- Encouraging *cooperation among these main actors of European R&D* is also among the objectives.

In order to reach the above objectives, the following **activities** are foreseen:

- implementation of *research and development programmes* (these will later be the so-called framework programmes);
- *promotion of cooperation with third countries and international organisations* (i.e. European research is not 'kept secret');
- *dissemination* of the results;
- *stimulation of training and mobility of researchers*.

With regard to the **multiannual framework programme scheme**, the Single European Act stated that these should:

- *set the scientific and technological objectives* for the Community;
- *indicate the broad lines for the activities* to be carried out;
- *fix upper thresholds for Community budget* to be spent on such activities;
- be further detailed into *specific programmes* with detailed *rules of implementation, duration and budget*.

This way, the *multiannual framework programmes* have become the major tools of the common R&D policy in the EEC/EU.

## Shift of focus of the common R&D in the 1990s

After the 1980s, there was *again a shift of focus* in the European research and development policy. This time the change was induced by the European Commission and all the common policies were affected. The new key concept became **economic and social cohesion**. In fact, the *Single European Act (1986)*, but even more explicitly, the *Treaty on European Union (1992)* declared that **the common policies have to serve the ultimate goal of the Community, namely the improvement of economic and social cohesion**.

Since then, European research has also been targeted at serving cohesion. In this conceptual setting, *research is pointless and useless unless it has a positive impact on cohesion*.

As a result, the focus of research in Europe changed substantially:

- Instead of production technology and processes in manufacturing, **biotechnology, human health, and the environment** have come to the forefront of European research.

Evidently, these research areas are intertwined. *This life-centred approach has been predominant in the EU ever since*, even if both the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the framework programmes encompass industry-, economy- and production-related subject areas as well.

### Questions for self-study

- What are the major objectives and elements of the common research and development policy according to the Treaty? (Single European Act, Articles 163-173)
- What scientific areas got into the focus of European R&D in the 1990s? What is the reason behind this shift?

### References:

Single European Act. Available at: [https://europa.eu/european-union/law/treaties\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/law/treaties_en)

Signature of the Single European Act (image). CVCE (Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe), Luxembourg, [www.cvce.eu](http://www.cvce.eu)