Research and technological development (RTD): activities of the Union. Annual report 2001

2002/2146(COS) - 02/09/2002 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

The JRC's Annual Report for 2001 indicates that the year marked the onset of a period of profound change for the JRC. It involved a stronger orientation towards its customers and users, the concentration and focusing of activities, enhanced collaboration with the Member States, the opening up and networking with other organisations, and the monitoring and benchmarking of scientific quality. The number of JRC Institutes was reduced from eight to seven. The remaining Institutes were restructured, resulting in the creation of three new ones. Several new key elements are being introduced in the JRC operation in order to reinforce its role as a provider of scientific and technological support to Community policy-making and as a catalyst for scientific and research networking and integration in Europe. They include: -building up a significant number of mobile young scientific staff who work at the JRC for limited periods of time. -enhancing training capacity and integrating research training into its work programme. Special emphasis is put on the needs of the candidate countries in designing the research training programme. -promoting transparency and simplification in administrative procedures. -promoting staff exchanges with other Commission services. JRC activities focused on the three key areas: food, chemical products and health; environment and sustainability; and nuclear safety and safeguards, which were underpinned by JRC competencies in: technical foresight; reference materials and measurements; and public security and anti-fraud. Specific activities addressed a series of major themes, including: -climate change; -combating fraud, from cybersecurity to agriculture; -emissions and air quality - avoiding impacts on health and environment; -improving GMO detection and risk assessment; -future EU strategy on safety of chemical substances; -nuclear safeguards - detecting proliferation of nuclear materials, equipment or technology form peaceful applications to military use, and combating illicit trafficking; -nuclear safety - improving management and storage; -safety and quality of the food chain; -sustainable energy; -water quality - preventing pollution. With regard to the European Research Area, the JRC's strategy encompasses networking, research and training and mobility and support to the enlargement process. Training through research has been a key component of research integration, coordination and reference. These include the high Flux Reactor in Petten, the linear accelerator in Geel, and the bio-cyclotron and the reaction wall in Ispra. The report goes on to highlight the action taken in progressing support to enlargement, in strengthening international relations, and managing technology transfer.