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Eurostat Figures Show Growth in Research Funding

Recent figures from Eurostat on research spending across the European Union show a growing trend in research investment. In 2007, the EU spent 229 billion euro on research and development (R&D), equivalent to 1.85% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The EU has set itself the goal of spending 3% of GDP on R&D by 2010; however, spending has remained stable at around 1.85% of GDP over the past few years.

For comparison, the US spent 2.67% of GDP on R&D in 2007, and in 2006 (the latest year for which data are available), Japan spent 3.40%. In 2007, just two countries spent over 3% of GDP on R&D: Sweden and Finland spent 3.60% and 3.47%, respectively, although even these nations spent less than they had in 2005. A further four countries (Denmark, Germany, France and Austria) spent over 2% of GDP on R&D in 2007.

The countries that have increased their R&D spending the most since 2001 are Austria (which increased its spending from 2.07% in 2001 to 2.56% in 2007), Estonia (0.71% to 1.14%) and Portugal (0.80% to 1.18%). However, 10 EU Member States still spend less than 1% of GDP on research, and of these, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Slovakia all spent less than 0.5%.

On the employment front, some 2.3 million people (full-time equivalent) were involved in R&D work in the EU in 2007. In addition to researchers, this figure includes research managers, administrators and clerical staff. These R&D personnel made up 1.6% of the EU's workforce. As with R&D spending, there are immense differences between the Member States. In Finland, R&D personnel account for 3.2% of total employment. R&D personnel make up over 2% of employment in Denmark, Luxembourg, Austria and Sweden. In contrast, they account for less than 1% of employment in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal and Romania.

For more information, please visit:

- Eurostat: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>
- EU 'Investing in European Research' web pages:
http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/index_en.htm

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