

#### 4.25. Chapter 25: Science and research

Good progress can be reported in the area of **science and research policy**. A number of regulatory arrangements were made to encourage international researchers to stay longer or settle permanently in Turkey. A new support programme was launched to encourage the return to Turkey of Turkish researchers who have completed their doctoral studies but currently live abroad.

At its December 2009 meeting, the Turkish Supreme Council for Science and Technology (SCST) decided to begin preparing a national science, technology and innovation action plan for the period 2011-2016. At the June meeting, the SCST decided to establish, under the coordination of TUBITAK, Work Groups consisting of experts from the public and private sector as well as from universities to prepare national research and innovation strategies in the fields of energy, water and food.

R&D expenditure under the national support programmes granted by the Turkish Scientific and Technological Research Council (Tübitak) was increased to €310 million (€210 million for industrial R&D) in 2009, from €205 million (€150 million for industrial R&D) in 2008, representing a 50% increase overall. A total of 62 new private-sector R&D centres have been approved by the Turkish Ministry of Trade and Industry. This was the first result of the R&D Law, adopted in March 2008, which aims to encourage research and technological development activities by providing a number of incentives and support mechanisms for investors and SMEs (tax incentives and elimination of some bureaucratic obstacles to R&D).

The expenditure on research increased to €5.63 billion, from €5.47 billion in 2007, reaching 0.73% of GDP. This is well below the national target of attaining 2% by 2013. In July 2010, the Board of the European Investment Bank (EIB) approved an investment loan of €300 million aiming, in co-financing with the Turkish Undersecretariat of Treasury, to strengthen the research infrastructure capacity for a sustainable future.

The administrative capacity of Tübitak has been reinforced through recruitment of new staff. This brought about a 15% personnel increase at Tübitak.

The level of Turkish participation in the 7th **Framework Programme** for Research and Technological Development (FP7) further improved but efforts remain necessary to increase the research capacity and scientific excellence. The discussions with the Commission on the update the action plan covering the period 2010-2011 are ongoing aiming at supporting Turkey's take up of FP7 projects are ongoing.

Active cooperation with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) continued through the participation of Turkish researchers in JRC workshops, high-level meetings and JRC projects and networks, and the secondment of Turkish researchers to JRC institutions.

Turkey launched, *in June 2010*, an online consultation process targeting the Turkish research community to determine their national positions for FP8. The outcome will then be submitted to the Commission to contribute to FP8 preparations.

Negotiations and preparations for the association to the Seventh Euratom Framework programme through the conclusion of a S&T Agreement are ongoing.

Concerning its integration into the **European Research Area (ERA)**, Turkey is participating in seven Joint Programming Initiatives, which aim to address major European societal

challenges by harmonising national research activities. Turkey participates, as an associated country, in the Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan), and is committed to strengthen its research efforts accordingly. Turkey further increased the number of scientists and improved the mobility of researchers. Turkey actively participates in all advisory bodies on the European Research Area including the ERAC (European Research Area Committee) as observer.

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### *Conclusion*

Turkey is well prepared in the area of science and research and good progress has been achieved towards future integration into the European Research Area. Overall, Turkey's participation and success rate in Framework Programmes are on the rise. However, further efforts are required to maintain these rates all through the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7).