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THE COMPETENCES OF THE AUTHORITIES IN BELGIUM RESPONSIBLE FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

I. GENERAL

The distribution of competences across the various governments in Belgium which are responsible for scientific research is established in the country's special institutional reform act of 8 August 1980 and subsequent amendments, in particular article 6bis.

This act confers "primary" jurisdiction over scientific research to Belgium's Communities and Regions within the framework of their respective competences, including research aimed at the execution of international or supranational agreements or acts. As an exception to this general rule, a number of competences involving scientific research are entrusted to the Federal Government.

- The ***Federal Government*** is competent for:
 - scientific research necessary in order to perform its own general competences, including scientific research aimed at the execution of international or supranational agreements or acts;
 - execution and organisation of networks for information exchanges between national and international scientific institutes;
 - space research within an international framework;
 - federal scientific institutes, including their research activities and public-service activities;
 - in accordance with rules established via co-operation agreements with the Communities and the Regions:
 - programmes and actions requiring homogeneous execution at national or international level;
 - maintenance of a permanent inventory of the country's scientific potential;
 - Belgian collaboration in activities of international research bodies;
 - on the basis of a co-operation proposal to the Communities and/or the Regions, and on the prior recommendation of the Federal Council for Science Policy, the Federal Government can take initiatives, set up structures and provide funds for scientific research into matters belonging to the competences of the Communities or the Regions and which, furthermore :
 - are either the subject of international or supranational agreements or instruments in which Belgium is a partner to the agreement or considered as such;
 - or refer to actions and programmes going beyond the interests of one Community or one Region.

Each Region and each Community may refuse any participation concerning them or the institutions coming under their jurisdiction.

- The *Communities* are competent for research related to education, culture and individual matters, namely health policy (care policy, health education) and personal assistance (family, youth, elderly, etc.).

This covers both research focusing on such matters as well as research conducted by organisations from the sector concerned, namely, as far as education is concerned, the universities and other higher education institutes. The Federal Government, and the Regions may nevertheless call upon educational institutes in exercising their competences.

- The *Regions* are competent for research related to the economy, energy policy (excluding nuclear), public works, the environment, transport and the other regional competences.

This covers support for basic technological and industrial research, the development of prototypes, new products and production processes, the distribution and transfer of technologies and the technological innovation (this support involves both companies as well as universities and research centres).

II. CONSULTATIVE BODIES INVOLVING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THE COMMUNITIES AND THE REGIONS

The *Inter-Ministerial Conference on Science Policy (IMCSP)* is the consultative body between the Federal Government, the Communities and the Regions. It is composed of those members of the Federal, Community and Regional Governments who have responsibilities in science policy matters. The IMCWB-CIMPS establishes co-operation agreements (including international affairs) and develops various procedures for co-operation and information exchanges between the various policy levels.

The “*International Cooperation*” *Commission (ICC)* and the “*Federal Co-operation*” *Commission (FCC)* are two permanent committees of the IMCSP. Each committee is made up of civil servants and administers consultations on matters concerning the Federal Government as well as the Communities and the Regions, respectively at the international and at the Belgian level. They have set up a series of specialized consultative bodies.

III. FEDERAL AUTHORITY

III.1. POLITICAL LEVEL

The *Council of Ministers* determines the major Federal Government options in the area of science policy. Its general orientations is co-ordinated by the minister in charge of science policy, currently the *Minister for Economy and Scientific Research*. Other ministers are dealing with activities concerning research and public scientific services related to matters in their area of competence.

III.2. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

The Federal office for scientific, technical and cultural affairs (OSTC) falls within the administrative control of the Offices of the Prime Minister and comes under the authority of the Minister for Economy and Scientific Research. It attends to horizontal duties involving co-ordination and programming at the federal level. It prepares and implements various research actions that coincide with the competence of the Federal Government or with those of the Communities and/or the Regions – in the latter cases involving a co-operation agreement.

The other federal departments that administering substantial research budgets are:

- *Economic Affairs* : nuclear research (SCK, IRE, CERN, JET, IIKW) and support for innovation infrastructures (standardisation, measurement and certification, patents, Collective Centres, Geological Service);
- *Self-employed Persons and Agriculture*: the ‘Research & Development’ Administration (DG6), as well as administering institutional research, attends to the contractual funding of research projects awarded to third parties;
- *Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation*: Third World issues;
- *National Defence*: Royal Military School and Royal Museum of the Army and Military History;
- *Social Affairs, Public Health and the Environment* : research associated with federal competences regarding public health and the environment;
- *Justice* : National Crime Statistics and Criminology Institute and Penitentiary Research and Clinical Observation Centre.

The *Inter-Ministerial Commission on Science Policy (CIPS-ICWB)* co-ordinates, on its own account or instructed by the Federal Government, the preparation and execution of Government decisions regarding federal science policy matters for which mutually agreed action by two or more ministerial departments is necessary.

One of the permanent duties undertaken by the *CIPS-ICWB* is the annual preparation of the interdepartmental budget programme for science policy (BPWB-PBPS). This classifies all credits dedicated to funding of scientific and technological activities (research and development, public scientific services and, occasionally, education and training) of the various federal ministries.

III.3. ADVISORY LEVEL

The *Federal Council for Science Policy (CFPS-FRWB)* is an advisory body made up of representatives from academic, scientific and socio-economic circles.

Its task is to :

- deliver advice on Federal Government initiatives aimed at promoting co-operation actions with the Communities and the Regions in areas belonging to the competences of the latter;
- deliver advice, on its own account or on request of the Federal Government (occasionally on request of a Community or a Regional Government) and to make recommendations concerning science policy issues for the nation as a whole, taking account of aspects that include the European and international context;
- deliver advice, when requested by the Federal Government, concerning scientific policy issues that fall within the competence of the Federal Government.

The *Advisory Council for Research and Development in Agriculture* was set up on the initiative of the minister empowered to deal with agriculture. Its task is to offer advice and put forward proposals to the minister on the following issues:

- establishment of research and development guidelines;
- establishment of research and development priorities;
- follow-up and evaluation of research and development actions, assess the way in which these fit in with the requirements, and the possible re-orientation of these actions.

IV. FLEMISH COMMUNITY

IV.1. POLITICAL LEVEL

Flemish policy on science and technology innovation is part of the competences of the *Minister for Economy, Town and Country Planning and Media*.

The *Minister for Education and Training* is responsible for the training of scientists and the structural funding of scientific research at universities and higher education colleges.

The *other ministers in the Flemish Government* are dealing with sector-specific science policy actions concerning matters coinciding with their respective area of competence.

IV. 2. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

The *Administratie Wetenschap en Innovatie (AWI) (Science and Innovation Administration)* of the Ministry of the Flemish Community has the task of:

- preparing, executing and supporting the policy of the concerned ministers;
- attending to horizontal co-ordination, within the ministry and together with public organisations (FWO-VI, IWT-Vlaanderen, research institutes, etc.);
- handling federal and international co-operation (CFS-CIS, EU etc.);
- listing, analysing and evaluating research;
- promoting science and technology towards the general public.

Other departments are responsible for the preparation and execution of sector-specific policies in the scientific sphere, namely in :

- *Education*;
- *Economy, Employment, Internal Affairs and Agriculture*;
- *Environment and Infrastructure* ;
- *Welfare, Public Health and Culture*.

IV.3. ADVISORY LEVEL

The *Vlaamse Raad voor Wetenschapsbeleid (VRWB) (Flemish Council for Science Policy)* formulates advice and recommendations for the Flemish Government or the Flemish Parliament, on request or on its own initiative.

IV. 4. OTHER BODIES INVOLVED IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

The *Instituut voor de Aanmoediging van Innovatie door Wetenschap en Technologie in Vlaanderen (IWT-Vlaanderen) (Institute for the Promotion of Innovation through Science and Technology in Flanders)* is a Flemish public body under the supervision of the Minister for Economy, Town and Country Planning and Media.

IWT-Vlaanderen contributes to the preparation and execution of the Flemish Government's policy for promoting technological innovation by way of:

- financial support for projects of companies and other organisations;
- awarding individual grants;
- disseminating information as well as delivering assistance, advice and expertise;
- stimulation of network development and co-operation between companies, institutes and organisations;
- promotion of participation in international programmes geared to technological innovation.

The *Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Vlaanderen (FWO-VI) (Fund for Scientific Research in Flanders)* is a public-utility private body that grants research fellowships and provides financial support for university research.

FWO-VI's associated funds are:

- the *Interuniversitair Instituut voor Kernwetenschappen (IIKW) (Inter-University Institute for Nuclear Sciences)* ; and
- the *Fonds voor Geneeskundig Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (FGWO) (Fund for Medical Scientific Research)*.

Both funds, like FWO-VI, are funded by the Flemish Community, but also receive financial contributions from the Federal Government.

FWO-VI and the *Bijzonder Onderzoeksfonds (BOF) (Special Research Fund)* administered by the universities represent the two foremost funding channels for basic scientific research.

V. FRENCH COMMUNITY

V.1. POLITICAL LEVEL

The *minister responsible for higher education and scientific research* has the primary competences over university research, but also applied research within the framework of higher education colleges.

The *other ministers* are responsible for actions in the science policy field connected to their areas of competence, for example health, the socio-cultural sphere, sport and tourism.

V.2. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

The *Direction générale de l'Enseignement non obligatoire et de la Recherche scientifique (DGENORS) (Directorate General for non-obligatory Education and Scientific Research)* of the Ministry of the French Community prepares and executes the Community's science policy.

The matters it deals with include the funding of university institutes, funds for non-specific scientific research (FNRS and associated funds), concerted research actions and the special fund for research in university institutes as well as the funding of higher education colleges.

DGENORS also handles all co-ordination and co-operation tasks involving science policy, both at the level of the Community itself and at the federal and international levels (including FCC-ICC and the EU).

There are *other general directorates of the Ministry of the French Community* which take responsibility for sector-specific research actions related to matters falling within their competence. However, this is less significant in budgetary terms.

V. 3. FUNDING BODIES BASED ON PUBLIC FUNDS

The *Fonds national de la recherche scientifique (FNRS) (National Scientific Research Fund)* is a public-utility private body that awards research mandates (Ph.D. fellows, post-doctorates, qualified researchers), finances a variety of activities (i.e. visits abroad) and funds research projects in universities and research institutes.

FNRS associated funds are:

- the *Institut interuniversitaire des sciences nucléaires (IISN) (Inter-University Institute of Nuclear Sciences)*;
- the *Fonds de la recherche scientifique médicale (FRSM) (Fund for Medical Scientific Research)*;
- the *Fonds de la recherche fondamentale collective à l'initiative des chercheurs (FRFC) (Fund for Collective Fundamental Scientific Research)*;
- the *Fonds pour la formation à la recherche dans l'industrie et dans l'agriculture (FRIA) (Fund for Research Training in Industry and Agriculture)*.
The latter awards doctorate grants to university graduates wishing to develop a career in research within industry or agriculture.

VI. GERMAN COMMUNITY

VI. 1. POLITICAL LEVEL

The *Minister for Education and Training, Culture and Tourism* is competent for science policy in Belgium's German Community.

VII. WALLOON REGION

VII. 1. POLITICAL LEVEL

The *Minister for Economy, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Research and New Technologies* is primarily responsible for research within the Walloon Government. He administers the most significant component of regional R&D policy, namely research for technological ends.

The *other ministers* are also empowered to fund research and studies in their respective areas of competence.

VII. 2. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

The *Direction générale des Technologies, de la Recherche et de l'Energie (DGTRE) (Directorate General for Technologies, Research and Energy)* is responsible for :

- preparing and executing the Region's R&D policy and programmes (research for technological ends, innovation, R&D in the energy sphere), with co-funding from EU structural funds;
- development of projects, management and follow-up of funding awarded to universities, research centres, companies, higher education colleges and independent inventors;
- federal and international co-operation (CFS-CIS, EU, etc.);
- co-ordination of data concerning research supported by the various administrations of the Walloon Region.

The *other administrative directorates of the Ministry of the Walloon Region* – Natural Resources and Environment, Social Action and Health, Town and Country

Planning, etc. – and of the *Walloon Ministry for Equipment and Transport* may, as the occasion arises, fund studies and sector-specific research actions connected with matters over which they have jurisdiction. However, these are marginal in budgetary terms.

VII. 3. ADVISORY LEVEL

The *Conseil de la politique scientifique en Région wallonne (CPS) (Council for Science Policy in the Walloon Region)* advises the Walloon Government during preparation and evaluation of the Region's science policy.

VIII. BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION

VIII. 1. POLITICAL LEVEL

The *Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Government* is competent for the Region's entire research policy.

VIII. 2. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

The *Service de la Recherche et de l'Innovation – Dienst Onderzoek en Innovatie (SRI-DOI) (Research and Innovation Office)* within the 'Economy and Employment' administration of the Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region has the task of :

- promoting the development of new activities (prototypes, new products or production processes) in the Brussels-Capital Region by awarding subsidies or interest-free loans and consolidating the presence of innovating activities already in existence;
- providing follow-up on international programmes in the area of scientific and technical research (EU, EUREKA, COST and other programmes) and stimulating participation by the Region in these programmes.

VIII. 3. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER BODY BASED ON PUBLIC FUNDING

Technopol Brussel-Bruxelles is an instrument designed to support technology transfer financed by the Region in the form of a non-profit-making association promoting information exchange and co-operation networks between companies (large firms and SME's) and/or research centres.

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