

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The European Commission is preparing its proposals for the next research Framework Programme due to start in 2007. In order to launch a debate a Communication on “Science and Technology, the key to Europe’s future: Guidelines for future European Union policy to support research” was published 16 June 2004.<sup>4</sup> Following this, an open consultation was launched on 30 July 2004 to obtain views and comments on these guidelines with a deadline for responses of 15 October 2004.

This report provides the statistical results and analyses the main messages arising from the online consultation, where over 1700 responses were received including over 8000 written comments on the various aspects of the guidelines. In addition to the online responses, the Commission is receiving a number of position papers and other written contributions for the preparation of the 7<sup>th</sup> framework programme proposals. To date, over 100 such documents have been received. In addition, more detailed information and consultations have been provided regarding the identification of the research themes for future European Union support.<sup>5</sup> Although they are not the focus of this report, these inputs are being analysed by the Commission in parallel.

The results of the consultation are being used to help the preparation of the Commission’s proposal for the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme which is due to be presented in April 2005.

## **2. RESPONSES RECEIVED**

Commission received a high level of response to the online questionnaire and a total of 1727 responses were received.<sup>6</sup> All responses were on a voluntary basis.

Regarding the types of respondent:

- 115 responses (about 7%) came from large companies. Many leading companies are represented from different sectors.
- 457 responses (about 26%) came from universities/higher education institutes; this also represents a strong response, although some responses come from the level of departments or research groups rather than the university as a whole.
- 144 responses (about 8%) came from SMEs represents a good response from this group. However, given the diversity in SMEs, more caution is needed in interpretation. It should be pointed out that a number of the associations that responded have a large number of SME members.
- Regarding wider societal interests, around 7% of responses came from associations, 8% from government bodies, and 31% from individuals. However given the very different nature of their interests, the following analysis does not generally attempt to identify trends for these types of respondent.

---

<sup>4</sup> COM(2004)353, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/index_en.html)

<sup>5</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/themes/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/themes/index_en.html)

<sup>6</sup> There were a couple of cases of coordinated actions. In one case a group of researchers from different countries have put forward comments in favour of a specific research topic. In another case a group of researcher in one country have submitted duplicates of the same form. However these two cases have not significantly affected the overall outcome of the statistics.