

## **Raising the Profile of the National Foundation for RTD and Ensuring**

The budget of the National Foundation for Research, Technology and Development that is paid out annually has fallen from EUR 125 million in 2004, when the Foundation was established, to EUR 80 million in 2008. The Austrian Council is of the opinion that in the medium term, funds from the National Foundation should be directed toward key areas of research that conform more closely with the provisions of the RTD National Foundation Act and the guiding principles. Furthermore, despite budgetary constraints, action should be taken to make it possible for the National Foundation to fulfil its statutory tasks. Measures are also required to safeguard the funding budget of approximately EUR 125 million per year originally laid down in the explanations to the National Foundation Act.

To assist the National Foundation in properly fulfilling its legal responsibilities, the Austrian Council recommends that stricter criteria be applied when assessing the basic compliance of applications with the guiding principles of the National Foundation. In future, only those applications should therefore be submitted for comment to the Austrian Council that allow the National Foundation to be independently positioned as a financing instrument in accordance with the guiding principles.

In order to realise and safeguard this independent positioning in the long term, an appropriate volume of funding is required. The Austrian Council therefore also recommends securing a funding budget for the Foundation amounting to EUR 125 million per year, as originally laid down in the explanations to the Act. Appropriate measures (pursuant to § 4 para. 3 of the RTD National Foundation Act) must be taken to ensure medium-term planning certainty, and a medium-term financial plan tailored to the Foundation's future tasks should be drawn up for the funds to be disbursed.