



## PRESS RELEASE

29 July 2021

### FLASH AUDIT

# FUNDING FOR PUBLIC RESEARCH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the context of the health crisis, the Court decided to initiate an audit that, while respecting its professional standards, is noteworthy for the speed of its investigation, carried out within four months. This work is presented as an initial assessment of the financial effort made to support public research in the fight against the pandemic, over the period from 1 January 2020 to 1 March 2021.

### The state of research funding

Over the period from January 2020 to March 2021, **the total volume of public resources made available in France was around €502 million, or €530 million with European funds.** This effort is less, in absolute terms and relatively, than that of other European countries with comparable scientific resources and infrastructure. This assessment by the Court also illustrates the plurality and heterogeneity of financing channels.

International comparison of the distribution of public research funding in the COVID-19 crisis

Germany	1.5 billion
United States <sup>1</sup>	9.63 billion
Netherlands	0.16 billion
United Kingdom <sup>2</sup>	1.30 billion
European Union	4.4 billion

Source: Embassies of France in Washington, London, Berlin, The Hague, RPUE.

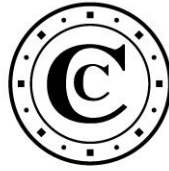
The comparative view makes French structural difficulties more apparent, symbolised in the eyes of public opinion by the absence of a vaccine design.

### An initial assessment that reflects the scattering of research and the failure to prioritise initiatives

Despite the particularly meritorious efforts of all the stakeholders in the French research system, and despite the internationally recognised qualities of our researchers, the results do not meet expectations. The dispersal of initiatives, the difficulty in fine-tuning priorities, the unpreparedness to take risks and administrative burdens hindered the creation of a coherent and effective response system.

<sup>1</sup> Exchange rates as at 4 May 2021: 1.2044 (Bank of France).

<sup>2</sup> Exchange rates as at 4 May 2021: 1.1556 (Bank of France).



## Areas for improvement


The audit highlights structural deficiencies and notes that these could be corrected in three ways:

- organising crisis management governance and appointing a lead manager;
- giving priority to fundamental research in biology-health;
- ensuring a continuum between academic research and industry, in the same way that foreign research is organised.


**[Read the audit](#)**


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