

## **Germany: new biotechnology powerhouse in Europe**

In just five years, Germany has risen from almost no biotech industry to a point where it has more biotech companies than in the region's historic champion, the United Kingdom. According to a report by Ernst and Young, an international consultant, at the end of 1999 there were totally 279 biotech companies in Germany. This number enabled Germany to edge out the United Kingdom from European leadership, as the country with the most biotech companies in Europe, ranking second only to the United States worldwide. The report also revealed that the combined sales of German biotech companies stood at roughly US\$380 million, up nearly 40 per cent from 1997 and their research spending had increased by 77 per cent to US\$240 million.

However, German biotech companies are still mostly small companies. In 1997, about 50 per cent of such companies had 1-10 employees, 30 per cent had 11-20 employees and only 2 per cent had more than 80 employees. By contrast, in Europe as a whole, 29 per cent of biotech companies had 1-10 employees, 21 per cent had 11-20 employees and some 19 per cent of companies had more than 80 employees. Therefore, Germany as of today can claim to be Europe's most densely populated biotech kindergarten, and is poised towards rapid growth. (Chemical Weekly, 26 December 2000)