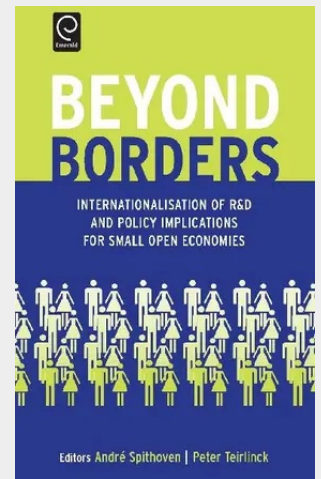


Beyond Borders

At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is common sense that science, technology and innovation will be of increasing importance to the well being of all. Nobody can turn a blind eye to the penetrating ways progress in communication technologies, new materials and biotechnology revolutionise our lives. Although the conversion of science and technology into marketable products that cover societal needs is largely a matter of the private sector, the public sector has its role to play. European integration and liberalisation promote the interaction of various actors in science and technology. Also the perceived arrears with the United States and Japan has prompted the European Union to step up their RD spending to reach 3% of gross domestic product by 2010. Individual Member States have taken concrete measures to promote their RD, and Belgium is one of them. But there is a long and bumpy way to go still because of the slow growth rate the economies are currently experiencing and the tied budgetary constraints policy makers are confronted with. In the face of this it has to be acknowledged that many differences exist between countries. Differences are part and parcel of the internationalisation process and, within it, small open economies are confronted with specific opportunities and problems of their own. This volume aims at informing and stimulating the debate on policy issues relating to science, technology and innovation. For those not acquainted with the subject it offers an introduction to the pallet of issues that play a role in the current state of affairs. Others might find the guidelines to policy more instructive. It is by no means the final word on the subject.

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