

Medical Equipment

IMPORTANCE OF THE SECTOR

In 1991, the French medical equipment market was estimated to be 17,4 billion francs (\$3,5 billion). Sales reached 11,6 billion francs (\$2,3 billion). Except for laboratory equipment, these figures represent the complete medical equipment market. In 1991, medical consumerism (total medical goods and services) represented 16% (540 billion francs (\$109 billion) of total household consumption, an increase from 9.5% in 1970. In 1991, France counted 3,756 hospitals. Public and private institutions totalled respectively 1,065 and 2,691. There were 566,000 beds in public hospitals, employing 13,900 doctors and 860,000 staff, and servicing 12 million patients.

The French bio-medical industry is comprised of approximately 350 companies with a workforce of close to 20,000. The structure can be categorized in the following way:

- there are no more French constructors of heavy medical equipment since Thomson sold CGR shares to General Electric. The scanners market is detained by General Electric CGR, Siemens, Philips and Elscint;

- subsidiary companies such as: Alm and Taema (Air Liquide), Ela Medical, and Porgès (Synthelabo);

- small businesses: 90% of companies realize less than 100 million francs (\$22 million) turnover. These companies generally have an average of 80 employees and many are family firms.

From a geographical point of view, the establishment of the bio-medical industry is mainly concentrated around Paris and to a lesser degree in the Rhône-Alpes and South West regions.

Snitem (Syndicat National de l'Industrie des Technologies Médicales--National Union for Medical Technology Industry), which resulted from the merger of two unions, Facomed (Medico-Surgical) and Semrad (Radiology), now represents 80% of medical manufacturers.

FOREIGN TRADE

French customs statistics reveal that total exports reached 7 billion francs (\$1,4 billion) in 1991, while imports totalled 8,7 billion francs (\$1,8 billion). Consequently, the commercial trade balance deficit amounted to 1,7 billion francs (\$400 million) in 1991. The majority of imports come from the United States, Germany and Japan.