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From: Secretary-General of the European Commission,  
signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director

date of receipt: 6 October 2017

To: Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of  
the European Union

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Subject: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
OF THE EVALUATION of the Commission Staff Working Document  
Participation of the EU in research and development programmes  
undertaken by several Member States based on Article 185 of the TFEU

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Delegations will find attached document SWD(2017) 341 final.

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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION**

**of the**

**Commission Staff Working Document**

**Participation of the EU in research and development programmes undertaken by  
several Member States based on Article 185 of the TFEU**

{SWD(2017) 340 final}

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Article 185 of the Treaty for the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) gives the EU the possibility to participate financially in multiannual research programmes proposed by several Member States including countries associated to the EU's framework programmes for Research and Innovation (R&I). These joint multiannual research programmes (Article 185 initiatives) are part of a larger family of so-called Public-Public-Partnerships (P2Ps), including ERA-NETs<sup>1</sup> and Joint Programming Initiatives<sup>2</sup> (JPIs).

This Staff Working Document (SWD) builds mainly on the main findings from seven<sup>3</sup> individual evaluations and the results of public stakeholder consultations. It is focused on the overarching issues that concern all initiatives, while the in-depth analysis and specific issues relating to the individual evaluations can be found in independent expert group reports referenced in annex 3 of this SWD.

Five initiatives have been established since 2003, of which four have been renewed under Horizon 2020:

- Active and Assisted Living Research and Development Programme (AAL2): innovative ICT-based solutions for active and healthy ageing;
- European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership 2 (EDCTP2): new or improved treatments for poverty-related diseases in sub-Saharan Africa;
- The European Metrology Programme for Innovation and Research (EMPIR): new measurement solutions for industrial competitiveness and societal challenges;
- Eurostars2: support to the transnational collaboration of R&D performing SMEs;
- BONUS: Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme (launched under Framework Programme 7 (FP7) but still active in 2017).

In October 2016 the European Commission adopted a proposal to establish a new public-public Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) under Article 185 TFEU. The initiative will start implementation in 2018.

While public funding for Article 185 initiatives under FP7 was about €1,6 billion (€600 M from the Union and €1.000 M from Member States), it will increase until the end of Horizon 2020 to nearly €4 billion (€2,2 billion from Member States and €1,7 billion from the Union).

The individual evaluations as well as the meta-evaluation identify particular strengths and challenges for the use of Article 185 TFEU which include specific issues related to the individual Article 185 initiatives and overarching issues related to the use of Article 185 more generally.

### Strengths

The major strength of Article 185 initiatives is that they provide a long-term financial perspective as incentive for stable programming, contributing to more effective and efficient R&I programme coordination and cooperation across Europe. Consequently, Article 185 initiatives are of special relevance for achieving the European Research Area

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<sup>1</sup> As ERA-NETs, the two Horizon 2020 instruments ERA-NET Cofund and European Joint Programming (EJP) Cofund are included.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Programming Initiatives are Member-State driven R&I programmes on societal challenges that have been directly established since 2010 by the Council and which are partly supported by Horizon 2020 through ERA-NETs.

<sup>3</sup> Two final evaluations for Article 185 initiatives funded under FP7 (BONUS, EMRP), four interim-evaluations for Article 185 initiatives funded under Horizon 2020 (AAL2, EDCTP2, EMPIR, Eurostars2) and a meta-evaluation of Article 185 initiatives.

(ERA), in particular in terms of optimal transnational cooperation and the alignment of R&I programming practices across Europe.

The Article 185 initiatives display a high coherence with wider EU policies beyond Horizon 2020, underlining the policy dimension of the programmes. The initiatives have clear positive network effects and are visible testimonials for joint European action at global level.

All Article 185 initiatives contribute to a more integrated and coordinated R&I programming in Europe, with a particular strength in scientific integration.

The governance structures of the Article 185 initiatives are efficient, considering the challenge to accommodate the diversity of national R&I practices and cultures within one programme. In particular, the Dedicated Implementation Structures (DIS) established for implementing the joint programmes are considered efficient, as the administrative expenditures stay below the limits set individually by the acts establishing the Article 185 initiatives. As Article 185 initiatives are implemented through indirect management, the administrative expenditures calculated do not include efforts at national level and cannot be compared with administrative expenditures of Horizon 2020, which is centrally and directly managed.

## **Challenges**

One challenge concerns the sustainability of the currently active Article 185 initiatives. Most evaluations (notably AAL2, BONUS, Eurostars2, and to a lesser extent EDCTP2) identify potential alternatives to the use of Article 185 to ensure the desired sustainability of the underlying programme which might allow for more flexibility and administrative simplification. While this fits well into national and EU policy objectives to provide the structures and "seed" for Europe-wide joint activities which eventually achieve a higher degree of self-sustainability, the transition requires careful planning and implementation.

Another overarching challenge is the positioning of Article 185 initiatives within the overall, rather complex R&I landscape at national and EU level. The number of "partnership approaches" increased significantly over the last 10 years. This has led to proliferation of the landscape of Public-Public Partnerships (e.g. Article 185, ERA-NETs, Joint Programming Initiatives), Public-Private Partnerships (e.g. Article 187 initiatives, contractual Public Private Partnerships), broader governance and stakeholder platforms (European Innovation Platforms, European Technology Platforms and other related initiatives (European Institute of technology and its KICS, FET Flagships)). Against this background, most evaluations concluded that it is not always clear how the Article 185 initiatives are positioned within a broader context. This refers to both national R&I policies and the EU R&I policy framework, currently Horizon 2020.

While the initiatives make clear contributions to the ERA and are attractive for Member States due to their variable geometry approach, allowing Member States to "cherry pick" their participation, the assessments also underline that the participation of R&D less-intensive countries was not sufficient.

The assessments identify also a mismatch between the policy related objectives of Article 185 initiatives and the concrete activities implemented by the programmes. The elaboration of Strategic Research Agendas and the limitation to joint calls without substantive financial integration miss opportunities to achieve broader policy impacts. As a consequence, the evaluations underline the need for future joint programmes based on Article 185 TFEU to establish a broader set of activities and to play a more visible role with R&I activities delivering on overarching policy agendas, including international policy agendas.