



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: Portuguese delegation
To: Council

Subject: Atlantic interactions: Development of a European infrastructure to promote
North-South international cooperation in research and innovation
- Information from the Portuguese delegation

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Portuguese delegation on the above-mentioned subject with a view to the Competitiveness Council on 29 November 2016.

Information note**AOB request from the PT delegation – COMPET Council
(configuration Research), 29th November 2016*****Atlantic interactions: development of a European Infrastructure to
promote North-South International Cooperation in Research and
Innovation***

Portugal has been developing, in cooperation with Spain and other European countries, Brazil, the United States of America, and southern Latin American and African countries, as well as with major international research organizations and agencies (including ESA, NASA, AEB), a strategic research agenda aiming at key strategic areas related to societal challenges, through an integrative approach to climate change and energy, space, earth and ocean science in the Atlantic, together with emerging methods of data science.

This agenda will be implemented through an international network of research, academic and business organizations across south and north Atlantic countries, together with the creation of an European and international infrastructure to be located in the Azores Islands (“Azores International Research Centre, AIR Center”, emulating the CERN intergovernmental experience in Geneva or that of INL- International Iberian Nano Technology Laboratory, in Braga/Portugal). The Azores Islands are well known for their privileged strategic geographical location in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and also as a natural laboratory for research in the above mentioned areas.

Portugal believes that the possible development of such an international infrastructure, with Europe in the driver’s seat, would be pivotal for the promotion of North-South research cooperation catalyzed by the Atlantic and neighboring seas. It will be the driving force for a new and unique north-south Atlantic observation platform through a network of islands: Azores; Canary Islands, Cape Verde; S. Pedro-S. Paulo and Fernando Noronha (Brazil); and Bermuda, providing access to the Global Geodetic Observing System. In addition it will provide a robust cyber-infrastructure for climate research and an Atlantic Spaceport for small satellites and low cost access to Space, as well as access to new deep-sea research. Also, a full scale smart grid platform for a living laboratory aiming at 100% renewable energy will be promoted.

There are already commitments from some Member States, the US, Brazil and other countries for such endeavor, as co-founders. In this context, Portugal would like to invite Member States to consider the possibility of joining this initiative and the creation of a new intergovernmental organization, in order to reinforce the leading role of the EU in the framework of future north-south international cooperation in research and innovation.

To this effect, Portugal is organizing an event, by the end of April (28-29 April, to be confirmed), in the Azores Islands, in which the participation of EU Ministers would be welcomed to establish a solid cooperation within the EU and between the EU and other countries involved.

