



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Draft Council Conclusions on a Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area

Delegations will find attached a Presidency text on the Draft Council conclusions on a Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area with a view to the Research Working Party meeting on Monday 6 October 2014.

**DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON A PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- The two joint Communications of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on "A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean"¹ and on "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood"², respectively of 8 and 25 May 2011, which acknowledged the shared interest in a democratic, stable, prosperous and peaceful Southern Mediterranean, and offered EU support to southern Mediterranean partners through a "Partnership for democracy and shared prosperity" aiming at supporting progress towards deep democracy, as well as sustainable economic and social development;
- That the process towards improved cooperation for Research and Innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean area has consisted of several political and operational steps, including the creation of the Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in 1995 to monitor and promote cooperation in Research, Technology and Development; the European Neighbourhood Policy established in 2004 and then renewed in 2011; the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008; and several EU funded projects and ERANETs, to support the coordination of national research programmes between EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries;

¹ Doc. COM(2011) 200 final

² Doc. COM(2011) 303 final

- The "Euro-Mediterranean conference on Research and Innovation" organised by the European Commission in Barcelona in April 2012, calling for a renewed partnership in Research and Innovation that should be based on the principles of co-ownership, mutual interest and shared benefit;
 - Its Conclusions of 30 May 2013 on "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: a strategic approach"³, recognising that that added value for the Union can be found not only in cooperating with the industrialised countries and emerging economies, but equally so in deepening the cooperation with the enlargement and neighbourhood countries and the developing countries, on the basis of mutual benefit;
 - The Communication from the European Commission of 10 June 2014 on "Research and innovation as sources of renewed growth"⁴, in which Research and Innovation are identified as resources for supporting growth and creating jobs and where Member States are invited to take care not to spread scarce resources too thinly, focusing on a limited number of key strengths and opportunities;
1. UNDERLINES that the partnership with our neighbours is mutually beneficial, since stability, prosperity and a sustainable economic development and job creation in partner countries of the Southern Mediterranean benefit the EU as well;
 2. RECALLS that as a follow-up to the conclusions of the "Euro-Mediterranean conference on Research and Innovation" held in Barcelona in 2012, the Commission DG Research and Innovation launched "a specific ERA-NET/ERA-NET PLUS action, with the aim of contributing to the preparation of a long-lasting and sustainable coordination mechanism between the EU, its Members States and the Mediterranean countries, such as an Article 185 initiative for the Mediterranean";

³ Doc. 10318/13

⁴ Doc. 10897/14

3. STRESSES the broad support reached on the need to move forward towards the application of Article 185 of the TFEU to handle the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in Research and Innovation at the Informal meeting of the Ministers responsible for research during the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 20 July 2012;
4. WELCOMES the relevant contribution of the initiative “Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area” (PRIMA), established in 2013, to pave the way towards an Article 185 initiative aimed at improving the cooperation in Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area, in order to create a stable long-term and sustainable framework on the basis of equal footing partnerships, co-ownership, co-decision, and co-financing.
5. REAFFIRMS its strong and wide political support for a long-term structured cooperation in Research and Innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean area, as expressed during the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union, in particular at the Informal meeting of the Ministers responsible for research and at the Council, respectively on 13 and 26 May 2014, and during the Lunch debate of the Italian Presidency, concluding the Competitiveness Council (Research) on 26 September 2014. In this regard, REAFFIRMS that such cooperation should aim at the establishment of a large-scale public-public partnership programme compliant with the Article 185 of TFEU, which represents its most appropriate legal basis.
6. EMPHASISES that a joint programme based on Article 185 of TFEU would give Research and Innovation a bridging role between participating countries, promoting scientific cooperation while providing concrete solutions to common challenges facing EU Member States and Mediterranean Partner Countries; and RECALLS that this renewed Partnership aims at committing policy, science, industry and civil society in a long-term structured path to provide a sound framework for free circulation of knowledge, future cross-border cooperation, as well as agreements at scientific and economic level.

7. NOTES that Horizon 2020 aims at achieving a greater impact on research and innovation by contributing to the strengthening of public-public partnerships, where actions at regional, national or international level are jointly implemented within the Union, including through Union participation in programmes undertaken by several Member States in accordance with article 185 of TFEU. ⁵
8. ACKNOWLEDGES the preparatory work to define a joint programme proposal based on Art. 185 of the TFEU, concretized with the presentation of a joint programme by the EU Members Sates and the Mediterranean Partner Countries by (date to be inserted).
9. NOTES that an analysis of the main common challenges that the Area is facing and of the remaining gaps of knowledge and innovation that need to be filled to successfully tackle those challenges has been conducted in order to identify clear objectives on the basis of common interest to guarantee synergies, mutual benefit, optimal scale and scope, and feasible, readily adoptable solutions.
10. WELCOMES that the **objective** of the Programme is clearly focused on the development of innovative and integrated solutions for a more efficient use of water resources and in the production of safe and secure food and that it will also take care of the adoption of the research and innovation results by the end users, thus supporting an inclusive and sustainable development in the Mediterranean area.
11. WELCOMES the **financial commitments** expressed by many participating Countries in response to the request of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which gives a solid base to the initiative.

⁵ Art. 26 2.b REGULATION (EU) No 1291/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC

12. ACKNOWLEDGES that such a large-scale public-public partnership programme on the basis of Article 185 of TFEU has achieved a **critical mass** in terms of Countries and scientific and innovators' communities involved, and will play a crucial role in reducing existing fragmentation between national and European programmes in the Mediterranean Area, thus providing a significant **added value** for the Union and contributing to advancing on ERA key priority areas, such as optimising transnational co-operation, improving the effectiveness of national research systems, favouring the circulation of and the access to scientific knowledge.
13. NOTES that the dimension of the challenge, the size and importance of the partnership and planned initiatives, the wide political commitment and endorsement, are all elements convincingly arguing in favor of the **appropriateness** of Art. 185 TFEU, as only solution able to promote stable and long-term financial, management and scientific integration, essential for achieving the Programme objectives.
14. Therefore, INVITES, in full respect of the Commission's right of initiative, the Commission to take the necessary steps for promptly proceeding towards a proposal for a joint programme for a partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area according to the Article 185 of TFEU.
