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**NOTE**

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From: Presidency

To: Delegations

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

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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 20 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"<sup>1</sup> and on "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood"<sup>2</sup>, 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;

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. COM(2011) 200 final

<sup>2</sup> Doc. COM(2011) 303 final

- **The Communication from the European Commission of 6 October 2010 on "Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union"<sup>3</sup> which considered 'The European Union and its Member States must treat scientific cooperation with third countries as an issue of common concern and develop common approaches' (commitment 31).**
- 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;
- **The Communication from the European Commission of 14 September 2012, "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: a strategic approach"<sup>4</sup>, which establishes a focus on fostering integration into – or alignment with – the European Research Area for the Neighbourhood, thus contributing to the development of a 'Common Knowledge and Innovation Space' inter alia postulates that cooperation will be in close coordination with the instruments of neighbourhood policies.**
- Its Conclusions of 30 May 2013 on "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: a strategic approach"<sup>5</sup>, recognising that the 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;

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<sup>3</sup> Doc. 7592/11  
<sup>4</sup> Doc. 14000/12  
<sup>5</sup> Doc. 10318/13

- The Communication from the European Commission of 10 June 2014 on "Research and innovation as sources of renewed growth"<sup>6</sup>, in which Research and Innovation are identified as resources for supporting growth and creating jobs and where Member States are invited to **focus their efforts on a limited number of key priorities** ~~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"; **WELCOMES that at that time the Commission came forward with the idea of using Article 185 of TFEU for implementing such a Partnership;**
  3. STRESSES **TAKES NOTE that there was** ~~the broad support~~ **for further strengthening the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in research and innovation** ~~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, where several Member States favoured making use of Article 185 of the TFEU, as the most appropriate legal basis to handle a long term strategic cooperation in the Mediterranean Area~~ ~~of the European Union on 20 July 2012;~~

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<sup>6</sup> Doc. 10897/14

4. WELCOMES the transparency, the relevant contribution and the dialogue with the Mediterranean Partner Countries of the initiative “Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area” (PRIMA), established which began in 2013, to pave the way towards an initiative pursuant Article 185 of the TFEU initiative aimed at improving the cooperation in research and innovation in the Mediterranean Area and, 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~~ broad political support for a long-term structured cooperation in research and innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean Area, as expressed during the ~~Greek~~ Hellenic 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~~ following 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~~ has the potential to give research and innovation a bridging role between participating countries, to significantly enhance the EU scientific diplomacy with its Southern Neighbors in the long-term, ~~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, on a voluntary basis, policy, science, industry and civil society in a long-term structured path to provide a sound framework for free circulation of knowledge; and to increase ~~future~~ cross-border cooperation; ~~as well as agreements at scientific and economic level.~~ ASKS for a coherent approach between the initiative and multi-lateral and bilateral activities in the field of research and innovation.

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<sup>7</sup>. **NOTES that initiatives established under Horizon 2020 would have to be in line with the principle of excellence.**
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 **as prepared** by the **several** EU Members States and the Mediterranean Partner Countries **and presented by on** [date to be inserted] **in view of the participation of the Union in an Article 185 of the TFEU.**
9. NOTES that **the PRIMA Participating Countries conducted** an analysis of **both** the main common challenges that the Area is facing and of the ~~remaining~~ gaps of knowledge and innovation, **and identified as priority challenge** that **the** need to **ensure a sustainable capacity of the Mediterranean Area to produce and provide adequate quantity and quality of safe food and water upon which the populations inhabiting the Area depend on for their health and well being and for their social, cultural and economic growth.** ~~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.~~

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<sup>7</sup> 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

10. WELCOMES ~~NOTES~~ that on the basis of these analysis and of the common interest to guarantee synergies, mutual benefit, optimal scale and scope, and feasible readily adoptable solutions, the PRIMA participating Countries:
- a) identified as the goal of the Joint Program proposal, the development and the adoption of innovative and integrated solutions for improving the efficiency, safety, security and sustainability of food production and water provision in order to support an inclusive and sustainable development in the Mediterranean Area;
  - b) defined a scientific program based on two specific objectives and eight operational objectives. ~~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 indicative financial commitments already expressed by ~~many participating a number of~~ Countries, both EU Member States and Mediterranean Partner Countries in response to the request of the Italian Minister for Education, University and Research Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which gives a solid provide an encouraging first financial ~~baseis~~ to the initiative, [amounting to 200 million euros].
12. ACKNOWLEDGES that ~~such a large-scale public-public partnership programme on the basis of~~ based on Article 185 of TFEU, has by ~~achiev~~inged a critical mass, ~~in terms of Countries and scientific and innovators' communities involved, and will~~ could play a crucial an important 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~~ the advancement of ~~on~~ ERA key priority areas, such as optimising transnational co-operation, improving the effectiveness of national research systems, facilitating the mobility of researchers, favouring the circulation of and the access to scientific knowledge.

13. NOTES **AKNOWLEDGES** that the participating Countries are of the view that the dimension of the challenge, the size and importance of the partnership, ~~and~~ **the** planned initiatives, **and** the wide political commitment ~~and endorsement~~, are all elements convincingly arguing in favor **of an initiative pursuant to** ~~of the~~ **appropriateness** of Article 185 ~~of~~ TFEU, as ~~only~~ **the relevant instrument** ~~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,~~ **in full respect of its** right of initiative, ~~the Commission to~~ **assess whether a participation of the Union in the PRIMA joint Program on the basis of Article 185 of TFEU is justified by the scope of the objectives pursued and the scale of the resources required.** ~~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.~~
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