



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 16 December 2013
(OR. en)**

17824/13

RECH 606

"I" ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee

Subject: Prolongation of the participation of countries associated to FP7 as observers in ERAC as of 1st January 2014

1. The European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) is a strategic policy advisory body whose main mission is to provide timely strategic input to the Council, the Commission and Member States on research and innovation issues that are relevant to the development of the European Research Area. Countries associated to the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7), hereinafter Associated Countries, are invited to participate in ERAC meetings as observers.
2. The observership status implies that Associated Countries' representatives participate in ERAC without voting rights, on an ad-hoc basis¹ and covering their own expenses. The observership status also applies to their participation, as appropriate, in ERAC's dedicated configurations, i.e. the High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC) and the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC).

¹ On certain items, the ERAC Chair could reserve participation to Member States only.

3. The observership status of Associated Countries is linked to their current association to FP7. With the start of Horizon 2020 - the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) on 1st January 2014, there is a need for the prolongation of the participation of the current Associated Countries to FP7 as observers in ERAC until their respective association provisions to Horizon 2020 are in place. This is also in line with Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the ERAC Rules of Procedure².
 4. Article 7 of the Horizon 2020 Framework Regulation allows for association to Horizon 2020 of those countries that are currently associated to FP7. The Commission has announced that it aims at associating to Horizon 2020, at least, the same Associated Countries that are currently associated to FP7, with the exception of Liechtenstein³.
 5. With regard to the subject of this note, the Research Working Party has been informed as the competent preparatory body.
 6. The Permanent Representatives Committee is thus invited to take note of the intention of the ERAC Chair to prolong the participation of the current Associated Countries to FP7 as observers in ERAC until their respective association provisions to Horizon 2020 are in place, as well as the intention of the Chairs of ERAC's dedicated configurations, GPC and SFIC, to also prolong the observership status of the Associated Countries in these two groups.
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² Doc. ERAC 1214/13

³ Liechtenstein's Parliament voted against the Government's proposal to associate to Horizon 2020.