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**NOTE**

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

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Subject: *Preparation of the Council (Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)) on 26-27 February 2026*  
Horizon Europe Package Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2028-2034  
a) Framework Programme and its rules for participation and dissemination  
b) Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe  
- Policy debate

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Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency with a view to the Policy debate at the Competitiveness Council on 27 February 2026.

**POLICY DEBATE - CRITICAL ISSUES OF THE HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL IN  
VIEW OF A PARTIAL GENERAL APPROACH**

During the Danish Presidency negotiations advanced significantly, resulting in a compromise text and a detailed progress report covering all four pillars of Horizon Europe, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, for the period 2028-2034 (FP10).

During negotiations **several elements of convergence emerged**. These include the overall four-pillar structure (Excellent Science; Competitiveness & Society; Innovation; European Research Area), some key horizontal principles, notably the need for simplification for beneficiaries, interdisciplinarity and the importance of social sciences and humanities (SSH). A high degree of convergence could be identified on the instruments of Pillar I and Pillar IV.

Building on the progress made, the Cyprus Presidency continued the negotiations from January 2026. Since then, discussions have focused on the **remaining critical issues**. Topics discussed include, among others, European Partnerships; the interlinkages between FP10 and the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF); the role and importance of SSH; Missions and NEB facility; the funding of Research and Technology Infrastructures; research security; dual-use and defence-only research.

Negotiations have now reached a decisive stage, where **political guidance** from Ministers is required on a number of critical outstanding issues in order to move jointly towards a Partial General Approach (PGA) at the Competitiveness Council meeting scheduled on 28 May.

Against this background, Ministers are invited to share their views on the following key questions towards a Partial General Approach by May:

- Which elements of FP10 are already sufficiently mature?
  - How should the identified critical issues be addressed?
  - Do you recognise any other issues requiring further political guidance?
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