

European metrology programme for innovation and research (EMPIR): participation of the Union

2013/0242(COD) - 10/07/2013 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to enable the participation of the European Union in a European Metrology Programme for Innovation and Research jointly undertaken by several Member States.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: metrology, the science of measurement, affects every aspect of our daily lives and ever more precise and reliable measurements are essential to drive innovation and economic growth. All governments in technologically advanced countries support a metrology infrastructure. Given the level of investment in metrology and its role in promoting scientific excellence and industrial competitiveness, individual Member States or a few acting together could not compete globally.

The [current European metrology research programme \(EMRP\)](#) is a joint initiative implemented by 22 national metrology institutes. In implementing the multiannual Framework Programme, it affords the possibility to coordinate national research programmes. By Decision No 912/2009/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, the Community decided to make a financial contribution to the EMRP matching that of the participating states but not exceeding EUR 200 million, for the duration of the Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013).

An interim evaluation recognised the value of the joint initiative. The main achievement of EMRP is strong integration by jointly programming 50 % of dedicated national funding for metrology research in Europe. Although substantial progress has been achieved under the EMRP, it has become evident that the system needs to tackle several challenges in order to increase the impact of metrology research.

EMPIR, the successor programme, will contribute to a number of flagship initiatives under EUROPE 2020 that are affected by metrology research (including [‘Innovation Union’](#)), will be a more ambitious and inclusive programme implemented for ten years (2014-2024) by 28 participating states. As part of the improvements from the previous programme, EMPIR will include activities on innovation and industrial exploitation, on research for norms and standards and on capacity building.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the impact assessment took into consideration the following options:

Option 1 (‘No dedicated EU action’): EU participation in the EMRP would be discontinued after the end of its current funding phase in 2013;

Option 2 (‘Business as usual - EMRP2’): this option would continue with an identical initiative focused entirely on coordination and integration of fundamental and challenge driven research. This would include some calls on topics relevant to the industry;

Option 3 (‘Improved Article 185 initiative – EMPIR’): this option would build on the success of the EMRP by implementing a more ambitious and inclusive Article 185 initiative that is aligned with the Europe 2020 objectives.

The impact assessment report concluded that Option 3 is clearly the preferred option.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 185 and the second paragraph of Article 188 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

CONTENT: the proposal for a Decision concerns the European Union's participation in the **European Metrology Programme for Innovation and Research (EMPIR)** undertaken by Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey.

The overarching goal of the EMPIR initiative is to **address the challenges faced by the European Metrology Research System** and to maximise the benefits of improved measurement solutions for Europe. The overall objectives of EMPIR are to:

- **provide integrated and fit-for-purpose metrology solutions** supporting innovation and industrial competitiveness and measurement technologies to tackle societal challenges such as health, environment and energy including support to policy development and implementation;
- **create an integrated European Metrology Research system** with critical mass and active engagement at regional, national, European and international level.

The proposal provides for derogations from the Horizon 2020 Rules of Participation. It also provides for safeguards to ensure that the principles of equal treatment and transparency are respected by the dedicated implementation structure when providing financial support to third parties, and the EU's financial interests are protected.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: The maximum Union's financial contribution, including EFTA appropriations, to EMPIR shall be **EUR 300 million** in current prices for the duration of the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme. The contributions will be related to the specific challenges and themes covered by the initiative.