

Partnership for research and innovation in the Mediterranean area (PRIMA): participation of the Union

2016/0325(COD) - 18/10/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to enable the EU to participate in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) 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: the process leading to the PRIMA Joint Programme started with the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation in Barcelona in 2012. The aim is to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in R&I as part of the broader objectives of the Union's external policy with regard to the Southern Neighbourhood.

On 23 December 2014, **a group of 19 countries of the Mediterranean Area** submitted to the Commission a proposal for a Joint Programme initiative 'Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area' (PRIMA). Among these countries, 14 countries have agreed to jointly undertake the PRIMA initiative by committing financial contributions: Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Spain, Member States of the Union; Israel and Tunisia, third countries associated to [Horizon 2020](#); Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco (third countries not associated to Horizon 2020).

With 180 million people who are considered 'water poor', the Mediterranean area is generally characterised by high levels of hydric stress. Climate change is increasingly causing severe water shortages in the area, with major impacts on agriculture. Such shortages result in decreasing and irregular crop yields, putting additional pressure on natural resources and on the capacity to provide clean water and affordable food for the region's inhabitants. The programme's strategic objective is to develop the common innovative solutions for water provision and food systems that the Mediterranean region urgently needs. The programme is in line with the [Communication from the Commission](#) on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the option withheld is Option 2: **PRIMA Joint Programme based on Article 185 TFEU** which enables the EU to make provisions for its participation in research and development programmes run by several Member States, including its participation in the structures created for the implementation of those programmes.

Previous and ongoing Article 185 TFEU initiatives show that such an initiative is likely to have a high leverage effect on national public funds in a stable, long-term and integrated manner.

CONTENT: the draft decision provides for the **participation of the EU in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area ('PRIMA')** jointly undertaken by Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia.

Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco shall become Participating States subject to the conclusion of international agreements with the Union setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA. Any Member State and any country associated to Horizon 2020 may participate in PRIMA provided they contribute to its financing.

Objectives: the general objective of PRIMA is to **develop the fully piloted and demonstrated common innovative solutions for water provision and food systems in the Mediterranean region**, to make them more climate resilient, efficient, cost-effective and sustainable, and to contribute to solving nutrition, health, well-being and migration problems upstream.

In order to contribute to the general objective, PRIMA shall fulfil the following specific objectives:

- the formulation of a stable, long-term, common strategic agenda in the area of water provision and food systems;
- the orientation of all national R&I programmes towards the implementation of the strategic agenda;
- the structural involvement of all relevant public and private sector actors in implementing the strategic agenda by pooling knowledge and financial resources to achieve the necessary critical mass;
- the strengthening of funding and of the implementation capabilities of all actors involved.

Implementation: in order to ensure the joint implementation of PRIMA, an **implementation structure** should be set up ('**PRIMA-IS**'). The PRIMA-IS should be the recipient of the Union's financial contribution and it should ensure the efficient implementation of PRIMA.

PRIMA activities should be **in line with the objectives and research and innovation priorities of Horizon 2020** and with the general principles and conditions laid down in the Regulation establishing the 2020 Horizon framework programme.

In order to achieve the objectives of PRIMA, the PRIMA-IS should provide financial support mainly in the form of **grants** to participants in actions funded by the PRIMAIS. Those actions should be selected following open and **competitive calls for proposals** under the responsibility of the PRIMA-IS.

The PRIMA Annual Work Plans (AWP), which is subject to the approval of the Commission, will ensure consistency and coordination between all activities and their orientation towards the achievement of the operational, specific and general objectives of PRIMA. The proposal contains provisions on the monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements of the initiative.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the EU contribution shall be up to **EUR 200 million** (in current prices) including the EFTA contribution. The EU contribution shall be made as part of the implementation of Horizon 2020.

The **Participating States** shall make or arrange for their national funding bodies to make financial or in kind contributions of at least EUR 200 000 000 during the period from the date of entry into force of this Decision until 31 December 2028.