EU/Egypt Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation: terms and conditions for participation of Egypt in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA)

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PURPOSE: to allow Egypt to participate in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: Decision (EU) 2017/1324 of the European Parliament and of the Council provides for the participation of the Union in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA).

The strategic objective of PRIMA is to build research and innovation capacities and to develop knowledge and **common innovative solutions for agro-food systems** in order to make them sustainable, as well as for an integrated water supply and management in the Mediterranean area.

PRIMA will be jointly undertaken by a number of Member States and third countries with a high level of commitment to scientific, management and financial integration and under the same terms and conditions.

Egypt expressed its wish to join PRIMA as a Participating State and pledged to commit a financial contribution of **EUR 33 million** to the initiative.

The negotiations started on 26 June 2017 and were successfully completed on 27 July 2017, when the text of the draft Agreement was initialled by representatives from each of the future Parties.

In order to ensure that Egypt participates in PRIMA on an equal footing with Member States and third countries associated to Horizon 2020, an International Agreement with the Union is required to extend the scope of the legal regime established by Decision (EU) 2017/1324 to Egypt.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council **conclude the Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Union and Egypt** setting out the terms and conditions for participation of Egypt in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA).

The present initiative will **allow Egypt to become a Participating State in PRIMA**, and thus engaged on an equal footing with Member States and third countries associated to Horizon 2020. Egyptian legal entities would be automatically eligible to apply for EU funding in projects funded from the EU budget.

In order to ensure the **protection of Union financial interests**, particularly the powers of the Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office, the Court of Auditors and the PRIMA Implementation Structure (PRIMA-IS) to carry out audits and investigations, the Agreement and obliges the Parties to provide all necessary assistance to ensure their implementation and agree on detailed arrangements for assistance.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the impact on expenditure is estimated at **EUR 82 800** for the period 2018-2020.