EC/India Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation: renewal of the Agreement

2020/0015(NLE) - 30/01/2020 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to renew the Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and the Government of the Republic of India.

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: the Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and India was signed in New Delhi on 23 November 2001 and entered into force on 14 October 2002. The Agreement has been renewed for additional periods of five years, in 2009 and 2015 respectively. The current Agreement is due to expire on 17 May 2020.

The Commission believes that the Agreement provides an important framework for conducting and facilitating cooperation between the EU and India in common priority science and technology areas of mutual benefit.

In the past years, under the Horizon 2020 Programme,

- a joint call on water resulted in 7 selected projects for a total of EUR 30 million with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT);

- a joint call on new generation vaccines with DBT for a total of EUR 30 million resulted in 3 selected projects;

- two innovation initiatives were launched: an incubators network and an innovation platform, resulting on more than 20 innovation partnerships among its participants;

- an Implementing Arrangement between the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) and the European Commission was signed to facilitate mobility of Indian researchers to European Research Council grantees teams;

- two cofunding mechanisms were set up by DBT and the Ministry of Earth Science (MoES) to fund successful Indian participants in more than 50 Horizon 2020 calls.

At the meeting of the India-EU Joint Steering Committee established by the Agreement, held in New Delhi on 1 March 2019, both Parties noted their intention to renew the Agreement for a further period of five years without any amendment.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council decide to approve, on behalf of the Union, the renewal of the Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and the Government of the Republic of India for an additional period of five years (i.e. from 17.5.2020 to 16.5.2025).

The Agreement allows for a frame to identify areas of cooperation on research and innovation of mutual interest and in line with the EU's agenda and strategy on international cooperation.

This Decision shall make it possible to:

- improve and intensify their cooperation in scientific and technological areas of common interest in line with the EU Strategy on India;

- foster additional exchange of specific knowledge and transfer of know-how to the benefit of the scientific communities, industry and citizens;

- provide a useful forum to assess past cooperation and determine future actions, including on topics making the cooperation effective such as open access and open innovation principle;

- to derive mutual benefit from the scientific and technological progress achieved through cooperative activities while enabling the Union and India to address global challenges together and the Union to contribute to India's sustainable modernisation.

The Commission shall regularly monitor all actions under the Agreement, including cooperative activities.

The budgetary impact (appropriations of an administrative nature) is estimated at EUR 0.360 million for the period 2020-2025.