

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

2023/0207(COD) - 28/06/2023 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to extend, until 2027, the Union's participation in the partnership for research and innovation in the Mediterranean area (PRIMA) under Horizon Europe.

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: PRIMA currently consists of nineteen Participating States: eleven EU Member States (Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain); three countries associated to Horizon 2020 (Israel, Tunisia and Turkey) and five third countries non-associated to Horizon 2020 (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco). The Partnership aims to build research and innovation capacities and to develop knowledge and common innovative solutions for agro-food systems, to make them sustainable, and for integrated water provision and management in the Mediterranean area. The thematic focus became even more relevant in recent years, due to increasing effects of climate change, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the destabilising effect of Russia's illegal and unjustified aggression against the Ukraine on the fragile agriculture markets in a number of Mediterranean countries.

Decision (EU) 2017/1324 of the European Parliament and of the Council was adopted under the previous Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, namely Horizon 2020, for a period up to 31 December 2028. However, the Member States participating in PRIMA declared their intention to continue in their joint initiative beyond 2024 and called for the continued participation of the Union.

CONTENT: this proposal for an amendment of Decision 2017/1324 (the PRIMA Basic Act) constitutes an **extension of active operation** (publication of R&I calls) until 2027 under the current R&I Framework Programme- Horizon Europe. The amendment will provide for **additional budget**, from both the EU financial contribution from the Horizon Europe programme and the Participating States' financial contributions, to ensure continuation at the current level of activities for three further years.

Since the initial rationale and objectives of PRIMA partnership are still valid and PRIMA is a successful instrument, the Union should continue to provide financial support to allow PRIMA to fund research and innovation actions under the same thematic scope until 2027, and bring that instrument in synchronisation with the Union's multiannual financial framework (MFF) and MFF-aligned programming cycles of R&I programmes. Moreover, the overall duration of PRIMA should be extended until 2031 to allow for the full implementation of supported research and innovation actions.

Monitoring

The extension of PRIMA requires monitoring and evaluation of this partnership in accordance with Horizon Europe related provisions. The Commission should conduct an interim evaluation of PRIMA by 31 December 2025 at the latest, and, a final evaluation by 31 December 2031 at the latest, that should feed into the overall interim and final evaluations of Horizon Europe. The evaluations should assess the quality

and efficiency of PRIMA and the progress made towards achieving its objectives. The Commission should publish and disseminate the results and conclusions of those evaluations.

Budgetary implications

The total Union contribution to the extended initiative will be up to **EUR 325 million** including the EEA contribution. Out of this amount, EUR 220 million were committed from the Horizon 2020 Programme for the programming period 2018-2024. EUR 105 million, to be committed in the period 2025-2027, will come from the Horizon Europe, cluster (vi) ‘Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’.

The maximum amount of the EU contribution to administrative costs for the whole duration of the initiative is up to 6%, corresponding to EUR 19.5 million from the total Union contribution of EUR 325 million.