

## EU participation in the PRIMA partnership

The European Parliament is expected to vote on the decision to allow the financial participation of the European Union in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) during the June 2017 plenary. This public-public partnership would support collaborative research and innovation projects on agro-food systems and water management between institutions of the EU and of third countries around the Mediterranean shore. The Union contribution under Horizon 2020 could reach a maximum of €220 million over 10 years.

### Background

The [idea](#) of a Euro-Mediterranean partnership on research and innovation was formally launched at a conference held in Barcelona in April 2012. Research cooperation in that geographical area had started under the Barcelona [declaration](#) in 1995 and had been reaffirmed in the Cairo [declaration](#) of 2007. In December 2014, nine Member States submitted a proposal for the participation of the European Union (EU) in a Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA). It was decided that the partnership would be established as an '[Article 185 initiative](#)', a structure used for [public-public partnerships](#) in research between the EU and Member States. Based on initial discussions, the initiative would focus on two key socioeconomic issues for the region: food systems and water resources.

### Proposal for the EU to participate in PRIMA as an Article 185 initiative

The Commission adopted a [proposal](#) for a decision to establish PRIMA as an Article 185 initiative in October 2016. The partnership would be established for 10 years and support collaborative projects in research and innovation between EU Member States and third countries from the Mediterranean shores. The decision would introduce amended rules of participation from those of Horizon 2020, to allow the provision of EU funding to institutions in third countries. The planned EU contribution was set at €200 million over 10 years, to match the planned financial and in-kind contributions of the 14 declared participating states.

### European Parliament position

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) adopted its [report](#) on the Commission proposal on 22 March 2017. The key amendments concerned an extension of the topics covered by PRIMA to agro-food systems and the full cycle of water management, and the extension of the types of research and innovation activities that can be funded under the partnership. The committee clarified the modalities for funding institutions of non-participating states, and modified the governance of the PRIMA implementation structure (PRIMA-IS) that would be responsible for managing and distributing the EU financial contribution.

Discussions with the Council in trilogue clarified the list of 19 states participating in the initiative (11 EU Member States, 3 countries associated to Horizon 2020, and 5 third countries). The EU contribution, intended to match that of the participating states, was set at a maximum of €220 million over 10 years. The amendments proposed by the ITRE Committee were included in the provisional agreement.

On 26 April 2017, the Council's Committee of Permanent Representatives [endorsed](#) the trilogue outcome. The ITRE Committee approved the provisional agreement on 30 May 2017. At its [meeting](#) on 30 May 2017 the Council adopted a [decision](#) to authorise the European Commission to launch negotiations with the five third countries participating in PRIMA in order to set out the terms and conditions of their participation.

First-reading report: [2016/0325\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: ITRE; Rapporteur: Sofia Sakorafa (GUE/NGL, Greece). For more information see EPRS's '[EU Legislation in progress](#)' briefing.

