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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

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Subject: *Preparation of the Council (Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)) on 22-23 May 2025*
Council Recommendation on the European Research Area Policy Agenda 2025-2027
- Political agreement

- Statement by Bulgaria
- Statement by Hungary

Statement by the Republic of Bulgaria on the Council Recommendation on the European Research Area Policy Agenda 2025-2027

The Republic of Bulgaria attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights. The country is and will remain dedicated to its human rights commitments, including combating harassment in the workplace.

In 2018, the Bulgarian Constitutional Court adopted a decision according to which the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ('Istanbul Convention') promotes legal concepts related to the concept of 'gender' that are incompatible with the fundamental principles of the Bulgarian Constitution. In 2021, the Constitutional Court further clarified that the concept of sex used in the Constitution should be understood, in the context of the national legal order, in its biological sense (men and women) only.

In line with the abovementioned decision by the Constitutional Court, the Republic of Bulgaria declares that the country cannot accept either the concept of 'gender', or the gender-based approach of the Council of Europe's Convention or any other document that seeks to distinguish between 'sex' as a biological (women and men) category and 'gender' as a social construct.

Bulgaria agrees with the need to strengthen gender equality in the European Research Area, where progress can be made by implementing the relevant structural policy of the European Research Area under the European Research Area Policy Programme 2025-2027. However, Bulgaria wishes to underline that it will interpret all terminology related to gender in the abovementioned Council Recommendation strictly within the framework of the binary concept of sex. In addition, the term 'cross-sectoral approach' will be understood exclusively in the context of the discriminatory grounds recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

**STATEMENT BY HUNGARY ON THE RECOMMENDATION ON THE EUROPEAN
RESEARCH AREA POLICY AGENDA 2025-2027**

Hungary recognises and promotes equality between men and women in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Hungary and the primary law, principles and values of the European Union, as well as commitments and principles stemming from international law. Equality between women and men is enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union as a fundamental value. In line with these and its national legislation, Hungary interprets the term ‘gender’ as a reference to ‘sex’ in the Recommendation on the European Research Area Policy Agenda 2025-2027.
