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NOTE

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Subject:	Horizon Europe Package Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2028-2034 a) Framework Programme and its rules for participation and dissemination b) Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe - Guidance for further work

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 16 July 2025, the Commission published the proposals for establishing Horizon Europe, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (the Framework Programme)[1], and for a Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe (the Specific Programme)[2].

2. The European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) is responsible for these proposals. Mr Christian Ehler (EPP, DE) has been appointed rapporteur for the Framework Programme and Mr René Repasi (S&D, DE) has been appointed rapporteur for the Specific Programme.

3. On 22 January 2026, the European Economic and Social Committee delivered its opinion on the proposals.

II. PROGRESS MADE

4. During the Danish and Cyprus Presidencies, the Working Party on Research (RWP) examined seven Presidency compromise texts of both proposals.

5. In addition, the Competitiveness Council held dedicated policy debates on thematic areas linked to Horizon Europe at its meetings on 30 September 2025, 9 December 2025 and 27 February 2026. The policy debates provided general guidance and covered the topics of research and Innovation for dual use, security and defence, the future partnerships, in view of a Partial General Approach.

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1 Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing Horizon Europe, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, for the period 2028-2034 laying down its rules for participation and dissemination and repealing Regulation (EU) 2021/695 (11765/25).

2 Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2028-2034, laying down the rules for participation and dissemination under that Programme, and repealing Decision (EU) 2021/764 (ST 11749/25).

6. While delegations still raise several text adjustments at technical level, the Cyprus Presidency considers most of the text of the proposals to be stable. The elements which are considered to have sufficient support include:

   a) The General Provisions, with the exception of a reference in Article 3(2) and Article 5(ca), which are linked to widening.

   b) Pillar I on Excellent Science.

   c) Pillar II on Competitiveness and Society, with the exception of elements related to the priority-setting.

   d) Pillar III on Innovation, with the exception of Article 16(5) on European Innovation Council (EIC) funding for defence applications

   e) Pillar IV on European Research Area, with the exception of Article 19 on widening and elements regarding Research and Technology Infrastructures.

   f) And the Rules for Participation and Dissemination.

III. REMAINING ISSUES

7. In view of aiming for a Partial General Approach at the meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 29 May 2026, the Cyprus Presidency considers that Coreper needs to provide political guidance on the following outstanding issues:

   a) **Widening measures**: Following the partial unbracketing of the relevant provisions[3] on 9 April 2026, the Research Working Party examined these provisions at its meetings on 20 and 30 April. Member States are currently divided on the level of detail of widening measures and examples in Article 19(5) and on whether the horizontal principle of broad geographical coverage in collaborative projects (Article 5(ca)) should remain in the text.

[3] Recital 20 and Article 19 of the Framework Programme and Article 15 of the Specific Programme.

b) **Priority-setting:** To ensure the seamless investment journey from research to deployment, Horizon Europe and the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) are tightly linked. These links have been clarified in joint meetings of the ECF subgroup of the Ad hoc Working Party MFF and the Research Working Party. However, several Member States stressed the need to introduce an ex-ante consultation of Member States via the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC), in order to shape the multiannual priorities of Horizon Europe.

c) **Defence research:** As new feature within the Framework Programme, it is proposed that the EIC can support innovative deep-tech companies with a focus on defence applications. Member States are still divided on this issue, with several delegations requesting that such activities should rather be financed under the ECF policy window on 'Resilience and Security, Defence Industry and Space', as Horizon Europe should maintain its civilian nature, while being open for support to dual use projects. A number of delegations supports the possibility for Horizon to fund the defence component of the EIC provided that a budget capping is ensured.

IV. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

8. To address each of these remaining issues, the Cyprus Presidency proposes the following way forward:

a) On widening measures:

Option 1 keeps the reference in Article 3(2) to reducing national and regional disparities in research and innovation capacity and Article 5(ca) on the horizontal principle on geographic coverage in collaborative projects, while limiting the list of examples for widening measures in Article 19(5) to Teaming, the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), the EIC pre-accelerator, the ERC support measures and ERA Fellowships.

Option 2 deletes the horizontal principle on geographic coverage in Article 5(ca), while developing further the non-exhaustive list of examples for widening measures in Article 19(5).

b) **On Priority-setting**:

Option 1 includes the alignment of Article 17b of the Specific Programme with the wording of the ECF Regulation. Member States shall be able to provide recommendations on the overall strategic direction and priorities of Horizon Europe at an early stage in the development of work programmes, based on the information provided by the Commission to the Horizon Europe Strategic Committee.

Option 2 would build on the elements in option 1 and, in addition, give a role to ERAC in the priority-setting mechanism.

c) **On Defence projects**:

Option 1 keeps the wording of the latest Presidency compromise text[4], allowing for the EIC funding under Horizon Europe to defence applications, while introducing a capping for this funding.

Option 2 deletes Article 16(5), meaning that the EIC defence projects would not be funded under Horizon Europe.

IV. QUESTIONS

9. In view of the above, delegations are invited to indicate preferred options regarding the issues identified in view of reaching a Partial General Approach at the Competitiveness Council (Research) meeting on 29 May 2026.

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4 8730/26 and 8731/26