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ESPACE 77	DIGIT 134
CONSOM 162	DATAPROTECT 153
DUAL USE 36	FREMP 164
EDUC 157	RELEX 645
TELECOM 227	COPS 272
ENER 242	UD 141
ENV 497	AUDIO 69
CLIMA 259	PROCIV 95
AGRI 365	IPCR 44
TRANS 302	MAP 106
SAN 297	FISC 174
PHARM 81	CODEC 893
BIOTECH 53	IA 120
POLMIL 201	CSC 299
POLGEN 120	

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee
Subject:	Regulation establishing European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), including specific programme for defence research and innovation *- Guidance for further work*

Introduction

The Ad hoc Working Party on the Multiannual Financial Framework (European Competitiveness Fund) has made substantial progress in the examination of the proposal for a Regulation on establishing the European Competitiveness Fund ('ECF'), and the Danish and Cyprus Presidencies prepared six revised texts to address requests for amendments from Member States.

In parallel, the Ad hoc Working Party on the Multiannual Financial Framework discussed all bracketed provisions of the proposal for a Regulation. The outcome of the discussion is included in the draft negotiating box.

On 22 April 2026, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2) discussed one of the most sensitive outstanding issues in the negotiations on the ECF, which is ensuring high quality projects while taking into account the different circumstances across the EU, in essence reflected in paragraph 78 of the negotiating box.

Since then, the Ad hoc Working Party on the Multiannual Financial Framework (European Competitiveness Fund) has continued its examination of the Commission's proposal with a view to submitting a partial general approach on the ECF to the Council. Some further issues have emerged on which the Permanent Representatives Committee will be invited to provide political orientation in the coming weeks.

Based on the discussions in the Ad hoc Working Party and its ECF subgroup, the Presidency invites Member States to indicate their positions on a set of compromise texts that the Presidency has circulated, with a view to supplementing the proposed ECF Regulation with provisions that take account of Member States' wishes regarding future seamless interaction in the implementation of the ECF Regulation and the forthcoming Horizon Europe research framework programme.

Elements for consideration in order to ensure smooth links between the ECF and Horizon Europe:

- **Joint priority setting**

  The Presidency proposes to include provisions establishing joint meetings between the ECF General Committee under its strategic advisory role and the Horizon Europe Strategic Committee in its advisory function to address issues of common relevance. The Member States should ensure representation at an appropriate level for these meetings.

  Additionally, the Presidency proposes to strengthen the role of Member States in the priority-setting mechanism by enabling the ECF General Committee in its advisory function to provide at dedicated strategic meetings recommendations on the overall strategic direction and priorities for the ECF before the start of the implementation of the programme and after three years.

The Commission would prepare a multiannual strategic document on the overall strategic direction and priorities for the ECF. The recommendations resulting from the discussion at the strategic meetings would have to be taken into account by the Commission in the preparation of draft implementing acts under the ECF.

- **Comitology**

  The Presidency proposes provisions establishing that when the relevant committee configurations examine work programmes containing a dedicated part on collaborative research and innovation activities, the agenda must include dedicated items for that part, with the aim of ensuring appropriate representation from Member States without prejudice to their competence to determine whom they send to comitology meetings.

  The Presidency proposal also provides for the invitation of two representatives per Member State to attend the meetings, not affecting the prerogative of Member States to send one, two or more representatives.

Question:

The Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to provide political orientation on the following question:

- In view of reaching a compromise, are the suggestions circulated by the Presidency acceptable to you?
- Would you consider any other elements to be fundamental to ensure that Member States are actively involved in identifying and setting common priorities at a strategic level, whilst taking adequate account of research and innovation priority areas?

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