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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*

1. 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'). The Danish and Cyprus Presidencies prepared seven revised texts to address requests for amendments from Member States.

2. 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.

3. On 22 April 2026, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2) exchanged views on 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.

4. The outcome of this debate was reflected in the draft ECF text by the Presidency with the introduction of a number of amendments and additions in order to take account of the wishes of the various Member States.

5. On 20 May 2026, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2) discussed a set of compromise suggestions prepared by the Presidency, with a view to supplementing the proposed ECF Regulation with provisions that reflect Member States' wishes regarding future seamless interaction in the implementation of the ECF Regulation and the forthcoming Framework Programme for Research and Innovation ('Horizon Europe').

6. While many delegations expressed overall support to the proposed compromises, the Presidency took note of the request by several delegations to further develop the provisions on Member States' early involvement for the identification of priorities, with close governance links between the ECF and Horizon Europe.

7. On this basis, and taking into account the discussions on other elements of the ECF text, the Presidency issued on 22 May 2026 a revised text[1], to be examined by the Ad hoc Working Party on the Multiannual Financial Framework (European Competitiveness Fund) at its meeting on 26 May 2026. The Presidency considers that this text represents the best possible compromise between the interests of the different Member States and therefore provides a sound basis for reaching a partial general approach.

[1] Doc. 9457/26.

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8. Further to the deliberations within the Ad hoc Working Party on the Multiannual Financial Framework (European Competitiveness Fund), the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to provide political guidance on the basis of the revised text. The Presidency asks Member States to set out their positions and indicate any fundamental difficulties that would prevent the Council from reaching an agreement on a partial general approach on the ECF.

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