Brussels, 15 September 2025

WK 11467/2025 INIT

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MEETING DOCUMENT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations

Subject:	The future ambitions at EU level on research and technology infrastructures - Informal Lunch debate between the Research Ministers at the Competitiveness Council on 30 September 2025

Delegations will find attached a Presidency paper on 'The future ambitions at EU level on research and technology infrastructures' with a view to the informal lunch debate at the Competitiveness Council on 30 September 2025.

The future ambitions at EU level on research and technology infrastructures

Research and technology infrastructures play a crucial role for the EU's strategic autonomy and support scientific excellence and competitiveness across Europe. The European research and technology infrastructures provide academia, SME's and industry with access to state-of-the-art facilities and data which helps to accelerate discoveries from excellent frontier research to market deployment in fields such as critical technologies, health, energy, and climate change. They are also important for attracting and retaining global talent. Coordinated investments in shared infrastructures strengthens the EU's capacity to tackle global challenges and support economic growth.

The importance of research and technology infrastructures in the EU has become even more apparent with the shifting geopolitical climate, where European actors increasingly needs to be attentive to possible challenges, such as losing access to research data and infrastructures in critical areas.

The European Commission's proposal for the regulation establishing Horizon Europe 2028-2034 highlights the importance of research and technology infrastructures. The proposal allocates nearly 16.3 billion EUR to pillar IV, European Research Area, which includes a reformed support for research and technology infrastructures. In the proposals it is stated that the Framework Programme shall contribute to equip the Union with a strong and coherent ecosystem of world-class sustainable facilities and services, building on prioritised pan-European infrastructures and complementary state-of-the-art national capacities and using funding instrument, including European partnerships.

Introducing a new approach, the next Framework Programme proposes support to the construction, development and integration of infrastructures, with the EU to cover up to 20 percent of the building cost of critical new European capacities in research and technology infrastructures.

While the debate around research and technology infrastructures is not new, it has gained urgency in light of the shifting geopolitical landscape and the growing emphasis

on European competitiveness. This urgency is underscored by the European Commission's proposed new approach which – due to its significance – calls for political dialogue and clarification. While there are still lack of details regarding the proposal from the European Commission on this topic, the Danish Presidency of the Council finds it timely to initiate, in the form of a lunch debate, a discussion on the future ambitions at EU level on research and technology infrastructures.

In that context, Research Ministers are invited to share their views on the following key questions:

- What is your view on the new approach for supporting research and technology infrastructures?
- Where do you see gaps in the existing landscape of research and technology infrastructures in terms of supporting Europe's research and innovation capacity, resilience, strategic autonomy and competitiveness?