Parliamentary Secretary, Hon. Chris Agius, heads the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Competitiveness (Research)

The Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Research was held on the 3rd May in Valletta under the auspices of the Maltese Presidency. It was chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sports, Hon. Chris Agius.

The first session focused on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in research and innovation (R&I). Ministers of European Member States and EFTA countries discussed the role that research and innovation could play in fostering stronger collaboration across the Mediterranean region, and in bringing to life the principle of Science Diplomacy. The outcomes of this session will form the foundation for further discussions during the Ministerial Conference on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation being held in Valletta on the 4th May, where European Heads of Delegations will be joined by representatives from non-EU Mediterranean Partner Countries.

The second session focused on tackling Europe’s innovation divide. Ministers were invited to have an exchange of views on the measures that need to be taken, on both a national and at Union-level, to promote convergence in research and innovation performance across Member States. Ministers also put forward suggestions on the instruments integrated into the EU’s Framework Programme aimed at bridging the gap between higher and lower R&I-performing countries.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Hon. Chris Agius, said that “despite our different interests in the Region we are able to have consensus on a number of issues. We have seen that Science Diplomacy is an important tool to achieve the aims and goals for cooperating with the Mediterranean and through the ‘Open to the World’ approach we can capitalise on strengthening our cooperation with the non-EU Member Countries around the Mediterranean Region and beyond.”

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