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**PRESS RELEASE**

**EC Director General for Research and Innovation J. E. Paquet visiting Athens to speak at event for «Horizon Europe», the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation**

Mr. Kostas Fotakis, Alternate Minister for Research and Innovation, and Mr. Jean-Eric Paquet, Director-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission, were the keynote speakers at an event organized by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT), for «Horizon Europe», the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The event, held at the amphitheater of the National Center for Scientific Research (NCSR) “Demokritos”, was moderated by the Secretary General for Research and Technology, Dr. Patricia Kyprianidou.

In his speech, Alternate Minister Kostas Fotakis stressed that the government places great importance on Research and Innovation, choosing to support research and new scientists through additional funding despite adverse economic circumstances. He underlined that allocations for Research & Development reached an all-time high in 2017 in Greece, amounting to more than € 2 billion, or 1.14% of GDP.

Director-General J. E. Paquet addressed the very important initiatives undertaken by Greece to promote excellence and support human capital, and highlighted the need to further emphasize the value of research for society. During his keynote speech he presented “Horizon Europe”, the most ambitious EU Research and Innovation Programme to date. For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing € 100 billion for Research & Innovation, of which € 94 billion are to be allocated to “Horizon Europe”.

He pointed out that this ambitious programme would contribute to addressing the multiple challenges related to climate change, digital technologies, health, food products, natural resources, etc. Special mention was made of the European Innovation Council (EIC) which, within the context of “Horizon Europe”, will support market-creating innovation by helping identify and finance rapidly evolving high-risk innovation actions.

The General Secretary for Research and Technology, Dr Patricia Kyprianidou said: “Greece is actively involved in all major European initiatives addressing the challenges of our era including ‘Artificial Intelligence for Europe’, European High Performance Computing (HPC) and European Open Science Cloud (EOSC); it also provides financing for technologies of the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), having already allocated € 66 million under the RTDI Action ‘Research-Create-Innovate’ (1st Cycle).”

Before the event, a bilateral meeting was held at the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs with Mr. P. Korkolis, Secretary General for Public Investments& the NSRFat the Ministry of Economy and Development.

On the margins of the event, Mr. J.E. Paquet met with representatives of start-up companies, members of the research and academic communities to discuss the potential uptake of «Horizon Europe» actions with the aim of enhancing their set of competences in Research and Innovation.

Mr. Paquet went on to visit the Acropolis Museum and, in the evening, he flied to Heraklion, Crete, where he was scheduled to visit the Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas (FORTH).