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DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**on former Commissioner Christos Stylianides' post term of office professional activity as
member of the Board of Directors of the Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,

Having regard to the Commission Decision of 31 January 2018 (C(2018) 700 final) on a Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission, and in particular Article 11(3) thereof,

Whereas:

- 1) According to Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Members of the Commission, when entering upon their duties, shall give a solemn undertaking that, both during and after their term of office, they will respect the obligations arising therefrom and, in particular, their duty to behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance, after they have ceased to hold office, of certain appointments or benefits.
- 2) Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that the Members of the institutions of the Union shall be required, even after their duties have ceased, not to disclose information of any kind covered by the obligation of professional secrecy, in particular information about undertakings, their business relations or their cost components.
- 3) Article 11 of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission establishes a specific procedure for the assessment of planned professional activities which the Members or former Members of the Commission intend to take up after they have ceased to hold office. The Commission shall examine the information provided in order to determine whether the nature of the planned activity is compatible with Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. If the planned activity is related to the portfolio of the Member or former Member, the Commission shall decide only after having consulted the Independent Ethical Committee unless the planned activity falls within the exceptions foreseen in Article 11(3), second subparagraph, of the Code of Conduct.
- 4) On 30 March 2020, former Commissioner Christos Stylianides informed the Commission about his intention to accept, subject to the Commission's authorisation, a non-remunerated assignment as member of the Board of Directors of the Eratosthenes Excellence Research Centre for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring of the Environment. Mr Stylianides confirmed his full awareness of his obligations arising from the treaties, namely Articles 245 and 339 of the Treaty on the

Functioning of the European Union and from the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission.

- 5) The Eratosthenes Excellence Research Centre for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring of the Environment (hereafter Eratosthenes) is a private-law body established, in 2019, under Cypriot law as non-profit company. The Cyprus University of Technology is the sole member of this company.
- 6) The company is created within the framework of the EXCELSIOR (Eratosthenes: Excellence Research Centre for Earth Surveillance & Space-based Monitoring of the Environment) project which is funded by the European Union (under the EU Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020) and by the Government of Cyprus. The main objective of the project is the creation of a centre of excellence for Earth observation and the monitoring of the environment from space. By virtue of the Grant Agreement, signed between the EU's Research Executive Agency (REA) and the project partners, the "Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence" is an autonomous and self-sustained entity built on the upgrading of the existing Remote Sensing and Geo-Environment Laboratory, operating within the Department of Civil Engineering and Geomatics of the Cyprus University of Technology.
- 7) Eratosthenes presents itself as aiming to become a world-class digital innovation hub for earth observation and geospatial information and the competent reference centre in the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa.
- 8) Its founding act states in detail around fifty operational strains to be pursued amongst which: (1) The conduct and publication of high level scientific research and technology development activities; (2) The application of interdisciplinary approaches to the study and development of space, geospatial technologies and remote sensing technology for the observation and remote sensing of the Earth; (3) Enhancing the ability to produce scientific and interdisciplinary research and to develop technological or other innovations of international excellence in Cyprus; (4) Contribute to further develop Cyprus as a pillar of scientific excellence at European and global level; (5) Strengthen Cyprus' ability to successfully implement and benefit from European and international projects and other sources; (6) Contribute to the creation in Cyprus of short- and long-term economic growth opportunities on the basis of innovation and knowledge-intensive activities; (7) Strengthen entrepreneurship and innovation; (8) Promote the creation of startups and, through them, new jobs for highly skilled scientific personnel; (9) Attract foreign startups and other innovative companies in Cyprus, (10) The development of a high-level training system to support the development and utilization of technology and innovation in Cyprus.
- 9) Eratosthenes is managed by a Managing Director and an Executive Committee, which is the body that takes decisions on the company's financial and administrative management and coordinates its internal and external operations, specifying and exercising financial control.
- 10) The Board of Directors decides on the company's policy and strategy issues and appoints the Managing Director as well as the members of the Executive Committee. The members of the Board of Directors must be personalities chosen for their expertise, skills and proficiency in Eratosthenes' action field and are supposed to guide the company as concerns its strategy, vision and values. Their position is

honourable and unpaid. They must not hold any other salaried position in the company or conduct financial transactions, which may be considered conflicting with their duties. Members of the Board of Directors are also not allowed to have any personal dealings with the Company.

- 11) There have been certain links between the former Commissioner's policy responsibilities for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management and earth surveillance and space-based monitoring of the environment (e.g. the Copernicus Emergency Management Service managed by the Commission via its Joint Research Centre and DG ECHO). However, these links are the result of the benefits provided by earth observation in general and the EU's Copernicus programme in particular, to a broad range of policy areas. This does not create a link between the envisaged activity and the former portfolio as such, which would require the consultation of the Independent Ethical Committee based on Article 11(3), first subparagraph, of the Code of Conduct.
- 12) The nature of the envisaged activity does not present any risk of incompatibility either with former Commissioner Stylianides' role as a Member of the Commission or with the interests of the institution, provided that Mr Stylianides abides by the obligations of discretion and protection of the confidentiality of sensitive information, set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and in Article 11(1), in conjunction with Article 5, of the Code of Conduct, and that he refrains from any lobbying towards the Commission on behalf, or for the interests, of the Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence, as provided in Article 11(4) of the Code of Conduct.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Former Commissioner Christos Stylianides' envisaged activity as member of the Board of Directors of the Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence is compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on condition that Mr Stylianides:

- abides by the obligations of discretion and protection of the confidentiality of sensitive information set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and in Article 11(1), in conjunction with Article 5, of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission;
- refrains from lobbying the Commission on behalf, or for the interests, of the Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence, in accordance with Article 11(4) of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission.

Done at Brussels, on 6 May 2020.

The President
Ursula von der Leyen