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**CO EUR-PREP 44** 

## **NOTE**

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	European Council (15 December 2016)
	- Draft conclusions

In accordance with Article 2(3)(a) of the Council's Rules of Procedure, delegations will find attached the draft conclusions prepared by the President of the European Council, in close cooperation with the member of the European Council representing the Member State holding the six-monthly Presidency of the Council and with the President of the Commission.

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13938/16 DPG **LIMITE EN** 

# I. MIGRATION

#### **External dimension**

- The European Council recalls its October conclusions concerning the Eastern Mediterranean
  route and reiterates its commitment to implementing all aspects of the EU-Turkey Statement.
  It also renews its pledge to continue support to the countries along the Western Balkans route.
- 2. The new Partnership Framework of cooperation is an important tool to address illegal migration and its root causes, particularly as concerns the Central Mediterranean route. The European Council welcomes the progress on the implementation of the compacts with five African countries of origin or transit and the growing ownership in the partner countries. In the light of this experience, additional compacts or other forms of cooperation may be envisaged, taking into account available resources. The underlying principles of the Partnership Framework set out by the European Council last June should be mainstreamed into all external instruments and policies of the EU and its Member States. The European Council will keep progress in terms of stemming the flows and improving return rates under close review.
- 3. In order to reinforce the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan and the Partnership Framework, the significant progress achieved by the Council on the European Fund for Sustainable Development and on the EIB External Lending Mandate should be followed by a swift adoption of the relevant legislation. The European Council welcomes in this respect that the EIB has started to implement its Resilience Initiative for the Western Balkans and Southern Neighbourhood.
- 4. The European Council underlines the need to enhance support to the Libyan coastguard, so as to increase its capacity to prevent the loss of life at sea and to break the business model of smugglers.

#### Internal dimension

5. The effective application of the principles of responsibility and solidarity remains a shared objective. Sustained efforts over the past months to review the Common European Asylum System have shown areas of convergence. Building on progress achieved, the incoming Council Presidency is invited to complete the process with the aim of broadening consensus on the EU's asylum policy.

## II. SECURITY

## Internal security

- 6. The European Council reaffirms its commitment to the European Union Internal Security Strategy. The [impending] agreement between co-legislators on the Counter-Terrorism Directive is an important step and should be followed by a swift adoption of the proposals on firearms and on anti-money laundering and the implementation of new legislation on PNR. The European Council calls for effective cooperation with electronic service providers based inside and outside the EU.
- 7. [p.m. revised Schengen Borders Code] The Council should agree on the Entry/Exit System and prioritise work for a European Travel Information and Authorisation System to more systematically screen visa-exempt travellers.

## External security and defence

- 8. In order to strengthen Europe's security and defence, the European Council confirms previous commitments in this respect and the need to do more, including committing significant additional resources and reinforcing cooperation for the development of required capabilities as well as committing to making such capabilities available when necessary. The European Council:
  - endorses the Council conclusions of 14 November on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence and calls for rapid and comprehensive follow-up by the High Representative and Member States;

 welcomes the European Defence Action Plan as the Commission's contribution to developing European security and defence policy and calls on all relevant actors to take work forward;

 urges swift implementation of the common set of proposals which follow up on the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw by EU and NATO leaders, avoiding duplication and ensuring complementarity between EU and NATO.

9. The European Council will regularly assess progress made in addressing the main threats that the Union faces, starting in March 2017. It will provide strategic guidance and set political priorities as appropriate.

# III. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, YOUTH

10. The European Council [welcomes the agreement reached in the Council] on the extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), which should be adopted by the colegislators in the first half of 2017.

11. It reiterates the importance of the various Single Market Strategies as well as the Energy Union. It welcomes the progress achieved so far and urges all Institutions to increase the momentum and the level of ambition, notably in the vital area of the Digital Single Market, ahead of the March 2017 European Council.

12. The European Council calls for the continuation of the Youth Guarantee and welcomes the increased support for the Youth Employment Initiative and calls for work to be taken forward on the recent Commission initiatives dedicated to youth, including the European Solidarity Corps.

#### IV. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

p.m.:	Nether	lands/EU	-Ukraine	Association	Agreement
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p.m.: Syria

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