



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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“I/A” ITEM NOTE

from:	Ad hoc Working Party on the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania
on:	7 March 2011
to:	COREPER/COUNCIL

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Subject:	The Mechanism on Cooperation and Verification for Bulgaria and Romania - Adoption of Council conclusions
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1. In the light of the Council's conclusions of 17 October 2006 (doc. 14109/06), of 23 July 2007 (doc. 11904/07), of 10 March 2008 (doc. 7017/08), of 15 September 2008 (doc. 12678/08 + REV 1(en)), of 23 February 2009 (doc.6694/09), of 14 September 2009 (doc.12938/1/09 REV 1), of 10 May 2010 (doc. 8791/10), and of 13 September 2010 (doc. 13105/10), the Commission presented Interim reports on progress in Bulgaria and Romania under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (docs 6986/11 COVEME 1 and 6987/11 COVEME 2).
2. Following the examination of the reports, the Working Party reached agreement on the text of draft Council conclusions on this subject in the terms set out in Annex.
3. It is therefore suggested to the Council, subject to confirmation by Coreper, to adopt the attached draft conclusions.

**Draft Council conclusions
on the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania**

Reaffirming its earlier conclusions, in particular those of 13 September 2010, the Council welcomes the Interim reports from the Commission on Progress in Bulgaria and Romania under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism. The Council commends the Commission on its work, on the methodology followed and fully shares the objective and balanced analysis contained in those reports. The Council notes the continued good level of co-operation of Bulgaria and Romania with the Commission and the other Member States.

Recalling the importance of unequivocal and sustained political will to take the necessary steps, the Council acknowledges the good efforts made by Bulgaria and Romania to meet the objectives set under the Mechanism.

The Council welcomes Bulgaria's continued commitment to implement its judicial reform strategy. In order to maintain its momentum of reform, Bulgaria should further improve judicial and investigation practices, continue the thorough reform of the judicial system, focus on the adoption of an effective law on asset forfeiture, on the establishment of an authority to identify and sanction conflicts of interest, and on ensuring a more effective judicial follow-up on cases of corruption and organised crime.

The Council welcomes that Romania responded in a constructive way to the Commission's recommendations and re-invigorated the momentum of reforms. In order to consolidate this momentum Romania should focus its efforts on implementing the new legislative framework in civil and criminal law, on the reform of the disciplinary system for magistrates, on improving the celerity, quality and consistency of the judicial process, in particular with regard to high-level corruption trials, and on strengthening general anti-corruption policy.

The Council encourages Bulgaria and Romania, building on progress already achieved - taking as a point of reference the progress reports adopted by the Commission on 20 July 2010 and their recommendations - to continue their intensified efforts in the coming months, in particular with regard to all areas highlighted in the Interim reports, and expects them to achieve tangible and lasting results in line with the agreed benchmarks. In the light of the above, the Council looks forward to the Commission reports to be tabled in the summer 2011. The Council will continue to pay careful attention to developments in this area.
