Council of the
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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Council Conclusions on the Commission Staff Working Document "Launching the EU International Cooperation and Development Results Framework"

At its meeting on 26 May 2015, the Council adopted the Council conclusions as set out in the annex to this note.

ANNEX

Council Conclusions on the Commission Staff Working Document

"Launching the EU International Cooperation and Development Results Framework"

1. The Council recalls its Conclusions on the Agenda for Change[1], which stressed the need to show that EU development cooperation delivers clear results and impact on the ground and achieves greater effectiveness and accountability for public spending. The Council also called upon the EU and its Member States to promote a common results-based approach, including through the use of strengthened results-based frameworks at country-level, and to strengthen their capacities to monitor and evaluate results.

2. The Council also recalls its 2014 Conclusions[2], following the Commission's Staff Working Document "Paving the way for an EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework", which provided key recommendations for the elaboration of the framework, underlining the importance of such a tool in order to strengthen the accountability, transparency and visibility of EU development and cooperation assistance. The Council also highlights that the framework should serve both as a communication tool for reporting on results, and as a means to improve practices in implementing the EU's development policy, while respecting its allocation decisions and partner countries' development strategies. The Council stresses that both aspects are important and that the Results Framework should also seek to improve mutual accountability with partner countries, peer learning and transparency.

[1] Doc. 9369/12
[2] Doc. 10044/14

3. The Council welcomes the Commission Staff Working Document "Launching the EU International Cooperation and Development Results Framework"[3] which presents the Results Framework and provides operational details on the set-up of the framework and on the indicators as well as on the reporting process through which the EU will demonstrate how funds spent contribute to the achievement of the policy objectives of its international cooperation and development assistance. The Council stresses that attention must now turn to putting the Results Framework into practice to ensure that it reaches out through implementation processes and makes a real difference on the ground. The Council commends the inclusive process that was followed for the elaboration of the framework, taking into account Member States' experience and lessons learned as well as similar and validated results frameworks of other international donors.

4. The Council welcomes the three-layered structure proposed by the Commission to measure results by looking at development progress in partner countries, at development outcomes and direct outputs supported by the EU, and at the Commission's organisational performance. The Council also welcomes the use of the overall approach for calculating the EU contribution to results achieved in partner countries. At the same time, the Council invites the Commission to also consider, in the medium term, to move to reporting results for ongoing programmes, as well as completed programmes, as soon as is feasible.

5. The Council acknowledges the efforts made to align the indicators with EU development policy priorities 2014-2020, and to keep them to a manageable number in order to facilitate data collection and reporting. The Council stresses the importance of further pursuing these efforts when revising and updating the indicators, as appropriate, notably in view of aligning them to the post-2015 development framework, once the indicators of the latter are agreed. In that context the Council especially supports the Commission's intention to review the Results Framework upon adoption of the indicators for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Council also welcomes the active participation of EUROSTAT, as well as that of national statistical offices, to the deliberations for the design of SDG indicators.

[3] Doc. 7604/15

6. The Council stresses that more emphasis must be given to gender in the Results Framework and, where necessary, gender indicators should be adapted and added following the publication of the successor to the current EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development. Results should be reported against sex and age disaggregated indicators wherever possible, and the feasibility of developing further indicators for cross-cutting issues should be explored.

7. In line with the Busan Partnership principles, the Council stresses the need to measure and analyse results on the basis of the specific contexts and needs of partner countries. The Council highlights the importance of making use of data produced by national statistical, monitoring and evaluation systems to the greatest extent possible, and underlines the need for continued support to strengthen partner countries' capacity for monitoring progress and evaluating development impact, including in the context of their own development strategies.

8. The Council acknowledges the need to select indicators that are clearly defined, measurable and can be aggregated. At the same time, the Council stresses the need to include in its reporting a qualitative analysis of results to ensure that not easily quantifiable thematic areas are not disregarded. The Council looks forward to the Commission complementing the reporting on the EU Results Framework with other tools, including evaluations and case studies, in order to ensure that qualitative and hard-to-measure results are also taken into account in the overall results reporting. The Council also stresses that the reporting process should build on results-focused reports from implementing partners. The Council further stresses the importance to undertake in-depth studies and evaluations to analyse in a robust way how the EU is contributing to the results in partner countries and to better understand the main drivers of change.

9. The Council stresses that the International Cooperation and Development Results Framework should cover all EU development cooperation activities in all partner countries, including in Europe's eastern and southern neighbourhood.

10. The Council encourages the EU and its Member States to enhance coordination and information sharing with a view to promoting a common approach, as appropriate, for measuring and communicating the results of the Union's development policy and that of its Member States. For this purpose the Council also encourages the EU and its Member States to pursue common approaches for measuring and communicating results in Joint Programming.

11. The Council welcomes the implementation of the Results Framework and looks forward to the first publication of results data in autumn 2015 as a supplement to the Commission's "Annual Report on the European Union's development and external assistance policies and their implementation", and as of 2016 as part of the report.