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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Draft REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (**first reading**)
- Adoption of the Council's position at first reading and of the statement of the Council's reasons
= Statements

Statement by Austria

Austria abstains and recalls the statement by Austria to the minutes of COREPER II on the 24 July 2020 as well as the statement by Austria to the minutes of COREPER II on the 30 September 2020 and to the minutes of the Council on 12 October 2020 regarding the Regulation establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF).

Statement by Greece

Greece expresses its concerns about the actual calculations of the national allocations by the European Commission. These calculations for the period 2021-27 seem to result in funding available which is by no means adequate in order to cover the actual needs. Hence there is an imminent risk for a totally undesirable cut-down or *even cut-off* of programmes of reception, integration and protection addressed to asylum claimants and beneficiaries of international protection. Greece is looking forward to working constructively with the European Commission in order to mitigate such risk and to avoid endangering programmes because of lack of necessary funds.

Statement by Hungary

In our view, migration will remain one of the main challenges for the European Union in the upcoming period, and appropriate financial instruments need to be provided to address this challenge in a holistic manner. As a result, Hungary prioritises the funding of measures and areas of support related to the effectiveness of activities in the field of return and the prevention of secondary movements, as well as those that provide EU funding for any project to be implemented in the external dimension.

Furthermore, we would like to point out that Hungary has serious concerns about the content of the proposal, as the proposal provides a disproportionate amount of resources for the implementation of the solidarity mechanism that includes the relocation of asylum seekers between Member States. Thus, it jeopardizes the further objectives of the fund and through this encourages to continue the systematic abuse of the EU asylum system.

Finally, through its provisions on legal migration, the proposal presupposes the need for additional migration channels. On the one hand, this is not a real assessment, and on the other hand, it is up to the Member States exclusively to decide how to respond to their labour market needs, having regard to their social and economic situation and their constitutional aspects. We find fundamentally problematic the approach which presents legal migration as a tool that would be a consensual response to the economic and demographic challenges that Member States are currently facing. In light of the epidemic in particular, Hungary is focusing on safeguarding existing jobs and green and digital transition, as well as on family policy, rather than on encouraging migration, which itself does not solve the problems and even creates new challenges. As a result, Hungary cannot accept the Asylum and Migration Fund in its current form, as Hungary believes that the fund places a

disproportionate emphasis on encouraging legal migration and financing integration, and will promote the increase of illegal migration by overfunding the relocation of asylum seekers between Member States.

Furthermore, Hungary considers it excessive that for the mid-term review, by 30 June 2024, Member States should account for at least 10% of the fund allocations. In our view, this provision will make it more difficult to implement the Member States' national programs, which is contrary to the objectives pursued by the three funds. However, in the spirit of compromise, Hungary is ready to accept this strict criterion.

Statement by Malta

We welcome the efforts to reach a provisional agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF); the Regulation establishing the Internal Security Fund (ISF) and the Regulation establishing the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, as outlined in ST 6486/21, ST 6487/21 and ST 6488/21 respectively. In view of the need to establish the respective funds for 2021-2027 as soon as possible, Malta can accept the provisional agreements reached.

However, Malta recalls the concerns raised on the conditionality of 10% included horizontally in the mid-term review for all three funds. Malta remains of the opinion that such a conditionality raises difficulties in the implementation and may result in the unnecessary loss of funds.

Statement by Poland

Equality between women and men is enshrined in the treaties of the European Union as a fundamental right. Poland ensures equality between women and men within the framework of the Polish national legal system in accordance with internationally binding human rights instruments and within the framework of fundamental values and principles of the European Union. For these reasons, in place where the regulation refer to “gender” Poland will interpret it as meaning women and men, in accordance with Article 8 and 10 TFEU.