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#### 'I/A' ITEM NOTE

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From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Counter Ransomware Initiative: -authorization to negotiate a Non-Binding Instrument

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1. The International Counter Ransomware Initiative was formally launched by the United States in October 2021 at an event inviting approximately 30 'partners' including the European Union. On 14 October 2021, the EU signed the joint statement that was published as an outcome of the event outlining four focus areas of cooperation, including resilience, illicit finance, law enforcement efforts, and diplomacy.
2. On 31 October and 1 November 2022, the International Counter Ransomware Initiative Summit 2022 will take place in the United States. On 30 September, the Commission informed about the preparation of the Summit indicating that a draft joint statement was expected from the US. On 12 October, the Commission presented the draft Statement and timeline for negotiating the content of the Statement, which the signatories will subscribe as the outcome of the Summit. On 14 October, the HWPCI had discussion on the matter, Member States examined the text, expressed initial positions and a clear interest in the EU being represented.

3. The Commission will have to revert to the Council at the end of the negotiations to seek, in accordance with Union law, the Council's authorisation for the signature on behalf of the Union of the Joint Statement expected to result from the Summit.
  4. In view of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to:
    - confirm its agreement for European Commission to enter into negotiations on a Joint Statement with the United States of America in the framework of the International Counter Ransomware Initiative; and
    - invite the Council to approve as an 'A' item at a forthcoming meeting the launch of the aforementioned negotiations.
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