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European Union

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To: Delegations

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Subject: Council Conclusions on the EU Arctic policy

Delegations will find attached Council conclusions on the EU Arctic policy as adopted by the Council (Foreign Affairs) on 9 December 2019.

Council Conclusions on the EU Arctic policy

1. The Council recalls the Joint Communication on an integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic published on 27 April 2016 by the European Commission and the High Representative; and the Council Conclusions on the Arctic on 20 June 2016; as well as the Council Conclusions of 12 May 2014 on developing a European Union policy towards the Arctic Region.
2. The Council also recalls the Council Conclusions of 19 November 2019 on Oceans and Seas, including the Arctic; as well as the Council Conclusions of 29 November 2019 on Space Solutions for a Sustainable Arctic.
3. The Council recognises the primary responsibility of the Arctic States for the development of the Arctic but also considers that many of the issues affecting the region are of a global nature and are more effectively addressed through regional or multilateral cooperation in particular the Arctic Council and including via the UN system. The Council notes that the European Union should continue to make a significant contribution, both at regional and multilateral fora which deal with Arctic matters, in particular the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Northern Dimension and the cross-border cooperation programmes in the region and welcomes the initiatives and actions of the EU – such as the Arctic Forum held in Umeå, Sweden on 3-4 October 2019 – as well as of its Member States in the area.
4. Developments in the Arctic are progressing at rapid pace. The European Union needs to ensure that its own policy approach would take account of relevant developments.
5. In light of the new challenges and opportunities across the Arctic and the growing international interest, the Council looks forward to an update of the EU Arctic policy set out in the 2016 Joint Communication on the integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic. It invites the High Representative and the Commission - in accordance with the division of competence between the EU and its Member States - to continue to actively implement the policy, to initiate a process in order to update the Arctic policy of the EU and to continue to report to the Council regularly.