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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Endorsement and authorisation to sign the EU-Canada Digital Partnership on behalf of the EU - Approval of a non-binding instrument

1. On 14 March 2023, the Working Party on Telecommunications and Information Society was informed by the European Commission, in a note¹, of its intention to start discussions on an individual Digital Partnership with Canada with a view to establishing cooperation on the digital transformation of the economy and society.
2. The Commission recalled that, in view of the interlinkage between the EU's internal and external digital policy, the Digital Compass Communication² announced that the EU would build strong international digital partnerships matching the four pillars of the Digital Compass: infrastructures, skills, digital transformation of businesses, and digitalisation of public services. In line with this approach, and taking into account the existing good cooperation with Canada, the Commission explained that its intention was to upgrade the existing Digital Dialogue with Canada to a Digital Partnership, based on the model of the Digital Partnerships recently agreed with Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore.

¹ WK 3222/23.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0118>

3. Following Coreper's approval on 22 March 2023, the TTE Council (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) authorised the Commission to negotiate an individual Digital Partnership with Canada in the form of a non-binding instrument on 28 March 2023.
4. At the meeting of the Working Party on Telecommunications and the Information Society on 9 November 2023, the Commission informed delegations about the outcome of the negotiations with Canada and presented the draft text of the Digital Partnership³. The draft received broad support. Delegations' proposals for slight amendments were taken into account and the Commission sent the Council a revised draft text on 10 November 2023.
5. In view of the above, and with a view to sign the Digital Partnership with Canada on the occasion of the EU-Canada Summit, scheduled on 23-24 November 2023, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to recommend that the Council:
- approves the text of the Digital Partnership with Canada, as set out in document 15356/23, as an A item during its AGRIFISH session on 20 November 2023, and
 - agrees that, if further adjustments of the text are required in order to ensure agreement by the EU and Canadian sides, the text may be adapted accordingly provided that the changes do not affect the substance and intent of the EU positions.
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³ WK14151/23.