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"I/A" ITEM NOTE

from : Political and Security Committee
to : Coreper/Council

Subject : Draft Council conclusions on combating violence against women, particularly in the ESDP framework, and all forms of discrimination against them

1. At its meeting on 3 December 2008, the Political and Security Committee approved the attached draft Council conclusions on combating violence against women, particularly in the ESDP framework, and all forms of discrimination against them.
2. The PSC is thus forwarding them to Coreper for approval with a view to their adoption by the Council at its meeting on 8 and 9 December 2008.

**Draft Council conclusions on combating violence against women,
particularly in the ESDP framework, and all forms of discrimination against them**

1. The Council reaffirms the need to make the theme of women's rights a priority of the policy to defend human rights, and a subject for long-term action by the European Union.
2. The Council emphasises its willingness to take greater account in its external policy of women's rights and of the issue of equality between women and men, as defined in European and international instruments and in the relevant standards and commitments, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the additional protocol to it, the 1994 Cairo Action Programme, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Millennium Development Goals.
3. To this end, the Council is adopting guidelines which make respect for women's rights and combating violence against them a priority of the external action of the European Union and its Member States. In particular, the EU must continue to play a leading role in combating sexual violence in armed conflicts.

4. In this context, the Council emphasises the importance of Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, which constitute the guiding principles for ESDP operations. It also commends the work of the competent EU bodies, in liaison with civil society, which has led to the definition of principles and actions to step up measures to combat violence against women and to promote the role of women, especially by ensuring their effective participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. It welcomes the recommendations made by the conference held in Brussels on 10 October 2008, "*From commitment to action – the EU delivering to women in conflict and post-conflict*", which contributed to the drafting of a joint paper by the General Secretariat of the Council and the Commission on a comprehensive EU approach to protection and the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and to the revision of the operational ESDP document on *the implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of ESDP*.
5. The Council recalls the close link between peace, security, development and gender equality. It stresses the need for a consistent and continuous approach, from crisis management to reconstruction and development activities.
6. The Council recalls the need to take account of the issue of gender in the EU's policies, particularly in questions of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), support for security sector reform (SSR), democratic governance, support for civil society, economic security and humanitarian action.
7. The Council stresses the need for effective coordination and cooperation, including on the ground, with the United Nations system, other international organisations, and the OSCE, as well as other international structures (the ICRC, the DCAF, etc.).
8. The Council invites the relevant bodies at the Council, the Commission and the other European institutions, and in the Member States, within the framework of their respective competences, to ensure that the documents attached to these conclusions are properly implemented.