



Council of the
European Union

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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Cooperation between the European Union and the Government of the Faroe Islands - Authorisation to sign a Non-Binding Instrument (NBI)

1. On 17 May 2023, the European External Action Service (EEAS) presented to the Council an information note regarding its intention to negotiate a Non-Binding Instrument ('NBI') in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Cooperation between the European Union and the Government of the Faroe Islands¹.
2. Discussions on options to strengthen EU-Faroe Islands cooperation have been ongoing. In July 2021, the Faroese government proposed to negotiate a "Partnership Declaration". In its Conclusions of 21 June 2022, the Council assessed the state of EU relations with the Faroe Islands noting that the Faroe Islands are an important partner of the EU with regard to several of the EU policies.

¹ Document 9816/23

3. In accordance with the Arrangements for Non-binding Instruments agreed by the Council, the Commission and the EEAS in December 2017, the Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Cooperation between the European Union and the Government of the Faroe Islands would demonstrate the political commitment of both sides and is to be considered as a non legally binding instrument, entailing no financial commitments ².
4. On 1 June 2023, the Council authorised that the EEAS to negotiate, in close consultation with the Commission services, a NBI in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Cooperation between the European Union and the Government of the Faroe Islands.
5. The Memorandum of Understanding³, within the Parties' fields of competences, refers to existing areas of cooperation (including, but not limited to fisheries, trade, research/scientific cooperation) and add other areas of relevance for the bilateral EU-Faroes relationship (e.g. climate change, arctic matters, energy, environment, marine biodiversity, twin transition, food security taxation/tax good governance and education, culture, youth) and include provisions on regular consultations, aimed at taking stock of the overall state of play of the cooperation.
6. On 12 December 2023, the European Free Trade Agreement working party agreed the text of the Memorandum of Understanding presented by the European External Action Service (EEAS), as set in document 16519/23.
7. Consequently, the Committee of Permanent Representatives is invited to agree with the NBI and approve the authorisation to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Cooperation between the European Union and the Government of the Faroe Islands, and to forward the latter to the Council for approval at one of its upcoming meetings.

² Arrangements between the Commission and the Council on non-binding procedures, as set out in doc. 15367/17.

³ Document 16519/23