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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Working Party on Information on 12 January 2016

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in document CM 5138/1/15 REV 1.

2. Communication / Information Policy

The Chair recalled that the Working Party agenda focuses on topics of immediate relevance to ongoing Council/European Council work, which has implications for the attendance of the Working Party, and referred to the default setting of Council bodies as set out in the Council's Rules of procedure. He invited delegations to actively contribute to the continued focussing of the agenda on items of high political relevance. For more general topics such as communication strategies or cooperation partnerships among the institutions, the approach of a more inclusive platform will be maintained and other institutions and bodies will continue to be invited.

- a) New Presidency's communication strategy and web site

The Netherlands Presidency informed delegations on its communication strategy which will follow its general "pragmatic" approach.

The Presidency programme's three guiding principles are: an EU that focuses on the main issues, that creates innovative growth and jobs, and connects with citizens. It will concentrate on four main areas: migration and international security, Europe as innovator and job creator, a stable and robust monetary Union, and a forward-looking climate and energy policy.

The Presidency also presented an introductory [video](#) and announced that all informal Presidency events foreseen in the Netherlands will take place in Amsterdam.

The second part of the presentation focused on the use of social media channels for the Presidency's communication activities. The Presidency [website](#) (available in NL, EN, FR and DE) provides information aimed both at the general public and more specialised audiences.

All information about the cultural programme can be found on the website [Europe by People](#).

b) Commission's activities and plans in the field of EU communication

The Commission representative underlined the importance of the Working Party's work for the Commission and the effectiveness of the current policy-driven approach to its proceedings and agenda-setting in that respect. He outlined DG COMM's future communication activities and stressed the Commission's willingness to continue the cooperation with the Working Party through sharing with delegations all Commission communication material and tools. Moreover, he underlined the readiness of DG COMM to participate in the meetings and to facilitate attendance by other DGs' representatives as appropriate.

The Commission representative indicated that the Commission's communication approach will continue to be country-specific and tailor-made, using thematic approaches (such as on the Digital Single Market, the Investment Plan), and with continued visits of Commissioners to the Member States.

Furthermore, the Commission will pursue the organisation of citizens' dialogues in Member States in close cooperation with the EP's offices and national authorities in each country, through the Commission's Representations.

Finally, the Commission drew delegations' attention to the [General Report](#) on the Activities of the European Union in 2014 and commended the cooperation of the EU institutions in particular regarding the "Europa" Portal, the organisation of the EU Open Day and on areas of common interest in the context of the works around the Schuman Roundabout area in Brussels.

Delegations' comments focused on the following points:

- positive communication of the EU's policies will be crucial in 2016 to support cohesion of the EU;
- EU communication needs, among others, to counter the narratives of a growing euro-sceptical camp;
- coherent and coordinated communication on the migration/refugee crisis is crucial;
- due attention should be paid to communicating EU policies and enhancing visibility in the Western Balkans, in particular in the light of the Council conclusions of 15 December 2015 on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process;¹
- continued attention should be given to the communication aspects of issues such as the Eastern Partnership, the agreement on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Ukraine, TTIP etc.

The General Secretariat of the Council informed delegations that the Council, in cooperation with the EEAS, has produced short [video clips](#) on the EU-Ukraine agreement.

¹¹ 15356/15

The Chair thanked the Commission for its presentation and delegations for their comments and confirmed that the GSC will keep in close contact with the Presidency and with delegations to identify the priority topics for future meetings.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 23 February, in the afternoon.

3. Transparency / Access to documents

a) Presentation of the voting calculator app

- Information from the General Secretariat of the Council
- Doc 14932/15 INF 197 API 112

The General Secretariat reminded delegates that a voting calculator app was available for downloading in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store and asked delegates to circulate the information note announcing the availability of the app (document 14932/15) to colleagues in their respective Permanent Representations and Capitals.

Delegations were invited to download the app and send their feed-back and suggestions for improvements (to the General Secretariat public.records@consilium.europa.eu).

b) Council Open Sessions - Statistics on Open Sessions during the Luxembourg Presidency (July - December 2015)

- Information from the General Secretariat of the Council
- Doc 5111/16 INF 10 API 10

The General Secretariat gave a presentation on statistics related to Council Open Sessions held during the Luxembourg Presidency.

- c) European Ombudsman enquiries - state of play
 - Information from the General Secretariat of the Council

The Council Legal Service informed delegations on the state of play of on-going European Ombudsman enquiries: Complaint 2049/2014/NF, Own initiative inquiry OI/8/2015/FOR, Complaint 1011/2015/TN and Complaint 916/2015/OV.

- d) Confirmatory applications - state of play
 - Information from the General Secretariat of the Council

The Chair informed the WPI that the General Secretariat of the Council had received two new confirmatory applications. The first confirmatory application (01/c/01/16) concerns a document regarding the bilateral Free Trade Agreement negotiations with the Philippines. The second confirmatory application (02/c/01/16) concerns twelve room documents of the Code of Conduct Group originated from delegations.

Due to the calendar of the WPI meetings, a written consultation of the Working Party will be launched. The General Secretariat of the Council will inform you by email of the launching of the written consultation as well as of the submission to Coreper and to the Council for adoption.

- e) Presentation of the Netherlands Presidency Work Programme on transparency
 - Information from the Presidency

The Presidency referred to the approval of the provisional text of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making which will be formally adopted soon and to the transparency elements it contains. Notably, the traceability of the legislative process by establishing a dedicated joint database and the transparency of trilogues were mentioned as important aspects of this II Agreement.

The Presidency emphasised the importance of pro-active stance on transparency. In this context, the Commission and the European Parliament will be invited to inform the WPI on the application of Regulation 1049/2001 by these institutions. Other issues related to transparency and access to documents such as on the guidelines for declassification of documents will also be discussed in the WPI during this semester.

The Presidency drew the attention of delegations to the "Transparency Camp Europe" for which they will be invited to participate. In addition, the WPI will be informed of the debates on transparency at the General Affairs Council.

Finally, the Presidency underlined the need to ensure progress through a pragmatic step by step approach within the current legislative framework and the important role of the WPI in enhancing transparency.

4. AOB

Information on cases before the General Court

The Legal Service drew the attention of delegations to case T-710/14 (Herbert Smith Freehills v. Council) for which the hearing will take place on the week 18-22 January 2016. The Council Legal Service intends to intervene in cases T-540/15 (De Capitani v. Parliament) and T-448/15 (EEB v. Commission).
