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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Draft REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027 (first reading) - Adoption of the legislative act - Statements

Statement by the Commission

The Commission proposed the Union Secure Connectivity Programme on 15 February 2022. The Russian invasion of Ukraine one week later and the events since have shown the need for enhanced secure connectivity in the EU and for an accelerated implementation of the programme. Therefore, pending its formal adoption, the Commission has brought forward the implementation of part of the activities linked to secure connectivity of a part of the new programme that could be sustained under the existing legal acts, and which requires an intensive development phase, in particular under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL).

Several calls under the work programmes 2021 and 2022 of the DIGITAL and the digital strand of CEF include actions that will later be taken over by the Union Secure Connectivity Programme under the Quantum Communication infrastructure objective. Grants to beneficiaries will start being signed as of the end of 2022 and in 2023. The total amount already allocated to Quantum Communication activities under DIGITAL and CEF is EUR 260 million in 2021 and 2022. Since an amount of EUR 260 million from DIGITAL and CEF has already been implemented, it will be deducted from the financial envelope of the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2027. Thus, the overall amount devoted to activities related to secure connectivity during this MFF remains unchanged at EUR 2.4 billion. Only the distribution between to be earmarked amounts under CEF and DIGITAL and the budget lines of the new programme will vary.

Statement of the Hellenic Republic

Greece was from the very beginning a strong supporter of the Commission's secure connectivity initiative and welcomes the swift completion of the Regulation establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027 and hopefully beyond.

Connectivity is a core political priority for Greece and this has been reflected in its RRF programme. Blending space and terrestrial infrastructure can provide connectivity in a secure and resilient manner, which is necessary for our governments, economy and society. Greece has its own GOVSATOM system ("GreeCom"), participates actively in EU programmes such as Galileo, Copernicus and EuroQCI, is one of the members of the SST Consortium and has launched a national microsatellite project aiming to strengthen and maximise the engagement of all space actors, utilise and expand its infrastructure and respond to the needs for secure connectivity.

In this spirit, Greece underlines the need to ensure a balanced distribution of the Union Secure Connectivity Programme's capacities among the Member States and stresses the absolute necessity to guarantee the interoperability and the complementarity of the Union Programme with the national relevant activities, capacities and infrastructure during the preparation, the development, the implementation and the running of the Programme.

Statement of the Republic of Croatia

The Republic of Croatia expresses its full support for the adoption of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027.

However, the Republic of Croatia reiterates its discontent with the current Croatian linguistic version of the proposal for the Regulation, i.e. with the Croatian equivalent of the English term “cyber” and its derivatives into the Croatian language¹, an issue which we have continuously raised on several levels within the Council during the last few years.

The current Croatian version of the proposal for the Regulation uses terminology that is non-existent in Croatian cyber legislation and professional use, thus creating confusion and undermining legal certainty, coherence and clarity.

The Republic of Croatia reiterates its position that the terminology used by the EU institutions should be aligned with already existing national legal terminology in order to ensure legal certainty.

The Republic of Croatia remains committed to promoting secure communications with a new constellation of satellites and continues to support the adoption of the Regulation.

¹ The equivalent used in the Croatian legislation is “kibernetički” whereas the term used in the Regulation is “kiber-“.