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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan on a Strategic Partnership on sustainable raw materials value chains <i>- Authorisation to sign a non-binding instrument</i>

1. On 10 January 2024, the Commission informed the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry) about its intention to enter into discussions to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the EU to establish a partnership on raw materials with Uzbekistan¹.
2. The partnership, as a non-binding instrument, intends to promote the following areas of collaboration:
 - integration of sustainable raw materials value chains, including via networking, preliminary selection of project proposals, joint development of projects, and promotion and facilitation of trade and investment linkages along the whole value chain;
 - increasing the resilience of raw material supply chains and establishing a dialogue to enhance the transparency of measures related to investments, operations and exports;

¹ WK 260/2024.

- mobilisation of funding for projects resulting from the partnership, as well as for the development of infrastructure required for the development of raw materials value chains such as, but not limited to, the development of clean energy supply;
- cooperation to achieve sustainable and responsible production and sourcing of raw materials;
- cooperation on research and innovation and sharing of knowledge and technologies related to sustainable exploration, extraction, processing and recycling of critical raw materials; and
- cooperation on building of capacity to enforce relevant rules, and on developing training and skills.

3. On 11 March 2024, the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry) received an information note from the Commission on the Memorandum of Understanding to be signed on behalf of the EU with the Republic of Uzbekistan, establishing a Strategic Partnership on sustainable raw materials value chains, with the draft text of the Memorandum of Understanding in an attachment².
4. The Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan on a Strategic Partnership on sustainable raw materials value chains, set out in document 7663/24, would constitute a non-binding instrument. The Memorandum of Understanding sets forth the intentions of both partners. It is not legally binding upon the partners.

² WK 3842/2024 + ADD 1.

5. The Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry) examined the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan on a Strategic Partnership on sustainable raw materials value chains at its meeting on 13 March 2024. Delegations generally welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding and indicated overall support to the Commission's proposal to sign it on behalf of the Union. Some delegations requested to include a reference to the Joint Communiqué of the 19th European Union-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting, held on 23 October 2023 in Luxembourg, and the Roadmap for Deepening Ties between the EU and Central Asia in the text of the Memorandum of Understanding. After consulting the Republic of Uzbekistan, this reference has been incorporated in the final text of the Memorandum of Understanding.
6. Following the examination by the Working Party, the Permanent Representatives Committee is asked to:
- confirm its agreement on the text of the Memorandum of Understanding as set out in document 7663/24;
 - recommend that the Council authorises the Commission to sign on behalf of the Union the Memorandum of Understanding, as set out in document 7663/24, as an 'A' item on the agenda of a forthcoming Council meeting.
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