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:	Proposal for a Council Decision determining the composition of the European Economic and Social Committee

1. The composition of the European Economic and Social Committee is currently determined by Council Decision (EU) 2015/1157[1]. Its Recital (6) provides that the Decision shall be revised by the Council, on the basis of a Commission proposal, in time for the mandate of the Committee starting in 2020.

2. Council Decision (EU) 2015/1157 adapted the composition of the European Economic and Social Committee following the accession of Croatia: Estonia, Cyprus and Luxembourg each lost one seat in order to address the discrepancy between the maximum number of members set by the Treaty (350) and the number of members following the accession of Croatia.

[1] OJ L 187, 15.7.2015, p. 28.

3. On 29 November 2018 the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal for a Council Decision determining the composition of the European Economic and Social Committee[2]. Taking into account that the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union will result in 24 vacant seats in the Committee, the Commission proposal envisages restoring the balance in the allocation of seats, by giving back to Estonia, Cyprus and Luxembourg each the seat they had lost following Council Decision (EU) 2015/1157, and by leaving the rest of the vacant seats as a reserve for possible future enlargements.

4. However, a specific clause has been inserted for the case where the United Kingdom would still be a Member State on the date of the application of the new Council Decision, on 21 September 2020. In that case, the composition of the Committee will be the one provided for in Council Decision (EU) 2015/1157, currently in force, until the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union becomes legally effective.

5. The Working Party on General Affairs examined the proposal at its meetings of 25 January 2019, 8 February 2019 and 12 April 2019 and unanimity could be reached on the proposed composition.

6. The Permanent Representatives Committee is therefore invited to:

   – confirm its agreement on the Presidency consolidated text and

   – invite the Council to adopt the text of the draft Decision on the composition of the European Economic and Social Committee set out in doc. 8937/19 CES 12 INST 123 as finalised by the Legal/Linguistic Experts, at a forthcoming meeting.

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[2] 14536/18.