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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 20 May 2025 - Termination of financing of Radio Free Europe – Information from Czechia

The AOB will address the current situation in the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which is facing a dramatic funding shortfall.

On March 15, the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM) notified Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) based in Prague of the termination of its grant agreement, effective immediately. On March 18, RFE/RL sued USAGM and its officials. USAGM released \$10,3 million in funding for March. The legal fight over funding for the month of April continued until May 13 when, after a series of court decisions, USAGM released \$12 million. It is clear that USAGM will continue blocking the release of subsequent funds and the court battle will continue. RFE/RL is currently surviving on very limited savings and has been forced to take drastic cost-saving measures, facing imminent threats to its survival. If RFE/RL is forced to completely suspend its operations, it may not be able to recover and other players such as Russia, China or Iran will step in to fill the void in information space in the European neighborhood.

For two months, RFE/RL together with the willing EU Member States and institutions have been looking for ways to approach this relevant call for help. An Endowment for Democracy-based proposal seems to be the best way forward for both the urgent short-term as well as for the strategic mid-term solution.