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NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, 18 December 2012, items 12-13

12. Visit of Neoklis Sylikiotis, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Presidency-in-Office of the Council of the European Union, reporting on the outcome of the Cyprus Presidency

Minister Sylikiotis presented the achievements of the Presidency in the fields of industry and energy, reflecting a need for continuity and for policies to overcome stagnation and to improve employment and competitiveness in the EU. In the area of industry, he referred to the agreement on unitary patent protection as one of the Presidency's great achievements. He also mentioned the Council conclusions on key enabling technologies and the European Innovation Partnership on raw materials, with smart technologies playing an increasingly important role and the conclusions on a stronger European industry for growth and economic recovery aiming at increasing the share of industry to 20% of GDP by 2020. He also mentioned entrepreneurship as a fundamental pillar of EU economic recovery, SMEs and their access to markets, financing and foreign markets. In the energy field, the Minister highlighted the agreement at first reading on the Regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure and the Council conclusions on renewable energy. He also

informed Members about the ongoing negotiations on a Directive on the safety of offshore oil and gas activities.

The first triilogue took place the previous month and, according to the Minister, it established the conditions for an agreement at first reading. He stressed the need to ensure that the EU took a leading role in setting safety rules, with a directive as a first step in that direction. In this context, he pointed to the ministerial meeting between the EU and countries in the South-Eastern Mediterranean region which are dealing with this issue as well. He also mentioned the energy efficiency labelling programme for office equipment and the progress report in six areas (energy efficiency, renewable energy, internal energy market, infrastructure, external energy relations and nuclear energy).

Members welcomed the achievements of the Cyprus presidency and expressed their appreciation of the fruitful cooperation. They highlighted the conclusions on renewable energy (including the mention of the emissions trading system) and agreements on patents, trans-European energy infrastructure and energy efficiency.

In his concluding remarks, the Minister underlined the need for the EU to maintain its leadership in the field of renewables and saw these conclusions as a political foundation for EU policy on renewables. He also stressed that the internal energy market needed to be fully established by 2014. In the context of trans-European energy infrastructure, he agreed with the need for EU-level connections for ensuring the security of supply. He pointed out that the Presidency had looked into the possibility of linking Cyprus and the South-Eastern Mediterranean basin and highlighted the joint declaration on enhancing the security of energy supply to and from Europe and the South-Eastern Mediterranean. He concluded that consistency in work was crucial and thanked the Committee for its cooperation.

13. Visit of Eleni Mavrou, Minister for the Interior (responsible for the Research portfolio), Presidency-in-Office of the Council of the European Union, reporting on the outcome of the Cyprus Presidency

Minister Mavrou recalled that promotion of and investment in R&D was essential for the EU to overcome the crisis and provided a detailed overview of progress on Presidency priorities. In particular, the Presidency had achieved a partial general approach on four legislative proposals in the Horizon 2020 package. Within this framework, she mentioned the single reimbursement rate for

eligible costs per project, access to results and remuneration of scientists, as well as new societal challenges, the role of regions and governance. She highlighted the flexible approach adopted by the Council on setting up of Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) and a new article on eligible personnel costs that could include supplementary payments to personnel of up to EUR 8000 per person per year.

The Minister also underlined progress on the creation of the European Research Area, with the adoption of relevant Council conclusions and progress in the development of EU international cooperation in research and innovation.

Within the Horizon 2020 framework, Mr Audy (EPP, FR) referred to diverging views between the Parliament and the Council on market approach, simplification and reimbursement rates. He also inquired about the efficiency of the Troika. Mr Johansson (ALDE, SE) was interested in the possibility of KICs using structural funds in more efficient way and the eligible cost of EUR 8000 per researcher per year. He also thought that the programme should have more leverage than the 7th Framework programme.

The Minister thought that research objectives had a market dimension and said that the matter would be discussed during the Irish Presidency. Regarding simplification, she saw a need to reach a common approach with the Parliament, as it should be possible to simplify the rules. She explained that EUR 8000 was an incentive mainly for new Member States to enable them to participate in the programme and an attempt to remove obstacles causing a brain drain from these countries. In conclusion, she saw that, despite its weaknesses, she found the Troika useful.

Next meeting(s)

- 23 January 2013, 9.00–12.30 and 15.00–18.30 (Brussels)
- 24 January 2013, 9.00–12.30 and 15.00–18.30 (Brussels)
