



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 5 July 2013

12032/13

**CADREFIN 182
FSTR 75
POLGEN 137
REGIO 148
FC 41
ECOFIN 681
ENV 677
TRANS 373
PECHE 309
RECH 334
JAI 600
COEST 182
ENER 351
MI 615
MAR 92
COMPET 546
AGRI 457**

"I" ITEM NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Permanent Representatives Committee

Subject: EU Macro-regional Strategies - organisation of work in the Council
- Information note

1. The objective to respond to the environmental deterioration of the Baltic Sea, address common challenges and exploit the opportunities in the region resulted in the adoption of the first macro-regional strategy – EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) in 2009. The progress made and the first results achieved of EUSBSR were summarized in the *Commission report on the Implementation of the EUSBSR* in 2011 as requested by the Council in 2009. The second progress report is planned to be prepared by the Commission by the end of 2013.

In June 2011 the second macro-regional strategy – the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) was adopted. Right afterwards the Council requested the Commission to regularly inform it on the progress made while implementing the strategy. On 8 April 2013 *Commission Report concerning EUSDR (the Report on EUSDR)* was adopted.

In 2012 European Council invited the European Commission (Commission) to present an EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region by end 2014 subject to the evaluation of the macro-regional concept.

Such an evaluation was requested by the Council on 13 April 2011 when it invited the Commission to clarify the concept of macro-regional strategies, to evaluate their value added and submit the outcomes to the Council and the European Parliament by June 2013. The Commission adopted the *Report concerning the added value of macro-regional strategies (the Report on added value)* on 27 June 2013.

2. A Friends of the Presidency (FoP) working party on macro-regional strategies is needed to be convened in order to analyse *the Report on added value* and to produce draft Council Conclusions clarifying the concept and value added of macro-regional strategies, analysing the lessons learnt during the implementation of the EUSBSR and EUSDR as well as giving recommendations and ideas on the future prospects of the concept. The FoP working party will examine draft Council Conclusions proposed by the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council.

For reasons of flexibility and in accordance with previous practices of similar FoP working parties (FoP on EUBSRS and FoP on EUSDR), its composition will be Brussels-based. It will be chaired by a Structural policy attaché from the Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU.

3. The FoP Working Party will not have interpretation.
4. All Member States are invited to participate in the work of the FoP working party.
5. The indicative dates of the FoP meetings are as follows: 19 July, 6 September, 20 September and 4 October. It is planned to submit the draft Council Conclusions to COREPER II on 16 October and next to the General Affairs Council meeting on 22 October.