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From: Presidency
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject: Annual programming
- Implementation of the Commission's 2015 and 2016 Work Programmes

As foreseen in the Council practical arrangements¹, delegations find attached a note from the Presidency on the implementation of the Commission's 2015 and 2016 Work Programmes in view of the General Affairs Council on 24 June 2016.

¹ Document 6879/16.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENCY

Implementation of the Commission's 2015 and 2016 Work Programmes

The Strategic Agenda adopted by the European Council at its meeting on 24-25 June 2014 provides guidance for the work of the European Union over the next five years. The Commission's Work Programmes (WP) for 2015 and 2016 have focused on a targeted set of key strategies grounded in the 10 priorities set out in the Political Guidelines by the President of the Commission, inspired by the Strategic Agenda. The Council has welcomed the focus of the Commission's 2015 and 2016 WPs on a set of well-targeted priority initiatives that broadly reflect the Strategic Agenda.

Broadly speaking, the 2015 WP contained a number of key strategies that have formed the basis for developing further concrete proposals in the 2016 WP. The primary areas of focus have been jobs, growth and competitiveness (including internal market and digital single market), Energy Union, Economic and Monetary Union, migration, security and external relations (in particular trade).

Considerable progress has been made in all these areas. However, some important initiatives are still to be delivered in 2016. Further initiatives beyond 2016 have already been announced. Expectations are thus that the Commission's WP for 2017 will for a large part continue to focus on unfolding the key strategies. Set out below is a broad overview of the implementation of the 2015 and 2016 WPs with indications on some key deliveries, also going beyond 2016².

Against this background, Ministers are invited to provide their views on the following:

- Do the areas chosen by the Commission for 2017 continue to be the right ones in light of the priorities identified in the Strategic Agenda?*
- Within those priority areas, are there particular aspects or concrete measures that could usefully be included in the Work Programme for 2017?*

Establishing the right framework for **Jobs and growth and competitiveness** has been a cornerstone of the 2015 and 2016 WPs. A number of individual priority areas are directly supporting this agenda: internal market, capital markets union, digital single market and TTIP. In particular:

² The overview is primarily based on the set of key "new initiatives" annexed to the 2015 and 2016 WPs.

- The flagship initiative is the European Fund for Strategic Investment (**EFSI**) that was adopted in June 2015. Focus is now on implementation. An Commission assessment of EFSI has been published in early June with a view to presenting it to the June EC. A proposal on the extension of EFSI has been announced for the second half of 2016.
- Completion of the **Internal Market** has remained a top priority as part of improving competitiveness while ensuring fairness and a level playing field. A series of proposals and initiatives have been tabled, including a new Internal Market strategy, measures on VAT and tax co-operation, as well as REFIT initiatives. The first part of the Labour Mobility Package has been delivered (“posting of workers”) while the remaining part is expected later in 2016. A stock taking on the Single Market (with Capital Markets Union and Digital Single Market) has been presented with a view to agreeing a Single Market Agenda by the June European Council. Still in 2016, one can expect key initiatives on, *inter alia*, corporate tax (common corporate tax base) and defence Industry.
- The **Capital Markets Union** has been developed through a number of concrete proposals and initiatives to facilitate access to capital market and thus support investment. A host of new initiatives are expected still in 2016 and beyond, including initiatives to support financing for innovation and SMEs.
- With the recent proposals on audio-visual and media services and e-commerce, the Commission has advanced further on the **Digital Single Market** agenda. Several initiatives have been announced for 2016 and beyond, including concrete measures related to on-line platforms (cf. also the European Council conclusions of 25-26 June 2015). Recently adopted legislation on data protection and roaming also underpin this agenda.
- The Commission has delivered the **circular economy package** followed by concrete proposals. A series of further measures are planned for 2016 and beyond. An initiative on “the next steps for a sustainable European future” has been announced.
- Initiatives to **promote skills development** are to be presented early June, including to support the employment of young people, also as a follow up to the Youth Employment Initiative.

The **MFF mid-term review** is expected in the second half of 2016. Non-legislative midterm-evaluations of the individual MFF sectorial programmes are to follow in 2017.

The implementation of another key strategic priority, the **Energy Union**, has been pursued through a series of measures addressing the five interrelated aspects (supply security, energy market, energy efficiency, climate action and research and innovation). Further key initiatives are expected still in 2016 and beyond, notably to follow up the Paris Agreement and the 2030 energy and climate framework as agreed by the European Council.

As regards the **Economic and Monetary Union**, the Commission has tabled measures to implement step 1 of the Five Presidents report, including the completion of the Banking Union (notably the “EDIS” proposal), a revised European Semester and a first concrete outline of the “Pillar of Social Rights”. Further reflections are announced for 2017, also relating to step 2 of the report.

The challenges of **migration** have been met by both immediate and longer term initiatives, also in response to European Council conclusions. Based on its **European Agenda for Migration**, the Commission has by now submitted proposals in relation to all of its four pillars: reducing the incentives for irregular migration, border management, common asylum policy and most recently legal migration (including revision of the “Blue Card” Directive). Further proposals, *inter alia* on asylum are expected still in 2016. **External aspects** of migration have in particular been addressed at the level of Heads of State and Government in the Valletta action plan and the EU-Turkey action plan/joint statement of 18 March 2016. A Communication on the external aspects of migration has been presented early June and will be discussed at the June European Council.

In the area of justice, the key initiative has been the **Agenda for security** which has led to a number of legislative and non-legislative measures aimed *inter alia* at combating terrorism. The proposals on border management and the recently adopted PNR Directive form part of the agenda. Measures to support the efforts of Member States in preventing radicalisation have also been provided under the agenda. Further measures are foreseen for the later part of 2016.

On **external priorities**, within the framework of its 2015 and 2016 WPs, the Commission *inter alia*:

- has contributed to the upcoming global strategy to be presented by the HR;
- has presented a Trade and Investment Strategy with follow-up actions expected still in 2016. Negotiations on trade agreements continued, including on TTIP. Although not announced in its WP, a proposal is expected in the second half of 2016 on the **market economy status of China**;
- has reviewed the neighborhood policy and made proposals for the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Preparations are on-going for a Post Cotonou framework announced for end 2016.

Finally, the Parliament, the Council and the Commission have agreed on an **Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law Making** that aims at underpinning the efforts to ensure an efficient delivery of EU priorities and legislation fit for purpose in the interest of citizens and business.