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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Friends of the Presidency Group, 27 June 2016
- EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS)

1. EUMSS implementation report

The representatives from the Commission, EEAS, and European Defence Agency (EDA) presented the Joint Commission-EEAS Staff Working Document on the implementation of the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) Action Plan (AP)¹, and outlined the input provided by the various stakeholders to the report.

The Commission representative indicated that this, the first implementation report since the EUMSS was adopted in 2014, was based on a cross-sectoral, inter-institutional cooperation, and on contributions from a large number of Member States.

He highlighted that Member States had focused their implementation efforts across three main themes: multilateral and bilateral cooperation initiatives, developing and implementing information sharing projects, and promoting and participating in exchange programs for capability development.

¹ 10625/16 of 24 June 2016

Work was also under way towards developing an online tool to facilitate Member States' reporting in future.

The EEAS representative stressed the importance of implementing the EU MSS Action Plan in coherence with other EU strategic priorities (the Arctic policy, Hybrid and Cyber Threats, the EU Global Strategy and the Migration Strategy). Maritime cooperation with NATO was also quoted as an area where further initiatives may be developed in future, notably after the NATO Warsaw Summit.

Finally, the EDA reported on progress achieved *inter alia* on maritime surveillance networking capability, naval training, dual use R&T in the maritime domain, and on the consideration of possible use of transnational EU structural funds for developing maritime security research projects.

The Group welcomed the report and its conclusions as a very good basis for further work on the EU MSS Action Plan (AP) implementation. Delegations generally welcomed concrete progress accomplished so far on the EUMSS AP implementation, both at EU and Member States' level, as reflected in the report.

At the same time, delegations agreed that further efforts could be made in a number of areas such as on enhancing cooperation and coordination between the EU and NATO, the results of which could be further assessed, and on mainstreaming maritime security in EU regional policies and strategies, including the Arctic. They suggested enhancing focus on geographical strategies, notably for the Gulf of Guinea, or for the fight against piracy in Africa, and further strengthening cooperation in the Mediterranean, enhancing Member States' coordination of maritime surveillance and data exchange. Some delegations suggested extending certain actions to the Baltic Sea region. The use of the 'lead nation' concept for select actions was suggested.

Delegations noted that progress was also needed on cross-border and civilian-military cooperation, on cooperation with the relevant coastguard fora, and on communication and outreach efforts.

Delegations also stressed the importance of enhanced cooperation between EU agencies, including as a means to promote a common maritime situational awareness, and welcomed progress on the European Border and Coast Guard package.

Delegations agreed on the need to further raise awareness, both at national and EU level, through appropriate communication strategies on the increasing and cross-cutting importance of the EU Maritime Security Strategy in the current global security context.

A suggestion was made to establish a "European Maritime Security Day" dedicated to the EUMSS, and to increase the focus of the annual European Maritime Day on the EUMSS in future.

With a view to next year's implementation report, delegations welcomed the Commission's initiative to develop a tool that would help improve and simplify Member States' reporting. The Group agreed that the 2017 Joint report should go beyond a factual depiction of the state of implementation of the Action Plan, and delegations suggested a focus and strategic approach towards possible improvements of the AP and implementation thereof, building *inter alia* on Member States' suggestions and on the conclusions included in the report, and in the light of developments and priorities emerging in the maritime domain. Meanwhile, efforts towards implementation of the priorities and actions identified in the AP should continue. Delegations had reservations about the possible deletion of actions from the Action Plan, which was still at an early stage of implementation.

2. EDA's Project Team on European Maritime Capabilities in the Arctic

Mr Martimo, Chairman of the Project team on European maritime capabilities in the Arctic, made a presentation of the activities of the Project Team in which he pointed to the rapidly evolving strategic environment in the Arctic region, including as a consequence of climate change, and called for improved Arctic data management, Arctic-specific training and adapted technical solutions, as well as further cooperation with NATO and between Arctic nations to face the challenges posed by this environment. He concluded by making a strong call for EU efforts in Arctic capability development projects, notably with EDA involvement. There were no further interventions.

3. Any other business

The incoming Presidency outlined the programme of work of the Group on the EUMSS for the coming months. Two meetings were tentatively planned for November and December 2016, notably to take stock of progress achieved and to draw up conclusions on the implementation of the Action Plan. A further maritime event/workshop could also take place in the coming months. The Presidency provided a short debrief of the Dutch Coastguard visit last March, and invited delegations to share their best practices on maritime security. One delegation suggested that the Presidency provide delegations with guidance on how to share their best practices with the Group.