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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations
Subject: Protection of children in Migration
- Policy debate

In recent years, the number of children in migration travelling to and arriving in the European Union, many of whom are unaccompanied, has increased significantly.

Despite continuous European Union and Member State efforts to protect children in migration, the higher numbers have exacerbated challenges and exposed shortcomings in how the EU is currently dealing with children in migration. These require urgent action on all fronts, including by addressing the root causes of children embarking on dangerous journeys, as identified in the Commission's Communication on the protection of the children in migration¹ of 12 April 2017.

¹ 8297/17.

The actions proposed complement current efforts within the EU's comprehensive approach to migration management. They focus on addressing urgent gaps in the short term. At the same time, they aim at ensuring effective protection of children in migration in the medium and longer term, by strengthening cross-border cooperation and developing integrated child protection systems.

A comprehensive approach is key to ensure Europe's long term capacity to protect children, both those who have already arrived and will stay as well as those who fall prey to smugglers, traffickers and unsafe migration or need to be returned.

In response to the Commission's Communication on the protection of the children in migration, the Presidency submits for adoption draft conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting in the framework of the Council on the protection of children in migration² and invites Justice and Home Affairs Ministers to hold a debate on this topic on 8 June 2017. To enable a broad discussion, the Presidency has invited external stakeholders to the policy debate and, in order to better structure the ministerial debate, invites Ministers to reply to the following questions:

1. In light of the current needs and challenges in ensuring the protection of children in migration that you are currently facing, which actions have proved effective and which less so in your Member State?

2. How can we ensure cooperation at all levels (between relevant actors within Member States and across the EU) to develop integrated child protection systems and address the situation of migrant children in a comprehensive and effective way?

² 9469/17.