



**COUNCIL OF
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"I" ITEM NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Permanent Representatives Committee

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

1. In 2012 the European Council invited the European Commission (Commission) to present an EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region by end 2014. On 17 June 2014, the Commission adopted the *Communication on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region*.

The request by the European Council was accompanied by the evaluation of the concept of macro-regional strategies, adopted by the Commission in June 2013 - *Commission's report concerning the added value of macro-regional strategies* - and endorsed by the Council on 22 October 2013. Furthermore, on 22 October 2013, the Council invited the Commission to facilitate discussions to improve governance of macro-regional strategies, and to report by end-2014. The Commission adopted the Report concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies on 20 May 2014.

2. A Friends of the Presidency (FoP) working party on macro-regional strategies is needed to be convened in order to examine *the Communication on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region* and *the Report concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies* and to produce draft Council Conclusions for each of the two documents mentioned above to reflect the views of the Council on the issues they contain and to give political guidance for further work and its implementation. The draft Council Conclusions on the Communication on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region will aim at endorsing the Strategy and giving impulse to its swift and prompt implementation which will ensure – inter alia – the effective coordination and integrated approach with the ESIF programmes. The draft Council Conclusions on the Report concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies will aim at clarifying several aspects such as the political leadership and ownership and accountability of the macro-regional strategies and the overall coordination of the different levels of participating countries or regions, as well as giving recommendations on the future developments of the concept and its governance.

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.

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 for the preparation of the draft Council Conclusions on the *EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region* and the *Report concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies* are as follows: 8 July, 16 July, 10 September and 17 September. Except for the meeting of 8 July, which will be half day and only dedicated to the *EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region*, the others will be split into two parts respectively dedicated to the *EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region* and to the *Report concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies*. At this stage, it is planned to submit the relevant draft Council Conclusions to COREPER II on 24 September and to the General Affairs Council meeting on 29 September.
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