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European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	State of play on the International Olive Council negotiations - <i>Information from the Commission</i>

Delegations will find in Annex a note concerning the International Olive Council submitted by the Commission to be presented under "Any other business" at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") at its session on 13/14 October 2014.

Note from the Commission concerning the International Olive Council

The International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives 2005, to which the European Union acceded, will expire on 31 December 2014, unless the International Olive Council (IOC) acting through its Council of Members decides to prolong it in accordance with Article 47 (1) and (2) of the Agreement. Since 2005, the olive sector has undergone major changes and the IOC members started effectively negotiating a new agreement end 2013.

In November 2013, the Council of the European Union authorised the Commission to open negotiations on behalf of the Union for the conclusion of a substantially reformed agreement that takes into account the economic, technical and commercial developments in the olive sector. In June 2014, under the new IOC Presidency (Turkey), the discussions on the future agreement continued at a moderate pace without dealing, as strongly requested by the EU, with the crucial issues of the prolongation of the 2005 IOC Agreement and the continuation of the IOC management.

In July 2014, the EU supported by other IOC members, invited the President to convene an extraordinary session to decide on the pending questions and make tangible progress with the modernisation of the organisation and the conclusion of a new agreement.

In the absence of a reply, it became evident that the deadline of 31 December 2014 for the conclusion of the negotiations for a new IOC agreement was not feasible. The EU Council thus decided to mandate the Commission to request and vote for a one-year prolongation of the current IOC Agreement (Council Decision, 2014/664/EU¹).

The IOC Presidency decided to delay the annual IOC session to the very end of November 2014. Such a single late IOC session brings the risk that there will neither be progress on the modernisation of the IOC, nor agreement on the prolongation of the current IOC Agreement by 31 December 2014. In that case the IOC will cease to exist.

¹ OJ L 275, 17.09.2014, p. 6–6.

Therefore, the Commission would like to inform the Council of the efforts it is making to urge the IOC President to organise an extraordinary session to pursue with urgency the negotiations on the future of the organisation, as well as to decide on pending issues. The Commission will continue to cooperate closely with Member States to ensure the short term continuity of the IOC as well as the establishment of a new Agreement along the agreed lines.
