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## OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Working Party on Information on 27 October 2015

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### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in document CM 4275/1/15 REV 1.

### 2. Transparency / Access to documents

#### a) Information by the Legal Service

- Judgment of the General Court in case T-395/13 (Miettinen v Council)

doc. 12361/15 JUR 616 API 97

- Judgement of the General Court in case T-658/14 (Jurašinović v Council)

doc. 13957/15 (to be issued)

The Legal Service informed delegations about two recent judgements of the General Court on transparency matters in cases T-395/13 (Miettinen v Council) and T-658/14 (Jurašinović v Council). The information notes of the Legal Service are set out respectively in document 12361/15 and 13957/15 (to be issued).

### 3. Communication / Information Policy

#### a) Climate change negotiations: communication activities

The item was introduced by an outline of the objectives of COP-21 and the main preparatory events, in particular the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Bonn from 19 to 23 October.

The Presidency outlined work in progress and indicated that the new 55-page text is a good result even if it still requires some adaptations.

Moreover, the Presidency confirmed its good cooperation with the Commission to address all challenges, ensure a high level outreach and develop a coherent communication strategy in synergy with all partners. An ad hoc Task Force and a communication network were recently established to this end, including Presidency, Commission, MS' and EEAS' officials.

Furthermore, the Presidency pointed out the high media interest in COP-21 (around 3.000 journalists accredited for the event) and mentioned three additional meetings preceding the Conference: an informal "Pre-Cop" meeting foreseen on 8-10 November in Paris, hosted by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development; and the G-20 leaders' meeting in Antalya on 15-16 November, and the Malta Commonwealth meeting taking place on 27-29 November.

The Commission's representatives (DG for Climate Action) stressed the need for transparency and accountability in a process that requires robust common rules and puts together 155 countries responsible for over 90% of global emissions. They admitted that a number of wider political issues are still unresolved, but expressed the view that an agreement is within reach.

With regard to the communication strategy, the Commission:

- highlighted its interactive approach with all its interlocutors and stakeholders;
- provided a comprehensive list of multilingual external communication material downloadable from the <http://ec.europa.eu> website and from the more specific portal <http://ec.europa.eu/clima>;

- reported on its strong involvement in social media activities, as well as on the proactive role of the Europe Direct Information Centres and the interaction with young audiences;
- reminded the strong public support for EU Climate Action emerged from public opinion surveys ([http://ec.europa.eu/clima/citizens/support/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/citizens/support/index_en.htm)).

The French delegation provided a comprehensive update on the national preparation of COP-21: different authorities involved, inter-ministerial coordination, audiences, communication players (civil society, relays/opinion leaders, youngsters) in France and abroad.

It also recalled the main features of the communication strategy towards the wide public (TED event, the "Parisianer" consortium of artists, the exhibition "Paris in 2050", interactive maps of the intended nationally determined contributions-INDT, infographics, quiz online, promotional ads in all public transport areas).

Finally, the French delegation referred to the close connection between climate action and growth which underpins its communication strategy. It also outlined the logistics of the Conference (virtual tour of the Bourget site).

Delegations' interventions (BE, DE, SE and UK) focused in particular on:

- the legally binding character of the agreement to be reached in Paris;
- the expected positive impact of climate policies on economic development and growth;
- the need for all MS to be present in all relevant coordination networks and mailing lists;
- the need for multilingual information material;
- the "Action Day" foreseen on 5 December 2015, which several MS will be joining and will attract high media's attention.

In its conclusions, the Chairman:

- welcomed the remarkable efforts made by the Commission, the Presidency and the French authorities in communicating around COP 21;

- invited delegations to use and share with their colleagues in the capitals the wealth of communication material and tools available on the Commission's website and on the official Paris Conference website;
- indicated that communication on the EU's climate action will not end with the Paris Conference, and that the WPI stands ready to consider the implementation of a post-COP-21 communication strategy and to examine possible follow-up actions.

#### **b) EU's management of migration flows: communication aspects**

The Chairman introduced the item recalling President Tusk's address to the EP that morning and in particular his reminder that communication on this issue is not only a challenge, but a duty as well, since citizens have the right to understand what is happening.

The representative of the Cabinet of the President of the European Council highlighted the need to act cautiously when communicating on migration, taking into account the different sensibilities on this issue, the different players involved (including non-EU countries) and the risk of being misunderstood. Moreover, he underlined that migration is "human", immediate and very technical at the same time, with a strong impact on public opinion.

He expressed the view that the internationalisation of the refugee crisis (amplified by the Syrian crisis that opened a channel for other large migration moves) will continue to represent a major challenge over the next decades. Hence, the need to act in synergy and deliver practical responses urgently, such as through the La Valletta's summit.

In this context, he pointed to the European Council's aim to act in unity, based on consensus in order to ensure coordinated answers and indicated that public communication is crucial in helping to create the conditions for such consensus. Clarity and simplicity are a must, in a process where communication must reach out to Europeans as well as to migrants from third countries.

The representative of the General Secretariat of the Council (DG Home and Internal Affairs) shared the views of the representative of the Cabinet of the President of the European Council on the need to provide coordinated answers on how to handle the migratory movements, representing a great challenge for the EU in humanitarian terms. He added that, according to recent statistics, over 700.000 migrants have crossed the EU's external borders in the first 9 months of 2015 and 3.280 people have died in trying to do so.

The Council Secretariat's representative recalled the recent decisions at EU level on resettlement and relocation of migrants, the implementation of which is under way.. He also stated that the outcomes of the meetings scheduled for November should reinforce the implementation of those decisions, and allow to agree on additional measures (e.g. hotspots to identify migrants, facilitate family re-unification, resettlement, asylum and return procedures).

The Presidency's representative indicated that it was difficult to develop communication strategies on this topic because of the situation evolving so rapidly, while NGOs and civil society at large expect to be informed promptly . Moreover, the Presidency reminded of the great media attention generated by extraordinary Council meetings, whereby the Presidency has the challenging task to explain new legislative proposals. In this context, the Presidency praised the smooth cooperation with the Council's Press Service.

The Commission's representative outlined the institution's multi-faceted reaction to this unprecedented crisis and the main political packages adopted since the submission of the European Agenda on Migration in May 2015.

While mentioning the difficulty to develop the appropriate narrative and communication plan under tight deadlines, he outlined the variety of communication tools produced by the Commission in all languages (new section in the DG HOME website, factsheets, national one-pagers on financing, IPs, MEMOs, press folders, a video on relocation in Sweden, a glossary, timeline summaries, infographics, strong social media activity).

The Commission's representative also highlighted the challenge of delivering the EU's narrative on this topic beyond the EU's borders, which requires a major effort and stronger internal coordination, in particular among the DGs which are more involved.

He finally added that the refugee crisis and the migratory challenges are "here to stay" and the communication in this field should move from the media-type approach to the general public, preparing a comprehensive communication campaign on migration, fostering a well-informed debate, producing new series of online information and new audiovisual material on success stories.

The FRONTEX spokesperson outlined the migratory situation at the EU's external borders and its evolution in the first nine months of 2015.

She summarised the communication activities of the Agency: website interaction and FAQ, social networking, press joining Frontex on the ground, press visits and study visits for students, researchers and political groups; infographics, web animations on the ongoing operations, etc. and highlighted the big challenge of multilingualism when intervening in the rescue scenario.

Delegations' comments (DE, CZ, LU, PL, FI, UK) focused in particular on:

- the need for sustained and long-term communication (not only when handling rescue phases, but also when addressing returns), referring to rational solutions in a often highly emotionalised context;
- the need to promptly identify the specific roles of the actors handling the crisis communication;
- the need for good internal coordination, taking into account the implications for several ministries in each MS: Internal Affairs, Social Affairs, Education, Health, etc.;
- the ongoing initiatives of awareness-raising and involvement of the academic world and young people;
- transparency activities (provision of statistics on requests for asylum, press kits, information kits for wide public, etc.);
- the need to identify the target audiences and to adopt two ways of communication: towards migrants (already ongoing in some countries, in particular by means of social media activities) and to the wider public (to prevent and respond to misperceptions and misunderstandings, often with anti-EU connotations);

- the due attention to be given to multilingualism, in particular in the framework of the institutions' social media activities;
- the need for continued regular exchanges on this topic in the future meetings of the WPI.

The discussion was followed by an overview of the preparations for the Valletta summit through contributions from the Maltese delegation and the General Secretariat of the Council.

The event will focus on:

- stepping up cooperation with third countries;
- implementing the decisions on relocation;
- setting up hotspots and reinforcing reception capacities and expertise;
- possible improvements in the control of the EU's external borders.

Much material will be available in all languages. Delegations were invited to use and share all information material on the dedicated summit page on the Council website (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/11-12/>). Key messages are being elaborated.

The Chairman concluded by:

- thanking delegations, the Commission and Frontex for their contributions;
- recalling the complexity of the topic and of the different sensibilities in the large variety of the audiences, and the need to keep up, in communication terms, with the rapid evolution of events;
- stressing the need to communicate in a coordinated manner, clearly and coherently;
- referring to the Valletta summit and the December **European Council** as further guidance for the EU's communication approach;
- indicating that the WPI stands ready to continue to facilitate the exchange of information in this field and to come back to this topic in its future meetings.

#### 4. AOB

##### a) **Information by the Legal Service on the handling of requests for public access to certain categories of documents held by the Secretariat General of the Council**

The Legal Service referred to its information note set out in document 12258/15 concerning the handling of requests for public access to certain categories of documents that are held by the Secretariat General of the Council, but relate to the performance of tasks of support to bodies or entities other than the Council itself. This is notably the case of documents, which are established during intergovernmental conferences, where the GSC is entrusted with administrative tasks of support.

In the case of request for access to joint documents, which originate from a large number or from all Member States, the usual procedure of written consultation of delegations by e-mail has proven particularly cumbersome, especially in the light of the strict deadlines laid down in Regulation 1049/2001. For this reason, an arrangement aiming at facilitating the consultation of Member States and allowing them to co-ordinate their positions will be proposed by the Presidency in a note to be circulated to delegations ahead of the next meeting of the WPI.

##### b) **Club of Venice (Milan, 22-23 October 2015)**

The Italian delegation debriefed the WPI on the plenary meeting of the informal network of the MS' communications directors, which was hosted in Milan.

The meeting focused on:

- communication in Europe and on Europe: today's challenges for governments and institutions: trends in citizens' involvement and engagement, objectives and impact of the referendum (with focus on the future referendum in the UK and previous experiences in other MS) as an instrument to detect public opinion trends and facilitate governmental orientations and decision-making in times of political instabilities and turbulences;
- the impact of social and political trends on media freedom and the crisis of confidence in media and political communication (follow-up to Vienna's plenary meeting held in June, where participants discussed the potential added value of strategic communication support to on line and traditional media);



- communication strategy for the Milan Universal EXPO: lessons learned from EXPO (with contributions from the Director of EXPO's public relations and institutional relations and from Greece and Slovenia PRs), orientations in the field of sustainable growth, development and environmental care and interconnections among EXPO, COP-21 (contributions from Commission DG CLIMA and France) and the EYD 2015 (Commission DG DEVCO).
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