



Brussels, 3 May 2018  
(OR. en)

8605/18

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## OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
On: 26 April 2018  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Working Party on Information

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### 1. Adoption of the Agenda

The WPI approved the agenda in CM 2423/1/18 REV 1.

### 2. Communication / Information policy

#### a) Refugees and Migration: state of play, future communication strategies and tools

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) presented its monitoring activity focusing on the social media usage by migrants and outlined its awareness-raising campaign in Nigeria.

The EASO looks forward to reinforcing its relations with Member States in view of joint initiatives and campaigns.

The Commission shared some figures of the evaluation report on the [www.infomigrants.net](http://www.infomigrants.net) portal carried out by the Open University and France Media Monde, highlighting its outreach.

The Commission also welcomed Member States' cooperation in feeding the portal. Finally, it outlined the information campaign “Stay and Help Build Afghanistan” and announced new projects to be launched by the end of 2018 in nine African countries.

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) warned against the risk of misguided and stereotyped narratives on migration and gave an overview of its activities <sup>(1)</sup>.

The Chairman thanked the EASO, the Commission and the ICMPD for their contributions and asked the Commission to circulate the evaluation report on the *infomigrants* portal to facilitate Member States' examination.

**b) Implementation of the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI): communication aspects**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Commission outlined the communication objectives and challenges of the EFSI and the outreach instruments (notably, advisory hubs in cohesion countries, video productions and interactive blogging) to inform stakeholders and facilitate their engagement.

They also shared the latest figures on the EFSI investments by sector and drew attention to the Fund's contribution to triggering EU-wide growth and concrete benefits to citizens.

The EIB announced a project underway to showcase on line good examples of EFSI projects. The Commission highlighted EFSI's connection with its #investEU campaign and transparency of the beneficiaries <sup>(2)</sup>.

The Presidency welcomed the joint presentation by the EIB and the Commission and the recent opening of an EIB office in Sofia.

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(1) <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/euromed-migration-iv/migration-narrative-study/>

(2) The breakdown of beneficiaries of all EFSI actions can be consulted online at [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan-europe-juncker-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan-europe-juncker-plan_en)

### c) EU's strategy to counter disinformation

The Commission presented the communication "Tackling online disinformation: a European approach" <sup>(3)</sup>, highlighting the following elements:

- the role of web platforms and search engines in tackling disinformation spread online
- the lack of transparency concerning the platforms' sponsors and the need for pluralism and impartiality
- the High Level Expert Group's (HLEG) reflexion on a regulatory approach versus a self-regulatory approach
- its proposal for a joint multi-stakeholder effort <sup>(4)</sup>
- the recommendation for Member States and EU Institutions to engage jointly in:
  - detecting disinformation, by establishing an independent European network of fact checkers
  - neutralising news becoming viral through bots, closing fake accounts and removing economic incentives as needed
  - better informing citizens, by:
    - investing in media literacy
    - supporting quality journalism
    - contributing to secure and resilient electoral processes.

The EEAS reported on ongoing activities of the StratCom East Task Force called for by the European Council in March 2015. It positively acknowledged the sustained close cooperation with Member States' and the growing synergies with civil society, think tanks, NGOs and media in the efforts to detect disinformation. The EEAS looks forward to the platform announced by the Commission and to working in partnership with all the key actors.

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) focused on the ongoing cooperation with the competent services from all EU institutions in a mapping exercise aimed at identifying their different initiatives to identify and address disinformation. The CoR referred to the "Facing up to fake news" workshop foreseen in its premises on 27 April (a preparatory event in view of the EuroPCom annual conference of 8/9 November 2018).

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<sup>(3)</sup> COM(2018) 236 final

<sup>(4)</sup> In its new communication, the Commission announces, among others, its intention to "convene a multi-stakeholder forum on disinformation" that should adopt an "EU-wide Code of Practice on Disinformation to be published by July 2018, with a view to producing measurable effects by October 2018".

Delegations (FR, IT, NL, PL, SE and UK) indicated their willingness to work in close cooperation with the Commission, the EEAS, civil society and media, and shared their preliminary views on the Commission's communication:

- agreeing with the need to invest in media literacy and education
- alerting about the risks of vulnerability in electoral periods ahead
- volunteering to intensify the exchange of relevant information (i.e. existing national programmes to counter disinformation).

The Presidency welcomed the presentation of the Commission's communication and stressed the need for a workable and inclusive approach. It pointed out that, to be effective, the EU should avoid counter-propaganda and that actions need to be tailored to each country. The Presidency also welcomed the Member States' willingness to exchange best practices, including in terms of legislation, and stressed the need to help citizens acquire the necessary skills to detect manipulation.

The Commission indicated that the first results of the implementation and a study on regulatory measures are foreseen in the last quarter 2018.

### **3. Any Other Business (communication)**

#### **a) Digital Strategies**

The Presidency thanked the General Secretariat of the Council for its cooperation in the organisation of the successful conference "Digital and Entrepreneurial Skills" hosted in the Europa building on 11 April and outlined the recent digital creativity and digital landscape conferences held in Sofia. It announced the Digital Assembly 2018 foreseen in Sofia on 25 and 26 June.

#### **b) Club of Venice plenary meeting – Vilnius, 7-8 June 2018**

The Lithuanian delegation presented the event, which will focus on three topics:

- public communication challenges and citizens' trust
- hybrid threats (focus on countering disinformation and fake news)
- capacity building.

A copy of the provisional programme was circulated.

#### 4. Transparency

- a) **Draft Council reply to the letter from Mr Azmani, co-signed by representatives of 26 chambers of national parliaments regarding transparency of the legislative process in the EU**
- **Examination and approval by the Working Party**  
8064/1/18 REV 1 INF 46 API 31  
8092/1/18 REV 1 INF 47 API 32

Delegations examined and approved the draft Council reply.

- b) **Annual Report on Access to documents 2017**
- **Presentation by the General Secretariat of the Council**  
8016/18 INF 45 API 30

A written consultation will be launched. Delegations were asked to send their written comments by 8 May 2018 with a view to approval by COREPER on 24 May and the Council on 28 May.

- c) **Own-initiative inquiry OI/2/2017/TE - Recommendation of the European Ombudsman in the above inquiry on the transparency of the Council legislative process - Reply by the Council**
- **Information by the General Secretariat of the Council**  
6495/18 API 22 INF 24 OMBUDS 1 JUR 83 INST 69

The Chairman informed Delegations that a letter has been sent to the Ombudsman on 23 April, informing her that the Council will send its reply early July. Given the importance and complexity of the topics raised, sufficient time should be allowed for political consideration by COREPER and Council.

- d) **New Ombudsman fast track procedure in dealing with complaints about access to documents**
- **Information by the Council Legal Service**  
7404/18 JUR 145 INST 123 API 27 OMBUDS 2 INF 35

The Council Legal Service informed Delegations that a draft reply will be circulated in document 7409/18.

- e) **Follow-up of De Capitani ruling (Case T-540/15)**  
- **Information by the Council Legal Service**  
**6693/18 JUR 93 INST 82 API 29**

The Council Legal Service informed Delegations of the state of play after the De Capitani ruling.

f) **Confirmatory applications**

- i) **For discussion**  
**02/c/01/18**  
**5167/18 API 6 INF 6**  
**5168/18 API 7 INF 7**

After discussion of this confirmatory application, it was decided that the written consultation will be relaunched with a deadline of 4 May 2018.

- ii) **For information**  
**06/c/01/18**  
**7275/18 INF 32 API 24**

Delegations were informed that the written consultation on this confirmatory application is expected to be launched in the beginning of the next week.

5. **Any Other Business (Transparency)**

None.

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