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From: Presidency  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Legislative Programming - Letter of intent  
– Letter from the Presidency to the Commission

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As a follow-up to the exchange of views held at the Council on 18 September 2018 on the Commission's "letter of intent" in preparation of the Commission's Work Programme for 2019<sup>1</sup>, delegations will find attached a letter from the Presidency to the President and First Vice-President of the Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Document 12075/18

H.E  
Jean-Claude Juncker  
President of the European Commission

Vienna, 26 September 2018  
BKA-402.220/0024-IV/2/2018

Dear President Juncker,

on behalf of the Council, I would like to thank you for the Letter of Intent of 12 September, in which you set out the main priorities envisaged by the Commission until the end of the 2014-2019 legislative term.

As you, President Juncker, rightly said in your State of the Union Address, European citizens will not be impressed by noble intentions and proposals that have not been implemented when they cast their ballots in May 2019. The Members of the Council agree with you: we will be judged by our actions. This is why the Presidency remains fully committed to achieving progress on all files that are currently being negotiated, including the Multiannual Financial Framework. In this context we attach a lot of importance on delivering on our Joint Declaration of legislative priorities and will keep its energy and determination focussed on closing as many files as possible.

The General Affairs Council of 18 September held an exchange of views on the Letter of Intent, which was overall received positively by the Members of the Council. The positions expressed in relation to individual policy areas and initiatives naturally varied. I would like to provide you with an overview of the broad lines of our discussion below.

Concerning job creation, growth and competitiveness, the further deepening of the Single Market was mentioned as a top priority by virtually all delegations, with several mentioning services. A number of Ministers welcomed the new anti-money laundering supervision initiative.

Multiple delegations stressed the importance of making progress on the Digital Single Market, including on the related questions of taxation and cyber threats.

Sustainable development and counteracting climate change continue to rank high on the agenda of Council priorities. Several delegations called for an even higher level of ambition in this area. The importance of making progress towards a circular economy was stressed by several delegations.

Many delegations agreed that the international role of the euro should be strengthened, while also completing the EMU internally.

Regarding trade, several Members of the Council reaffirmed their calls for the EU to maintain its positive agenda and to continue negotiating ambitious, balanced and mutually beneficial trade agreements as part of this agenda.

Concerning the proposed extension of the mandate of the European Public Prosecutor's Office to cross-border terrorist crimes, some voiced support for it, while others expressed doubts on this matter. Support was also expressed for a strengthened European Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

On migration, the importance of a comprehensive approach was underlined by several Members of the Council, as well as the need to find compromises with a view to reaching sustainable solutions. Regarding the proposal on the European Border and Coast Guard, there was agreement that the proposal is of a high priority while several delegations called for having a more in-depth exchange of views on the exact objectives to be reached. The importance of overcoming ad-hoc solutions, as well as taking into account legal migration channels, was mentioned repeatedly. The European Council conclusions of 28 June 2018 were referred to and reaffirmed by many.

