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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Revised draft Council Conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 14/2019 "Have your say!": Commission's public consultations engage citizens, but fall short of outreach activities"

Revised draft Council Conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 14/2019 "Have your say!": Commission's public consultations engage citizens, but fall short of outreach activities"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. WELCOMES the Special Report No 14/2019 from the European Court of Auditors (hereinafter referred to as "the Court") entitled "Have your say!": Commission's public consultations engage citizens, but fall short of outreach activities". REAFFIRMS the importance of public consultations, in improving the transparency and accountability of the EU measures as well as in building coherency in the EU legal framework. **UNDERLINES the need to ensure the highest degree of impartiality of consultations. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of other participation measures complementing online public consultations;**

2. NOTES the Court's overall finding that the Commission's framework for public consultations is of a high standard but that *in some areas* there is still room for improvements. TAKES NOTE that the Commission mainly accepts all of the Court's recommendations;
3. SUPPORTS the Court's recommendation to further develop the stakeholder consultation guidelines as regards monitoring and systematic assessments of public consultations. ENCOURAGES the Commission to advance its consultation strategies and the outreach of its public consultations in order to promote broad and inclusive participation in public consultations. **CALLS on the Commission to pay attention to the quality of consultation documents, including readability, as well as to sufficient time for contributions during holiday seasons;**
4. **INVITES CALLS on** the Commission to clarify the criteria for classifying initiatives, which serve as a basis for language arrangements. ~~**CALLS on the Commission, and**~~ to translate questionnaires and other key consultation documents for all priority initiatives and initiatives of broad public interest into all official languages. ENCOURAGES the Commission **to continuously improve the design of questionnaires**, and confirm that each public consultation has a general questionnaire for the public **with additional questions for specialists where necessary;**
5. STRESSES the importance of high standards of data processing and security, in particular protection against manipulation of results. INVITES the Commission to further improve its data processing and security for all public consultations. **ENCOURAGES the Commission to be clear on the analysis and interpretation of responses by stakeholder category and geographical distribution;**
6. NOTES the Court's findings that the Commission has not always been able to give timely feedback on the outcome of the consultation. CALLS on the Commission to *enhance* **improve** its feedback mechanism and publish the results duly after the consultations.