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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3588th Council meeting

General Affairs

Brussels, 12 December 2017

President **Sven Mikser**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

ITEMS DEBATED

Preparation of the European Council on 14 December 2017

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 14 December, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Estonian presidency and the Commission.

At their meeting EU leaders will focus on:

- defence, in respect of which they are expected to welcome the launch of the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and review progress in other fields, in particular EU-NATO cooperation;
- social issues, education and culture, adopting conclusions which build on the discussions held at the Social Summit in Gothenburg and the Leaders' Agenda debate on culture and education;
- external relations, addressing the latest foreign policy developments;
- migration, holding a debate on the way forward in this field as part of the Leaders' Agenda.

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 20 November 2017.

[European Council 14-15/12/2017](#)

European Council follow-up

The Council took stock of the implementation of earlier European Council conclusions, with a particular focus on developments since October.

Legislative programming - Joint declaration on legislative priorities

The Council approved the [EU's legislative priorities for 2018-2019](#), which focus on seven main areas:

1. Better protecting the security of citizens;
2. Reforming and developing migration policy in a spirit of responsibility and solidarity;
3. Giving a new boost to jobs, growth and investment;
4. Addressing the social dimension of the European Union;
5. Delivering on the commitment to implement a connected Digital Single Market;
6. Delivering on the objective of an ambitious Energy Union and a forward-looking climate change policy;
7. Further developing democratic legitimacy at EU level.

The Council, the Parliament and the Commission agreed that progress is also needed in some other important areas.

The joint declaration setting out the EU's priorities for 2018-19 will be signed by the Estonian Prime Minister, Jüri Ratas, the President of the Parliament, Antonio Tajani, and the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker on 14 December in the margins of the meeting of the [European Council](#).

For more information, see [press release](#).

European Semester 2018 - Annual Growth Survey

The Commission presented to the Council its [annual growth survey for 2018](#), in which it outlines the most pressing economic and social priorities on which the EU and its member states should focus their attention in the coming months.

The adoption of the annual growth survey kicks off the European semester of economic and budgetary policy coordination.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

GENERAL AFFAIRS

European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)

The Council agreed on its position (general approach) on the proposed regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP).

The purpose of the regulation, which is an integral part of the European Defence Fund, is to establish a programme aiming to support the competitiveness and innovative capacity of the Union's defence industry with a budget of EUR 500 million for 2019-2020.

The Council broadly agreed with the objectives and main elements of the proposed regulation. In its general approach, the Council aims in particular to incentivise the cross-border participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and middle capitalisation companies (Mid-caps) in the proposed programme.

Negotiations with the European Parliament are expected to start in 2018, with a view to financing the first capability projects in 2019.

For more information, see [press release](#).

Regulatory procedure with scrutiny - Alignment with the Lisbon Treaty

The Council took stock of the [progress achieved](#) in aligning all basic acts which still refer to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny with the Lisbon Treaty.

A number of legislative acts in force still contain this procedure, which continues to apply in those acts until they are formally amended and adapted to the Lisbon Treaty. In 2016, the Commission submitted two proposals which cover the adaptation of all those acts to the Lisbon Treaty ([5623/17](#) + [ADD 1 REV 1](#), [5705/17](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

The proposals are currently being discussed in a dedicated Friends of the Presidency group in the Council.

Update of the population figures of the EU

The Council adopted a [decision](#) amending its rules of procedure in order to update the figures concerning the population of the Union and the population of each Member State with a view to implementing the provisions concerning qualified majority voting in the Council.

The new figures are based on [data](#) from the Statistical Office of the European Union forwarded to the Council by the Commission.

Action plan on cybersecurity

The Council adopted an [action plan](#) for the implementation of the [Council conclusions](#) on building strong cybersecurity for the EU.

The conclusions were adopted by the Council on 20 November 2017. They call for the strengthening of European cybersecurity and the enhancement of cyber resilience across the EU, in line with the instructions issued by the [European Council](#) in October 2017.

The action plan is envisaged as a tool for horizontal oversight of and strategic follow-up to those conclusions. It is a living document, and as such will be regularly reviewed and updated by the Council.

For more information, see [press release](#).

[Reform of cyber security in Europe](#)

Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania

The Council adopted conclusions on the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania ([15587/17](#)). The conclusions are based on Commission reports on the progress of [Bulgaria](#) and [Romania](#) under this mechanism.

The Cooperation and Verification Mechanism is a transitional measure aiming to assist Bulgaria and Romania in developing the effective administrative and judicial systems needed to deliver on the obligations of EU membership and ensure the correct application of EU laws, policies and programmes.

The Commission reports regularly on progress in this regard. Each Commission report is subsequently discussed in the Council, which also adopts conclusions on that basis.

Implementation of the better law-making agreement

The Council received an [update](#) on the work undertaken to implement the interinstitutional agreement on better law-making during the second half of 2017.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Libya - Support for the clean-up operations at former chemical weapons storage site

The Council adopted a decision in support of the activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to assist clean-up operations at the former chemical weapons storage site in Libya. The budget allocated to this support is EUR 2.58 million. This decision forms part of the implementation of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Syria - Support for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons

The Council adopted a decision to support the continued implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC. on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons. This decision forms part of the implementation of the EU Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Bank recovery and resolution - Markets in financial instruments

The Council decided not to object to Commission regulations supplementing directive 2014/59/EU on bank recovery and resolution with regard to regulatory technical standards specifying criteria relating to the methodologies for:

- valuation of difference in treatment in resolution ([14904/17](#), [14377/17](#));
- assessing the value of assets and liabilities of institutions or entities ([14905/17](#), [14379/17](#)).

The Council also decided not to object to a Commission regulation supplementing regulation 600/2014 on markets in financial instruments with regard to regulatory technical standards on the trading obligation for certain derivatives ([14909/17](#), [14544/17](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

The regulations are delegated acts pursuant to Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. They can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.

ENVIRONMENT

Ministerial Council of the Energy Community

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken, on behalf of the EU, in the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community and in the Permanent High-Level Group (PHLG) of the Energy Community to be held in Pristina, Kosovo, on 14 December 2017. It concerns the EU's position with regard to a number of acts proposed for the Ministerial Council and PHLG, as set out in annexes 1 and 2 to this decision.

The Ministerial Council ensures that the objectives set out in the Energy Community Treaty are attained. It provides general policy guidelines, takes measures and adopts procedural acts. The EU is one of the nine Parties and has one vote, also depending on the subject-matter concerned.

The PHLG is an important subsidiary body of the Ministerial Council. The EU is represented in the PHLG and has one vote.

For more details concerning the 15th Ministerial Council of the Energy Community, click [here](#).