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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
No. prev. doc.:	8792/1/23 REV 1
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No. 08/2023: "Intermodal freight transport: EU still far from getting freight off the road" - Approval

1. The European Court of Auditors published the above-mentioned Special Report on 28 March 2023.
2. On 5 April 2023, the Permanent Representatives Committee instructed the Working Party on Transport – Intermodal Questions and Networks to examine the above-mentioned special report¹ in accordance with the rules laid down in the Council conclusions on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors².
3. Consequently, the Special Report was presented to the Working Party on 28 April and the first draft of the Council conclusions was examined on 8 May³.

1 7959/23
2 7515/00 FIN 127 + COR 1
3 8792/23

4. At the meeting on 22 May, the Working Party discussed the revised and final draft⁴ prepared by the Presidency. The text as agreed at that meeting, including one change agreed on the spot in paragraph 11 and one in paragraph 12⁵, is set out in the Annex to this note.

 5. In light of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to confirm the agreement reached at the Working Party and recommend to the Council to approve the Council conclusions set out in the Annex to this note as an "A" item at one of its forthcoming meetings.
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⁴ 8792/1/23 REV 1

⁵ Changes compared to the previous version (ST 8792/1/23 REV 1) are marked in **bold/underline** or in ~~strikethrough~~.

Draft
Council conclusions
on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 08/2023:

"Intermodal freight transport:
EU still far from getting freight off the road"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. TAKES NOTE of Special Report No 08/2023 by the European Court of Auditors entitled "*Intermodal freight transport: EU still far from getting freight off the road*".
2. REMARKS that the Report assesses the effectiveness of the EU's regulatory and financial support for intermodal freight transport since 2014 and NOTES that the audit was carried out in seven Member States and examined a sample of 16 projects.
3. UNDERLINES that the promotion of a shift towards more sustainable transport remains a key objective of the EU's transport policy, in particular in the context of the climate objectives set for 2030 and 2050 as presented in the Green Deal Communication and the European Climate law and further underlined in the Sustainable Mobility Strategy.
4. RECALLS the Council conclusions of October 2016 on the European Court of Auditors Special Report 8/2016 "*Rail freight transport in the EU: still not on the right track*"⁶; the Council conclusions of June 2021 on the Commission's Communication entitled "*Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future*"⁷; and the Council conclusions of June 2021 on "*Putting Rail at the Forefront of Smart and Sustainable Mobility*"⁸.

⁶ 13231/16

⁷ 9324/21

⁸ 8790/21

5. SUPPORTS a modal shift in transport from roads to rail, inland waterways and short-sea shipping and HIGHLIGHTS the benefits of the increased use of intermodal transport which contributes to a safer, more resilient and more environmentally friendly freight transport system that can also alleviate the pressure on the EU's congested roads.
6. RECALLS the implementation and application of EU and national policy measures of recent years that aim to improve the performance of sustainable freight transport in terms of transported volumes and the increased proportion of modal share.
7. ACKNOWLEDGES, however, that strengthened efforts in the approach towards a more sustainable freight transport are needed as greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase.
8. WELCOMES the proposed alignment of the European Transport Corridors that will replace the Rail Freight Corridors and the Core Network Corridors ensuring more coherence in the network development and contributing to synergies between the infrastructure and operational aspects of the network.
9. EXPECTS that the completion of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), the widespread deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), and the further harmonisation of technical and operational requirements will lead to a more efficient, less costly and better integrated intermodal transport system, thus enabling the continued growth of intermodal freight transport.
10. RECOGNISES that the necessary infrastructure, such as transshipment terminals, are a key component in achieving the modal shift.

11. RECOGNISES that significant amount of funding has been made available by the EU under the ERDF/CF, the CEF and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and by Member States in support of multimodal transport projects, RECALLS, however, that investments in intermodal freight transport infrastructure and rolling stock need to be complemented with appropriate financial resources at the EU level as well as from the private sector **and** ~~as well as~~ from the national, regional and local level to ensure adequate operation and maintenance of the public transport network.

12. LOOKS FORWARD to upcoming legislative initiatives which could provide a further opportunity to build a better integrated, more sustainable and more competitive intermodal freight transport system in the EU.
