



Council of the  
European Union

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#### **'A' ITEM NOTE**

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| From:           | General Secretariat of the Council   |
| To:             | Council  |
| No. prev. doc.: | 10714/1/24 REV1  |
| No. Cion doc.:  | 16064/23   |
| Subject:        | Proposal for a DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Council Decision 89/367/EEC setting up a Standing Forestry Committee<br>- General Approach<br>= Statement by the Commission |

#### **STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSION**

The Commission expresses serious concerns on the General Approach with regard to changes which put into question the aim and purpose of the proposal. Three changes in particular distort the Commission's proposal and are therefore red lines for us. The Commission hopes that its main concerns can be rectified in the course of the legislative procedure, otherwise the Commission will need to consider whether or not to withdraw its proposal.

First, a Commission Expert Group has an advisory purpose. In line with the principle of institutional and administrative autonomy and the Inter-institutional agreement on better law-making of 2016, the Commission is entitled to decide if and when to consult the experts depending on the topics it needs the advice on, except for the preparation of draft delegated acts.

Second, which services will represent the Commission is an internal decision emerging from its institutional and administrative autonomy.

Third, the Commission underlines that it cannot and does not intend to impose to Member States which representatives must attend. However, the composition of the group should ensure that it can live up to its intended role and mandate so that it can provide the necessary expertise to the Commission directly in the expert meetings. This should cover all relevant EU policy matters pertaining to forests and forestry including the implementation and follow-up of the EU Forest Strategy for 2030. This would not only support the Commission in ensuring coherence and consistency in related policy-making but also strengthen the Standing Forestry Committee (SFC) as central advisory body on forest and forestry related matters, allowing Member States to express their views fully.

Furthermore, the Commission also observes that the name of “committee” should be avoided and replaced with “expert group”, for reasons of better regulation, clarity and consistency. If the 1989 Council decision is repealed, the group established by this Decision is a Commission Expert Group which should be set up by the Commission.

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