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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Council Implementing Decision on the suspension of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council with respect to Somalia

- Statement by Italy

Statement by the Republic of Italy on item I-84
(Council Implementing Decision on restrictive visa measures against Somalia)

Coreper II meeting of the 24th of June 2026

With reference to the proposed adoption of a Council Implementing Decision on the suspension of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) 810/2009 (Visa Code) with respect to Somalia, as set out in documents 10270/26 and 10268/26, Italy would like to offer the following considerations.

Italy does not call into question the importance and strategic effectiveness of the mechanism under Article 25a of the Visa Code as a tool of leverage. It remains a key instrument to incentivize and promote stronger cooperation by third countries that show insufficient engagement and cooperation in the area of readmission.

However, Italy does not consider it appropriate to activate this instrument with respect to Somalia at this stage, and will abstain.

Recent developments point to clear and concrete signs of engagement from the Somali authorities. In its Note Verbale of 20 June 2026, Somalia communicated its intention to lift, effective from 1 July 2026, the suspension of non-voluntary returns in place since 2021 and committed to a structured cooperation framework, including measurable deliverables on ETDs, caseload processing, case management and reporting, as well as the designation of a single competent authority and full engagement in the forthcoming third technical dialogue.

These steps indicate a shift towards operational cooperation to be preserved and encouraged. On the contrary, activating restrictive measures would undermine the positive momentum and harden the dialogue.

As already stated at the Justice and Home Affairs Council of June 4, 2026, at this stage priority should be attributed to the consolidation of the Somali engagement through a comprehensive and calibrated approach centered on prevention, capacity building and partnership. In parallel, enhanced regional and diplomatic engagement remains essential, together with the promotion of legal pathways, in order to address migratory pressures more effectively and sustainably at their root.

On this basis, and in light of the above, Italy remains convinced that the adoption of restrictive measures with respect to Somalia should be postponed. Granting a limited timeframe to assess the effective implementation of the recent commitments would allow the Union to consolidate the ongoing positive engagement, while preserving its full leverage to act, should concrete progress not materialize.