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From: Political and Security Committee

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To: COREPER/Council

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Subject: Draft Council conclusions on Counter-Terrorism

1. At its meeting on 2 September 2011 the Political and Security Committee examined the draft Council Conclusions on Counter-Terrorism as an element of the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of 11 September.
2. Following this examination, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to confirm the draft Council Conclusions on Counter-Terrorism as set out in the Annex and submit them to Council for approval.

Draft Council Conclusions on Counter-Terrorism

1. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 shook all of us profoundly and changed not only our perception of terrorism but also our comprehension of the world as we knew it. These attacks stand as a hideous example of inhumanity and cruelty but they are also a strong symbol of a world coming together in unity to step up to a common challenge. A decade after 11 September, our societies have emerged stronger, not weaker, and have shown a remarkable resilience. The Council takes this opportunity to condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and underlines its strong resolve to defend the values that unite us all and to protect the EU's citizens against acts of terrorism. At the same time the Council underlines the importance of respecting international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promoting the rule of law and criminal justice approach to counter-terrorism.
2. In commemorating 11 September we express our sympathy and solidarity with all victims of terrorism, their families and friends. Our thoughts also turn towards all victims of recent tragic events in Norway. The death of young, innocent people is particularly painful for all of us. The Council highlights that terrorists harm people from all backgrounds, including those they claim to represent. The Council also stresses the need to promote and protect the rights of victims of terrorism as well as to encourage the EU's Member States to reinforce, on a voluntary basis, national systems of assistance that would meet the needs of victims of terrorism and their families and facilitate the process of normalisation of their lives.
3. Although the demise of Usama bin Laden and other key terrorist figures marks a significant turning point in our endeavours to counter terrorism, the scourge of terrorism still poses a considerable threat to security.

4. The Arab spring has allowed people from across the Arab world to express their legitimate aspirations to live in societies which respect principles of dignity, democracy, freedom, economic opportunity, the rule of law and human rights. By setting in motion processes of democratic reform, the peoples of the region have discredited the terrorists' argument that change can only be brought about through violence. The EU stands ready to assist the countries of the Arab spring to achieve deep democracy and the rule of law based on full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, but also economic development and social justice.
5. The Council reaffirms its commitment to step up efforts in the international fight against terrorism in line with the full implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, while underlining the obligation of all States Parties to adhere to counter-terrorism related UN conventions and protocols, and calls for other States to consider ratifying them as a matter of priority. Recognising the key role of the UN in international counter-terrorism cooperation the Council expresses its hope that all UN Member States will move towards the successful conclusion of negotiations on the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.
6. The Council remains committed to the robust implementation of the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the EU Action Plan on combating terrorism that were adopted in reaction to the horrendous attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005). The Council also stresses the necessity of continuous implementation of the European Security Strategy, the Internal Security Strategy for the EU, the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism and the Strategy on Terrorist Financing. The Council also recalls its conclusions on enhancing the links between internal and external aspects of counter-terrorism. While acknowledging the significant progress achieved so far in preventing and combating terrorism, the Council underlines the need to further intensify the EU's efforts.

7. The Council emphasises that no state is able to tackle terrorism alone and that international cooperation is crucial for successfully combating terrorism and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism, as well as for eradication of safe havens and assuring safety of transport networks. The EU will continue to develop initiatives for closer and more effective cooperation with international, regional and sub-regional organisations particularly the UN, the G8, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, as well as with the United States and other partners active in combating terrorism, while respecting human rights. The Council believes that the establishment and activities of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum will have an additional positive input in promoting multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation, and expresses its readiness to actively contribute to the success of this forum.
8. In the last decade there has been a considerable effort to make our world, our continent and our community safer. The Council underlines its commitment to deepening cooperation with countries affected by terrorism through political dialogue held with third partner countries and international organisations, with particular emphasis on ratification and implementation of international law, promoting full respect of human rights, law enforcement and criminal justice cooperation and countering the financing of terrorism. The Council is determined to support, via national and regional instruments, counter-terrorism capacity building efforts in particular in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, the Horn of Africa, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and the Sahel as well as in other parts of the world that require particular attention concerning the threat that terrorism poses. In this regard the Council welcomes programmes initiated under the 2009-2011 Instrument for Stability. While stressing the importance of a coordinated and coherent approach to countering terrorism in EU external assistance instruments, the Council undertakes to ensure the necessary funding for counter-terrorism measures.
9. The Council underlines the importance of continuing to tackle extremism and radicalisation in all its forms, regardless of motivation, and terrorist modus operandi, dealing with the spreading of extremist propaganda via the Internet, recruitment and incitement to commit terrorist acts. We welcome the Commission initiative to launch a EU radicalisation awareness network, based on the belief that terrorist radicalisation can be best contained at a level closest to the most susceptible individuals in the most vulnerable communities. Therefore, it requires close cooperation with local authorities and civil society.

10. To strengthen this comprehensive and integrated approach the Council recognises the new possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty, especially through the creation of the European External Action Service, for further improvement of coordination and interaction between traditional external policy instruments and internal aspects of counter-terrorism activities. The European Commission continues to play an important role in this area, as does the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator.
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