NOTE
From: Presidency
To: Committee of Permanent Representatives (Part 1) / Council
Subject: Competitiveness Council, 28 May 2009:
- Small Business Act for Europe: State of play
- Policy debate: Presidency questions

INTRODUCTION

The Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) was adopted by the Commission on 25 June 2008. At its meeting on 1 and 2 December 2008, the Competitiveness Council adopted Council Conclusions on "Think Small First – A Small Business Act for Europe". The Council also adopted the Council’s Action Plan for a Small Business Act for Europe ("Translating intentions into actions"), to be implemented by Member States and the Commission. The Council proposed to focus the implementation of the SBA on three priority areas, i.e. improving SME access to finance, a regulatory environment supportive of SMEs' needs and enhancing market access for SMEs.

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1 Doc. 11262/08.
2 Doc. 16788/08.
3 Doc. 16788/08, Annex to ANNEX.
On 7 May 2009, the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth discussed a Note from the Presidency containing two questions that could guide the policy debate on the state of play of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) (item 4 of the agenda for the Competitiveness Council on 28 and 29 May 2009).

The Working Party reached agreement on the Presidency Note as set out in the Annex to the present Note.

**Topics for discussion at the Competitiveness Council**

During the previous meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 5 and 6 March 2009, a number of delegations and Ministers expressed their will to have a broader debate on the implementation of the SBA Action Plan at the next meeting of the Competitiveness Council. The Presidency has therefore put this item on the agenda of the next meeting.

At the Competitiveness Council on 28 May, Ministers are invited to express their views on the following questions:

1. A lot of measures have been launched under the Small Business Act. In particular, the SBA Action Plan both in Member States and at EU level and their implementation is key now. What are the particular measures your country is concentrating on?

2. Implementation of which measures within the three priority areas should be strengthened at EU level in the light of the current economic situation?

**CONCLUSION**

The Permanent Representatives Committee is therefore invited to endorse the above questions for structuring the Ministerial debate at the Competitiveness Council meeting on 28 May 2009 on the state of play of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA), it being understood that Ministers may obviously discuss the implementation of the SBA Action Plan in a wider context.