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NOTE

from :	Presidency
to :	Coreper/Council
Subject :	Draft Council Conclusions on Counter terrorism

The Council took note of the report of the High Representative on the progress in the implementation of the EU Action Plan for Combating Terrorism that was adopted by the June European Council and the work of the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator in that respect.

The Council welcomed the progress that has been made and underlined the need to pursue efforts in various areas, in particular the improvement of exchange of information between the strengthened EU SitCen, Intelligence/Security Services of the Member States and Europol, the re-installing of the Anti-terrorism Task Force at Europol, the evaluation of Member States' national structures to combat terrorism, the setting up of the European Border Management Agency, the inclusion of biometrics in passports and the prevention of financing of terrorism. The Council also took note of the additional contributions from Member States in the fight against terrorism.

The Council welcomed the new focus of the external policies of the EU in counter terrorism, which have given greater visibility to the commitment of the European Union in the fight against terrorism and have been instrumental in deepening cooperation with the Union's main partners while contributing as well to reinforcing the central role of the UN in the international community's efforts against terrorism. The Council reiterated its conviction that in order to be effective in the long run the Union's response to terrorism must also address the underlying factors to terrorism and must strive to contribute to the protection and promotion of democracy, human rights and freedoms and resolution of regional conflicts as well as the economic and social problems in the world.

The Council noted, however, that significant steps still need to be taken by the EU and its Member States to adhere fully to the commitments that have been made in the EU Action plan for Combating Terrorism. In this regard the Council urged Member States to finalize within the deadlines set in the Action Plan on Combating Terrorism implementation of the relevant EU/EC legislation (in particular the Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on the European Arrest Warrant and the Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on Joint Investigation Teams) as well as the ratification of the relevant conventions (in particular the 2000 Mutual Legal Assistance Convention and its 2001 Protocol, the three Protocols to the Europol Convention as well as all 12 UN Conventions against terrorism). In that respect the Council also welcomed the adoption of UNSCR 1566 that was proposed by the Russian Federation after the horrendous terrorist attack in Beslan, as a useful additional tool in our common fight against the scourge of international terrorism.

The Council welcomed the important work of the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator and urged him to follow closely the implementation of measures that have been decided upon. The Council called on the relevant bodies of the Council to take forward discussions on the other measures identified by the European Council to prevent and counter terrorism, for example on the improvement of exchange of information between Member States and Europol and Eurojust, measures aimed at enhancing EU capabilities to deal with the consequences of a terrorist attack, the Directive on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, the Regulation on Controls on Cash Movements and the comprehensive strategy on the prevention of terrorist financing with a view to achieving significant progress on these issues before the European Council in December.

The Council decided to continue to monitor progress closely with a view to take stock of progress being made at the European Council in December.
