



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 8 May 2014

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**PE-L 29
INST 232
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CSC 99**

NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Working Party on General Affairs

Subject: Draft arrangement between the European Parliament, the Council and the High Representative on the forwarding to and handling by the European Parliament of classified information in the area of CFSP

Further to discussions in GAG on 11 April 2014 on an arrangement on the forwarding to and handling by the Parliament of classified information in the area of CFSP, delegations will find attached the letter sent on 28 April 2014 to the Secretary-General of the European Parliament by Ambassador Mr Theodoros SOTIROPOULOS.

Dear Secretary-General,

On 20 March 2014, representatives of the Greek Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the EEAS met with a number of your colleagues to take stock of progress on the issue of the forwarding and handling to the European Parliament of classified information. This meeting was arranged in view of the impending entry into force on 1 April 2014 of the inter-institutional agreement (IIA) concerning classified information on non-CFSP issues, and in order to assess to what extent progress could be made on the separate agreement covering classified information in the area of CFSP.

Following that meeting, the matter was raised with Member State delegations within the General Affairs Working Group on 28 March and again on 11 April. I would like to share with you the results of those discussions.

Member States very much welcomed the entry into force of the IIA concerning non-CFSP issues, not least since negotiations were concluded as long ago as the autumn of 2012. There was also a clear interest from delegations in using this opportunity to take stock of future arrangements governing classified information in the area of CFSP, including how best to address the concerns expressed by your services at the 20 March meeting on the basis of the text discussed at the political level negotiating session in Strasbourg on 16 April 2013.

In general Member States take this matter very seriously, both in order to guarantee adequate protection for classified material in what is a sensitive sector, as well as to ensure that Parliament has access to the information it requires to carry out its legitimate functions and responsibilities under the Treaty. For this reason Member States attach importance to gaining some prior experience of the implementation of the non-CFSP IIA. This is in line with the joint declaration of the EP and Council agreed at the time of the conclusion of that IIA. Obviously it is difficult to make any assessment of the functioning of the 2012 IIA at this stage given that it only entered into force on 1 April 2014.

I would like to assure you of the Council's readiness to continue with contacts at both technical and political level during the next legislature on the basis of the text already under discussion, and am confident that we will be able to reach a satisfactory conclusion to the negotiations.

Yours sincerely,

President of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
