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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
No. prev. doc.:	8563/19
Subject:	Participation of the EU in GRECO

1. GRECO was established in 1999 by the Council of Europe. The objective of GRECO is to improve the capacity of its members to fight corruption by monitoring their compliance with Council of Europe anti-corruption standards through a system of mutual evaluations and peer pressure. Currently, GRECO comprises 49 Member States (48 European states, including all the Member States of the European Union, and the United States of America) and 10 observers. The European Parliament has repeatedly called for the EU to submit an application for membership of GRECO.
2. The question of the participation of the EU in GRECO has been under discussion since 2011 and has been the subject of several debates over the years, without any real progress so far.

3. This topic was further discussed on 10 April 2019 in the DROIPEN Working Party. Following a letter sent by GRECO in this respect, the Presidency tabled a Note inviting delegations to hold a discussion on the proposal that the EU could join GRECO with observer status¹. The vast majority of delegations supported this approach, as a first step towards full membership.
4. The Presidency decided to include this item in the agenda of the CATS meeting held on 13 May 2019 and tabled a Note on this subject², in which the legal and practical consequences of the EU accession to Greco with observer status were explained.

Delegations were invited to agree on the following:

- the EU should join GRECO with observer status;
- the Commission should be invited to present at the earliest opportunity a proposal for a Council decision on the EU's observer status in GRECO.

The discussion clearly showed that delegations supported the Presidency approach, confirming the outcome of the meeting of the DROIPEN Working Party. The Commission took note of the delegations' wish for the EU to join GRECO with observer status.

5. The Permanent Representatives Committee and the Council are invited to:
 - confirm the position expressed by delegations at the CATS meeting on 13 May 2019 that the EU should join GRECO with observer status;
 - to achieve this objective, invite the Commission to submit a proposal for a Council Decision based on Article 218(9) TFEU (acts having legal effects in respect of bodies set up by an international agreement).
 - encourage the relevant Council bodies to consider, on the basis of the experience acquired by the EU as an observer, the possibility of full membership of the EU in GRECO at a later stage.

¹ 7918/19

² 8563/19