

**SEMDOC**

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**"I/A" ITEM NOTE**

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from : the Secretary General

to : the COREPER/Council

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Subject: **Organization of services in the General Secretariat of the Council dealing with external relations**

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1. On 30 March 1998, the General Affairs Council mandated the Secretary General to present a report on the organization of the services of the General Secretariat dealing with external relations. The report was submitted on 23 July 1998 (doc. 10010/98 CAB 9 PESC 192). In the resulting discussion in COREPER there was general agreement that the division between CFSP and external economic issues had become anomalous and that CFSP and external economic regional desks should be merged.

It became also clear from the discussion that some proposals <sup>(1)</sup> contained in the report would remain on the table for consideration after the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty. This means that the Secretary General/High Representative will deal with those items once appointed.

2. On 16 September 1998, the Secretary General informed COREPER on how he intended to reorganize the services of DG E in the light of the earlier COREPER discussion with Member States. COREPER supported the Secretary General's intention to proceed on that basis and asked to be kept informed.

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<sup>(1)</sup> One proposal concerned the new structure of DG E at Directors General level and the other the transformation of temporary posts for CFSP into permanent posts, especially in view of the recruitment of fifteen temporary officials from the Member States for the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit (PPEWU).

3. COREPER/Council is now asked to take note that practical arrangements will be made to introduce the new structure from 1 July 1999. Under the new structure the Secretariat will handle all EU relations with third countries and regions within a number of geographical directorates fused to cover all pillar 1 and pillar 2 aspects; other directorates will deal with thematic issues. This will mean that some temporary officials in DG E, while continuing to be employed as far as possible on CFSP issues, will no longer exclusively deal with them as originally foreseen after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty. At the same time more permanent officials will also deal with CFSP issues.
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