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Seizing Africa's new moment for the reform of the African Union

In his report, *'The Imperative to Strengthen our Union: Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union'*, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda observed that 'it has always been Africa's moment'. He went on to state that the 'question at any given time is whether we choose to be present and develop the institutional capacity ... to seize the available advantages.' In adopting the report and its recommendations at the 28th AU Summit in January 2017, the African Union (AU) Assembly presented itself a new moment for the reform of the AU. As leaders of African States descend on Addis Ababa for 29th AU Summit to discuss the reform of the AU, once again the question is whether member states would seize this new moment and ensure the implementation of the reform agenda.

The reform agenda as elaborated in the report, which attracted warm reception from members of the AU Assembly, aims at making the AU 'fit for purpose'. If carried through, the scope and depth of the proposed reform would result in the first major reconstitution of the continental organization since the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the AU in 2002.

This policy research report provides analysis of President Kagame's report and the accompanying AU Assembly decision endorsing it. The report also highlights, including in a tabular matrix, a review of the issues that affect the implementation of each of the 21 broad reform areas. This research report draws on a combination of critical review of relevant documents and extensive discussion and consultations with member states of the AU.

Appraisal of Kagame's report diagnosis of the problems

In terms of critical diagnosis of the issues to be addressed, President Kagame's report identified two imperatives necessitating the reform of the AU. The first related to the major changes taking place in Africa and the world and the resultant collective challenges these developments pose to Africa. In this regard, the report noted the uncertainties that the political upheavals underway in many parts of the world brought to multilateral cooperation and the emerging issues of climate change, violent extremist ideologies, disease pandemics or mass migration that require robust collective action.

Second, it identified nine issues stifling the effective functioning and delivery of the AU. Zeroing on non-implementation of decisions of the AU, it observed that despite the more than 1,500 resolutions that the AU assembly adopted, there is no mechanism for determining the level of implementation of these decisions.

Although some may take issue with the scope of analysis of the two imperatives necessitating the reform, the report is generally on mark in its diagnosis of the major issues facing Africa and the AU. The report's assessment of the AU is direct and sweeping. It thus stated that the AU has become 'a dysfunctional organization in which member states see limited value, global partners find little credibility and our citizens have no trust'.

The one area where the report failed short was in terms of its analysis of the problems of continental leadership and unity of purpose of member states of the AU. The stagnation or paralysis afflicting the AU is partly a direct result of the dearth of the required pan-African leadership observed during the last few years. All the major countries in all parts of the continent suffer from major internal crises, much of it self inflicted. Apart from their entanglement in national troubles, most of the countries have become inward looking with sub-regional focus in their foreign policy. In the May 2017 edition of *New African Magazine*, Carlos Lopez, former Executive Secretary of the UNECA, pointed out that the leadership of South Africa on continental affairs is fading. He also observed in passing that the situation of Nigeria and Egypt, two other heavy weights in continental affairs, is not any better either.

As President Kagame himself admitted in an exclusive interview with the April 2017 edition of *New African Magazine*, Africa today lacks the kind of pan-African leadership that steered the transformation of the OAU to the AU and the continental agenda forward under the AU. Kagame's report should be credited for pointing out that the reform has to start and end with the leaders of the AU. It puts the responsibility squarely on member states, notably on the current leadership of AU member states. Yet, despite the trend he also pointed out in his interview on the emergence of such leaders as Idriss Deby, Alpha Conde, Macky Sall and Hailemariam Desalegn as champions of the continental agenda, there is still a need, for the success of the current reform of the AU, for expanding and transforming this emerging leadership into the kind of coalition of leaders that mobilized the continent for transforming the OAU to the AU.

There is an emerging practice in the AU for developing common African positions on matters of global governance. Member states also adopted agenda 2063 as the continental blue print for achieving socio-economic transformation, regional integration and continental unity. Yet, there are persisting regional, ideological and linguistic cleavages impeding both unity of purpose in the AU and the effective pursuit of the agenda of the integration process. Further compounding this situation is the political practice emphasizing national interest and sovereignty. During the 7 May 2017 meeting of Foreign Ministers and ambassadors to the AU, President Kagame convened in Kigali, Some countries such as Zambia highlighted these factors and the politicization of the AU processes as presenting serious challenge for AU reform.

There are thus concerns that regional, ideological and linguistic cleavages in the AU are creating political gridlock and thereby inhibiting effective collective action.

Any measure of success both in terms of agenda 20163 and the AU reform depends on transcending these issues detracting member states from the continental agenda. It has also become clear that there is need for enabling the coalescing of a pan-African leadership that actively champions the agenda of the union. Such a group of pan-African leadership should include major countries from all the regions of the continent as a guarantee of successful pursuit of the reform agenda.

The four action areas for reform plus one

To address the issues identified and for making the AU fit for the challenges of today and the future, Kagame's report proposed four action areas for reform. The first action area, emphasizing a focus on key priorities with continental scope, has two components. First is to focus on a few number of priority areas with continental scope. The priority areas the report highlighted are political affairs, peace and security, economic integration and Africa's global representation. Second is clarifying the division of labour and effective collaboration between AU, RECs and member states.

The second action area is realignment of the structure of the AU institutions to the agreed priority areas with continental scale. It thus calls for rationalizing the eight AU Commission directorates, the 31 departments and offices, the 11 Union organs, the 31 specialized technical agencies and some 20 high-level committees. To this end, it suggested both an audit of the bureaucratic bottlenecks and inefficiencies in the AU and the review of the Commission's structures and senior leadership to the appropriate size and capacity. It also suggested the review of the AU organs including New African Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Judicial and legislative organs focusing in particular on the legislative authority of the Pan African Parliament (PAP), the Peace and Security Council (PSC), Permanent Representatives Committee and Specialized Technical Agencies (STAs).

Kagame's report third action area is the efficient management of the AU both at the political and operational levels. The report lamented that the inefficient working methods of the AU summits including agenda overloads, lack of opportunity for achieving consensus among leaders on key issues ahead of plenary sessions and inadequate consultations with RECs. At the political level, the proposed reforms in this regard include the provision of no more than three strategic items at each summit with delegation of other items to the Executive Council, one summit a year with the second summit involving Bureau of the Assembly and focusing on coordination with RECs, limiting the level of representation to Assembly meetings to Heads of

State and Government or their deputies, and invitation to external partners on exceptional basis. It also envisaged a troika arrangement between outgoing, current and incoming chairs and further clarification of the role of the Chairperson of the Assembly.

At the operational level, it outlined four proposed reforms. These were robust and transparent governance process in the election of the Chairperson of the AU, competitive recruitment and appointment by the Chairperson of the AUC of the Deputy Chairperson and the Commissioners, reformulation of the role of the Deputy Chairperson with focus on efficient and effective functioning of the Commission and fundamental review of the structure and staffing needs of the Commission as well as conditions of service.

Finally, the fourth action area for reform is financing of the AU by member states and sustainably. In this respect as well, apart from the immediate implementation of the Kigali Financing Decision, the report offers specific recommendations. As highlighted in our report on financing peace (Amani Africa Report No. 2), a new scale of assessment has been implemented only since 2016. Yet, the report envisages the revision of the scale of assessment on the basis of the principles of ability to pay, solidarity and equitable burden sharing.

The Report and the Assembly decision endorsing it assigns the responsibility for oversight of the AU budget and finances to the new Committee of Ten Ministers of Finance. This same Committee is also tasked to develop a set of 'golden rules' on financial management and accountability to be written into the AUC Statutes and Financial Rules and Regulations. In the meeting of the finance ministers after the July 2017 meeting, the membership of the Committee has been increased to 15.

Given that late or partial payment of assessed contributions has become a recurrent problem affecting the functioning of the AU, another recommendation envisaged the strengthening of the sanctions regime. It in particular proposed imposition of lapse of membership in respect of states failing to meet full obligations within 18 months and upon resumption of full membership to pay outstanding arrears with additional charges.

The January 2017 AU Summit Assembly decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.14(XXVIII)) endorsed the report and its recommendations. Yet, there were some recommendations in the Kagame report that were either modified or left out from the annex of the Assembly decision endorsing the report. Strangely enough, the strengthening of the sanctions regime meant to enforce implementation of AU decisions is one of the reform proposals that were not carried in the annex from the Report, although the AU remains seized of this issue as reflected in the PRC discussion on the report of its sub-committee on budget, administrative and finance matters.

Apart from the four action areas that Kagame's report identified, the January 2017 Assembly decision also singled out the proposal on connecting the AU to African citizens as a standalone focus area. Following the transition from the OAU to the AU, there have been efforts for opening spaces in the AU processes to non-governmental actors. Clearly, these efforts remain inadequate. The AU continues to operate as a platform of 'We the Heads of State and Government'. The ambition to link it with ordinary Africans and hence move it in the direction of being an organization of 'We the peoples of Africa' is a welcome development, although this should start with opening the reform agenda to wider consultation and input from the public. Apart from creating the spaces for participation of various sectors of the African public in AU processes, the measures necessary for achieving such a transformation need to include plans for direct election of members of the Pan African Parliament (PAP) and the extension of identified legislative authority to PAP.

Implementation processes and analysis

While it is not the first time for the AU to have proposals for the reform of its structures and procedures, almost all of those previous attempts for reform did not provide for effective follow up and implementation mechanism. This is perhaps one of the major issues that Kagame's report sought to fix. Insisting that 'we cannot leave implementation of the institutional reforms to chance, or treat it as routine', it stated that 'the responsibility for delivery of the reform agenda must be clearly assigned' both in the Assembly and the AUC. Accordingly, it provided for implementation mechanisms both at the political and operational levels.

Apart from the decision of the Assembly tasking President Kagame to report on the implementation of the reform at every summit, the Assembly Decision, as per the recommendation of the Report, constituted **a three member high-level panel of Heads of State and Government**. This high-level Panel of the AU Assembly is composed of Presidents Paul Kagame, Idriss Deby Itno and Alpha Conde and has the political responsibility to oversee the implementation process.

At the operational level, it also provided for the establishment of a Reform Implementation Unit within the Bureau of the Chairperson. This Unit is responsible for following up the coordination and day-to-day implementation of the reform.

The report also outlines implementation timelines. These are divided into short term (six months), medium term (six to 12 Months) and long-term (one to two years).

The following table highlights the various areas of reform and the implementation timelines as well as the legal, political and institutional issues that may affect their implementation.

No.	Reform areas	Follow up mechanisms	Timeline and degree of ease to implement	Analysis and Issues for implementation
1.	Identify and focus fewer number of priority areas	Three member High-level Panel, Consultations and Report from President Kagame	Short term – relatively difficult owing to consensus and uncertainties on legal implications	Shared understanding of the number and focus of the priority areas, willingness and ability (of member states) sticking to the priority areas and clarity on legal implications including whether it entails reviewing the Constitutive Act
2.	Clarifying the division of labor between AU, RECs, member states and other continental organizations	AUC, Consultations with RECs, and periodic report of President Kagame	Long term – difficult	Delegation of AU’s areas of engagement other than those that are priorities to RECs and member states, agreement between the AU, RECs and member states on their respective roles and responsibilities and the mechanisms for coordination
3.	Conduct audit of the AU’s bureaucratic bottlenecks and inefficiencies	AUC, Bureau of the AUC Chairperson, periodic report of President Kagame	Medium term – relatively easy owing to control of mandate by AUC and audit is under way	Avoiding repetition of the comprehensive review of the AU done in the 2007 Adedeje AU Audit Report and the 2016 AU Comparative Study on the Working Methods of the African Union and Other Similar International and Multilateral Organizations; focusing on listing down the bottlenecks and inefficiencies identified in those reports and prioritizing and addressing them according to their importance for the proper functioning of the AUC including accountability for

				service delivery and financial responsibility; and aligning the audit with the proposed review of the structures of the AUC.
4.	Re-evaluate the size and capabilities of the Commission's structures	AUC, Bureau of the AUC Chairperson, periodic report of President Kagame	Medium term – relatively easy	Inertia of the old structure and institutional practices of the AU Commission; possibility of restructuring without reviewing the legal instruments of the AU.
5.	Establish a lean and performance oriented senior leadership team at the Commission	AUC, Bureau of the AUC Chairperson, periodic report of President Kagame	Medium term – relatively difficult due to institutional and legal implications	The determination of which of the eight AU Commission directorates to be unfolded; review and implementation of a new process for the assignment of the leadership of the eight AU Commission directorates; and review and effective enforcement of the governance rules of the AU Commission
6.	Review and update of the mandate and structures of key AU organs and institutions	Three member High-level Panel of Assembly, AUC, Bureau of the AUC Chairperson, periodic report of President Kagame	Long term – relatively difficult	Lack of consultation of the AU organs and institutions identified for review of their mandates and structures; the necessity of review of AU legal instruments including the Constitutive Act and the instruments establishing those organs and institutions; political will and buy-in of member states
7.	Reform of the working methods of the Summit	January 2017 Assembly decision, Three member High-level Panel, Consultations and Report from	Medium term – easy to implement particularly on holding one ordinary summit per	Lack of consensus on the proposed changes on some of the working methods such as level of representation at meeting of AU Assembly; Achieving consensus and clarifying on the implication of

		President Kagame	year and focusing on no more than three strategic items per summit	the representation formula on representation of member states in partnership summits
8.	Establish troika of the outgoing, current and incoming AU Assembly chairpersons	January 2017 Assembly Decision	Long term – easy to implement	Establishing the practice of selecting the incoming chairperson one year in advance
9.	Strengthen and enforce the sanctions regime	Three member High-level Panel, Consultations and Report from President Kagame	Short term – relatively easy	Identifying and adopting the sanctions to be attached to non-implementation of decisions and delay or failure of payment of assessed contributions; establishment of a sanctions committee to supervise and report on the same
10.	Improve the process for election of the Commission chairperson	January 2017 Assembly decision and periodic Report from President Kagame	Medium term – relatively easy	Revising and adopting changes on the rules of procedure of the AU Assembly on election process
11.	Recruiting the Commission Deputy Chair and Commissioners competitively	January 2017 Assembly decision and periodic Report from President Kagame	Medium term – relatively easy	Revising and adopting changes on the rules of procedure of the AU Assembly on election process and revising the mandate of the AUC Chairpersons including the revision of the AUC Statute
12.	Revising the role of the Deputy Chairperson and the title of the same	January 2017 Assembly decision and periodic Report	Medium term – relatively easy	Revision of the AUC Statute and the ToR of the Deputy Chair

		from President Kagame		
13.	Review the structure, staffing needs and conditions of service	January 2017 Assembly decision, AUC and periodic Report from President Kagame	Medium term – relatively easy	Alignment with the reassessment of the size and capabilities of the structures of the Commission
14.	Implement Kigali financing decision	January 2017 Assembly decision, High Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson on Financing of the AU, Three member High-level Panel of the Assembly, AUC and periodic Report from President Kagame	Medium term – difficult	Technical and legal challenges for implementing the 0.2 import levy; lack of buy-in of the financing scheme on the part of not-so-insignificant number of member states; slow pace of implementation with only 11 to 14 member states so far reported to be complying with paying the 2017 transitional year contributions; disagreement over the January 2017 Assembly decision on the use of the surplus from the 0.2 import levy; lack of consensus at the national level on compliance with the financing decision.
15.	Revision of current scale of assessment	January 2017 Assembly decision, Committee of Ten Finance Ministers and periodic Report from President Kagame	Short term – relatively difficult and Committee of Ten Finance Ministers in place	Risk of division on objectively assessing the principles identified for reviewing scale of assessment and resultant danger of derailing the implementation process
16.	Entrusting the Committee of Ten	January 2017 Assembly	Short term – easy and	Aligning and linking the work of the Committee of Ten with the

	Finance Ministers with oversight role	decision, Committee of Ten Finance Ministers and periodic Report from President Kagame	done	PRC Sub-committee on Budget, Administrative and Finance Matters
17.	Establishment of high level panel of the AU Assembly for overseeing implementation	Assembly decision	Short term – easy and done	Lack of regional representativeness of the Panel; there is no panel member from Southern Africa and North Africa
18.	Establish a Reform Implementation Unit in the Bureau of the AUC Chairperson	Assembly Decision, AUC Chairperson	Short term – easy to implement and process under way	Composition and scope of mandate and authority as well as availability of the required resources and expertise;
19.	Revise the role of the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) excluding it from playing a supervisory role over the AU Commission	Assembly Decision and Periodic Report of President Kagame	Long term – very difficult and set to be adjusted	Critical body for the functioning of the Union and for the day to day follow up of decisions of policy bodies of the AU; lack of consensus on the diagnosis of the issues affecting the PRC-AUC; emerging consensus in May 2017 Kigali meeting for keeping the oversight role of the PRC
20.	Launching initiatives focusing on increasing the AU's relevance to citizens	AUC, Bureau of the AUC Chairperson, periodic report of President Kagame	Long term – relatively easy if issues are promptly clarified and support is mobilized	Identifying the initiatives that make AU relevant to citizens; mobilizing the necessary funds and institutional mechanisms and coordination for implementing those initiatives; creating spaces in AU processes for the participation of various sections of the African public; consistency of assigning the implementation of such initiatives to the AU

				with the proposal for delegation to RECs and member states; and political will and buy-in of member states
21	Member states to avail the AU Passport to all eligible citizens in line with Kigali summit decision	January 2017 AU Assembly decision; President Kagame's periodic report; AU Member States	Long term - relatively difficult	Depends on the adoption of the treaty on the free movement of people in Africa, the adoption of the appropriate national legislation enabling the issuance of and recognition of AU Passport issued to ordinary citizens; political discord and intra-African suspicion among member states on intra-African movement of people including migration

Sources – President Paul Kagame’s Report ‘The Imperative to Strengthen our Union: Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union’; January 2017 AU Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.606(XXXVIII)) and Amani Africa’s research and analysis

The devil in the implementation: Issues emerging since January 2017

As the discussions of the retreat of the AU Assembly during the January 2017 AU summit reveal, the report of President Kagame on the reform of the AU was received with a great deal of enthusiasm or so it seemed. This was a welcome development, more so because the aspiration for change is not limited to the AU Assembly.

The agenda of reforming the AU to make it fit for addressing the economic, political, peace and security and other challenges that Africa is facing is a noble objective and imperative with which many governmental and non-governmental actors agree. The fast evolving and unpredictable global environment, where partnerships and alliances are fast changing make it essential for any organization of similar nature to assess its standing, evaluate its relevance and adjust its objectives, processes and working methods.

Since January 2017, it has become clear that the level of wider public discussion and debate on President Kagame’s report and the outcome of the AU Assembly decision on the reform agenda remain nearly

inexistent. It is to be recalled that even within the AU structures the presentation of and reflection on the report was limited to the level of the Heads of State and Government.¹ A step on the right direction was taken when on 7 May 2017 President Kagame convened a meeting in Kigali to discuss the reform agenda with Ministers and members of the AU PRC. All the same, some countries such as Burkina Faso highlighted during that meeting the need for involving the wider public including citizens in the discussion on the reform of the AU.

Despite Dr Donalid Kaberuka's appeal for a sense of urgency, change management and implementability of the reform, the May 2017 meeting in Kigali has shone light on the devil in the implementation of the recommendations of the President Kagame's report as endorsed by the AU Assembly. Most notably, it became clear that there has been clear disconnect between the summit level apparent rhetoric embracing the proposed reform and the political and technical commitment at the national level necessary for effective implementation. Or as the cartoon below illustrates although most support change, none are willing to change and hence the change that they support is unlikely to be realized.

¹ The report was circulated to the members of the AU Assembly in the afternoon of the day before its presentation and consideration. Representatives of member states observed that there was inadequate time for members of the Assembly to review and engage the report substantively. In adopting the report without the level of engagement it deserved and required, members of the Assembly failed to leave up to their responsibilities.



Various member states made observations on the various areas of reform and suggested adjustment to a number of the recommended reforms that the Assembly endorsed in January 2017. One such area relates to the proposed limitation of the level of representation at the AU Assembly to heads of state and government or their deputies. Similarly, many urged the need to reconsider the proposed restriction of the day-to-day oversight role of the PRC over the AU Commission. President Paul Kagame himself explained that the decision on the role of the PRC should be understood as entailing complementary and cohesive working relationship between the PRC and the AUC.

In his intervention in the May 2017 meeting, the AUC Chairperson also clarified that representation by the troika of the Assembly in partnership summits will be limited to African partnerships with individual countries only while all member states are to be represented in continent-to-continent partnerships.

The May 2017 Kigali meeting also identified another devil in the implementation details of the reform decision. This concerned the legal and institutional implications that need to be identified and addressed for implementation of those areas of reform having such implications. Concerns have been raised on the need

to align the reform proposals with the legal and institutional arrangements at the RECs level. This issue has become apparent when the Southern Africa Customs Union held its meetings in Swaziland in June 2017 with member states expressing concern about the 0.2 import levy.

A number of countries including Egypt, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone pointed out the necessity of ensuring the consistency of the financing proposal with WTO rules. Similarly, countries such as Malawi and Guinea highlighted the necessity to identify areas requiring revision of AU legal instruments such as the AU Constitutive Act. Against this background, various countries suggested the elaboration of a matrix identifying the recommendations requiring various actions including revision of AU legal instruments and a roadmap for their implementation.

Methodological concerns were apparent in the discussions during the May 2017 Kigali meeting and from the extensive consultations with representatives of member states in Addis Ababa. Most notably, the methodology used in drawing up the report and processing it for Assembly decision emerged as one explanation why the support to the reform did not go beyond the level of heads of state and government. Many observed that the process was not consultative enough. Even at the level of the Assembly, there was not enough time to properly examine and meaningfully engage the document. The report was circulated to member states late in the afternoon and it was presented for adoption the following morning at a breakfast retreat of the members of the Assembly.

Problems have also been observed in terms of mobilization of wider support and active participation of wider group of heads of state representing all regions. Apart from the lack of representation of Southern Africa and North Africa in the High-level Panel of the Assembly overseeing implementation, major countries including South Africa and Nigeria do not seem to assume active leadership role in advocating for the reform agenda. For the AU leadership steering the reform agenda, it seems that there is a need for learning from the coalition of leaders of countries that successfully oversaw and mobilized others for the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the AU.

Looking Ahead: July 2017 Summit and beyond

Pursuant to the January 2017 AU Assembly decision, President Paul Kagame is expected to present a report on the implementation of the reform process. In this regard, the report is expected to highlight the various steps taken towards the implementation of the decision including what are called quick wins. Among others, it would cite the meeting of the High-Level Panel that the current Chairperson of the AU Assembly President Konde hosted in Conakry, Guinea. The other processes to feature in President Kagame's report include the

meeting he convened in May 2017 in Kigali, the missions that Dr Kaberuka has undertaken to support implementation and the steps taken at the level of the AU Commission towards conducting the audit of the Commission and establishing the Reform Unit in the Bureau of the Chairperson of the AUC.

In the light of the various issues observed since the January 2017 decision and the May 2017 meeting in Kigali, President Kagame's report is also expected to provide explanations and adjustments to some of the reform items whose implementations require such adjustments. Member states also anticipate the report to indicate the next steps and a matrix identifying a roadmap on implementation measures, timelines and responsibilities for each of the outstanding reform areas.

The January 2017 AU Assembly decision endorsing President Kagame's report and the recommendations contained therein presents Africa and the AU an opportunity for renewal of the AU for delivering on present and future challenges. No doubt, the reform process has an immense potential to serve as a starting point for a bigger agenda of continuous transformation to attain continental renaissance. In pursuing the reform process forward, it appears worthwhile for grounding the reform on a bigger political vision than just considerations of efficiency and tactical issues. In this regard, the link of this reform process with the achievement of such peace and security objectives as silencing the guns and the pan-Africanist economic transformation and integration priorities of Agenda 2063 need to be foregrounded.

Another area for a major rethink is the methodology on the reform in general and the specific recommendation on enhancing the link of the AU to African citizens. Connecting the AU to citizens better starts with opening the reform process to wider African public and mobilizing the support of various sections of society.

President Kagame's report was apt in observing that 'Reform does not start with the Commission. It starts and ends with the leaders, who must set the right expectations and tempo. The effectiveness of the African Union, after all, is our business and responsibility.' If the reform process is not to face the scenario depicted in the cartoon above, it is vital that efforts are mobilized at building a strong and representative group of champion countries from all regions of the continent. This may necessitate further negotiating and refining of some of the reform proposals enthusiastically adopted in January 2017 but are not actively followed up. These adjustments can be undertaken as part of the implementation process through some degree of flexibility and wider consultation that accommodates a critical mass of member states that can carry the reform forward.

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