



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 13 July 2005**

**11017/05**

**POLGEN 31**

**"I/A" ITEM NOTE**

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From: Presidency

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to: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

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*Subject: Report on proceedings in the Council's other configurations*

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Delegations will find below a list of the most important issues currently under discussion in the Council's other configurations. This document should enable delegations to draw the Presidency's attention to any point which they believe has implications for the proper organisation of proceedings in the areas covered.

## ECOFIN

At its meeting on **12 July 2005**, the Council discussed the following items :

### Work programme

*The Presidency presented a work programme for economic and financial affairs for the second half of 2005, focusing on two key priorities:*

- 1. building prosperous, dynamic European economies through implementation of the revised economic reform agenda; through further action on regulatory reform; and through work in key sectors including a strategic approach to financial services; and*
- 2. addressing international challenges through European action to lead the way on international poverty reduction and financing for development ahead of the UN summit in September; and through effective relationships with key international partners, including a strengthened transatlantic economic dialogue.*

*The Presidency also signalled its intentions on the fight against terrorism, in particular the issue of combating terrorist financing, to be discussed in detail at an informal meeting of finance ministers to be held in Manchester on 9 and 10 September.*

*Finally, the Presidency plans to continue discussions on the EU's 2007-13 budgetary framework, drawing on progress made to date and with a view to defining all the elements necessary for an overall agreement as soon as possible.*

### Financing for development

*The Council took stock of progress, following the G8 summit in Gleneagles (Scotland) on 6-8 July, on the financing of development cooperation under the millennium development goals set by the United Nations in 2000. It assessed the main issues involved with a view to presenting a coordinated European position to the UN General Assembly in New York on 14-16 September.*

## Economic regeneration in the West Bank and Gaza

*The Council discussed possible support from the EU for economic regeneration in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It requested the Commission and the European Investment Bank to continue work with a view to further discussion and so as to enable decisions to be taken.*

## **JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

An Addendum to the present document with the results of the Council's discussions at its extraordinary meeting on 13 July 2005 will issue on 14 July 2005.

## **AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES**

At its meeting on **20 and 21 June 2005**, the Council discussed:

### Rural development

*The Council reached unanimous political agreement on the proposal for a Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The Regulation defines the objectives to which rural development policy should contribute, its strategic context, as well as the priorities and measures for rural development. It further lays down rules on partnership, programming, evaluation, financial management, monitoring and control on the basis of responsibilities shared between the Member States and the Commission.*

## European Fisheries Fund

*The Council held detailed discussions on the proposal for a European Fisheries Fund to replace the existing Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance from 2007. At the end of the discussions the Presidency stated that agreement could not be achieved at this stage and instructed the Committee of Permanent Representatives to pursue work on this proposal.*

## **ENVIRONMENT**

At its meeting on **24 June 2005**, the Council discussed:

### Protection of groundwater against pollution

*The Council reached, by qualified majority, political agreement on a common position on the draft Directive on the protection of groundwater against pollution, with the German, Hungarian, Italian and Swedish delegations indicating that they would vote against. The draft proposal aims to prevent and control groundwater pollution by establishing criteria for the assessment of good groundwater chemical status, for the identification and reversal of significant and sustained upward trends in pollutant concentrations in ground waters, and for the definition of starting points for trend reversals. It also aims to prevent or limit the introduction of pollutants and to prevent deterioration of the status of groundwater bodies.*

### INSPIRE

*The Council reached, by unanimity, political agreement on a common position concerning the proposal for a Directive establishing an infrastructure for spatial information in the Community (INSPIRE). The Commission did not endorse this political agreement as it considered the text agreed to be unambitious compared to its initial proposal. The purpose of the draft Directive is to provide public authorities, legislators, universities and researchers with information needed in order to monitor and improve the state of the environment, in particular information regarding air, water, soil and the natural landscape.*

## Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

*The Council rejected, by qualified majority, eight proposals for Decisions aimed at the withdrawal of the safeguard measures taken by certain Member States against transgenic plant varieties authorised in the European Union. These measures, which provisionally restrict or ban the use and sale of genetically modified organisms, have been taken by Austria, Germany and Luxembourg in relation to maize Bt 176, by Austria in relation to T 25 and MON 810 maizes, by France and Greece in relation to Topas 19/2 colza and by France against MSI x RF1 colzas.*

## Community strategy concerning mercury

*As a follow-up to the Commission communication on a "Community Strategy concerning mercury", the Council adopted conclusions addressing i. a. the phasing out of the export of mercury from the Community (by 2011 by the latest), actions to be taken on a Community as well as on a global scale, and the environmental and social problems arising from the closure of mercury mines in the Community. In particular the Council invited the Commission to present appropriate proposals on the phasing out of the export of mercury and on its safe storage or disposal as well as on marketing restrictions for consumer use and for certain types of health care equipment containing mercury.*

## **TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATION AND ENERGY**

At its meeting on **27 and 28 June 2005**, the Council discussed:

### Community air traffic controller licence

*The Council reached political agreement on its common position concerning the proposal for a Directive on a Community air traffic controller licence, the objective of which is to increase safety standards and to improve the operations of the Community air traffic control system through the issue of a Community air traffic controller licence. This licence will be based on a harmonisation of the training given to student air traffic controllers and to air traffic controllers employed by air navigation service providers offering their services primarily to general air traffic. In particular the text agreed introduces high Community standards for entry conditions to the profession, the structure of qualifications, the content of initial training and linguistic knowledge.*

## External relations in the aviation sector

*The Council adopted conclusions which address the existing bilateral agreements between Member States and third countries, the general principles regarding agreements and negotiations between the Community and third countries and the mandates for these negotiations as well as the future development of policy on Community-level negotiations with third countries. Furthermore, the Council adopted two Decisions on the Agreement between the Community and Chile on certain aspects of air services. The objective of the Agreement is to bring the relevant provisions of the bilateral air services agreements between the Member States and Chile into conformity with Community law.*

## Trans-European energy networks

*The Council reached political agreement on its common position on the proposal for a Decision laying down guidelines for trans-European energy networks (TEN-E) and repealing Decisions Nos 96/391/EC and 1229/2003/EC. The purpose of the proposal is to adapt the guidelines on trans-European networks adopted in June 2003, particularly to take account of enlargement and to allow the funding of projects of common interest to the enlarged Union. The revised guidelines include projects which will facilitate the integration of the new Member States into the internal market for electricity and gas and addresses also the need to include projects involving neighbouring third countries.*

## Energy efficiency

*The Council reached political agreement on its common position concerning the proposal for a Directive on energy end-use efficiency and energy services. The text agreed aims to stimulate energy efficiency by introducing indicative savings targets for Member States and by measures which will assist the development of the market for energy services. The proposal, which seeks to contribute to the achievement of the EU's Kyoto emission reduction target, focuses on the demand side (i.e. end-user and retail suppliers) and thus constitutes a complement to earlier Community legislation concerning the supply side.*