



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 22 January 2016
(OR. en)

15340/15

LIMITE

PV/CONS 76

DRAFT MINUTES¹

Subject: **3439th** meeting of the Council of the European Union
(GENERAL AFFAIRS) held in Brussels on 15 December 2015

¹ Information on Council legislative deliberations, on other cases of Council deliberations open to the public and on public debates may be found in Addendum 1 to these minutes.

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1. **Adoption of the provisional agenda**

13824/15 OJ/CONS 64

The Council adopted the above agenda.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

2. **Approval of the list of "A" items**

15204/15 PTS A 104

The Council adopted the "A" item as listed in 15204/15.

The Commission made a statement as set out in the Annex.

3. **Resolutions, decisions and opinions adopted by the European Parliament at its part-sessions in Strasbourg from 23 November 2015, and in Brussels on 11 November 2015 and 2 December 2015**

14340/15 PE-RE 9

The Council took note of the resolutions, opinions and decisions adopted by the European Parliament at its above mentioned part-sessions, which have been or would be taken into consideration when the relevant issues were examined.

4. **Proposal for an interinstitutional agreement on better regulation**

= Political agreement

15007/15 INST 437 POLGEN 174 JUR 767 IA 22 CODEC 1671

+ COR 1

The Presidency presented the provisional agreement on a new interinstitutional agreement on better regulation, reached with the European Parliament and the Commission on 8 December 2015.

The Council confirmed its political agreement on the text presented by the Presidency.

5. Eighteen-month programme of the Council (1 January 2016 - 30 June 2017)

- = Approval
(Public debate in accordance with Article 8(3) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)
15258/15 POLGEN 178

The Council endorsed the eighteen-month programme of the Council.

6. Preparation for the European Council meeting on 17 and 18 December 2015

- = Draft conclusions
13596/15 CO EUR-PREP 46
- = Five Presidents' Report: 'Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union'

The Council examined the draft European Council conclusions.

The Council had an exchange of views on the draft European Council conclusions focusing in particular on migration, fight against terrorism, EMU (in particular the follow-up to the Five Presidents' report), internal market, UK and external relations.

7. Enlargement, and stabilisation and association process

- = Draft Council conclusions
15234/15 ELARG 70 COWEB 148

Following an exchange of views on issues related to Enlargement and the Stabilisation and Association Process, the Council adopted conclusions as set out in doc. 15356/15.

The Cyprus delegation made a statement as set out in the Annex.

8. European Semester 2016

- Annual Growth Survey 2016
 - = Presentation by the Commission
14270/15 ECOFIN 875 UEM 415 SOC 676 EMPL 441 COMPET 519 ENV 705
EDUC 300 RECH 279 ENER 391 JAI 873

The Commission presented its Annual Growth Survey for 2016.

9. Any other business

– **Alpine strategy**

The Slovenian delegation announced that it will host the launch conference for the macro-regional strategy for the Alpine Region on 25-26 January in Brdo.

STATEMENTS FOR THE COUNCIL MINUTES

Ad "A" item 1: **Draft Council conclusions on off-site nuclear emergency preparedness and response**
 = Adoption

STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSION

"The Commission welcomes the Council conclusions on Off-Site Nuclear Emergency Preparedness and Response as approved by the General Affairs Council on 15 December.

The Commission recalls the obligations of the Member States under the relevant provisions on emergency preparedness and response (EP&R) of Council Directive 2013/59/EURATOM (Articles 97 to 99 of the Directive), in particular to cooperate with other Member States in addressing possible emergencies on their territories which may affect other Member States, as well as its own responsibility to ensure the correct implementation of these relevant EP&R provisions.

The Commission also notes the invitation by the Council to ensure that Member States are developing a coherent approach to EP&R provisions particularly between neighbouring Member States, including through emergency response arrangement.

To enable the Commission to ensure the correct implementation of the relevant EP&R provisions of Council Directive 2013/59/EURATOM and to promote best practices at EU level, the Commission considers that it needs direct access as an observer to the joint training sessions and nuclear emergency exercises organised by Member States with the objective of testing cross-border arrangements, in order to gain an improved practical understanding of EU Member States practices in this field.

The Commission regrets that this is not acknowledged in the Council conclusions."

Ad "B" item 7: **Enlargement, and stabilisation and association process**
= **Draft Council conclusions**

STATEMENT BY CYPRUS

"Cyprus would like to recall its position that the EU accession process for Turkey, as well as for all candidates, is in line with the Negotiating Framework and the relevant Council Conclusions and is subject to the full and non discriminatory implementation of their obligations towards the EU and all the 28 Member States,

In this regard, Turkey is expected to proceed with the fulfillment of all its accession obligations with no further delay. While it is within the Commission's remit of competences to proceed with the screening work on negotiating chapters, this is without prejudice to the position of the Republic of Cyprus on the chapters frozen in 2009. For as long as the reasons that have lead to the freezing of these chapters remain valid, the position of Cyprus will remain unchanged.

We regret that Turkey's unilateral Statement of 29 November 2015 reiterates its intention not to implement the Visa Liberalisation Road Map towards the Republic of Cyprus. While this unilateral Statement bares no legal effect, it demonstrates once again Turkey's discriminatory and non-cooperative policy *vis-a-vis* an EU member state and questions the spirit of the reenergization of the EU-Turkey relations, as decided at the EU-Turkey Summit. Turkey's progress towards Visa Liberalisation will depend on the full implementation of the requirements as set out in the Road Map including the full and non-discriminatory implementation of the Readmission Agreement, as well as ensuring effective cooperation on all JHA issues with all EU Member States. In this context, Cyprus cannot consent to any preferential treatment or concessions to the Visa Liberalisation Road Map. It should also be stressed that the systematic policy applied by Turkey of changing the demographic character of the occupied areas of the Republic of Cyprus by the illegal influx of Turkish citizens (settlers) is in direct conflict with the EU's legal order in the area of Justice, Freedom and Security.

In light of the Commission's decision to update the Screening Report on Chapter 24, and the preparation of the report pertaining to progress achieved by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its Visa Liberalisation Roadmap, in 2016, Cyprus expects that the discriminatory policies of Turkey will be duly reflected in the Commission's assessment as well as an urgent call for the need Turkey to withdraw its unilateral statements submitted in this regard.

Any attempt to revive work, especially when it comes to Chapter 24, will yield successful results, only when political conditions allow it and if Turkey proceeds to the necessary preparations for full alignment with the *acquis* in a non-discriminatory manner towards all Member States, including the Republic of Cyprus."