



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



13339/06 (Presse 264)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

2755th Council Meeting

### **General Affairs and External Relations**

### **General Affairs**

Luxembourg, 17 October 2006

President      **Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA,**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland

\* The 2756th meeting on External Relations is the subject of a separate press release (13340/06).

# **P R E S S**

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Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6083 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026  
[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

13339/06 (Presse 264)

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**EN**

## **Main Results of the Council**

*The Council welcomed a report from the Commission concluding that **Bulgaria and Romania**, on the basis of progress made, will be able to take on the rights and obligations of European Union membership, as scheduled, on 1 January 2007. It commended the two countries for reforms undertaken and invited them to complete final preparations for membership.*

*The Council approved regulations providing the legal basis for spending as from 1 January 2007 under the EU's new financial framework in two key external relations policy areas, namely a financing instrument for **development cooperation**, with nearly EUR 17 billion for seven years, and a **European neighbourhood** and partnership instrument, with over EUR 11,1 billion.*

*It also agreed to the signature of a new agreement with the United States on the processing and transfer by airline companies of **passenger name record** data. The agreement is aimed at preventing and combating terrorism and serious crime, whilst ensuring an equivalent level of protection of passengers' personal data in line with European standards on fundamental rights and privacy.*

*The Council also approved the **EU Annual Report on Human Rights 2006**.*

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
  - The documents whose references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site <http://www.consilium.europa.eu>.
  - Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the abovementioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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## **PARTICIPANTS**

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

### **Belgium:**

Mr Karel DE GUCHT  
Mr Didier DONFUT

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary for European Affairs, attached to the  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Czech Republic:**

Mr Alexandr VONDRA  
Ms Helena BAMBASOVÁ

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Denmark:**

Mr Michael ZILMER-JOHNS

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Germany:**

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Estonia:**

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Greece:**

Ms Dora BAKOYANNIS  
Mr Ioannis VALINAKIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

### **Spain:**

Mr Alberto NAVARRO GONZÁLEZ

State Secretary for the European Union

### **France:**

Mr Philippe DOUSTE-BLAZY

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Ireland:**

Mr Noel TREACY

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach and  
Foreign Affairs (with special responsibility for European  
Affairs)

### **Italy:**

Mr Massimo D'ALEMA  
Ms Patrizia SENTINELLI

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

### **Cyprus:**

Mr Yiorgos LILLIKAS  
Mr George CHACALLI

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Deputy Permanent Representative

### **Latvia:**

Ms Maija MANIKA

Undersecretary of State for Economic Relations and  
Development Cooperation Policy Directorate, Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs

### **Lithuania:**

Mr Petras VAITIEKŪNAS  
Mr Laimonas TALAT-KELPŠA

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Undersecretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Luxembourg:**

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and  
Immigration

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT

Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and  
Immigration

### **Hungary:**

Ms Kinga GÖNCZ  
Mr László VÁRKONYI

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Malta:**

Mr Michael FRENDO

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Netherlands:**

Mr Bernard Rudolf BOT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Austria:**

Mr Hans WINKLER

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Poland:**

Ms Anna Elżbieta FOTYGA

Mr Rafał WISNIEWSKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Portugal:**

Mr Luís AMADO

Mr Manuel LOBO ANTUNES

Ministro de Estado, Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for Defence and Maritime Affairs

**Slovenia:**

Mr Dimitrij RUPEL

Mr Božo CERAR

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Slovakia:**

Mr Ján KUBIŠ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Finland:**

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Sweden:**

Mr Carl BILDT

Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Mr Hans JEPPSON

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for European Affairs

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**United Kingdom:**

Ms Margaret BECKETT

Mr Geoff HOON

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Minister of State for Europe

**Commission:**

Mr Olli REHN

Member

**General Secretariat of the Council:**

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

The Governments of the Accessing States were represented as follows:

**Bulgaria:**

Mr Ivailo KALFIN

Ms Evgenia KOLDANOVA

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Deputy Foreign Minister

**Romania:**

Mr Mihai-Răzvan UNGUREANU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**ITEMS DEBATED****ENLARGEMENT - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council welcomes the Commission's report which concludes that Bulgaria and Romania, based on the progress made, will be in a position to take on the rights and obligations of membership on 1 January 2007.

The Council commends Bulgaria and Romania for the reforms undertaken and invites both countries to complete their final preparations. It underlines the importance of continued political commitment of both countries to address outstanding issues.

The Council supports the mechanism to be set up for cooperation and verification of the progress in the area of judicial reform and the fight against organised crime and corruption, including, if necessary and appropriate, the possibility to impose safeguards, as well as the other measures identified by the Commission to accompany Bulgaria's and Romania's accession. These will aim to ensure the proper functioning of EU policies and institutions after accession.

The Council notes the advanced state of the ongoing process of ratification of the Accession Treaty and looks forward to welcoming Bulgaria and Romania as members of the Union on 1 January 2007."

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED****EXTERNAL RELATIONS****Iraq - extension of the mandate of the EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission**

The Council adopted a joint action amending and extending joint action 2005/190/CFSP on the EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX) (13171/06).

The new joint action extends the mandate of the mission until 31 December 2007 (Joint Action 2005/190/CFSP expires on 31 October 2006).

EUJUST LEX, a mission conducted under the European security and defence policy, is designed to address urgent needs in the Iraqi criminal justice system by providing training in management and criminal investigation to be given to senior officials and executive staff in the judiciary, police and penitentiary sectors. The operational phase of the mission started on 1 July 2005.

**Sudan/Darfur - extension of the EU civilian-military supporting action**

The Council adopted a decision extending until 31 December 2006 the EU civilian-military supporting action to the African Union mission in the Darfur region of Sudan (AMIS II) (13528/06).

This decision, which implements joint action 2005/557/CFSP, follows a decision taken by the African Union Peace and Security Council to extend the mandate of AMIS until 31 December 2006.

Pending transition of the African Union mission to a United Nations operation in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1706(2006), the EU will continue its civilian-military supporting action to AMIS II until the end of 2006. The EU supporting action, which was first agreed in July 2005, had already been extended by the Council in July 2006 until 31 October.

The EU civilian-military supporting action to AMIS II is aimed at ensuring effective and timely EU assistance to support the AMIS II enhancement. Respecting the principle of African ownership, it supports the AU and its political, military and police efforts to address the crisis in Darfur. It includes support to the AMIS Civilian Police Component, planning and technical assistance at all AMIS levels of command, the provision of military observers, training of African troops and observers as well as strategic and tactical transportation.

## **EU Annual Report on Human Rights 2006**

The Council approved the eighth EU annual report on human rights, covering the period from July 2005 to June 2006. The report provides an overview of the EU's work in promoting human rights and democracy.

The report records the EU's human rights related activities with regard to third countries, action at multilateral level as well as important thematic issues. As in previous years, it also highlights various human rights issues within the EU.

The report will be available on the Council's web site:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_fo/showPage.asp?id=970&lang=en&mode=g](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=970&lang=en&mode=g)

## **Preparations for the EU-Ukraine summit**

The Council took note of information provided by the presidency, the high representative and the Commission on progress in preparations for the EU-Ukraine Summit, to take place in Helsinki on 27 October.

The summit will be the first such meeting since Ukrainian parliamentary elections in March and the formation of the new government in August. Three main points are on the agenda: developments in the EU and Ukraine, EU-Ukraine relations and international issues.

See also *13340/06*, EU-Ukraine relations, p. 25.

## **Relations with Moldova - Cooperation committee**

The Council approved the position to be taken by the EU at the 7th EU-Moldova cooperation committee meeting, which will take place in Brussels on 19 October 2006.

## **Romania - Industrial products**

The Council adopted a decision authorising signature of an additional protocol to the Europe association agreement with Romania, dealing with conformity assessment and acceptance of industrial products.

The protocol is aimed at facilitating the elimination of technical barriers between the parties to trade in industrial products, with the progressive adoption and implementation by Romania of national law which is equivalent to EU law.

## **European neighbourhood and partnership instrument\***

The Council adopted a regulation establishing, and laying down general provisions for, a European neighbourhood and partnership instrument for the 2007-13 period, following an agreement reached with the European Parliament in first reading.

The regulation establishes a legal framework for the provision of Community assistance to support the EU's European neighbourhood policy. It is intended to support the development of an area of prosperity and good neighbourly relations involving both the European Union and the following countries and territories: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, the Russian Federation, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

A total of over EUR 11,1 billion under the EU's 2007-13 financial framework will be provided from the Community budget for implementation of the regulation, of which at least 95 per cent will be allocated to country and multi-country programmes, and up to 5 per cent will be devoted to cross-border cooperation programmes.

The regulation will apply as from 1 January 2007.

## **Development cooperation instrument**

The Council reached political agreement on the content of a draft regulation aimed at establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation for the 2007-2013 period (*13635/06*). A common position will be adopted by the Council without delay and forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading under the Parliament-Council co-decision procedure.

Creation of the development cooperation instrument (DCI) will allow renewal of one of the EU's most important tools for funding its development cooperation activities, with almost EUR 17 billion for the 2007-13 period. These funds, already agreed under the EU's 2007-13 financial framework, come in addition to EUR 22,7 billion agreed specifically for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries over the 2008-13 period, bringing the total - not including member states' national contributions - to almost EUR 40 billion in new EU funding.

Interventions are planned at two mutually-reinforcing levels. The first is geographic, covering Asia, Central Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and South Africa, the second thematic, enabling regional programmes to be reinforced in response to specific needs, such as migration, education, and health. ACP countries can also benefit from the thematic programmes, and a specific amount is earmarked for ACP countries that need assistance in adjusting to the effects of the EU's sugar sector reform.

Moreover, the DCI allows for a simplified system by replacing a series of existing instruments by a single financing instrument, enabling all EU interventions to be decided on the basis of the same principles and to follow a simpler decision-making procedure.

The aim is to ensure that the regulation is signed in December and can enter force on 1 January 2007, at the start of the new financing period.

### **External assistance in 2005 - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"RECALLING the 2005 Joint Development Policy Statement: "The European Consensus on Development" (JDPS);

RECALLING its conclusions of 21 November 2005 on the Annual Report 2005 on the European Community's (EC) Development Policy and the implementation of external assistance in 2004;

THE COUNCIL:

1. WELCOMES the Commission's Annual Report 2006 on the EC's development policy and the implementation of external assistance in 2005 and NOTES with satisfaction the overall improvement of the Annual Report, and in particular, the strengthened partnership approach and results-orientation which show improved quality of EC interventions;
2. NOTES that the JDPS adopted in 2005 provides a basis to further develop the contents and the structure of the Annual Report as a management and communication tool, and REITERATES its invitation to the Commission to further improve the analytical part of the Annual Report by showing contributions of EC assistance to achievement of outcomes and impacts, including concrete examples;
3. INVITES the Commission in the 2007 Annual Report to
  - make a clear link from the description of activities to the achievement of development policy objectives as defined in the JDPS, including continued and enhanced MDG-related analysis,
  - set out explicitly its annual objectives in the report and to provide an assessment on their achievement,

- include highlights from the Donor Atlas which are relevant to the achievement of development policy objectives,
  - after analysing the positive achievements and assessing existing challenges, strengthen the forward-looking contents of the Annual Report, by outlining improvements of policies and programming, and
  - include a more explicit description of implementation and effects of the Paris Declaration as well as, based on the biennial EU PCD report , a summary of achievements as regards the policy coherence for development (PCD) commitments;
4. WELCOMES in particular the description of lessons learnt from evaluations and INVITES the Commission to integrate them into policy and programming processes;
  5. NOTES with concern the decrease in effectiveness and efficiency of EC contributions to Latin America, as reflected in the results-oriented monitoring system, and INVITES the Commission in the future to provide assessments on reasons behind major changes;
  6. COMMENDS the Commission for the quantitative improvements on its aid delivery in 2005 with respect to 2004 both in terms of commitments (EUR 8 billion, i.e. a 16% increase) and payments (EUR 6,2 billion last year, compared to EUR 5,7 billion in 2004) and ENCOURAGES the Commission to keep up with its efforts with a view to reducing the outstanding RAL;
  7. WELCOMES the increase in share of low income countries (LICs) in the overall resource allocation, NOTES that the share of least developed countries (LDCs) has remained stable after a decline in 2004, EMPHASISES the importance of the commitments made for a specific focus on Africa and REITERATES the request to report on measures to ensure greater impact on poverty and inequality in middle income countries (MICs);
  8. INVITES the Commission to further improve the accounting of its ODA reporting to DAC, and to present the financial statistics on the use of ODA in a way that provides information on how the share of the areas for EC action identified in the JDPS evolves over time, how EC contributions relate to the global aid allocations by region and how the geographical distribution responds to the needs and performance of the regions;
  9. WELCOMES the presentation of the Annual Report 2006 in June and ENCOURAGES the Commission to enhance its efforts to present the Annual Report at the earliest possible stage in the future;

10. INVITES the Commission to draft the executive summary as a strategic document with analytical and forward-looking contents focusing on achievements, remaining challenges and opportunities, and which serves as a public communication tool."

### **EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council recalled the agreement reached at the EU-South Africa Joint Cooperation Council in 2005 to take new steps to ensure that the relations between the EU and South Africa develop into a truly strategic partnership. The Council reaffirmed the EU's commitment to working towards this goal. The Council stressed that the strategic partnership between the EU and South Africa shall be complementary to and fully consistent with the EU Strategy for Africa.
2. The Council acknowledged South Africa's important role in Africa and in the world at large. The Council noted that the EU and South Africa share common values and interests and are committed to working together with other partners to promote peace and security, sustainable development, democracy, respect for human rights and good governance in Africa and globally.
3. The Council underlined that the process of developing an EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership must be based on an open, concrete and transparent dialogue between the two parties and be pursued on the basis of mutual understanding and ownership of the process.
4. The Council welcomed the Commission's communication "Towards an EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership" as a good basis from which to begin the negotiations that should seek to bring the Member States, the Community and South Africa together to agree on a single and coherent framework. The framework should have clearly and jointly defined objectives, cover all areas of cooperation and ensure the participation of all stakeholders.
5. The Council underlined that the strategic partnership shall be built on the existing relations between the EU and South Africa with the objective of strengthening and bringing added value to these relations, while being fully consistent with international human rights obligations as well as with the EU Strategy for Africa and the EU consensus on development. Coherence needs to be assured between the Strategic Partnership, the TDCA, the EPA negotiations with the SADC group, the CSP and South Africa's national, regional and African priorities and commitments to its regional partners.

6. It is envisaged that the existing cooperation between the EU and South Africa will be enhanced by moving from political dialogue to shared objectives and strategic political cooperation on regional, African and global issues including conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. It is also envisaged that the Strategic Partnership will develop stronger and sustainable economic cooperation, fully implement the TDCA provisions on trade related areas and extend cooperation to the social, cultural and environmental fields.
7. The Council further welcomed the intention to draw up an operational, results-oriented and measurable action plan for the implementation of the strategic partnership in cooperation with the Member States, the Community and South Africa. On the EU side, the implementation of the Action Plan should be a joint exercise to which both the Member States and the Community will make a valuable contribution based on their respective spheres of competence.
8. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to continuing dialogue with South Africa with a view to reaching a common understanding on the strategic partnership in the Joint Cooperation Council in November 2006. "

### **EU-Africa partnership on Infrastructure - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting within the council:

1. EMPHASISE the importance of infrastructure, the related services and the regulatory framework for sustainable economic growth, trade, employment creation, continental and regional integration, food security and poverty reduction and RECALL the contribution that improved infrastructure can make to the achievement of the MDGs;
2. AFFIRM the ambition to establish an EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure ("the Partnership") to support programmes that facilitate Africa's interconnectivity at a continental and regional level as well as national programmes that contribute to that connectivity and UNDERLINE that the Partnership should be based on the principles of African ownership, sustainability, economic soundness and debt sustainability and should respond to the development goals and plans of the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Development Bank;

3. WELCOME the Commission's Communication "Interconnecting Africa: EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure" and NOTE with satisfaction that the Partnership represents a concrete step in the implementation of the EU Strategy for Africa, contributes to increased regional trade and a fuller integration of African countries into the multilateral trading system and should in particular support the implementation of EPAs and help the countries to reap their benefits;
4. WELCOME the Partnership's scope to focus on trans-boundary, regional, and national infrastructure in transport, water and sanitation, energy and ICT sectors that secures interconnectivity across the continent and its different regions and RECALL the opportunities that lie in the development of integrated regional markets for decentralised infrastructure systems;
5. NOTE that the Partnership supplements the EU's sectoral approach and support to infrastructure at national and local levels where the major bulk of assistance is channelled through partner countries' strategies supported through the National Indicative Programmes by the European Development Fund (EDF), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, as appropriate, and by the Member States;
6. UNDERLINE that the Partnership should facilitate country-led efforts to improve access to market and basic services at national and local levels;
7. NOTE that the Partnership is complementary to the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, a joint effort of major IFIs, bilateral donors, multilateral agencies and African institutions actively engaged in infrastructure development; RECALL the role of the private sector and the important contribution public-private partnerships can make to the development of infrastructure and REQUEST proper coordination and cooperation with these actors as well as among the Commission's various instruments, the EIB and its Investment Facility and the Member States, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness;
8. RECALL that the EU has extensive expertise and experience of the Trans-European Networks (TENs) for transport, energy and telecommunications including related regulatory frameworks which can be shared with Africa taking into account local circumstances and conditions;
9. RECALL that the EU Water Initiative and EU Energy Initiative have provided valuable preparatory work for strategic sector dialogues for the Partnership and INVITE the Commission, the Member States and the other Partners to the EU Water Initiative, on which discussions on the way forward are ongoing, and the EU Energy Initiative to closely align the activities of those initiatives in Africa to the Partnership, especially where they are relevant to trans-boundary issues and regional integration;

10. EMPHASISE the importance of strategic sector dialogues between EU and Africa on infrastructure policies and priorities and INVITE the Commission, the Member States and relevant other partners to establish adequate fora where they do not exist;
11. NOTE that the development of infrastructure is capital intensive and requires substantial resources, both human and financial, to operate and maintain it; EMPHASISE the importance of capacity building and development of related services, markets and regulatory frameworks to sustain the benefits the investments deliver, while underlining the prime responsibility of partner countries and institutions to maintain them;
12. CONSIDER that, given the high costs of infrastructure projects, special emphasis shall be paid to good governance, accountability and anti-corruption issues;
13. RECALL the fact that the environmental and social impacts of large infrastructure projects can be severe and INVITE the Commission to establish sustainability criteria for selection of projects and to ensure application of environmental and social impacts assessment, paying special attention to education, health, conflict sensitivity, climate change, labour and human rights aspects, and to mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender concerns throughout the project cycle. The principles on integrating energy into development cooperation referred to in the General Affairs and External Relations Council conclusions of 10 April 2006 and the sustainability criteria provided by the World Commission on Dams Recommendations for large water infrastructure should, inter alia, be taken into due account when establishing the criteria;
14. LOOK FORWARD to the establishment of the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund giving all Member States and their institutions, the Commission and the European Investment Bank the possibility to support Partnership activities; UNDERLINE the importance for the Trust Fund to associate all interested Member States and STRESS the possibility of joint financing and co-financing infrastructure projects supported by the Trust Fund.

Furthermore UNDERLINE the need for the trust fund to be managed in an efficient and transparent manner and for all Member States to be informed regarding its activities and projects; STRESS the need to work closely with the African Development Bank and other African partners to ensure ownership and dialogue; WELCOME the contributions pledged so far to the Fund and LOOK FORWARD to further long-term financial contributions, which can be made by the Commission as well as, on a voluntary basis, by the Member States;

15. WELCOME this example of close coordination between the Commission and the EIB and CALL UPON both institutions to take further measures to further improve the coordination of their work in Africa and the rest of the world;
16. INVITE all parties to ensure the effective follow-up of these conclusions."

## **TRADE POLICY**

### **Switzerland - Tariff quotas for agricultural products**

The Council adopted a regulation repealing regulation 7/2005 on a Community tariff quota for certain agricultural products originating in Switzerland (11115/06).

Regulation 7/2005 has been superseded by a decision of the EU-Switzerland joint committee for agriculture incorporating, into the EU/ Switzerland agreement on trade in agricultural products provisions on the tariff quota for products of CN code 0705 21 00.

Following the enlargement of the EU on 1 May 2004, the Community and Switzerland agreed to adapt tariff concessions laid down in the agreement, in order to broaden an existing duty-free Community tariff quota to cover a new product (CN code 0705 21 00).

## **GENERAL AFFAIRS**

### **Proceedings in the Council's other configurations**

The Council took note of a presidency report on proceedings in the Council's other configurations (13639/06).

## **ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome - 2 euro commemorative coin - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council underlines the importance of celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which will take place on 25 March 2007. It therefore welcomes the Member States' initiative of issuing a common commemorative coin on this occasion. Euro-area Member States will issue a 2-euro commemorative coin bearing a common design on the national side, whereas the other Member States are invited to use the common design for issuing a commemorative or collector coin in their national currency.

2. As under the existing rules euro-area Member States are allowed to issue only one 2-euro commemorative coin per year and in order to allow all euro-area Member States to participate in this initiative, in view of the symbolic importance of the commemorated event, euro-area Member States may exceptionally issue this commemorative coin in addition to another 2-euro commemorative coin which some of them may issue in 2007 to commemorate a different event.
3. Member States should forward by 30 November 2006 the complete design of their national side of the commemorative coin to the Commission, which will without delay inform the other Member States about the designs. "

### **JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

#### **Passenger name record data - Signature of an agreement with the United States**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the presidency to sign an interim agreement with the United States on the continued use of passenger name record (PNR) data (*13226/06 and 13216/06*). The process of signature by both parties is due to be completed on 18 October.

On 6 October the EU and the United States completed negotiations on the interim agreement, which covers the processing and transfer of passenger name record (PNR) data by air carriers to the US Administration.

The new Agreement will help to prevent and combat terrorism and serious transnational crime, whilst ensuring an equivalent level of protection of passengers' personal data in line with European standards on fundamental rights and privacy.

*See press release 14006/06.*

#### **External borders agency - participation of Iceland and Norway**

The Council agreed to the signature of an arrangement between the European Community and Iceland and Norway on the modalities of those states' participation in the European external borders agency (*10945/1/06*).

## **INTERNAL MARKET**

### **Motor vehicles - Systems to protect passengers - Field of vision**

The Council agreed on a common approach on the position to be taken by the European Community with regard to a draft regulation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), concerning the approval of:

- partitioning systems to protect passengers against displaced luggage, supplied as non-original equipment (11523/06);
- motor vehicles with regard to the forward field of vision of the motor vehicle driver (11522/06).

The draft decisions will be forwarded to the European Parliament for its assent.

The main purpose of the UN/ECE regulation is to establish harmonised technical prescriptions, thereby avoiding the creation of technical barriers to trade in motor vehicles between the contracting parties, while ensuring a high level of safety and environmental protection.

The intention is for the Community to vote in favour of the draft regulation at a forthcoming meeting of the UN/ECE World Forum for harmonisation of vehicle regulations.

## **TRANSPARENCY**

### **Annual report on public access to documents**

The Council adopted its annual report on the implementation of regulation 1049/2001 regarding public access to documents in 2005 (13354/1/06).

The report indicates, *inter alia*, that

- 68,6% of the Council documents produced in 2005 - i.e. 77 832 of the 113 398 new documents listed in the Council's register - were made directly accessible to the public via the register upon circulation.
- As of 19 January 2006, the Council's register referred to 697 111 documents (all language versions taken together), of which 459 033 (65,8% of those registered) were public documents, i.e. either available in a downloadable format or on request.

- In 2005, 259 106 individual users logged on to the Council's public register via the Internet. The number of visits rose by nearly 16 % (the third successive annual increase) totalling 1 064 039 visits, which on average corresponds to almost 3 000 visits per day.
- The Council received 2 100 requests for access from the public concerning a total of 9 457 documents and gave access (total and partial access taken together) to 7 788 (80,6 %) of the requested documents.

The report highlights the key developments in the fourth year of implementation of the regulation and reviews complaints submitted to the European Ombudsman, rulings given by the Community Courts in 2005 under regulation 1049/2001 as well as cases brought before the Court of First Instance regarding access to Council documents.

In addition, the report presents the regulatory, administrative and practical adaptations made by the Council to comply with the regulation.

In conclusion, the report indicates that, as far as the Council is concerned, the aims set by the Treaties and by regulation 1049/2001 were achieved in 2005.

### **DECISIONS TAKEN BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE**

#### **Economic and Social Committee**

The Council adopted a Decision appointing the Danish members of the Economic and Social Committee for the period from 21 September 2006 to 20 September 2010 (13553/06):

Ms Dorthe ANDERSEN  
Chefkonsulent, DA

Mr Henrik FALLESEN  
Leder af DI's Bruxelles kontor

Ms Benedicte FEDERSPIEL  
Chefkonsulent, Forbrugerrådet

Mr Peder Munch HANSEN  
International konsulent, LO

Ms Randi IVERSEN  
Forkvinde, Kvinderådet

Mr Søren KARGAARD  
International konsulent, FTF

Ms Marie-Louise KNUPPERT  
LO sekretær

Mr Poul LÜNEBORG  
Konsulent, DSI

Mr Leif Erland NIELSEN  
Seniorkonsulent, Landbrugsrådet

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