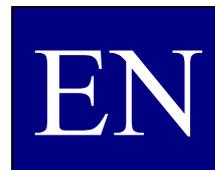




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



6187/08 (Presse 32)

PRESS RELEASE

2847th Council meeting

Economic and Financial Affairs

Brussels, 12 February 2008

President **Mr Andrej BAJUK**
Minister for Finance of Slovenia

P R E S S

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 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

6187/08 (Presse 32)

1
EN

Main results of the Council

*The Council approved changes to the rules regarding **VAT on services**, so as to ensure that most types of service are taxed in the member state of consumption, and service providers can fulfil their EU-wide VAT obligations in a single member state, thus reducing compliance costs.*

*The Council assessed updated **stability and convergence programmes** presented by a number of member states.*

*It adopted a **key issues paper** on economic and financial affairs, as well as conclusions on the efficiency of economic instruments in reaching **energy and climate change** targets. Both documents will be submitted to the spring meeting of the European Council, to be held in Brussels on 13 and 14 March.*

*The Council also approved an updated accession partnership with **Croatia**, as well as the launch of an EU mission in support of security sector reform in **Guinea-Bissau**, and the extension of the mandates of a number of EU **special representatives**.*

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS.....	5
--------------------------	----------

ITEMS DEBATED

STABILITY AND CONVERGENCE PROGRAMMES.....	7
PREPARATION OF THE SPRING MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL.....	8
BETTER REGULATION	11
EU BUDGET – DISCHARGE FOR 2006.....	12
MEETINGS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL	13

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED*ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS*

– VAT on services.....	14
– Capital duty (recast)	14

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

– EU special representatives - Extension of mandates.....	15
– Identification and tracing of illicit light weapons.....	15
– EU/Israel - Participation in Community programmes.....	16
– Liberia - Restrictive measures.....	16

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

– Guinea-Bissau - EU mission in support of security sector reform.....	16
--	----

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

– European development funds - Discharge for 2006.....	17
--	----

- ¹
- 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.
 - Documents for which 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 Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

ENLARGEMENT

- Accession partnership with Croatia..... 17

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

- Schengen - 2008 budget..... 17

TRADE POLICY

- Trade barrier regulations - The Community's rights under international rules..... 18

ENERGY

- Euratom Supply Agency - Statutes..... 18

FISHERIES

- EU/Ivory Coast fisheries partnership agreement..... 19
- EU/Seychelles partnership agreement 19

DECISION TAKEN BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Restrictive measures against extremists.....20

PARTICIPANTS

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

<u>Belgium:</u> Mr Didier REYNDEERS	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance
<u>Bulgaria:</u> Mr Plamen Vassilev ORESHARSKI	Minister for Finance
<u>Czech Republic:</u> Mr Tomáš ZÍDEK	Deputy Minister for Finance, International Relations and Financial Policy Section
<u>Denmark:</u> Mr Claus GRUBE	Permanent Representative
<u>Germany:</u> Mr Peer STEINBRÜCK	Federal Minister for Finance
<u>Estonia:</u> Mr Ivari PADAR	Minister for Finance
<u>Ireland:</u> Mr Brian COWEN	Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Finance
<u>Greece:</u> Mr Georgios ALOGOSKOUFIS	Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance
<u>Spain:</u> Mr Pedro SOLBES MIRA	Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance
<u>France:</u> Ms Christine LAGARDE	Minister for Economic Affairs, Finance and Employment
<u>Italy:</u> Mr Tommaso PADOA SCHIOPPA	Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance
<u>Cyprus:</u> Mr Michalis SARRIS	Minister for Finance
<u>Latvia:</u> Mr Normunds POPENS	Permanent Representative
<u>Lithuania:</u> Mr Rimantas ŠADŽIUS	Minister for Finance
<u>Luxembourg:</u> Mr Jeannot KRECKÉ	Minister for Economic Affairs and Foreign Trade, Minister for Sport
<u>Hungary:</u> Mr János VERES	Minister for Finance
<u>Malta:</u> Mr Alfred CAMILLERI	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance
<u>Netherlands:</u> Mr Wouter BOS	Minister for Finance, Deputy Prime Minister
<u>Austria:</u> Mr Wilhelm MOLTERER	Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Finance
<u>Poland:</u> Mr Jan VINCENT-ROSTOWSKI	Minister for Finance
<u>Portugal:</u> Mr Emanuel AUGUSTO SANTOS	State Secretary for the Budget, attached to the Minister for Finance

Romania:

Mr Varujan VOSGANIAN

Minister for the Economy and Finance

Slovenia:

Mr Andrej BAJUK

Minister for Finance

Mr Žiga LAVRIČ

State Secretary at the Ministry of Finance

Slovakia:

Mr Ján POČIATEK

Minister for Finance

Finland:

Mr Jyrki KATAINEN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Finance

Sweden:

Mr Anders BORG

Minister for Finance

United Kingdom:

Ms Angela EAGLE

Exchequer Secretary

Commission:

M. Günter VERHEUGEN

Vice-President

M. Siim KALLAS

Vice-President

Mr Joaquín ALMUNIA

Member

Other participants:

Mr Philippe MAYSTADT

President of the European Investment Bank

Mr Xavier MUSCA

Chairman of the Economic and Financial Committee

Mr Christian KASTROP

Chairman of the Economic Policy Committee

ITEMS DEBATED**STABILITY AND CONVERGENCE PROGRAMMES**

The Council adopted opinions on a number of annual updates of the member states' stability and convergence programmes, namely:

- updated stability programmes presented by Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Finland;
- updated convergence programmes presented by Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

It also held an exchange of views on policy measures to support member states in reaching their MTO's.

Under the EU's stability and growth pact, member states having the euro as their currency are required to present stability programmes, and those not participating in the single currency to present convergence programmes.

The programmes set out the member states' medium-term budgetary objectives (MTOs), the main assumptions about expected economic developments and important economic variables, a description of budgetary and other economic policy measures, and an analysis of how changes in assumptions will affect their budgetary and debt position.

The aim is to ensure sound government finances as a means of strengthening the conditions for price stability and for sustainable growth conducive to employment creation.

The Council's opinion can be found in the following documents:

6306/08	(Luxembourg)
6309/08	(Finland)
6311/08	(the Netherlands)
6312/08	(Germany)
6313/08	(Sweden)
6314/08	(Hungary)
6315/08	(UK)
6316/08	(Italy)
6317/08	(France)
6318/08	(Romania)
6320/08	(Slovakia)

The Council is due to adopt opinions on a second batch of updated stability and convergence programmes at its meeting on 4 March.

PREPARATION OF THE SPRING MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Council approved two texts to be submitted to the spring meeting of the European Council (13 and 14 March in Brussels), with a view to its annual review of the EU's strategy for growth and jobs.

– Key issues paper on economic and financial affairs

The Council adopted a key issues paper outlining the main policy objectives to be set for 2008 as concerns economic and financial affairs.

The key issues paper can be found in document [5267/1/08 REV 1](#).

The Economic and Financial Affairs Council is one of a number of Council configurations contributing key issues papers to the European Council. The permanent representatives committee will draw on the main messages from those papers in preparing draft European Council conclusions.

– Energy and climate change

The Council adopted the following conclusions, as a contribution to discussions on energy and climate change:

"Tackling climate change is an economic as well as environmental issue. The macroeconomic impacts of unmitigated climate change are potentially significant and there are also substantial economic and fiscal implications from the implementation of policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, the costs of action at the global level – at up to 3 per cent of global GDP by 2030 – are estimated to be far lower than the costs of inaction, as long as both global solutions and cost-effective measures are implemented. A key challenge will be to ensure that the transition to a low-carbon economy is handled in a way that is consistent with EU competitiveness, sound and sustainable public finances and that contributes positively to broader growth objectives consistent with the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs.

The Council welcomes the Economic Policy Committee's report which reviews Member States' experience of policy instruments to address energy and climate policy objectives. The choice and design of mitigation and adaptation policies will substantially affect the overall costs of action. As contribution to the upcoming European Council discussions on energy and climate change policy, which will discuss the Commission's recently published Climate Action and Renewable Energy package, the Council:

- NOTES that there are a wide range of costs per tonne of CO₂ abated associated with different measures across EU countries. Typically, measures to improve energy efficiency come at least cost, while increasing the share of renewables is more expensive in the short term, even if the cost of renewables energies can be reduced in the longer term as new technology develops. Although a variety of instruments will be needed to achieve energy and climate change targets for 2020, their relative costs should be taken into account.
- UNDERLINES the importance of market based policy instruments such as the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) and environment taxes to deliver least cost policy options for meeting energy and climate change targets. Given that policy instruments are often applied in combination, the Council EMPHASIZES the need for careful consideration of the interaction between different instruments to avoid reduced efficiency and excessive costs and to deliver a consistent price on greenhouse gases – both at national and European level.
- RECOGNISES the need to fully consider the impacts of climate change measures on income distribution, fiscal policy, and public finances, including possible impacts of an increase in the use of auctioning of greenhouse gas emission allowances (EUA) on revenue streams. The Council therefore EMPHASIZES that any policies that have significant budgetary implications should be considered by Finance Ministers. For reasons of subsidiarity and sustainable public finances, revenues from auctioning should be used in line with sound budgetary principles and, specifically, not be subject to mandatory earmarking or hypothecation at EU level. The use of such revenues by Member States should not be inconsistent with EU efforts to tackle climate change.
- CONSIDERS that the full cost of the Commission's energy and climate change proposals must be evaluated and taken into account, AGREES ON the need for appropriate ex-ante cost-benefit analysis and post-implementation evaluation of policy instruments and sub-targets and CALLS FOR reporting on the budgetary, microeconomic and macroeconomic costs of compliance. The reporting requirements should be in line with the efforts to reduce administrative burden. This information should be collated and presented to ECOFIN on a regular basis.
- UNDERLINES the importance of flexibility mechanisms in order to meet the targets in a cost-effective manner. For example, this could include flexibilities in the design and implementation of renewable targets, the use of Kyoto project based credits and the possibility of virtual or physical renewable trading within and outside the Union, while taking into account interactions with existing effective national support schemes. The Council NOTES that adding sub-targets could create additional costs and should not unnecessarily restrict the flexibility of implementation.

- REITERATES that the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS) is the centrepiece of the EU's long-term efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet its international climate change commitments and CALLS FOR further work on market related issues linked to the ongoing development of the EU-ETS such as the conditions under which different emission trading schemes may be effectively and efficiently linked, expansion to include other sectors, market monitoring, regulatory supervision and the provision of information.
- CONSIDERS that within the EU-ETS, auctioning appears to be, in principle, the most efficient allocation method. The Council RECOGNISES the need to take into account competitiveness considerations and to manage the risk of carbon leakage to countries with lower environmental standards outside the EU. Any necessary measures will be considered to this end. Existing evidence suggests that risks will be concentrated in energy sectors and energy-intensive sectors of the EU economy, which vary across Member States.
- STRESSES the importance of clear and credible long-term signals for investors and the need for overall policy frameworks to be designed to support and generate private-sector investment in energy infrastructure and safe and new clean technologies. The Council EMPHASISES the importance of ensuring that policy proposals for 2020 and beyond provide the private sector with a clear view of the level of carbon constraint, including the conditions under which those constraints may be liable to change in the future.
- RECALLS that well functioning energy markets may help to improve price signals and reduce the costs of policies used to reach energy and climate changes objectives, as well as security of energy supply, based on diversified energy supply networks, including the external dimension. In this context, more efforts are needed to achieve a truly competitive, interconnected and single Europe-wide internal market for electricity and gas.
- HIGHLIGHTS the importance of co-ordinated international action for achieving economically-efficient and environmentally-effective action and REAFFIRMS the importance of a new comprehensive international agreement on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change no later than 2009. The Council UNDERLINES the importance of achieving cost-effective abatement through building a global carbon market and continuing to use existing flexible international mechanisms. In this context, there is a need to find solutions, create new instruments and funnel private sector investment to incentivise cost-effective abatement in developing countries (e. g. through the abolition of energy subsidies) and enhanced national measures, with the aim of reaching a global climate agreement.

The Council INVITES the EPC to continue its work on the economic dimension of energy and climate change and the EFC to consider the international financing aspects of global action, with a view to receiving an update on both streams of work by Autumn 2008."

BETTER REGULATION

The Council held an exchange of views, on the basis of a communication from the Commission (6077/08), on progress with the EU's "*better regulation*" initiative.

The *better regulation* initiative involves the simplification of legislation, the reduction of administrative burdens on businesses, the broader use of economic impact assessments, as well as other actions aimed at reducing unnecessary costs on businesses that result from measures taken in order to comply with requirements set by regulations.

Businesses, voluntary groups and citizens consistently cite "red tape" as a major concern; the initiative is therefore a central element of the EU's strategy for strengthening competitiveness and supporting growth and employment.

In its communication, the Commission assesses progress made in simplifying existing legislation and towards the objective set by the European Council last March of a 25% reduction by 2012 in the administrative burden on businesses created by EU legislation. The European Council also called on member states to set national targets of comparable ambition by 2008.

The communication sets out plans for taking the initiative forward over the next two years.

EU BUDGET – DISCHARGE FOR 2006

The Council, on the basis of a report from the Court of Auditors¹, approved by qualified majority a recommendation on the discharge to be given to the Commission for implementation of the EU's general budget for 2006 (*5842/08 ADD 1*).

The Netherlands delegation voted against.

The Council also approved recommendations on the discharge to be given to the directors of 22 specialised EU agencies as regards implementation of their budgets for 2006 (*5843/08 ADD 1 + 5855/08 ADD 1*), as well as conclusions on a series of Court of Auditors special reports (*5842/08 ADD 2*).

The recommendations and conclusions will be forwarded to the European Parliament in accordance with provisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of budgets.

¹ OJ C/273, 15.11.2007, p. 1

MEETINGS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL

The following meetings were held in the margins of the Council:

– *Macroeconomic policy dialogue with the social partners*

The Council presidency met the social partners (representatives of employers, trade unions, public enterprises and SMEs), examining the economic situation and policy response. Representatives of the Commission, the eurogroup, the European Central Bank and non-euro area central banks also attended the meeting.

– *Eurogroup*

Ministers of the euro area member states attended a meeting of the eurogroup on 11 February.

– *Breakfast meeting on the economic situation*

Ministers attended a breakfast meeting to discuss the economic situation. They were also debriefed on the eurogroup meeting held on 11 February.

– *Meeting with the European Parliament*

The Council presidency met a delegation from the European Parliament to discuss this year's update of the EU's broad economic policy guidelines and recent developments on financial markets.

*

* *

Over lunch, ministers discussed issues regarding the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, with a view to the bank's annual meeting in Kiev on 18 and 19 May.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

VAT on services

The Council adopted a package of measures on value-added tax (VAT), which includes a change in the rules on the place of supply of services in order to ensure that most types of services are taxed in the member state of consumption.

At the same time, the package introduces the possibility for taxpayers who perform certain services to fulfil their EU-wide VAT reporting obligations in one single member state (using a "mini one-stop shop") and thus reduce their compliance costs.

The package, which includes two draft directives and a draft regulation, also provides for improved mechanisms for cooperation between member states in order to prevent tax avoidance under the new system.

Adoption by the Council follows political agreement reached at its meeting on 4 December 2007.

For more details see press release 6359/08.

Capital duty (recast)

The Council adopted a directive recasting the capital duty directive (16525/07).

The objective of this directive concerning "indirect taxes on the raising of capital" is to contribute to legal certainty by enhancing clarity, rationality and simplification of legislation in this field. The directive also reflects certain developments arising out of well-established case law of the EU Court of Justice.

The directive provides the opportunity for member states which currently apply capital duty to continue to subject to capital duty all or part of the transactions concerned. The directive provides however that once a member state has chosen not to levy capital duty, it is no longer possible for that member state to reintroduce such duty.

Since 1985, capital duty has been abolished by many member states, while seven member states continue to levy it. The Commission is requested to report every three years on the operation of the directive with a view to abolishing capital duty.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

EU special representatives - Extension of mandates

The Council adopted joint actions extending, with some amendments, the mandates of four EU special representatives (EUSRs).

The joint actions extend the mandates of:

- Kálmán Mizsei, EUSR for Moldova, until 28 February 2009 (5091/08);
- Pierre Morel, EUSR for Central Asia, until 28 February 2009 (5206/08);
- Roeland van de Geer, EUSR for the African Great Lakes region, until 28 February 2009.

This mandate has also been adjusted to the role that the EUSR has been assigned in relation to two EU security sector reform missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: the EU police mission and its interface with the justice system (EUPOL RD Congo) and the EU mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform (EUSEC RD Congo) (5301/08);

- Torben Brylle, EUSR for Sudan, until 28 February 2009.

This mandate has been amended so as to reflect the closure of the EU civilian-military supporting action to African Union missions in the Darfur region of Sudan and in Somalia (5485/08).

Identification and tracing of illicit light weapons

The Council adopted a joint action aimed at improving information mechanisms for the identification and tracing of illicit light weapons (15450/07).

The joint action will contribute to enhancing information on, and the better understanding of, provisions set up by a United Nations international tracing instrument in beneficiary countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The total estimated cost of the project is EUR 538 000, to which the EU will contribute EUR 300 000.

In December 2005, the European Council approved an EU strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and ammunition (EU SALW strategy), which called for support for the adoption of a legally binding international instrument on the tracing and marking of SALW.

EU/Israel - Participation in Community programmes

The Council adopted a decision approving the signing and provisional application of a protocol to the EU-Israel association agreement, establishing general principles governing Israel's participation in Community programmes (5465/08 and 5468/08).

Liberia - Restrictive measures

The Council adopted a common position on restrictive measures against Liberia by which it renews restrictive measures on arms and travel restrictions on certain individuals for a further period of 12 months (5364/08). These measures are thus implemented at EU level, following UN Security Council resolution 1792(2007).

The common position is also aimed at consolidating all restrictive measures currently in force against Liberia into one single legal act.

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Guinea-Bissau - EU mission in support of security sector reform

The Council adopted a joint action establishing an EU mission in support of security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau, to be conducted under European security and defence policy (ESDP) (5497/08).

The objective of the mission is to provide advice and assistance to the local authorities on reform of the security sector helping to create the conditions for implementation of a national security sector reform strategy, in close cooperation with other EU, international and bilateral actors, and with a view to facilitating subsequent donor engagement.

For more details see press release 6372/08.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

European development funds - Discharge for 2006

The Council adopted recommendations on the discharges to be given to the Commission by the European Parliament in respect of implementation of operations under the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th European development funds for the financial year 2006 (*16744/07, 16745/07, 16746/07 and 16748/07*).

The Council also adopted a statement in response to the Court of Auditors' statement of assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. The recommendations and statement will be forwarded to the European Parliament (*5908/08*).

ENLARGEMENT

Accession partnership with Croatia

The Council adopted a decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the EU's accession partnership with Croatia (*5122/08*).

The decision is based on regulation 533/2004 on the establishment of partnerships in the framework of the stabilisation and association process for the Western Balkans.

The decision updates the current partnership in order to identify renewed priorities for further work, on the basis of the findings of the Commission's 2007 progress report on Croatia's preparations for further integration with the EU.

The accession partnership is a key feature of the pre-accession strategy, identifying new as well as remaining priorities for action and providing guidance for financial assistance to Croatia

The decision repeals decision 2006/145/EC.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Schengen - 2008 budget

The member states meeting within the Council adopted the 2008 budget for SISNET (the communication infrastructure for the Schengen environment) (*15950/07*).

TRADE POLICY

Trade barrier regulations - The Community's rights under international rules

The Council adopted a regulation amending regulation 3286/94 on procedures relating to the EU's common commercial policy, in order to ensure the exercise of the Community's rights under international trade rules, in particular those established under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (16698/07).

Regulation 3286/94 (the "trade barrier regulation") has thus been amended so as to remove the existing prohibition for a Community enterprise to rely exclusively on bilateral agreements to bring a complaint.

The trade barrier regulation is one of the trade policy instruments available to the EU for monitoring the respect of obligations arising from international trade agreements with the objective of removing barriers to trade.

It provides to Community enterprises and producers the right to lodge a complaint with the Commission on obstacles to trade. When admissible, the complaint triggers an investigation into the existence of alleged obstacles and adverse trade effects or injury to EU industry. This complaint may result in the Community deciding to enter into dispute-settlement procedures under an international agreement with the trading partner.

ENERGY

Euratom Supply Agency - Statutes

The Council adopted a decision establishing new statutes for the Euratom Supply Agency (5064/08).

The decision repeals and replaces the statutes of the Euratom Supply Agency of 6 November 1958, in order to take into account the increase in the number of member states as well as the need to apply modern financial provisions to the agency and the need to establish its seat. The seat of the agency will be in Luxembourg.

The Euratom Supply Agency's mission is to guarantee a regular and equitable supply of nuclear materials to European Union users.

FISHERIES

EU/Ivory Coast fisheries partnership agreement

The Council adopted a decision approving the conclusion of an agreement with Ivory Coast on the provisional application of a protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the EU/Ivory Coast partnership agreement on fishing in Ivory Coast waters (16679/07).

The fishing opportunities set out in the protocol will be allocated, retroactively for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2013, among the member states as follows:

- 25 purse seiners: Spain (15 vessels) and France (10 vessels);
- 15 surface longliners : Spain (10 vessels) and Portugal (5 vessels).

The EU's financial contribution amounts to EUR 455 000 per year equivalent to a reference tonnage of 7 000 tonnes per year, and a specific amount of EUR 140 000 per year for the support and implementation of Ivory Coast's fisheries policy.

The new agreement will replace a 1990 agreement on fishing off the coast of Ivory Coast.

EU/Seychelles partnership agreement

The Council adopted a decision approving the inclusion of amendments in a protocol setting out, for the period from 18 January 2005 to 17 January 2011, fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by an agreement with the Seychelles (16663/07).

The amendments increase the reference tonnage, taking account of the average level of catches over the past three years, introduce financial support for the partnership and increase the share paid by ship owners.

DECISION TAKEN BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE**Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Restrictive measures against extremists**

The Council adopted on 8 February a common position updating the list of persons affected by restrictive measures with regard to extremists in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and extending its application for one year.

The common position extends until 10 February 2009 the restrictive measures which were adopted for the first time in 2004.

The measures are aimed at preventing admission into the EU of individuals who actively promote or take part in violent extremist activities challenging the Ohrid framework agreement's basic principles of stability, territorial integrity and the multi-ethnic character of FYROM and/or who deliberately undermine and obstruct implementation of the agreement by actions outside the democratic process.

Two persons were removed and three were added to the list, which was published in Official Journal L 36 of 9 February. It now contains seventeen names affected by the visa ban.
