



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



10026/07 (Presse 119)

PRESS RELEASE

2803rd Council meeting

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs

Brussels, 30-31 May 2007

President **Mr Franz MÜNTEFERING**, Deputy Federal Chancellor
and Federal Minister for Labour and Social Affairs,
Ms Ursula VON DER LEYEN, Federal Minister for Family
Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and
Ms Ulla SCHMIDT, Federal Minister for Health
Mr Horst SEEHOFER, Federal Minister for Food,
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10026/07 (Presse 119)

1
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Main results of the Council

The Council adopted a joint action on the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan - EUPOL Afghanistan.

The Council unanimously accepted all the amendments voted by the European Parliament plenary on 25 April 2007 concerning a draft Regulation on advanced therapy medicinal products.

The Council adopted a Regulation on type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions (Euro 5 and 6).

The Council reached general approaches on three draft Regulations concerning the coordination of the social security systems:

- *part of the draft implementing Regulation;*
- *part of the draft Regulation on the content of Annex XI of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004;*
- *annual updating of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71, still in force.*

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS.....	5
ITEMS DEBATED	
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY	8
Active ageing	8
Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work - <i>Council resolution</i>	10
Social security.....	11
– Implementing Regulation	11
– Annex XI of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004.....	12
– Miscellaneous amendments 2006.....	12
Supplementary pension rights.....	13
Alliance for Families - <i>Council conclusions</i>	14
Beijing platform for action - <i>Council conclusions</i>	15
Social services of general interest.....	16

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.

HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS	17
EU Consumer Policy Strategy 2007-2013 - <i>Council resolution</i>	17
Food improvement agents package.....	18
Health promotion – nutrition and physical activity - <i>Council conclusions</i>	19
Advanced therapy medicinal products.....	20
Combating HIV/AIDS within the EU and in the neighbouring countries - <i>Council conclusions</i>	21
Community framework on health services - Council conclusions	22
Prevention of injury and promotion of safety	23
Towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke	24
OTHER BUSINESS	25

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

EMPLOYMENT

– Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States*	27
– Simplification of administrative procedures.....	27

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

– EU Police Mission in Afghanistan	27
--	----

TRADE POLICY

– Ukraine - Steel.....	28
------------------------	----

ENVIRONMENT

– Motor vehicles emissions (Euro 5 and 6) *	28
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TRANSPORT

– Agreement on air services with Kyrgyz Republic	29
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PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Mr Bruno TOBBACK Minister for the Environment and Minister for Pensions

Bulgaria:

Ms Emilia MASLAROVA Minister for Labour and Social Policy
Mr Radoslav Nenkov GAJDARSKI Minister for Health

Czech Republic:

Mr Petr NEČAS Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Labour and Social Affairs
Mr Tomáš JULÍNEK Minister for Health

Denmark:

Ms Eva Kjer HANSEN Minister for Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Germany:

Mr Franz MÜNTEFERING Deputy Federal Chancellor and Federal Minister for Labour and Social Affairs
Ms Ursula VON DER LEYEN Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Mr Horst SEEHOFER Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection
Ms Ulla SCHMIDT Federal Minister for Health
Mr Gerd ANDRES Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Labour and Social Affairs
Mr Gert LINDEMANN State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection
Mr Klaus Theo SCHRÖDER State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Health

Estonia:

Ms Maret MARIPUU Minister for Social Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Tony KILLEEN Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (with special responsibility for Labour Affairs including Training)

Greece:

Mr Vasilios MAGGINAS Minister for Employment and Social Protection
Mr Georgios KONSTANTOPOULOS State Secretary for Health and Social Solidarity

Spain:

Mr Jesús CALDERA SÁNCHEZ-CAPITÁN Minister for Labour and Social Affairs
Ms Elena SALGADO MÉNDEZ Minister for Health and Consumer Affairs
Mr Antonio FERNÁNDEZ Minister for Employment of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia
Ms María Teresa HERRANZ Minister for Health of the Autonomous Community of Murcia

France:

Ms Roselyne BACHELOT-NARQUIN Minister for Health, Youth and Sport

Italy:

Mr Cesare DAMIANO Minister for Labour and Social Security
Ms Livia TURCO Minister for Health
Ms Rosy BINDI Minister without portfolio, Minister for Family Policy

Cyprus:

Mr Antonis VASSILIOU Minister for Labour and Social Insurance
Mr Sotiris SOTIRIOU Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health

Latvia:

Ms Dagnija STAŽE Minister for Welfare

Lithuania:

Ms Vilija BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ
Mr Rimvydas TURČINSKAS

Minister for Social Security and Labour
Minister for Health

Luxembourg:

Mr Mars DI BARTOLOMEO
Ms Marie-Josée JACOBS

Minister for Health and Social Security
Minister for the Family and Integration, Minister for Equal Opportunities
Minister for Labour and Employment, Minister for Culture, Higher Education and Research, Minister for Religious Affairs

Mr François BILTGEN

Hungary:

Mr Gábor CSIZMÁR
Ms Ágnes HORVÁTH

State Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
State Secretary, Ministry of Health

Malta:

Mr Louis GALEA
Mr Louis DEGUARA

Minister for Education, Youth and Employment
Minister for Health, the Elderly and Community Care

Netherlands:

Mr André ROUVOET
Mr Piet Hein DONNER
Mr Abraham KLINK

Minister for Youth and the Family, Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Social Affairs and Employment
Minister for Health, Welfare and Sport

Austria:

Mr Erwin BUCHINGER

Federal Minister for Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
Federal Minister for Health, the Family and Youth
State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs

Ms Andrea KDOLSKY
Ms Christine MAREK

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Minister for Labour and Social Policy
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Health

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Mr José VIEIRA DA SILVA
Mr António CORREIA DE CAMPOS
Mr Pedro MARQUES

Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity
Minister for Health
State Secretary for Social Security

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Mr Eugen NICOLĂESCU

Minister for Labour, the Family and Equal Opportunities
Minister for Health

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Mr Marko ŠTROVS

Minister for Health
State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, the Family and Social Affairs

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Mr Daniel KLAČKO

Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and the Family
State Secretary, Ministry of Health

Finland:

Ms Paula RISIKKO
Ms Liisa HYSSÄLÄ

Minister for Health and Social Services
Minister for Social Affairs and Health

Sweden:

Ms Maria LARSSON

Minister for the Elderly and Public Health

United Kingdom:

Ms Anne McGUIRE

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Disabled People

Commission:

Mr Günter VERHEUGEN
Mr Markos KYPRIANOU
Mr Vladimír ŠPIDLA

Vice President
Member
Member

Ms Meglena KUNEVA

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

Active ageing

The Council endorsed a joint Employment Committee (EMCO) and Social Protection Committee (SPC) opinion on active ageing (9269/07), encouraging older people to remain active in later life.

The EU started to tackle the challenges caused by the ageing of the workforce in the mid-1990s. The subject has already been dealt with at European Council level (2001 Stockholm European Council; 2002 Barcelona European Council; 2006 Spring European Council).

Taken as a whole, the EU is moving in the right direction: people are staying active longer than in recent past decades. However, most Member States have to step up their efforts.

The EU has taken a number of concrete steps, such as the adoption of Directive 2000/78/EC on equal treatment in employment and occupation, which bans discrimination on the grounds of age. Furthermore, a new strategy on health and safety at work is being developed.

Increasing the average exit age from the labour market will be crucial for ensuring the adequacy and sustainability of pension and health care systems.

The key elements of the joint opinion can be summarised as follows:

- barriers to the employability of older workers can be overcome by increasing training, providing more flexible work schedules that are adaptable to workers' needs and better working conditions;
- special attention should be paid to unemployed older people as they face particular difficulties in re-entering the labour market. Member States have reported on some promising comprehensive approaches to this problem. In particular, activation strategies that establish the rights and duties of older unemployed people and consider both the supply and the demand side appear to be successful;
- the qualifications and skills required for gainful work have to be enhanced over the entire life cycle. In particular, employers should take more initiatives to train and motivate their workers. Moreover, older workers should be encouraged more than ever before to participate in further education and training;

- in all Member States, participation rates are lower on average for older women than for older men. Reducing the gender gap in participation rates will be an important part of any strategy to mobilise more fully the labour supply of older people;
- pension reforms have been widespread in the Member States; it remains important to find the right balance between encouraging later retirement, closing pathways to early retirement and increasing flexibility in work/retirement choices and ensuring that other welfare benefits are not used as paths to early exit from the labour market;
- a life-cycle perspective is essential. Active ageing must not start with older people but much earlier than this. There is a broad linkage between different policies which include education and training, health, family policy and culture etc;
- the good practices make a clear case for comprehensive action in different policy directions, namely changing employment practices to facilitate retention and hiring of older workers; promoting employability as well as increasing the “workability” of all workers through the life cycle by providing incentives for employers to hire or maintain older workers;
- the social partners have a key role in addressing and promoting active ageing, in particular in the fields of lifelong learning and the improvement of working conditions;
- monitoring and evaluating measures are important for policy implementation;
- there is a need for more exchange of good practice on active ageing.

Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work - Council resolution

The Council held a policy debate covering, in particular, the following issues:

1. *Concrete initiatives and measures to be taken by the Member States in order to improve health and safety at work and ensure a high level of protection;*
2. *Measures to be taken at European level to make "good work" an EU "trademark".*

Welcoming the Commission's Communication outlining a new Community strategy for health safety at work for 2007-2012, which includes the ambitious goal of reducing occupational accidents in the EU by 25% by 2012, delegations held a general policy debate on this topic under the heading of "Good Work".

Affirming the social and economic benefits of improving health and safety at work, delegations highlighted the importance of a number of issues, including

- action in key areas such as SMEs, high-risk sectors and vulnerable workers;
- education, training and awareness-raising; and
- research and the exchange of information.

Delegations also underlined the importance of simplifying legislation, ensuring its proper implementation and the involvement of all actors, including the social partners.

The Council further adopted a Resolution on a Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work (9353/07).

See the full text of the resolution at
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09353.en07.pdf>

Social security

– *Implementing Regulation*

Pending the European Parliament's opinion at first reading, the Council reached a *partial* general approach on a draft Regulation aimed at implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004¹ on the coordination of social security systems. The agreed text covers Chapter I of Title III (sickness, maternity and equivalent paternity benefits) and Chapter I of Title IV (financial provisions) of the Commission proposal (9747/07 and 9752/07).

Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 was the first step of a process aimed at modernising and simplifying EU rules on the coordination of the national social security systems. Such rules are intended to allow EU citizens to move freely within Europe, while maintaining their social rights and expectations (health, pensions, unemployment protection, etc.).

The process must be completed with the adoption of an implementing Regulation², for which a proposal is now under examination. The Regulation will replace Regulation (EEC) No 574/72³, with provisions designed to strengthen cooperation between national institutions and improve the methods of data exchange.

In accordance with the approach already taken for the adoption of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004, it has been decided to aim for the Council's agreement on a chapter-by-chapter basis. On 1 June 2006, the Council reached a partial general approach on Titles I and II of the proposal. On 1 December 2006, the Council reached a partial general approach on Chapter 4 of Title III. The examination of the Commission proposal will continue under the forthcoming Portuguese Presidency.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 42 and 308 of the Treaty – unanimity required for a Council Decision; co-Decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

¹ Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems, OJ L 166, 30.4.2004, corrigendum OJ L 200, 7.6.2004.

² See Article 89 of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004.

³ OJ L 74, 27.3.1972, as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 647/2005, OJ L 28, 30.1.1997.

– ***Annex XI of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004***

Pending the European Parliament's opinion at first reading, the Council reached a *partial*¹ general approach on a draft Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and determining the content of Annex XI on the coordination of the social security systems.

While the proposal for a Regulation implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 (the "basic Regulation") provides for horizontal rules, the draft Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 833/2004 and determining the content of Annex XI, for its part, provides for supplementary provisions regarding specific aspects of individual Member States' legislation in order to ensure that the basic Regulation is smoothly applied in the Member States concerned².

The examination of this proposal will be pursued in parallel with the examination of the implementing Regulation (*see* previous item).

Legal basis proposed: Articles 42 and 308 of the Treaty – unanimity required for a Council Decision; co-Decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

– ***Miscellaneous amendments 2006***

Pending the European Parliament's opinion at first reading, the Council agreed on a general approach on a draft Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of the national social security schemes to persons moving within the Community.

The draft Regulation aims to update and amend the references in certain Annexes to Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71, to take account of recent changes in national legislation.

Similar exercises have been undertaken at more or less annual intervals. This update is intended to be the last one for Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 42 and 308 of the Treaty – unanimity required for a Council Decision; co-Decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

¹ Covering the parts of the proposal corresponding to chapter I of title III and chapter I of title IV of the proposed implementing Regulation.

² See Article 83 of the Regulation.

Supplementary pension rights

Pending the first reading opinion of the European Parliament, the Council endeavoured to reach agreement on a general approach on a draft Directive concerning supplementary pension rights (9761/1/07, 9763/07).

However, given the impossibility of reaching a compromise that would satisfy all the delegations, the President had to conclude, with regret, that, at this stage, the Council was not yet in a position to agree on a text, as the required unanimity was not achieved.

As soon as the European Parliament has adopted its opinion at first reading, the possibility of resuming work on the basis of an amended proposal from the Commission will be explored.

Supplementary pension schemes, established in the context of an employment relationship, are important for covering the risk of old age in the Member States.

The draft Directive aims to facilitate free movement of workers through provisions

- guaranteeing an adequate protection of dormant rights of outgoing workers;
- ensuring that workers receive appropriate information in the event of professional mobility.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 42 and 94 of the Treaty – unanimity required for a Council Decision and co-Decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

Alliance for Families - Council conclusions

The Council held an exchange of views on the establishment of an Alliance for Families, covering, in particular, the following topics:

1. *Family-related areas regarding which Member States will contribute to the exchange of views and information within the Alliance for Families;*
2. *Knowledge, experience and facts that the Member States will need at their disposal to frame national policies to support families; role of existing or new instruments (such as the High-Level Group on Demography) and forms of cooperation (e.g. joint research activities, peer review activities, involvement of the social partners and of civil society) to that end.*

A large majority of the delegations warmly welcomed the initiative of the Presidency establishing an Alliance for Families.

According to the 2007 Spring European Council conclusions, the European Alliance for Families constitutes a platform for the exchange of views and knowledge on family-friendly policies and good practice at European level.

It aims to address, within the context of demographic change, issues related to family-friendly policies, to search for forward-looking political responses and to make knowledge and experience available for all actors, so as to reinforce shared efforts.

Following the debate, the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, adopted conclusions on the importance of family-friendly policies in Europe and the establishment of an Alliance for Families (9317/1/07).

See the full text of the conclusions at

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09317-re01.en07.pdf>

Beijing platform for action - *Council conclusions*

As part of the annual follow-up to the Beijing platform for action for the advancement of women¹, the Council adopted conclusions (9152/07) setting out 3 indicators on "Education and training of women", one of the 12 critical areas for action².

Since 1999, successive Presidencies have each year chosen one of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and presented a number of indicators for that area³.

See the full text of the conclusions at

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09152.en07.pdf>

¹ Adopted during the UN World Conference on Women in 1995 (see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm>).

²

- Burden of poverty on women;
- Access to education and training;
- Access to health care and related services;
- Violence against women;
- The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation;
- Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources;
- Inequality in the sharing of power and Decision-making at all levels
- Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women;
- Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women;
- Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media;
- Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment;
- Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child.

³ Women in power and Decision-making (1999); Women in the economy (reconciliation of work and family life) (2000); Women in the economy (equal pay) (2001); Violence against women (2002); Women and men in economic Decision-making (2003); Sexual harassment at the workplace (2004); Women and health, (2006); and Institutional Mechanisms (2006).

Social services of general interest

The Council took note of an oral progress report by the chair of the Social Protection Committee, as part of the open consultation mentioned in the Commission communication: *Implementing the Community Lisbon programme: social services of general interest in the EU (9038/06)*.

The aim of the communication was to identify the specific characteristics of social services of general interest and to clarify how EU state aid, internal market and public procurement rules apply to these services. It is to be recalled that certain social services are excluded from the scope of the "services" Directive.

The communication presented an open list of characteristics reflecting the specific nature of social services of general interest. In addition to the traditional criteria (universality, transparency, continuity, accessibility, etc), these characteristics refer to the organisational conditions and modalities applying to those services.

The communication constituted a starting point for a consultation by the Commission of Member States, service providers and users of services.

It is envisaged that the Commission will seek to identify the best approach to take with regard to the increasing interaction of the modernisation of the Social Services with the application of Community law, including giving consideration to the need for, and legal possibility of, a legal proposal.

HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

EU Consumer Policy Strategy 2007-2013 - *Council resolution*

The Council adopted a resolution on the EU Consumer Policy Strategy 2007-2013 (9542/07).

See the full text of the resolution at

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09542.en07.pdf>

Food improvement agents package

Pending the European Parliament first reading opinion, the Council reached general approaches on three draft Regulations concerning:

- common authorisation procedure (*9536/07 ADD 1*);
- food additives (*9536/07 ADD 2*);
- food enzymes (*9536/07 ADD 3*).

It took note of a progress report regarding a draft Regulation on:

- flavourings (*9536/07 ADD 4*).

The free movement of safe and wholesome food is an essential aspect of the internal market. It contributes significantly to the health and well-being of citizens. To ensure a high level of protection of human life and health, the safety of additives, enzymes and flavouring for use in food stuffs for human consumption must be assessed before they are placed on the Community market, in the light of harmonised rules.

The package of four draft Regulations is designed to overhaul the Community's rules on food improvement agents.

The proposals aim at reviewing the current legislation on food additives and flavourings and at introducing a simplified common Community approval procedure for food additives, flavourings to better reflect technological and scientific developments and enzymes, which would be based on a scientific evaluation by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Under the new proposed system, harmonised Community rules would be laid down for the first time for the evaluation, approval and control of enzymes used in food.

Legal basis proposed for the four Regulations: Article 95 of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council Decision; co-Decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

Health promotion – nutrition and physical activity - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted conclusions on health promotion by means of nutrition and physical activity (9363/07).

See the full text of the conclusions at

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09363.en07.pdf>

Advanced therapy medicinal products

The Council unanimously accepted all the amendments voted by the European Parliament plenary on 25 April 2007 concerning a draft Regulation on advanced therapy medicinal products (9756/07).

Thus, an agreement at first reading was reached with the European Parliament. The text now agreed will be formally adopted as soon as it has been legally and linguistically finalised in all the official languages.

The main objective of this draft Regulation is to create a single legal framework for three kinds of advanced therapies (gene therapy, somatic cell therapy and tissue-engineering) where scientific and technical development, due to scientific progress in cellular and molecular biotechnology, has been very fast.

In order to safeguard public health, the draft Regulation lays down specific procedures for authorisation of advanced therapy and medicinal products as well as for pharmacovigilance and post-marketing surveillance. These products were authorised by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) through a centralised procedure. To this aim a new committee on Advanced Therapies will replace EMA, with representatives of Member States' competent Authorities, patients and clinicians.

Developments in this field are of great importance for future treatment of illnesses. There is, consequently, a significant need to create Community rules in order to facilitate innovation, development and clinical use on an emerging market. Both European patients and the European pharmaceutical industry will benefit from rules ensuring, simultaneously, health, safety and equality in the access to the market.

Legal basis proposed: Article 95 of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council Decision; co-Decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable. European Parliament first reading opinion was delivered on 25 April 2007.

Combating HIV/AIDS within the EU and in the neighbouring countries - Council conclusions

The Council held a policy debate on combating HIV/AIDS within the EU and in the neighbouring countries covering, in particular, the following topics:

- *How to intensify both prevention efforts and civil society involvement, in each country and at EU level; examples of best practice;*
- *Access to antiretroviral treatment and prices of antiretroviral drugs; sustainability of universal access to treatment also in some parts of Europe, measures / initiatives appropriate to tackle this problem.*

Recognising that prevention is a key element to concretise the efforts aimed at fighting HIV/AIDS disease, the delegations suggested a number of examples of best practice, such as:

- the use of the Internet to inform a large number of people;
- programmes of education on health matters addressed to young people;
- identification of high risk population groups and preparation of information programmes targeted at such groups;
- personal advice, preserving the patient's anonymity;
- distribution of condoms at low prices;
- end of stigmatisation, with respect for human rights and of the right to privacy.

Concerning access to antiretroviral treatments at accessible prices, the delegations underlined the need to negotiate with the pharmaceutical industry and to show solidarity with the countries in economic difficulties.

The Council further adopted conclusions based on the outcome of the Presidency conference on this topic, held in Bremen on 12-13 March 2007.

See the full text of the conclusions at
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09537.en07.pdf>

Community framework on health services - Council conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions on health services, reflecting the outcome of the informal meeting of Health Ministers in Aachen (9540/07).

See the full text of the conclusions at

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09540.en07.pdf> and

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09540-co01.en07.pdf>

Prevention of injury and promotion of safety

The Council adopted a Recommendation on the prevention of injury and the promotion of safety (9476/07 and 8344/07).

In the EU, the rate of accidents and injuries is increasing and becoming a leading cause of death and chronic disability among children, adolescents and young adults.

The Recommendation aims, in particular, to improve the use of existing data as well as the development, where appropriate, of injury surveillance and of reporting mechanisms, with a view to ensuring a coordinated approach across Member States to develop their national policies, including the exchange of best practice.

The priority areas identified are:

- the safety of children and adolescents;
- the safety of elderly citizens;
- the safety of vulnerable road users;
- prevention of sports and leisure injuries;
- prevention of injuries caused by products and services;
- prevention of self-harm;
- prevention of violence against women and children.

Legal basis proposed: 152 (4) of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council Decision.

Towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke

The Council held an exchange of views as a contribution to the consultation launched by the Commission Green Paper¹ on the policy options at EU level for tackling involuntary exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (passive smoking).

The debate focused, in particular, on the following topic:

- *Effective and appropriate measures and level (national or EU) at which they should they be taken.*

During the debate, the delegations referred to the national binding measures already taken and applied in their countries, with the aim of stopping smoking, in particular in enclosed or public areas. They recalled that the more efficient measures involve a ban on tobacco advertising; prevention of addiction in relation to young people; incentives for people to change their habits voluntarily rather than binding measures; information campaigns about the consequences of smoking for health.

A number of these measures would be more efficient if applied at local or regional level, even if financed by European contributions.

¹ 5899/07.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Council was briefed on the following issues:

- (a) Information on Presidency conferences
 - (i) Euromed Conference (Berlin, 16 March 2007)
 - (ii) Quality of Work (Berlin, 2-3 May 2007)
 - (iii) Sixth European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty (Brussels, 4-5 May 2007)
 - (iv) Meeting of G-8 Labour Ministers (Dresden, 5-8 May 2007)
 - (v) Informal Meeting of Ministers for Gender Equality and Family (Bad Pyrmont, 15-16 May 2007) *9820/07*
 - (vi) UN Commission on the Status of Women, 51st Session (New York, 26 February - 9 March 2007) *9822/07*
 - (vii) European Congress "Demographic Change as Opportunity: the Economic Potential of the Elderly" (Berlin, 17-18 April 2007) *9823/07*
- (b) Social Partners' Framework agreement on harassment and violence at work
 - Information from the Commission *9967/07*
- (c) Communication from the Commission: Promoting solidarity between the generation
 - Presentation by the Commission *9717/07*
- (d) Social aspects of human trafficking
 - Information from the Danish delegation *9824/07*
- (e) Presidency Conference "Challenges and Opportunities in a Digitalised World. The Role of Consumer Policy"
 - Information from the Presidency *9412/07*
- (f) Second Programme of Community action in the field of Health (2007-2013)
 - Information from the Presidency *9830/07*

- (g) Presidency Conferences on Health
 - Information from the Presidency *9831/07*
- (h) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
 - Information from the Commission and the Presidency *9832/07*
- (i) International Health Regulations
 - Information from the Commission and the Presidency *9833/07*
- (j) European Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health
 - Presentation by the Commission of its White Paper
- (k) Communication from the Commission on improving the mental health of the population
 - Information from the Commission *9836/07*
- (l) Communication from the Commission on organ donation and transplantation
 - Presentation by the Commission of its communication recently adopted
- (m) Health Security Committee and related matters
 - Information from the Commission
- (n) Proposal for a Directive regarding the review of the medical device directives
 - The Presidency announced that a first reading with the European Parliament had already been completed *9819/07*

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**EMPLOYMENT****Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States***

The Council reached political agreement on a draft Decision establishing the Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States for 2007 (9766/07 + ADDI).

As proposed by the Commission, the Guidelines adopted in 2005 and 2006 (10205/05 and 9471/06) remain unchanged, the next full revision of the integrated guidelines (Employment and Broad Economic Policy Guidelines) being scheduled for next year .

Simplification of administrative procedures

The Council adopted a Directive aimed at simplifying and rationalising provisions of Community Directives concerning protection of the health and safety of workers that oblige the EU Member States and the Commission to draw up reports on their practical implementation (PE-CONS 3617/07).

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY**EU Police Mission in Afghanistan**

The Council adopted today a joint action on the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan - EUPOL Afghanistan.

The mission aims at contributing to the establishment of sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements under Afghan ownership which will ensure appropriate interaction with the wider criminal justice system. It will also support the reform process towards a trusted and efficient police service which works in accordance with international standards.

The mission will carry out its tasks through monitoring, mentoring, advice and training at the level of the Afghan Ministry of the Interior, regions and provinces. It will work towards a joint overall strategy of the international community in police reform and support the government of Afghanistan in coherently implementing its strategy.

Brigadier-General Friedrich Eichele (Germany) is appointed Head of Mission.

The mission is established for a duration of three years. The operational phase is due to begin on 15 June 2007.

EUPOL Afghanistan will consist of some 160 police, law enforcement and justice experts. Candidate and other third States may be invited to contribute to EUPOL Afghanistan.

TRADE POLICY

Ukraine - Steel

The Council adopted a Decision concerning the conclusion of an agreement between the EC and Ukraine on trade in certain steel products (*8597/07 + COR 1*) for the year 2007 as well as a Regulation on administering certain restrictions on imports of those Ukrainian products into the EC (*8610/1/07 REV 1*) which provides for the effective application of the agreement.

This new agreement fixes quantitative limits for imports of steel products and will apply from the date of its entry into force until 31 December 2007 or until Ukraine's accession to the World Trade Organisation if that occurs first. It could be automatically renewed for one year at the end of 2007. This agreement replaces the previous one which expired at the end of 2006 and takes account of the development of trade relations between the two parties in this sector.

ENVIRONMENT

Motor vehicles emissions (Euro 5 and 6) *

The Council, accepting all the amendments suggested by the European Parliament in its first reading opinion, adopted a Regulation on type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions from light passenger and commercial vehicles and on access to vehicles repair and maintenance information (PE-CONS 3602/2/07 + 9156/07 + ADD 1).

The Regulation harmonises the technical requirements for the type approval of motor vehicles with regards to emissions, while ensuring a high level of environmental protection.

For more details see press release *10165/07*.

TRANSPORT

Agreement on air services with Kyrgyz Republic

The Council adopted a Decision approving the signing and provisional application of an agreement between the EU and Kyrgyz Republic on certain aspects of air services.

The agreement is the result of negotiations under a mandate by which the Commission can negotiate with any third country with a view to bringing Member States' existing bilateral aviation agreements with that country into line with Community law.
