



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

2907th Council meeting

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Brussels, 27 November 2008

President **Luc CHATEL**
Minister of State with responsibility for Industry and
Consumer Affairs
Eric BESSON
Minister of State with responsibility for Forward Planning,
Assessment of Public Policies and the Development of the
Digital Economy

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

*The Council reached a political agreement on a **review of the EU's regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services.***

*The Council arrived at a general approach on a proposal to extend the first **Regulation on roaming** and widen its scope to include SMS and data.*

*In addition, the Council held an exchange of views on the **second periodic review of the scope of universal service** and in particular extension of the scope of broadband.*

*It also adopted conclusions on **future networks and the Internet.***

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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.
 - 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.

PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Mr Didier SEEUWS

Deputy Permanent Representative

Bulgaria:

Mr Plamen VATCHKOV

Chairman of the National Agency for information technologies and communications

Czech Republic:

Mr Martin ŘÍMAN

Minister for Industry and Trade

Denmark:

Mr Helge SANDER

Minister for Science, Technology and Development

Germany:

Mr Bernd PFAFFENBACH

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology

Estonia:

Mr Juhan PARTS

Minister for Economic Affairs and Communications

Ireland:

Mr Eamon RYAN

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Greece:

Mr Konstantinos HADJIDAKIS

Minister for Transport and Communications

Spain:

Mr Francisco ROS PERÁN

State Secretary for Telecommunications and the Information Society

France:

Mr Luc CHATEL

Minister of State with responsibility for Industry and Consumer Affairs, Government Spokesperson
Minister of State with responsibility for Forward Planning, Assessment of Public Policies and the Development of the Digital Economy

Mr Eric BESSON

Italy:

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State Secretary for Economic Development

Cyprus:

Mr Nicos NICOLAIDES

Minister for Communications and Works

Latvia:

Mr Ainārs ŠLESERS

Minister for Transport

Lithuania:

Mr Alminas MACIULIS

State Secretary at the Ministry of Transport and Communications

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Louis SCHILTZ

Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Action,
Minister for Communications, Minister for Defence

Hungary:

Mr. Lajos CSEPI

State Secretary for Transport

Malta:

Mr Austin GATT

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications

Netherlands:

Mr Frank HEEMSKERK

Minister for Foreign Trade

Austria:

Mr Walter GRAHAMMER

Permanent Representative

Poland:

Mr Andrzej PANASIUK

Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Infrastructure

Portugal:

Mr Hugo SOBRAL

Member of Mertens Group

Romania:

Mr Marius HIRTE

Deputy Permanent Representative

Slovenia:

Ms Mary Veronica TOVSAK PLETESKI

Deputy Permanent Representative

Slovakia:

Mr Ľubomír VÁŽNY

Minister for Transport, Post and Telecommunications

Finland:

Ms Suvi LINDÉN

Minister for Communications

Sweden:

Mr Leif ZETTERBERG

State Secretary to the Minister for Infrastructure

United Kingdom:

Mr Stephen CARTER

Minister for Communications, Technology and
Broadcasting**Commission:**

Ms Viviane REDING

Member

ITEMS DEBATED**REVIEW OF THE EU REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The Council unanimously¹ reach political agreement, in public deliberation, on the review of the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services.

The set of measures to reform the telecommunications sector² was adopted by the Commission on 13 November 2007. It aims to enable citizens, wherever they live or travel in the EU, to enjoy better quality communications services at lower cost.

Following the political agreement, the Council will adopt its common positions on all the Commission proposals which will serve as a basis for negotiations with the European Parliament to reach an agreement between the two institutions at second reading by the end of March 2009.

– ***Better Regulation Directive***

This Commission proposal aims to amend the regulatory framework for e-communications by improving its effectiveness, reducing the administrative resources needed for implementing economic regulation and making access to radio frequencies simpler and more efficient. It amends the existing Framework, Authorisation and Access Directives.

¹ With the Swedish, United Kingdom and Netherlands delegations abstaining.

² It contains the following legislative proposals:

- a proposal for a **Better Regulation** Directive amending Directives 2002/21/EC (Framework Directive), 2002/19/EC (Access Directive), and 2002/20/EC (Authorisation Directive) ([15379/07](#));
- a proposal for a **Citizens' Rights** Directive amending Directive 2002/22/EC (Universal Service Directive), Directive 2002/58/EC (Privacy Directive) and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 on consumer protection cooperation ([15387/07](#));
- a proposal for a Regulation establishing the **European** Electronic Communications Market **Authority** ([15408/07](#)).

Framework Directive

The Council approved a Presidency compromise text ([15758/08](#) as amended by the Council) on the Framework Directive which is a consolidated version of the proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2002/21/EC.

The Council bodies have reached a broad consensus on the text. The detailed discussions focused in particular on the provisions on national regulatory authorities, consolidating the internal market for electronic communications (Article 7 procedure), strategic planning, coordination of radio spectrum policy and the management of radio frequencies.

– *National regulatory authorities (NRAs)*: The point which was most at issue was increasing the independence of NRAs, already guaranteed in the existing text. The Council also discussed in detail the procedures governing the dismissal of the head of the NRA and of the other members of the board.

– *Consolidating the internal market*: the text approved by ministers takes account of the view expressed by most of the Council that the Commission should issue opinions on the regulators' draft remedies, and any regulator which did not comply with the Commission's opinion would then have to justify its position.

– *Management of radio frequencies*: the Member States accepted the proposals concerning technology neutrality and spectrum management services and the text also provides for undertakings to be able to transfer or lease their individual rights to use radio frequencies to other undertakings.

Authorisation Directive

Ministers approved a Presidency compromise text ([15702/08](#)) which is a consolidated version of the proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2002/20/EC.

The Council's bodies have examined in particular the following provisions of the Commission's initial proposal:

- *granting of individual rights of use for radio frequencies*: the text approved by the ministers provides that Member States may grant individual rights of use for radio frequencies rather than issuing general authorisations for certain precise reasons. The text also contains a new provision to prevent competition being distorted by any transfer or accumulation of radio frequency usage rights;
- *measures to harmonise the use of the radio spectrum*: since the Council considered that the existing arrangements for harmonising use of the spectrum were satisfactory, it felt there was no need to introduce new harmonisation measures, or a common selection procedure for issuing rights;
- *existing authorisations*: the text approved requires Member States to bring general authorisations and individual rights of use already in existence into conformity with the new provisions of the Directive;
- *transparency obligations*: Annex I of the text approved, which contains the maximum list of conditions which may be attached to general authorisations, proposes imposing transparency obligations on undertakings providing public electronic communications services to ensure end-to-end connectivity.

Access Directive

The Council approved a Presidency compromise text ([15695/08](#) as amended by the Council) which is a consolidated version of the proposal for an amendment to the Directive amending the current Directive 2002/19/EC.

The Council has reached a broad consensus on the essential features of the Commission proposal and has taken due account of the European Parliament's first-reading opinion. The Council's bodies have discussed in particular the provisions concerning functional separation. The Commission proposed adding functional separation as a remedy available to national regulators, which could then as a last resort impose an obligation on vertically integrated undertakings to place activities related to the wholesale provision of access products in an independently operating business entity.

The text approved by ministers allows functional separation, stresses the exceptional nature of this measure and provides a framework for its implementation.

– *Citizens' Rights Directive*

The Commission proposal amending the Privacy and Universal Service Directives aims to ensure a high level of consumer protection and users' rights, in particular the right to privacy and data protection, whilst enabling the development and diffusion of new innovative services and applications.

The Commission proposal also provides for the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 on consumer protection cooperation; this was accepted without discussion.

Privacy Directive

Ministers approved a Presidency compromise text ([15899/08](#)) concerning the proposal to amend Directive 2002/58/EC.

The aim of the EU regulatory framework is to promote the interests of citizens by, among other things, ensuring a high level of protection of personal data and privacy and ensuring that the integrity and security of public communications networks are maintained. The growing number of new electronic threats in recent years such as viruses, spam, spyware and phishing has further increased the importance of these objectives.

The Commission proposal on this issue addresses such issues as ensuring that consumers are informed if their personal data have been compromised as a result of a breach of network security, giving operators and NRAs more responsibility with respect to the security and integrity of all electronic communications networks and services, strengthening implementation and enforcement powers for competent authorities, in particular in the fight against "spam", and clarifying the application of the EU rules to data collection and identification devices using public electronic communications networks.

When the Council examined this proposal, delegations focused in particular on the provisions concerning security of data processing and enforcement.

Universal Service Directive

The Council approved a Presidency compromise text ([15896/08](#) as amended by the Council) concerning the proposal to amend the current Directive 2002/22/EC on Universal Service.

This Commission proposal concerns in particular the following areas: transparency and publication of information for users, improved accessibility for users with disabilities, emergency services and access to 112; and basic connectivity and quality of services.

When the Council examined this proposal, delegations focused in particular on the provisions concerning the definition of publicly available telephone service and the information contained in consumer contracts.

– ***Regulation establishing the European Electronic Communications Market Authority***

Discussion by the Council has demonstrated that the Member States wish to give the existing European Regulators Group (established under Commission Decision 2002/627/EC) a formal status, but that a majority of delegations were against establishing a new Community agency in this context.

Ministers therefore approved a compromise proposal ([15901/08](#)) which gives formal status to the European Regulators Group in the Community Regulation. The new body will be designated Group of European Regulators in Telecoms (GERT).

The principal aim of the Group will be to contribute to ensuring consistent application of the regulatory framework in the internal market in electronic communications networks and services by improving its functioning in this way. In addition, it will encourage cooperation between national regulatory authorities and between them and the Commission, and will advise the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

The Group will be composed of heads or senior representatives of the national regulatory authorities set up in each Member State and comprise one member per Member State.

The draft Regulation should enter into force on 31 December 2009.

The European Parliament adopted its first-reading opinions on all these legislative proposals on 24 September 2008. The Commission adopted its amended proposals following the Parliament's first reading on 6 November.

AMENDMENT OF THE FIRST ROAMING REGULATION

The Council worked out by a qualified majority, in public deliberation, a general approach on a proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 717/2007 on roaming on public mobile telephone networks within the Community ([15898/08](#)).

The proposal provides for a three-year extension to the Regulation currently in force which is due to expire on 2010, a further reduction in charges and an extension of pricing limits to cover SMS and data services in addition to voice calls.

The Commission proposal was generally well received by the Member States. The text endorsed by ministers retains the same pricing ceilings as were originally proposed by the Commission. In addition, certain delegations would also like to set limits on retail prices for data services, in order to correct the excessive charges for roaming data services in relation to domestic rates. To meet this concern, the text contains provisions to protect consumers from excessive bills. Thus the operator will offer all its subscribers the possibility of deliberately opting, free of charge, for a cut-off limit. This option will protect consumers by warning them when the cut-off limit is about to be reached. That cut-off limit may not exceed EUR 50 (excluding VAT).

The general aim of the proposed rules is to ensure that the price paid by users of mobile communication networks for community-wide roaming services, i.e. when travelling within the EU, is not abnormally high in relation to the price paid for making a call, sending an SMS or transferring data in their country of origin. It also aims to ensure that users have the information needed to understand and control their roaming expenditure.

The main details of the Commission proposal are as follows:

- voice calls:
 - wholesale and retail prices to continue to fall, in several stages;
 - billing per second for all roaming calls made and received (as from the 31st second for calls made);
- SMS:
 - wholesale prices limited to EUR 0,04 and retail prices limited to EUR 0,11 (exc. VAT);
- packet switched data:
 - wholesale charges limited to EUR 1 per megabyte of data transmitted. The Commission is not proposing to limit retail prices to give this emerging market the chance to regulate itself.

The new Regulation should enter into force on 1 July 2009. The measure will be time-limited, expiring *a priori* on 30 June 2013.

The Commission submitted its proposal at the end of September 2008 ([13531/08](#)), after reviewing the operation of the first Regulation on the matter, adopted last year. That review, the details of which can be found in a Commission communication ([13521/08](#)), led to the conclusion that, despite the price reductions achieved through that Regulation, charges were still much too high in comparison with operators' costs. In addition, a study of price trends for SMS and data services revealed that these services also needed regulating along with voice call services, which were the only aspect on which a pricing limit was imposed in the first Regulation.

The European Parliament should adopt its first-reading opinion in April 2009.

SECOND PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE SCOPE OF UNIVERSAL SERVICE AND QUESTION OF INCLUDING BROADBAND IN ITS COVERAGE

The Council held an exchange of views on the second periodic review of the scope of universal service¹ in electronic communications networks and services.

The Commission sent its communication on this subject to the Council in October 2008 ([13775/08](#)). The second review is provided for in Directive 2002/22/EC on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services.

Ministers were invited to give their views on universal broadband access, notably by answering the questions suggested by the Presidency ([15116/08](#)).

The Presidency summarised the debate as follows:

- all delegations stressed the importance of broadband for the information society and the citizen, particularly in the context of the digital dividend;
- broadband must be geared to the market and stimulated by competition;
- a balance must be found between flexibility for Member States and harmonisation of the market at Community level;
- the question of whether broadband should be included in universal service needed detailed examination;
- the possibilities for using frequencies for broadband mobile services should also be examined.

¹ Universal service in the electronic communications sector means ensuring that all who so request are provided with those services essential for participation in society and already available to the great majority of citizens, either by the market or in the case of market failure by public intervention. It is defined as a minimum set of e-communications services available to all end-users upon reasonable request at an affordable price and of specified quality, independently of geographical location within a Member State.

The debate on this issue will continue in 2009 after the Commission has published the results of a public consultation launched by the present communication.

The communication more specifically examines the question of including mobile telephony and broadband. In the case of mobile telephony, it concludes that the market does overall provide access. However, in the case of broadband it recognises that it is unlikely that the market will provide broadband Internet access within a reasonable period of time to the most isolated regions of the EU. It stresses, moreover, that more and more social and economic transactions are taking place online and that broadband Internet access is becoming widely available. Finally, it notes like the Presidency that broadband is proving more and more of a necessity for accessing a whole range of services and therefore its impact on competitiveness and economic growth is gradually turning this infrastructure into an essential commodity and is an argument for strengthening Community and national strategies to provide access. Nevertheless, the communication does not conclude that it is advisable to extend the coverage of this Directive to broadband, but does raise a number of questions concerning the place of this mechanism among other Community and national instruments which may be mobilised today to complete broadband cover of the EU.

FUTURE NETWORKS AND THE INTERNET – Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1) WELCOMES

- (a) the Commission communication of 29 September 2008 "Future networks and the Internet";
- (b) the Commission communication of 25 September 2008 on the second periodic review of the scope of universal service in electronic communications networks and services in accordance with Article 15 of Directive 2002/22/EC;
- (c) the Commission communication of 27 May 2008 presenting an action plan for the transition to the IPv6 protocol.

2. RECALLS

- (a) the conclusions of the European Council of December 2006, encouraging the March 2008 European Council to review the primary challenges raised by next-generation networks;
- (b) the conclusions of the European Council of 14 March 2008 recommending much greater use of online infrastructures and broadband Internet and encouraging Member States to set, within the framework of national reform programmes, ambitious national objectives concerning households' access to such services;
- (c) the mid-term review of the i2010 strategy and the conclusions of the Council of 12 June 2008, granting strategic importance to the transition to next-generation networks, for competitive reasons and for an increased use of ICT in Europe.

3. RECOGNISES

- (a) the remarkable vitality of information technologies and the fundamental role that they play in the future of both our economies and our societies, in particular their contribution to increased European productivity and competitiveness;
- (b) the growing presence of the Internet, which has, for a decade now, played a major economic and social role, and served as a space for cultural identity, technological innovation, economic activity and creation of value;
- (c) that future Internet developments, whether gradual or disruptive, and whether they concern the Internet's infrastructure, services or applications, represent major opportunities for Europe, requiring ambitious research and development work, similar to the programmes engaged by other regions or third countries;
- (d) that the arrival of new trends, particularly the development of next-generation networks offers significantly higher bandwidth and new possibilities for use;
- (e) that users' desires for mobility and ubiquitous access to services of the digital economy represent a wide-ranging trend, and that, as a result, the deployment of a very high-speed mobile and wireless network, as well as very high-speed fixed network, is a major issue;
- (f) the potential of ICT to help address climate and environmental changes;
- (g) that although some EU countries have extensive broadband coverage, full broadband coverage of the EU territory has not yet been achieved, and that coverage is unequal both among and within Member States;

- (h) that the Internet of Things is poised to develop and to give rise to important possibilities for developing new services but that it also represents risks in terms of the protection of individual privacy;
- (i) that certain advanced services, like these based on RFID and mobile contactless services, have significant potential in terms of both growth and added value;
- (j) that the protection of private data is a legitimately increasing concern within the EU related to the introduction of new technologies and services, including geolocation services.
- (k) that stability, safety and resilience of the Internet are decisive factors for forthcoming developments.

4. UNDERLINES

- (a) that the EU must play an active role in facilitating deployment of next-generation Internet and networks, in order to foster afterwards a large diffusion of uses;
- (b) that the deployment of high speed fixed and mobile networks has a strategic importance; European competitiveness, a strong innovation capacity and the development of next generation services depend on it;
- (c) that in this context, the deployment of such networks must continue in order for the EU to reach the levels of the most advanced countries in the world;
- (d) that this deployment must be given impetus by encouraging a concerted European approach, which nevertheless takes national diversity into account;
- (e) that a proper balance between stimulation of competition and innovation and encouragement of private investment, taking into account the costs of civil engineering works, will also contribute to this goal;

- (f) that, when it comes to mobile very high-speed networks, Europe's position is currently strong with respect to equipment and terminal manufacturers and first tier operators, and that in such a context, the development of mobile very high-speed broadband is a European growth vector;
- (g) that the deployment of very high-speed networks induces an increased risk of "geographical digital divides" and that the goal of encouraging an inclusive digital economy must remain a priority in the i2010 strategy;
- (h) that open and non discriminatory access to the Internet should be promoted in order to ensure effective competition and an innovation-friendly environment;
- (i) that the rapid deployment of the IPv6 protocol is of importance for the future growth of the Internet;
- (j) that it is essential to prevent cybercrime, in particular by educating and protecting young Internet users, where the Safer Internet Programme and related activities play very important role;
- (k) that regarding protection of privacy, empowering the user is necessary to take informed decisions and more generally, user empowerment is vital to ensure adoption of new technologies, applications and services;
- (l) that mobile contactless services represent an opportunity for growth and will offer users true added value in terms of payment, identification, and ticket purchase, provided that this comes with actions to promote interoperability, consumer trust and protection of privacy;
- (m) that Internet of the future and these new networks have a clear potential to help Europe face societal challenges such as those posed by population ageing.

5. WELCOMES THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO

- (a) up-date and summarize the conditions under which public financing may be used for very high-speed broadband infrastructure projects;
- (b) adopt a recommendation providing guidance on the regulatory treatment of next-generation access networks in order to foster their efficient deployment and to promote non discriminatory access;
- (c) prepare a forward-looking strategy on the respect of privacy and trust in the context of a ubiquitous information society;
- (d) consider public-private R&D partnerships concerning the Internet of the future, in compliance with the Bled Declaration of 31 March 2008;
- (e) adopt a communication in 2009 on the Internet of Things, presenting architecture and governance issues and identifying a series of concrete actions to initiate;
- (f) adopt a communication in 2009 on the protection of critical information infrastructure, addressing particularly global cooperation for long-term stability and resilience of the Internet.

6. INVITES MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO

- (a) launch a reflection on how best to ensure territorial cohesion and to guarantee all citizens sufficient access to the information society;
- (b) measure the progress of both fixed and mobile very high-speed broadband in the Member States through an agreed methodology and official data provided by Member States, when available, and to compare this progress with that of the most advanced third countries;

- (c) encourage, as regards very high-speed broadband, exchange of best practices between Member States (regulators and national administrations) in order to identify the best measures to foster its deployment and exchange on their economic and technical models for providing coverage to sparsely-populated and/or non-profitable zones;
- (d) make efforts, as regards mobile very high-speed broadband, to ensure that Member States have access to frequencies that can be adapted to future needs, and in this respect encourage close cooperation between Member States in the use of the digital dividend, based on the results of WRC-07 and the Council conclusions of 12 June 2008;
- (e) encourage the emergence of harmonised and open international standards to meet needs of interoperability and roaming, and finally direct R&D efforts in favour of mobile services that encourage innovation, interoperability, openness and simplicity of systems and services;
- (f) initiate, with respect to the Internet of the future, ambitious research programmes that will allow Europe to take an active part in the Internet's transformation and breakthrough changes;
- (g) better structure and coordinate their efforts concerning the Internet of the future, in particular in the areas of R&D and standardisation, and collaborate with third countries who are excelling in this respect;
- (h) encourage the creation of European test platforms based on open standards to serve as an essential tool for validating hypotheses, solutions and protocols for the Internet of the future;
- (i) call upon European standards organisations to initiate and coordinate work with the aim of supporting the industry in this area;
- (j) implement, after appropriate discussion, the action plan for a transition to the IPv6 protocol;

- (k) with respect to the Internet of Things, deepen the reflection on the development of decentralised architectures and promoting a shared and decentralised network governance;
- (l) launch discussions, in partnership with ENISA, on possible ways to improve the security and the resilience of the European Internet network;
- (m) encourage R&D to develop technologies that improve security and privacy on a network basis;
- (n) create an environment propitious for accelerating the development of advanced services within the EU, in particular, by favouring an ecosystem, based on open standards, that encourages development of mobile contactless services on a Europe-wide level and ensures coherence of regulatory frameworks governing the various stakeholders (telecom operators, banks, transport operators, etc.) and the interoperability of these services;
- (o) continue to promote a market of competitive, rich and diversified digital content, in particular via electronic administration services;
- (p) contribute to ensuring the confidentiality, security, privacy and ethical management of the data that will be exchanged on the Internet of Things, for example by promoting where appropriate the possibility of deactivating RFID chips or any other way which provides empowerment and user control;
- (q) take into account the economic and societal impacts of new networks and the Internet of the future in the reflections on the post 2010 Lisbon strategy.

7. INVITES MEMBER STATES TO

- (a) continue to foster favourable conditions for the deployment of infrastructures for very high-speed broadband access (both fixed and mobile);

- (b) increase their cooperation, within the high-level group devoted to Internet governance, in order to improve their mutual understanding of issues of safety, privacy, resilience and governance;
- (c) facilitate, with regard to mobile contactless services, dialogue between the various stakeholders (electronic communication operators and service providers), as currently done in several Member States.

8. ENCOURAGES ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO

- (a) integrate, into the design of products and services, requirements for service quality, security, environmental protection and protection of personal data, aiming to improve users' trust and to accelerate the adoption and sustainability of these products and services;
- (b) promote investments in the deployment of next generation access networks;
- (c) participate in coordination efforts by public- and private-sphere stakeholders in order to achieve the level of security and trust to the Internet that is indispensable to its development and to enhancing measures to limit the risks linked to critical infrastructures;
- (d) launch awareness raising and education programs for professionals and for individual users as well, covering the issues of advantages, security, protection and possible threats as regards the use of ICT;
- (e) continue research efforts into the Internet of the future and strengthen European participation in international standardisation organisations;

- (f) regarding the Internet of Things, deploy technologically neutral, open and interoperable solutions;
- (g) adopt, after appropriate discussion, the IPv6 protocol by 2010, in compliance with the Commission's communication of 27 May 2008 concerning its deployment;
- (h) as regards mobile contactless services, develop joint projects bringing together companies, electronic communication operators and service providers (banks, transport companies, shops, etc.) around the technical aspects and the business model."

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**ENERGY****Standby and off mode electricity consumption – Regulatory procedure with scrutiny**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a Regulation implementing Directive 2005/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to ecodesign requirements for standby and off mode electric power consumption of electrical and electronic household and office equipment.

Pursuant to the EU regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the Council may oppose the adoption of legal acts by the Commission. This means that unless the European Parliament objects, the Commission may adopt the Regulation.

TRANSPORT**Agreement with Armenia on air services**

The Council adopted a Decision on the signing of the Agreement between the European Community and Armenia on certain aspects of air services.

This Agreement is the result of negotiations conducted under a mandate according to 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.

INTERNAL MARKET**Freedom of movement for persons – Bulgaria and Romania**

The Council adopted a Decision on the participation of Bulgaria and Romania as contracting parties to a Protocol to the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons ([9116/08](#)).

HUMAN RIGHTS

Consultations with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico – Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council recalls the adoption in 2001 of the European Union Guidelines on human rights dialogues.

The Council welcomes the analysis of the current state of relations, as regards human rights, with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico.

The Council endorses the initiation of human rights consultations with Argentina, Brazil and Colombia and the enhancement of human rights consultations with Mexico and Chile.

The Council is pleased to be able to enhance its human rights dialogue with these States."

TRADE POLICY

EU-China – combating the misuse of substances for the manufacture of illicit drugs

The Council adopted a Decision authorising the conclusion of an Agreement with China to step up administrative cooperation to prevent the misuse of drug precursors and substances used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances ([13001/1/08](#)).

APPOINTMENTS**Committee of the Regions**

The Council adopted a Decision appointing for the remainder of the current term of office, i.e. until 25 January 2010:

(a) as members:

- Ms Helene LUND, Byrådsmedlem, Furesø Kommune (change of mandate),
- Ms Mona HEiberg, 1. Næstformand for Borgerrepræsentationen, Københavns Kommune (change of mandate),
- Mr Bas VERKERK, Burgemeester van Delft (change of mandate),

(b) as alternate members:

- Mr Jens Christian GJESING, 1. Viceborgmester, Haderslev Kommune (change of mandate),
 - Ms Tove LARSEN, Borgmester, Aabenraa Kommune (change of mandate),
 - Mr Job COHEN, Burgemeester van Amsterdam,
 - Mr Hans KOK, Burgemeester van Hof van Twente.
-