



Brussels, 10 June 2014

BACKGROUND¹
ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL
Thursday 12 June in Luxembourg

*The Council, which will start at 10.00 a.m., is expected to reach political agreement on draft directive amending directive 2001/18/EC as regards the possibility for members states to **restrict or prohibit the cultivation of genetically modified organisms** within their territory.*

*Ministers will hold a policy debate on the 2030 framework for **climate and energy**.*

*The Council will hold a public orientation debate on two proposals from the clear air package : **emissions from medium combustion plants and reduction of national emissions**.*

*In addition, ministers are expected to adopt conclusions on the "**Convention on Biological Diversity**".*

Over lunch, ministers will discuss sustainable development goals and the post-2015 process in the run-up to the UN Environment Assembly, which will take place in Nairobi on 25-26 June 2014.

Press conference: before lunch (+/- 13.15) and at the end of the Council (+/- 18.00).

Press conferences and public deliberations: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

Video coverage: <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

Photographic library: www.consilium.europa.eu/photo

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

P R E S S

Cultivation of genetically modified organisms

In a public session, the Council is expected to reach a political agreement on draft directive amending directive 2001/18/EC as regards the possibility for member states to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in their territory.

The aim of the proposal is to facilitate the GMO authorisation process by providing for a legal basis in the related EU legal framework in order to allow member states to restrict or prohibit the cultivation, in all or part of their territory, of GMOs that have been authorised at EU level.

On 3 March 2014, the exchange of views held by the Environment Council confirmed the willingness of member states to re-open discussions on this legislative proposal on the basis of the presidency compromise text. Since then, the Hellenic presidency has convened several meetings of the ad hoc working party on GMOs, which showed that a new revised proposal could gather broad support.

The Commission presented the GMO cultivation proposal in July 2010 ([12371/10](#) + [ADD 1](#)) with the aim of providing for a legal basis to allow member states to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs in their territory on grounds other than health and environment considerations, which had already been addressed during the EU authorisation process for GMOs. The proposal has been examined during several presidencies. The European Parliament adopted, at first reading, a set of amendments to the Commission proposal in July 2011. The Environment Council of 9 March 2012 was not able to reach a political agreement as a blocking minority of delegations still had concerns regarding certain issues.

2030 framework for climate and energy

The Council will hold a public policy debate on a Commission communication for a 2030 framework for climate and energy policy.

To structure the debate, the presidency proposed that the ministers focus on two issues ([10180/14](#)). The first is the role of various economic sectors in cutting emissions. The second is the investment needed for the implementation of the 2030 policy framework. The aim of the debate is to make progress on specific issues in order to help define elements for the final package.

The presidency will report on the outcome of the ministerial discussion to the President of the European Council with a view to the European Council meeting of 26-27 June 2014. The aim of the June European Council is to take stock of progress as regards final agreement by October 2014.

Since its publication in January 2014, the proposal for a 2030 climate and energy framework has been examined at all levels and in various different fora: the March Environment Council, the March European Council ([7/1/14 REV 1](#), paragraph 18) and the informal ministerial meeting held in Athens in May.

The Commission communication ([5644/1/14 REV 1](#)), presented on 22 January, suggests a framework for future EU energy and climate policies and is intended to launch a process to reach a shared understanding on how to develop these policies in future.

The main elements of the proposed framework include:

- a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 40% below 1990 levels, to be achieved only through domestic measures (without the use of international credits);
- a renewable energy target of at least 27% of energy consumption, with flexibility for member states to set national objectives;
- energy efficiency as a key component of the 2030 framework: a review of the energy efficiency directive will be concluded later in 2014.

The Commission also sets out a new governance system based on national plans for competitive, secure and sustainable energy, which will be drawn up by member states. In addition, it proposes a set of indicators intended to assess progress over time and to provide a factual basis for a potential policy response.

For more information on this topic, see the Commission [website](#).

Clean Air Programme for Europe

Ministers will hold a public orientation debate on two draft directives (medium size combustion plants and national emission ceilings), which are part of a Clear Air Programme for Europe.

The objective of the debate is to give ministers the opportunity to express their initial views and concerns on these proposals. The Hellenic presidency proposes to focus the debate of the Environment Council on the main political issues, in particular on matters related to the scope such as flexibility and exemptions ([10112/14](#)).

The Commission presented its clear air programme in December 2013. The package includes an update of existing legislation and imposes further limits on harmful emissions from industry, traffic, energy plants and agriculture. The aim is to reduce the impact of emissions on human health and the environment. The Programme was presented to the Council in March 2014.

Medium size combustion plants

Medium combustion plants are used for a wide variety of applications (including electricity generation, domestic/residential heating and cooling and providing heat/steam for industrial processes, etc.). They are an important source of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. The approximate number of medium combustion plants in the EU is 142,986.

The draft directive ([18170/13](#)) is designed to tackle air pollution at source as described in the 7th Environment Action Programme. It establishes emission limit values for medium size combustion plants, with a rated input equal to or greater than 1MW and less than 50 MW and, it distinguishes between new and existing plants as regards the date of implementation. Emission limit values for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter are set depending on the different types of plants and fuels used. Certain combustion plants are exempted from the scope of the proposal, on the basis of their technical characteristics, their annual operating time or their use in particular activities.

National emission ceilings

The proposal ([18167/13](#)) repeals and replaces the current EU regime on the annual capping of national emissions of air pollutants, as provided for in Directive 2001/81/EC. The aim is to integrate the EU's international commitments for 2020 under the Gothenburg Protocol as amended in 2012. It also sets out new reduction commitments for the period up to 2030. The objectives for national emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC) and ammonia (NH₃) are maintained up to 2019. New reductions for all these pollutants and for particulate matter (PM_{2,5}) are set for the period 2020-2030 and reduction for methane (CH₄) are set for the period from 2030.

In addition to the two above proposals, the package consists of two other documents. The first is a communication entitled "A new clean air programme for Europe", outlining measures to ensure that existing targets are met in the short term, and new air quality objectives for the period up to 2030 ([18155/13](#)). The second is a proposal for a Council decision on the acceptance of the Amendment to the 1999 Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone ([18165/13](#)).

For more information, see the Commission [website](#).

Convention on Biological Diversity

The Council is due to adopt conclusions on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The conclusions are adopted with a view to preparing for the Convention on Biological Diversity three related international meetings to be held in Pyeongchang (Korea) in October 2014.

These conclusions, together with the EU position papers that will be prepared on the various items on the agendas of these meetings, will form the overall EU negotiating position.

The 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) to the CBD will take place in Pyeongchang from 6 to 17 October 2014. The 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 7) will be held from 29 September to 3 October 2014. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (COP-MOP 1) will take place from 6 to 17 October 2014.

In the draft conclusions the Council confirms, for instance, that the EU and its member states are strongly committed to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its related Protocols as well as the implementation of the decisions adopted by their governing bodies, in particular the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets. In addition, the Council calls for the objectives of the CBD and those of the Strategic Plan and its Aichi Targets to be reflected, as appropriate, in the Sustainable Development Goals targets and indicators. The Council stresses the need for the post-2015 framework to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss.

The Conference of the Parties is the governing body of the CBD. It promotes the implementation of the CBD through the decisions it takes at its periodic meetings.

The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (COP-MOP) is also the Governing Body of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.

The objectives of the CBD are the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The main topics in the agenda of CBD COP 12 will be the implementation of the Strategic Plan, Resource Mobilisation, Indigenous and Local Communities, Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, and Biodiversity and Climate change

The aim of the Biosafety Protocol is to regulate international trade in living modified organisms by ensuring that importing countries know what they are importing and are satisfied that there are no undue risks to biodiversity or human health.

The key priorities for the Cartagena Protocol COP-MOP 7 will be the consolidation of activities under the Protocol and its improved implementation.

The Nagoya Protocol COP-MOP 1 will take place at the same time as CBD COP 12, provided that at least 50 countries have ratified the Protocol by July 2014.

For more details see the CBD [website](#).

Other business

(a) **Current legislative files** (public deliberation)

Proposal for a regulation on the monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon dioxide emissions from maritime transport and amending Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 ([10275/14](#))

Proposal for a directive amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags ([10142/14](#))

Information from the Presidency on the state of play

(b) Proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion of the **Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol** to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the joint fulfilment of commitments thereunder

Information from the Presidency on the state of play

(c) **International meetings and events**

Information from the Presidency and the Commission

(d) **Endocrine disruptors**

Information from the French delegation, supported by the Danish and Swedish delegations
([10247/14](#))

(e) **Need for an EU Action plan for highly fluorinated substances**

Information from the Swedish delegation ([10274/14](#))

(f) **Work programme of the incoming Presidency**

Information from the Italian delegation
