



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



5485/09 (Presse 15)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

2920th Council meeting

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

#### **General Affairs**

Brussels, 26 January 2009

President            **Alexandr Vondra**  
Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for European  
Affairs of the Czech Republic

\* The 2921st meeting on External Relations is the subject of a separate press release (5701/09).

# **P R E S S**

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5485/09 (Presse 15)

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## **Main results of the Council**

*The Council adopted conclusions condemning the regime in **Zimbabwe** for its failure to address the economic and social needs of its people, and expressing distress at the escalation of the humanitarian crisis there. It called on the Southern African Development Community, the African Union and states in the region to work for a durable and equitable political solution in Zimbabwe, involving a truly representative democratic government.*

*The Council decided to extend the EU's restrictive measures against Zimbabwe for another year, adding further names to the list of persons and entities that are subject to those measures.*

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- <sup>1</sup>
- 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.

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## **PARTICIPANTS**

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

### **Belgium:**

Mr Karel DE GUCHT Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Bulgaria:**

Ms Gergana GRANCHAROVA Minister for European Affairs

### **Czech Republic:**

Mr Alexandr VONDRA Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for European Affairs

Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Denmark:**

Mr Michael ZILMER-JOHNS State Secretary for Foreign and Security Policy, EU Policy and EU Coordination

### **Germany:**

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Estonia:**

Mr Urmas PAET Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Ireland:**

Mr Michael MARTIN Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Greece:**

Ms Dora BAKOYANNI Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Spain:**

Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO State Secretary for the European Union

### **France:**

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

### **Italy:**

Mr Franco FRATTINI Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Cyprus:**

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Latvia:**

Mr Māris RIEKSTIŅŠ Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Lithuania:**

Mr Vygaudas UŠACKAS Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Luxembourg:**

Mr Jean ASSELBORN Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

### **Hungary:**

Ms Kinga GÖNCZ Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Malta:**

Mr Richard CACHIA CARUANA Permanent Representative

### **Netherlands:**

Mr Maxime VERHAGEN Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Frans TIMMERMANS Minister for European Affairs

### **Austria:**

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

### **Poland:**

Mr Radosław SIKORSKI Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Portugal:**

Mr Luis AMADO Ministro de Estado, Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Romania:**

Mr Cristian DIACONESCU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Slovenia:**

Mr Samuel ŽBOGAR

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Slovakia:**

Ms Oľga ALGAYEROVÁ

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Finland:**

Mr Alexander STUBB

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Sweden:**

Mr Carl BILDT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Minister for European Affairs

**United Kingdom:**

Mr David MILIBAND

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

**Commission:**

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Member

**General Secretariat of the Council:**

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

**ITEMS DEBATED****PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES**

The Council took note of the presentation by the Czech presidency of its priorities for the duration of its tenure (January to June 2009).

The main priorities are as follows:

- Economy: increasing the competitiveness of European industry, increasing the confidence of consumers and SMEs, dealing effectively with the financial crisis and continuing reforms of the EU's budget and policies.
- Energy: taking policy forward whilst maintaining a balance between the needs of the environment and the preservation of competitiveness and energy security in Europe. Particular attention will be paid to the diversification of energy sources and the development of new energy networks.
- External relations: priorities include the preparation of a partnership with the EU's eastern neighbours and the further development of transatlantic relations.

## **ENERGY SECURITY**

The presidency briefed the Council on how it plans to handle the issue of energy security, following the crisis stemming from the recent interruption of gas supplies from Russia via Ukraine to the EU.

The presidency outlined areas where it intends work to be speeded up and given the highest priority. The Commission confirmed its intentions regarding interconnection and infrastructure projects to be proposed for EU funding under the economic recovery plan approved in December by the European Council.

The Council held an exchange of views, emphasising urgency in seeking solutions to problems that were highlighted during the gas crisis.

The presidency identified four areas on which it intends to focus:

- Internal energy market: reaching an agreement by the end of March on a proposed package, including on market transparency.
- Interconnection and infrastructure projects: reaching an early agreement on the Commission's proposals.
- Supply crisis response mechanisms: adjustments to directives on the security of supply of oil and gas, and measures to improve access to and investment in gas storage.
- External energy policy: developing policy so as to reduce the EU's vulnerability and avoid new disruptions of supply.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

***Consequences of the storms in southern Europe***

At the request of the French delegation, the Council took stock of the situation following violent storms in Spain, France and Italy, and of arrangements in place regarding the provision of assistance.

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED****EXTERNAL RELATIONS*****Zimbabwe - Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The situation in Zimbabwe has deteriorated in a manner that stands in stark contrast to the duties and responsibilities of Governments, according to global and regional standards and charters, not least the SADC principles and charters. The victims of this misrule are the Zimbabwean people. The Council condemns the regime for its ongoing failure to address the most basic economic and social needs of its people.
2. The Council views with particular distress the escalation of the humanitarian crisis including the cholera epidemic that has taken the lives of so many Zimbabweans and that threatens the health security of the neighbouring countries and of the region as a whole. The Council reiterates its deep concern at the continued deterioration of economic and social conditions in Zimbabwe.
3. The Council reaffirms the European Union's commitment to the Zimbabwean people through a substantial and long-standing programme of humanitarian aid. The Council demands full respect for the principles of humanitarian aid and, in particular, respect for the principle of impartiality and equal access to humanitarian aid for the entire Zimbabwean population. It underlines the importance of a response by the international community to the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe and the urgent needs of the country.
4. The Council considers that only in the context of a durable, equitable, political solution can the economic, social and humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe be fully addressed. It calls on SADC, the African Union and states in the region to pave actively the way for a truly representative democratic government reflecting the will of the Zimbabwean people expressed in the election of March 2008. The Council urges stakeholders to comply with the power sharing agreement. It condemns the ongoing violations of human rights, in particular the abduction and detention of those exercising a democratic right to express opposition to the regime and of those defending human rights.

5. The Council has decided to extend, for another year, the Common Position on restrictive measures against Zimbabwe. It has further decided to add to its list of persons and entities subject to those measures additional persons and entities that are actively associated with the violence or human rights infringements of the regime.
6. The Council notes with concern the growing trade in illicit diamonds that provide financial support to the regime. In this context, it also condemns the violence inflicted by state-sponsored forces on diamond panners and dealers at Marange/Chiadzwa. The Council supports action to investigate the exploitation of diamonds from the site at Marange/Chiadzwa and their significance in possible financial support to the regime and recent human rights abuses. It calls on the Kimberley Process to take action with a view to ensure Zimbabwe's compliance with its Kimberley obligations.
7. The Council reaffirms that the European Union stands ready to support the economic and social recovery of Zimbabwe once a government reflecting the will of the Zimbabwean people has been formed and shows tangible signs of a return to respect for human rights, the rule of law and macroeconomic stabilization."

### **Restrictive measures against Zimbabwe**

The Council adopted a common position:

- renewing restrictive measures against Zimbabwe until 20 February 2010;
- extending the group of targeted persons to include more supporters and beneficiaries of the Mugabe regime, as well as entities and companies whose owners are economically supporting the regime.

Overall, 27 persons and 36 entities and companies are added to the list.

The current restrictive measures include a ban on the sale of arms to Zimbabwe, an assets freeze and the prohibition of the entry into and the transit through an EU member state of persons whose activities seriously undermine democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Zimbabwe.

## **EU terrorist list - Adoption of a new consolidated list**

The Council has conducted a complete review of the persons and entities subject to the EU's autonomous regime on specific restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities with a view to combating terrorism (common position 2001/931/CFSP and Council regulation 2580/2001<sup>1</sup>).

In the light of this review, the Council adopted a common position updating common position 2001/931/CFSP on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism and a Council decision implementing article 2(3) of regulation 2580/2001 on specific restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities with a view to combating terrorism. The lists of the persons and entities subject to the measures are annexed to the common position and to the Council decision.

The parties listed pursuant to regulation 2580/2001 will be informed via a "letter of notification" of the specific information that forms the basis for the Council's decision<sup>2</sup>.

These parties may challenge the Council's Decision before the Court of First Instance.

Both acts, including the new consolidated lists, will be published in the Official Journal.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 344 28.12.2001, p. 70 and p. 93.

All persons, groups and entities on the list annexed to common position 2001/931/CFSP are subject to enhanced measures relating to police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters within the framework of title VI of the Treaty on European Union. In addition, those persons, groups and entities which are also on the list provided for in Council regulation 2580/2001 are subject to an asset freeze implemented by the European Community.

<sup>2</sup> For those whose address is unknown, a notice is published in the Official Journal ("C" series) which indicates that they may submit a request to obtain the Council's statement of reasons concerning them.

## **Democratic Republic of the Congo - restrictive measures**

The Council adopted a common position amending common position 2008/369/CFSP<sup>1</sup> on restrictive measures against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, implementing UN Security Council resolution 1857 (2008) adopted in December ([5172/09](#)).

UNSCR 1857 (2008) provides for additional criteria for the designation by the UN sanctions committee of individuals and entities subject to an asset freeze and travel ban. It also extends measures imposed by UNSCR 1807 (2008) until 30 November 2009.

## **DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **High-level meeting on food security**

The Council approved the EU's contribution to a high-level meeting on "Food Security for All" that is due to take place in Madrid on 26 and 27 January ([5365/09](#)).

The EU would like the Madrid conference to urge the donor community to engage in a joint, coordinated and coherent response to the challenge of food security in developing countries. It further calls on the conference to launch a consultation process between all stakeholders of the global food system - developing countries, donor countries, international organisations, private sector, NGOs and civil societies - which would lead to the formation of a "global partnership for agriculture and food security". The global partnership would allow all stakeholders to renew their commitment to achieve a comprehensive and coherent long-term response to hunger and malnutrition.

## **TRADE POLICY**

### **Anti-dumping - fasteners from China**

The Council adopted a regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of certain iron or steel fasteners originating in China ([5121/1/09](#)).

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 127, 15.5.2008, p. 84.

## **Accession of Montenegro to the WTO**

The Council adopted a decision whereby the Community, within the General Council of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), is to approve the accession of Montenegro to the (WTO) .

## **GENERAL AFFAIRS**

### **Publications Office**

The Council approved a draft decision on the organisation and operation of the EU's Publications Office, with a view to replacing the current Decision (2000/459) in order to take account of certain reforms and decisions made since July 2000, in particular regarding the financial regulation and the staff regulations of officials of the European Communities.

The other institutions and bodies concerned (Parliament, Commission, Court of Auditors, Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions) are called upon to approve the text in accordance with their own procedures.

## **BUDGETS**

### **System of EU own resources**

The Council adopted a regulation updating the EU's budgetary rules in line with decision 2007/436/EC on the system of the EU own resources<sup>1</sup>. The regulation also takes into account the development of Community legislation since the previous amendments, introduced by regulation 2028/2004 ([15177/1/08](#)).<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 163, 21.6.2007, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 352, 27.11.2004, p. 1.

The changes, which will apply retroactively as from 1 January 2007, relate in particular to:

- a. *the elimination of the distinction between agricultural duties and import duties*

Following the implementation in EU legislation of agreements concluded during the Uruguay Round of world trade negotiations, there is no longer any material difference between agricultural duties and customs duties. The distinction made between these duties was therefore removed in the 2007 own resources decision.

- b. *the inclusion of gross reductions for the Netherlands and Sweden in their annual gross national income-based contributions for the period 2007-2013*

According to the 2007 own resources decision, the Netherlands and Sweden will receive a gross reduction in their annual GNI-based contributions for the period 2007-2013. The 2007 decision specifies the amount of this reduction (which must be adapted to current prices) and indicates that this reduction shall be granted only after calculation of the correction in favour of the United Kingdom. This reduction is to be financed by all member states via monthly twelfths.

## **CUSTOMS UNION**

### **Convention on the international transport of goods**

The Council approved the Community's position on a decision to be taken by the administrative committee of the UN customs convention on the international transport of goods (TIR convention), with a view to increasing the current recommended amount of guarantee which can be claimed for each TIR carnet from USD 50 000 to EUR 60 000 ([5166/09](#)).

The 1975 TIR convention entered into force in the Community in 1983<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 31, 2.2.1983, p. 13.

**ENERGY****Ecodesign requirements - Regulatory procedure with scrutiny**

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation implementing directive 2005/32/EC with regard to ecodesign requirements for fluorescent lamps without integrated ballast, for high intensity discharge lamps, and for ballasts and luminaires able to operate such lamps, and repealing directive 2000/55/EC.

In accordance with the EU's regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the Council can oppose the adoption of legal acts by the Commission. Consequently, unless the European Parliament objects, the Commission can adopt the regulation.

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