



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



5685/10 (Presse 9)

PRESS RELEASE

2991st Council meeting

General Affairs

Brussels, 25 January 2010

President

Mr Miguel Angel MORATINOS
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain

- * The 2992nd meeting on External Relations is the subject of a separate press release (5686/10).

P R E S S

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Main results of the Council

The Council heard a presentation by Minister Moratinos of the priorities of the Spanish presidency.

*The Council decided to forward to the European Parliament for its consent a draft decision on the conclusion of an agreement with the United States on the **processing and transfer of financial messaging data** from the EU.*

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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.

PARTICIPANTS

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

<u>Belgium:</u> Mr Olivier CHASTEL	State Secretary for European Affairs
<u>Bulgaria:</u> Mr Konstantin DIMITROV	Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
<u>Czech Republic:</u> Ms Milena VICENOVA	Permanent Representative
<u>Denmark:</u> Mr Per Stig MØLLER	Minister for Foreign Affairs
<u>Germany:</u> Mr Edmund DUCKWITZ	Permanent Representative
<u>Estonia:</u> Mr Urmas PAET	Minister for Foreign Affairs
<u>Ireland:</u> Mr Dick ROCHE	Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach and at the Department of Foreign Affairs with special responsibility for European Affairs
<u>Greece:</u> Mr Dimitris DROUTSAS	Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs
<u>Spain:</u> Mr Miguel Ángel MORATINOS CUYAUBÉ Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO	Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation State Secretary for the European Union
<u>France:</u> Mr Pierre LELLOUCHE	State Secretary with responsibility for European affairs
<u>Italy:</u> Mr Alfredo MANTICA	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs
<u>Cyprus:</u> Mr Marcos KYPRIANOU	Minister for Foreign Affairs
<u>Latvia:</u> Mr Andris TEIKMANIS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
<u>Lithuania:</u> Mr Vygaudas UŠACKAS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
<u>Luxembourg:</u> Mr Jean ASSELBORN	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration
<u>Hungary:</u> Mr Péter BALÁZS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
<u>Malta:</u> Mr Tonio BORG	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
<u>Netherlands:</u> Mr Frans TIMMERMANS	Minister for European Affairs
<u>Austria:</u> Mr Hans-Dietmar SCHWEISGUT	Permanent Representative
<u>Poland:</u> Mr Mikołaj DOWGIELEWICZ	State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<u>Portugal:</u> Mr Luis AMADO Mr Pedro LOURTIE	State Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Secretary of State for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Teodor BACONSCI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovenia:

Ms Andreja JERINA

State Secretary at the Government Office for Growth and European Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Miroslav LAJČÁK

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Ms Astrid THORS

Minister for Migration and European Affairs

Sweden:

Mr Carl BILDT

Ms Amelie VON ZWEIGBERGK

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for European Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Chris BRYANT

Deputy Leader of the House of Commons and Parliamentary Secretary

Commission:

Mr Karel de GUCHT

Member

General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Pierre de BOISSIEU

Secretary-General

ITEMS DEBATED**SPANISH PRESIDENCY PROGRAMME**

The Council took note of the presentation by the Spanish presidency of its programme for the duration of its term of office (January to July 2010).

The presidency's priorities are as follows:

- promoting economic recovery and sustainable growth across Europe and launching the EU 2020 strategy for growth and jobs;
- full implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon;
- fostering a Europe of rights and freedoms for its citizens;
- strengthening the Union's foreign policy to make the EU a truly global player.

The presidency will focus on fostering economic recovery through sustainable growth geared to generating employment. It aims to strengthen coordination at EU level of the member states' economic policies, ahead of the launch of the EU 2020 strategy.

With the Treaty of Lisbon now in force, it falls on the Spanish presidency to ensure as its first priority that the treaty is implemented rigorously and in full.

For the Union to enhance its global role and influence, it needs to foster close links with its citizens and build their support and involvement. To this end, the presidency aims to strengthen the rights, civil liberties and security of Europe's citizens and promote real equality between men and women.

In foreign affairs, the presidency will collaborate closely with the President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in order to make the best use of the possibilities created by the new treaty. The Union is now equipped to streamline and strengthen its Common Foreign and Security Policy and assume its role as a fully-fledged global player promoting its values and interests in the international arena.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EU-US agreement on the transfer of financial messaging data

The Council decided to forward to the European Parliament for its consent a draft decision on the conclusion of an agreement with the United States on the processing and transfer of financial messaging data from the EU for the purposes of a terrorist finance tracking programme ([5305/10](#)).

Saudi Arabia - Exemption from visa requirement for diplomatic staff

The Council adopted a decision allowing France to exempt, as of 1 February 2010, holders of diplomatic passports from Saudi Arabia from EU visa requirements. The decision amends the Common Consular Instructions on visas for the diplomatic missions and consular posts ([17584/1/09 REV 1](#)).

Additional rules for the surveillance of sea borders

The Council agreed on a draft decision supplementing the Schengen Borders Code as regards the surveillance of the sea external borders in the context of the operational cooperation coordinated by Frontex (the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders).

The draft decision will be forwarded to the European Parliament in accordance with the EU's regulatory procedure with scrutiny. The measure will be adopted by the Council within a few months, provided that the European Parliament does not oppose it.

The draft decision is aimed at strengthening border controls by providing rules for sea border operations and non-binding guidelines for search and rescue situations and for disembarkation in the context of sea border operations coordinated by Frontex¹.

¹ <http://www.frontex.europa.eu/>

GENERAL AFFAIRS**Proceedings in the Council's different configurations**

The Council took note of a report from the presidency on proceedings in the Council's different configurations ([5405/10](#)).

INTERNAL MARKET**Chemicals - REACH system - Regulatory procedure with scrutiny**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation aimed at updating the so-called REACH regulation as regards restrictions on the manufacture, placing on the market and use of dichloromethane, lamp oils and grill lighter fluids and organostannic compounds.

The regulation will amend, through the EU's regulatory procedure with scrutiny, annex XVII of regulation 1907/2006 on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH).

Under the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the Council can oppose an act which exceeds the implementing powers of the Commission, is not compatible with the aim or content of the basic instrument or does not respect the principles of subsidiarity or proportionality.

ENVIRONMENT

Biocidal products - Regulatory procedure with scrutiny

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation concerning the placing of biocidal products on the market.

The regulation will provide for an extension of the current derogation from the prohibition of biocidal products containing active substances not listed in annex II of regulation 1451/2007 or in annex I or IA to directive 98/8 until 14 May 2014, when a review of existing active substances runs out.

Under the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the Council can oppose an act which exceeds the implementing powers of the Commission, is not compatible with the aim or content of the basic instrument or does not respect the principles of subsidiarity or proportionality.

TRANSPORT

Customs convention on the international transport of goods

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the EU as regards modifications to the customs convention on the international transport of goods under cover of TIR carnets (TIR convention).

The modifications concern notably improvements to the process of authorisation for associations to issue TIR carnets and to act as guarantor. They reorganise the process so that it is easier to understand and apply the authorisation procedure.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION**Switzerland - Participation in EU programmes**

The Council adopted a decision approving the signing and provisional application of an agreement between the EU and Switzerland establishing the terms and conditions for Switzerland's participation in the "EU's Youth in Action" programme and in its action programme for lifelong learning (2007-2013) ([13104/2/09 REV 2](#)).
