



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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3028th Council meeting

General Affairs

Brussels, 26 July 2010

President

Mr Steven Vanackere

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Institutional Reforms of Belgium

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 8914 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

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Main results of the Council

*The Council adopted a decision establishing the **European External Action Service** and setting out its organisation and functioning.*

One of the most significant changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, the EEAS will assist High Representative Catherine Ashton in fulfilling her mandate. It is aimed at making the EU's external action more coherent and efficient, thereby increasing the EU's influence in the world.

*The Council also approved a framework for negotiations with **Iceland** on its accession to the EU, with a view to the opening of the negotiations on 27 July.*

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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.

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PARTICIPANTS

Belgium:

Mr Steven VANACKERE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Institutional Reforms
State Secretary for European Affairs

Mr Olivier CHASTEL

Bulgaria:

Mr Nickolay MLADENOV

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Mr. Michael ZILMER-JOHNS

State Secretary for Foreign Policy

Germany:

Mr Guido WESTERWELLE

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Werner HOYER

Minister of State at the Foreign Office

Estonia:

Mr Raul MÄLK

Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Dick ROCHE

Minister of State for European Affairs

Greece:

Mr Dimitrios DROUTSAS

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Miguel Ángel MORATINOS CUYAUBÉ

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

France:

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

Mr Pierre LELLOUCHE

State Secretary with responsibility for European Affairs

Italy:

Mr Franco FRATTINI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Aivis RONIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Audronius AŽUBALIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Immigration

Hungary:

Mr János MARTONYI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Tonio BORG

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Tom de BRUIJN

Permanent Representative

Austria:

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

Poland:

Mr Mikolaj DOWGIELEWICZ

State Secretary for European Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Pedro LOURTIE

State Secretary for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Teodor BACONSCI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Igor SENČAR

Permanent Representative

Slovakia:

Mr Mikulas DZURINDA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Jan STORE

Permanent Representative

Sweden:

Mr Carl BILDT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr David LIDINGTON

Minister of State for Europe

.....

Commission:

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ

Vice-President

Mr Štefan FÜLE

Member

Secretariat General

Mr Pierre de BOISSIEU

Secretary General

ITEMS DEBATED

PRESIDENCY PROGRAMME

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

It held an exchange of views.

The Belgian presidency intends to concentrate on the following priorities:

- overcoming the economic and financial crisis and ensuring a return to growth;
- the promotion of social progress and combating poverty and social exclusion;
- international negotiations on climate and the environment;
- justice and home affairs: the EU area of freedom, security and justice;
- the global influence of the EU and the efficiency of its external policies.

ENLARGEMENT

Preparation for the ministerial accession conference with Iceland - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"Referring to the conclusions adopted by the European Council on 17 June 2010, the Council adopted the general EU position, including the negotiating framework, with a view to the opening of accession negotiations with Iceland. The Council is accordingly looking forward to the opening session of the Intergovernmental Conference on 27 July 2010."

FOLLOW-UP TO THE JUNE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Council took note of a note from the presidency, setting out its intentions regarding the follow-up to be given to the European Council's meeting on 17 June (*doc.* [12316/10](#)).

PREPARATION OF THE SEPTEMBER EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Council examined an annotated draft agenda for the European Council meeting to be held on 16 September (*doc.* [12298/10](#)).

The European Council is expected to focus on:

- relations with the EU's strategic partners;
- economic governance: work of the task force chaired by the President of the European Council.

The Council will hold a further discussion at its meeting on 13 September, on the basis of draft European Council conclusions.

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

The Council adopted a decision establishing the European External Action Service (EEAS) and setting out its organisation and functioning ([11665/1/10](#)).

The creation of the EEAS is one of the most significant changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 December 2009. It is aimed at making the EU's external action more coherent and efficient, thereby increasing the EU's influence in the world.

The EEAS will assist Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in fulfilling her mandate. It will work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the member states and comprise officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission, as well as staff seconded from the national diplomatic services of the member states.

For details, see: http://eeas.europa.eu/background/index_en.htm

OTHER BUSINESS

Use of information technologies in the Council

The Council took note of ongoing work with regard to the possible broader use within the Council of information technologies, in particular video- and teleconferencing.

In the light of the disruption caused to air travel by the spread of a volcanic ash cloud over Europe in April, the Council's general secretariat was asked to examine the scope for using new technologies in the event of delegations being prevented from attending Council meetings.

Situation of the Roma

The Council held a brief exchange of views, at the request of the French delegation, regarding the situation of the Roma in Europe.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS****Statistical data - Excessive deficit procedure**

The Council adopted a regulation aimed at strengthening the rules concerning statistical data used under the EU's excessive deficit procedure (doc. [11551/10](#)).

The aim is to allow the Commission and the member states to work together more effectively in improving the quality and reliability of statistical data used to determine government deficit and debt figures.

For details, see press release [12456/10](#)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS**Euro-Mediterranean agreements - Originating status**

The Council decided on the position to be taken by the EU within the different Association Councils under its Euro-Mediterranean agreements with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, PLO/Palestinian Authority and Tunisia concerning the list of working ore processing required to be carried out on non-originating materials so that the product manufactured can obtain originating status (docs. [10516/10](#) + [10517/10](#) + [10518/10](#) + [10567/10](#) + [10520/10](#) + [10521/10](#) + [10522/10](#) + [10523/10](#)).

Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference on employment and labour

The Council adopted EU guidelines for conclusions to be adopted by the second Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference on employment and labour, to be held in Brussels on 21-22 November.

Weapons of mass destruction - Implementation of EU strategy

The Council adopted a decision on support for the preparatory commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) in order to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities (*doc. 8681/10*).

The decision was taken under the 2003 EU strategy on measures to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which requires particular attention to be paid to strengthening the multilateral treaty system and to undertaking efforts aimed at strengthening international organisations in charge of verification activities.

Against this background, the Council in previous years adopted joint actions 2006/243/CFSP, 2007/468/CFSP and 2008/588/CFSP on support for the preparatory commission of the CTBTO in the areas of training, monitoring and verification.

Separately, the Council adopted a decision establishing a European network of independent non-proliferation think tanks in support of the EU's anti-WMD strategy (*doc.5382/10*).

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Frontex - Switzerland and Liechtenstein

The Council adopted a decision approving the conclusion of an arrangement with Switzerland and Liechtenstein regarding their participation in the work of Frontex, the European agency for the management of operational cooperation at the external borders of the EU (*doc. [5707/10](#)*).

European Police College

The Council endorsed the annual CEPOL report for the year 2009 (*[12006/10](#)*).

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs - Croatia

The Council adopted a decision approving the signing of an agreement allowing Croatia to participate in the work of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (doc. [11407/10](#)).

Cross-border cooperation against terrorism - Iceland and Norway

The Council adopted a decision approving the conclusion of an agreement with Iceland and Norway aimed at stepping up cross-border cooperation in combating terrorism and cross-border crime (doc. [5309/10](#)).

Deputy director of Europol

The Council decided to extend the term of office of the Europol deputy director, Eugenio Orlandi, by four years until 31 July 2015 (doc. [12312/10](#)).

BUDGETS**Body of European regulators for electronic communications - Draft amending budget**

The Council accepted the part of draft amending budget No 2 to the EU's 2010 general budget which concerns the body of European regulators for electronic communications (BEREC).

The draft amending budget provides for the necessary modifications to the BEREC establishment plan to enable the Commission to hire staff following the adoption of a legal basis for the setting up of this body. The modifications do not require additional financial provisions, as the corresponding administrative appropriations have already been authorised under the 2010 budget.

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

Mechanisms for reducing economic and social disparities

The Council adopted a decision on the signing and provisional application of agreements with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway establishing a new mechanism for financial contributions from the three partner countries and a new Norwegian financial mechanism for the period 2009-2014 (doc. [9899/10](#)).

The financial mechanisms are aimed at reducing economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area. The Council decision also covers the signing and provisional application of two additional protocols to free trade agreements with Iceland and Norway, concerning special provisions for imports of certain fish and fisheries products during the 2009-2014 period.

ENERGY

Convention on nuclear safety

The Council took note of a report on implementation of the EU's obligations under the convention on nuclear safety ([12284/10 ADD 1](#)).

In accordance with the terms of the convention, each party must submit a report on the measures it has taken to implement the convention. The reports will be examined at the next review meeting, scheduled for 4-15 April 2011.

Electricity - Access to the network for cross-border exchanges

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation laying down guidelines relating to the inter-transmission system operator compensation mechanism for electricity and a common regulatory approach to transmission charging.

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. Under that procedure, the Council can oppose an act that exceeds the implementing powers of the Commission, is not compatible with the aim or content of the basic instrument or does not respect the EU's principles of subsidiarity or proportionality.

The Council having given its consent, the Commission may now adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

SOCIAL POLICY**Coordination of social security**

The Council adopted its position at first reading on a draft regulation aimed at extending the application of regulation 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and its implementing regulation 987/2009 to nationals of third countries.

The draft regulation is intended to ensure that third country nationals who are legally resident in the EU and in a cross-border situation are subject to the same rules for coordinating social security entitlements as European citizens (docs. [11160/10](#) + [11160/10 ADD 1](#)). The German, Austrian and Bulgarian delegations voted against, and the Czech delegation abstained.

The draft regulation will now be forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading.

ENVIRONMENT

Greenhouse gas emissions registries

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation on an EU system of registries of greenhouse gas emissions permits.

The electronic databases are used to track the issue, holding, transfer and cancellation of emission allowances and emission reduction credits, to provide for public access and confidentiality as appropriate and to ensure that there are no transfers which are incompatible with the EU's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol.

The regulation will change the existing system of registries as of 1 January 2012, repealing Commission regulation 994/2008.

Protocol on heavy metals

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to participate, on behalf of the EU, in negotiations on amendments to the 1998 protocol on heavy metals to the 1979 convention on long-range transboundary air pollution.

Trade in endangered species

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending Council regulation 338/97 on the protection of wild fauna and flora.

The amendments implement changes to the international trade regime in endangered species agreed at the 15th session of the conference of the parties to the convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, held in Doha, Qatar, in March 2010.

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. Under that procedure, the Council can oppose an act that exceeds the implementing powers of the Commission, is not compatible with the aim or content of the basic instrument or does not respect the EU's principles of subsidiarity or proportionality.

The Council having given its consent, the Commission may now adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

TRANSPORT

Transport of dangerous goods

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a directive adapting to scientific and technical progress an existing directive on inland transport of dangerous goods (doc. [12040/10](#)).

The draft directive amends the directive's annexes in the light of a bi-annual update of international agreements on transport of dangerous goods by road, rail and inland waterways. The new provisions will apply as from 1 January 2011, with a transitional period up to 30 June 2011.

The Commission directive is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. Under that procedure, the Council can oppose an act that exceeds the implementing powers of the Commission, is not compatible with the aim or content of the basic instrument or does not respect the EU's principles of subsidiarity or proportionality.

The Council having given its consent, the Commission may now adopt the directive, unless the European Parliament objects.

FISHERIES

Cod, redfish and bluefin tuna - Fishing opportunities

The Council approved amendments to a regulation setting fishing opportunities for 2010 for whiting, plaice, mackerel, cod, redfish and bluefin tuna fish.

The adjustments of the quotas take into account recent international agreements and scientific information provided by the member states.

Anchovy - Fishing opportunities in the Bay of Biscay

The Council adopted a regulation establishing fishing opportunities for anchovy in the Bay of Biscay for the 2010-2011 fishing season.

The total allowable catches proposed for Spain and France are thus established on the basis of scientific advice, taking into account both biological and socio-economic considerations.

AUDIOVISUAL POLICY

Participation of Switzerland in "Media 2007" programme

The Council approved the conclusion of an agreement with Switzerland on its participation in the EU's "Media 2007" audiovisual programme. (doc. [5133/10](#)).

The agreement has been applied provisionally since September 2007.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

The Council adopted:

- the reply to confirmatory application 14/c/01/10 by Ms Viera KNUTELSKÁ, the Danish and Swedish delegations having voted against ([11679/10](#)); and
 - the reply to confirmatory application 15/c/01/10, the Danish, Finnish and Swedish delegations having voted against ([12068/10](#))
-