



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



16572/10

PROVISIONAL VERSION

PRESSE 306
PR CO 37

PRESS RELEASE

3047th Council meeting

General Affairs

Brussels, 22 November 2010

President

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 6083 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

16572/10

1
EN

Main results of the Council

The Council discussed preparations for the December meeting of the **European Council**, taking stock of ongoing work on issues discussed in October.

It adopted a decision authorising Germany, Italy, Austria and the UK to apply a reversal of tax liability for the payment of value-added tax (VAT) on mobile telephones and integrated circuit devices, as a means of better **tackling VAT fraud**.

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS..... 4

ITEMS DEBATED

FOLLOW-UP TO THE OCTOBER EUROPEAN COUNCIL..... 6

PREPARATION OF THE DECEMBER EUROPEAN COUNCIL 7

USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN THE COUNCIL..... 8

COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2011 9

EUROPEAN DISASTER RESPONSE 10

OTHER BUSINESS 11

Common register of lobbyists 11

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

– VAT fraud - Mobile telephones and electronic devices 12

BUDGETS

– Mobilisation of the solidarity fund for Ireland 12

APPOINTMENTS

– European Antifraud Office 13

– Economic and Social Committee 13

– Committee of the Regions 13

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

Belgium:

Mr Steven VANACKERE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Institutional Reforms

Bulgaria:

Mr Nickolay MLADENOV

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Karl SCHWARZENBERG

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Ms Lene ESPERSEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Werner HOYER

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Ürmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Raul MÄLK

Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Micheál MARTIN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Dick ROCHE

Minister for European Affairs

Greece:

Mr Dimitrios DROUTSAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mme Marilisa XENOGIANNAKOPOULOU

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Ms Trinidad JIMENEZ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO

Secretary of State for European Affairs

France:

Mr Laurent WAUQUIEZ

Secretary of State with responsibility for European Affairs

Italy:

Mr Alfredo MANTICA

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Girts Valdis KRISTOVSKIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Egidijus MEILUNAS

Deputy 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 of Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Tom DE BRUIJN

Permanent Representative

Austria:

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

Poland:

Mr Mikolaj DOWGIELEWICZ

Secretary of State for European Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Pedro LOURTIE

Secretary of State for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Teodor BACONSI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovenia:

Ms Andreja JERINA

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Development

Slovakia:

Mr Milan JEŽOVICA

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Ms Astrid THORS

Minister for Immigration and European Affairs

Sweden:

Ms Birgitta OHLSSON

Minister for European Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr David LIDINGTON

Minister of State for Europe

.....

Commission:

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ

Vice-President

Ms Kristalina GEORGIEVA

Member

Secretariat General

Mr Pierre de BOISSIEU

Secretary General

ITEMS DEBATED

FOLLOW-UP TO THE OCTOBER EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Council took note of a note from the presidency, setting out its intentions regarding the follow-up to the European Council meeting on 28 and 29 October (*doc.* [16204/10](#)).

PREPARATION OF THE DECEMBER EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Council examined a draft annotated agenda for the European Council meeting to be held on 16 and 17 December (*doc. [12345/10](#)*).

Further to the conclusions of its October meeting, the European Council is due to decide on the outline of a permanent crisis mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area and on a limited amendment to the EU treaties required to create such a mechanism. It will moreover take stock of work in progress on legislative proposals to strengthen EU economic governance provisions.

The European Council will also discuss work on the assessment of the EU's relations with its strategic partners, further to the conclusions of its September meeting.

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

USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN THE COUNCIL

The Council took note of work regarding the possibilities for using information technologies to a greater extent within the Council, in particular videoconferencing 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 possibilities for using new technologies in the event of delegations being prevented from attending Council meetings. And the presidency prepared a draft code of conduct for the running of videoconferencing and teleconferencing within the Council.

As regards videoconferencing, the Council agreed on the need to upgrade the Council's current system so that it should be possible in the near future to organise such meetings with the participation of all member states.

COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2011

The Council took note of the presentation by the Commission of its work programme for 2011 (*doc. [15772/10](#) + [ADD 1](#)*).

EUROPEAN DISASTER RESPONSE

The Council took note of the presentation by the Commission of a communication entitled "*Towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance*" (doc. 15614/10 + ADD 1).

It held an exchange of views, and asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to prepare conclusions for adoption at the Council's meeting on 13 December.

OTHER BUSINESS

Common register of lobbyists

The Council was informed by the Commission of developments regarding a common register of interest representatives (lobbyists) that the Commission and the European Parliament are preparing, and which is expected to become operational in 2011.

The Commission repeated its request for the Council to join the initiative.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

VAT fraud - Mobile telephones and electronic devices

The Council adopted a decision aimed at enabling certain member states to better tackle fraud with regard to the payment of value-added tax (VAT) on mobile telephones and integrated circuit devices and their components.

The decision authorises Germany, Italy and Austria to implement, on an optional and temporary basis, a reversal of tax liability as regards the payment of VAT on domestic supplies of those products. It also extends the period of validity of an existing authorisation for the United Kingdom.

The aim is to close off certain forms of tax fraud, in particular so-called carousel schemes whereby goods are traded several times by different suppliers without VAT being paid to the tax authorities. Applying a "reverse charge" principle, the decision allows, until 31 December 2013 in all four countries, liability for the payment of VAT on those goods to be shifted from the supplier (as normally required by EU rules) to the customer.

BUDGETS

Mobilisation of the solidarity fund for Ireland

The Council adopted its position on draft amending budget No 8 for 2010, accepting the Commission proposal to mobilise the EU solidarity fund for an amount of EUR 13.0 million for Ireland, following the severe floods which affected the country in November 2009.

APPOINTMENTS

European Antifraud Office

The Council approved the text of a letter to be sent to the Commission indicating its preferences for two of the six candidates short-listed by the Commission for the post of director of the European Antifraud Office (OLAF).

Under regulation 1073/99 the Commission appoints the OLAF director after having consulted the Council and the European Parliament.

Economic and Social Committee

The Council appointed Mr Alberto NADAL BELDA (Spain), as a member of the European Economic and Social Committee for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 20 September 2015 ([14249/10](#)).

Committee of the Regions

The Council appointed Mr Markus LINHART (Austria), as a member of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January ([14090/10](#)).
