



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

2993rd Council meeting

Education, Youth and Culture

Brussels, 15 February 2010

President

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P R E S S

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Main results of the Council

*The Council discussed the **role of education and training** in Europe's strategy to promote growth and jobs and underlined its place at the heart of an economy based on knowledge and innovation.*

*Without discussion, the Council extended for a further year **restrictive measures against Zimbabwe**, including an arms embargo.*

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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

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

Belgium:

Mr Pascal SMET

Flemish Minister for Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels Affairs

Bulgaria:

Ms Petya EVTIMOVA

Deputy Minister for Education, Youth and Science

Czech Republic:

Ms Jana MATEŠOVÁ

Deputy Minister for Education, Youth and Sports

Denmark:

Mr Bertel HAARDER

Minister for Education and Minister for Nordic Cooperation

Germany:

Mr Helge BRAUN

Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Education and Research

Estonia:

Mr Gert ANTSU

Deputy Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Ms Geraldine BYRNE NASON

Deputy Permanent Representative

Greece:

Mr. Leonidas ROKANAS

Deputy Permanent Representative

Spain:

Mr Ángel GABILONDO PUJOL
Ms Maria Victoria BROTO COSCULLUELA

Minister for Education
Counsellor

France:

Mr Philippe LEGLISE-COSTA

Deputy Permanent Representative

Italy:

Mr Giuseppe PIZZA

State Secretary for Education, Universities and Research

Cyprus:

Mr George CHACALLI

Deputy Permanent Representative

Latvia:

Mr Mareks Gruskevics

State Secretary

Lithuania:

Mr Raimundas Karoblis

Deputy Permanent Representative

Luxembourg:

Ms Michèle EISENBARTH

Deputy Permanent Representative

Hungary:

Mr Zoltán LOBODA

State Secretary for Education and Culture

Malta:

Mr Clyde PULI

Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and Sport in the Ministry of Education and Culture

Netherlands:

Ms Sharon DIJKSMA

State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science

Austria:

Ms Beatrix KARL

Federal Minister for Science and Research

Poland:

Ms Lilla JARON

Deputy State Secretary for Science and Higher Education

Portugal:

Ms Isabel VEIGA
Mr José MARIANO GAGO

Minister for Education
Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education

Romania:

Mr Daniel Petru FUNERIU

Minister for Education, Research, Youth and Sports

Slovenia:

Ms Alenka KOVŠČA

State Secretary for Education and Sports

Slovakia:

Mr Peter BENO

Mertens

Finland:

Ms Henna VIRKKUNEN

Minister for Education

Sweden:

Ms Karin PILSÄTER

State Secretary for Education, Higher Education and Research

United Kingdom:

Baroness Delyth MORGAN

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children,
Young People and Families
Deputy Permanent Representative

Mr Andy LEBRECHT

Commission:

Ms Androulla VASSILIOU

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

Education and training for the Europe of 2020

The Council discussed the role of education and training in Europe's efforts to promote growth and jobs against the background of preparations for the new 'EU 2020' strategy to replace that of Lisbon.

The Council began by adopting the 2010 joint progress report on the implementation of the "Education & Training 2010" programme in the period 2007-2009 ([5394/10](#)). Overall, the report shows an improvement in education performance across Europe, with EU policies helping to promote reforms at national level. At the same time, important challenges remain, in particular concerning literacy levels.

Ministers were asked to consider two questions:

1. How do you see the role of education and training in Europe's efforts to promote growth and jobs, together with social equity and social cohesion?
2. How - in practical terms - can education ministers contribute to the future 'EU 2020' agenda and to ensuring adequate resources for the education and training sector?

Ministers emphasised that education was central to Europe's efforts to promote growth and jobs. Knowledge was not only key to recovering from the current economic crisis, but also vital in the long term as new jobs demand increasingly high skills levels. Equally, ministers stressed the social dimension of education and its importance in terms of imparting European values and ensuring that all individuals have a contribution to make to society. Education systems should strive for both excellence and equity. Moreover, in the transition to a more sustainable, "greener" economy, education would be critical in adapting to changing lifestyles and business practices.

To achieve these aims, many ministers stressed the considerable role which would be played by the new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training adopted last year. In addition, a number of them found interesting the suggestion that the objectives of the future 'EU 2020' strategy should include a specific educational target, such as increasing the number of tertiary education graduates.

Concluding, ministers underlined the need to sustain investment in education and training in order to modernise education and training systems and promote a knowledge-based economy and society. Resources should be used in a targeted, efficient and transparent manner. Several delegations also indicated that they would like to see the importance of education reflected in the forthcoming reform of the EU budget.

OTHER BUSINESS

The role of education and training in the new European economy

The presidency informed delegations about a conference on the role of education and training in the new European economy, which was held on 25 and 26 January 2010 in Madrid.

Higher education in Portugal

The Portuguese delegation briefed the Council on its recent programme for the development of higher education in 2010 - 2013 ([5831/10](#)).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

AUDIOVISUAL POLICY

Audiovisual media services

The Council adopted a codified version of the directive concerning the provision of audiovisual media services ([3683/09](#)).

The new directive replaces the various acts incorporated into directive 89/552, while fully preserving their content.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Updated EU common military list covered by the code of conduct on arms exports

The Council adopted an updated common list of military equipment covered by the EU code of conduct on arms exports. The EU common military list acts as a reference point for member states' national military technology and equipment lists, but does not directly replace them.

Restrictive measures against Zimbabwe

The Council extended for a further year the restrictive measures imposed on Zimbabwe (see Official Journal C 38 of 16.2.2010). These include a ban on the sale to Zimbabwe of arms and of equipment that can be used for internal repression; a ban on entering or transiting the EU member states aimed at persons whose activities seriously undermine democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Zimbabwe; and an assets freeze applying to natural and legal persons, entities and bodies that economically support the regime. The measures will expire on 20 February 2011.

EU - Moldova human rights dialogue - Council conclusions

1. The Council recalls its conclusions on the Republic of Moldova from 15 June 2009, in which the Council reiterated its commitment to further deepening the relations between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, on the basis of shared values and principles. The Council also recalls the EU-Republic of Moldova Cooperation Council meeting on 21 December 2009, in which both sides welcomed recent positive steps in the field of human rights, democratisation and the rule of law in Moldova and the commitment of the Moldovan authorities to address outstanding human rights issues. Moreover, the EU welcomed Moldova's readiness to set up a regular dialogue on Human Rights.
2. The Council notes that the objectives of the Human Rights dialogue with the Republic of Moldova are on the one hand to raise human rights issues, including individual cases, in the Republic of Moldova and in the European Union in a more in-depth manner with the view toward achieving concrete results and, on the other hand, to enhance dialogue on human rights topics in multilateral fora. The respect for human rights and democratic principles remains an integral part of a broader political dialogue between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova.
3. The Council therefore decides to launch a Human Rights Dialogue with the Republic of Moldova. The dialogue should be held at least once per year, with meetings held, in principle, alternately in the Republic of Moldova and in the European Union. The dialogue will integrate a civil society component and, on an ad hoc basis, include exchanges with relevant international and regional organisations such as the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**Agreements with third countries**

The Council decided to forward to the European Parliament for its consent a set of agreements to be concluded between the EU and the following third countries:

- Iceland and Norway:
 - on the application of certain provisions of Council decision 2008/615/JHA on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime and Council decision 2008/616/JHA on the implementation of decision 2008/615/JHA ([5309/10](#));
 - on the application of certain provisions of the Convention on mutual assistance in criminal matters ([5306/10](#)); and
 - on the surrender procedure ([5307/10](#)).
- Liechtenstein and Switzerland: on the modalities of participation in "Frontex", the EU agency for the management of operational cooperation at the external borders ([5707/10](#)).
- Australia: on the processing and transfer of EU-sourced passenger name records (PNR) data by air carriers to the Australian Customs Service ([5303/10](#)).
- Japan: on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters ([5308/10](#)).
- The United States of America: on the processing and transfer of PNR data by air carriers to the US Department of Homeland Security (2007 PNR agreement) ([5304/10](#)).

CUSTOMS UNION

EU/China agreement on drug precursors - amendment

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the EU with a view to amending annex A to the EU/China agreement on drug precursors and substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.

This agreement, which lays down measures to strengthen the control of the trade between the EU and China in drug precursors, entered into force in July 2009¹.

TRANSPORT

Statistics on sea transport - regulatory procedure

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission decision on a directive in the field of sea transport. The directive concerns statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods and passengers by sea. It amends directive 2009/42 by stipulating that the existing quarterly statistics on passengers transport and on vessel traffic in the main European ports should be forwarded to Eurostat and disseminated on an annual basis and that the statistics on passengers transport should be collected by member states on a voluntary basis.

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 subsidiarity or proportionality.

¹ OJ L 177, 8.7.2009, p. 7.

TRADE POLICY**Withdrawal of an EU special incentive arrangement for Sri Lanka**

The Council adopted a regulation temporarily withdrawing the special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance for all products originating in Sri Lanka ([5470/10](#)). This decision was taken on the basis of a Commission report concluding that the national legislation of Sri Lanka incorporating international human rights conventions was not effectively implemented. The Council undertook to re-establish the special incentive arrangement for products originating in Sri Lanka if the reasons justifying the temporary withdrawal no longer prevail.

ENVIRONMENT**Industrial emissions***

The Council adopted its position at first reading on the directive on industrial emissions ([11962/3/09 REV 3](#) + [11962/2/09 REV 2 ADD 1](#) + [5998/10 ADD 1 REV 1](#) + [COR 1](#)).¹

The IPPC directive, as it is called, seeks to prevent and control, in a coordinated way, pollution of the air, water and soil resulting from emissions from industrial installations. It regulates emissions for a wide range of pollutants, including sulphur and nitrogen compounds, dust particles, asbestos and heavy metals. The directive is aimed at improving local air, water and soil quality, not at mitigating the global warming effects of some of these substances. Emissions of carbon dioxide are therefore not covered. The proposal incorporates seven previously independent directives into a single coherent and simpler legal framework.

The Council's position provides for a more harmonised and rigorous implementation of emissions limits associated with Best Available Techniques (BAT) across the EU. In addition, it reinforces rules for new power plants and combustion installations in oil refineries and the metal industry, what are termed large combustion plants: They must apply current BAT earlier than proposed by the Commission, namely within two years of the entry into force of the directive. Existing such plants would have to comply with current BAT from 2016, though a transition period until the end of 2020 is foreseen.

¹ The position was adopted by unanimity, with DE, AT, DK, IE abstaining.

The Council's position at first reading is based on a political agreement among member states reached at the Environment Council on 25 June 2009. It has been amended to take account of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and will be forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading under the ordinary legislative procedure.

INTERNAL MARKET

Type-approval of hydrogen-powered motor vehicles - regulatory procedure

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation implementing regulation 79/209 on the type-approval of hydrogen-powered motor vehicles.

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.

SOCIAL POLICY

Employment of disabled people - statistics

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of two Commission regulations concerning the labour force sample survey provided for by regulation 577/98. The first regulation sets out the list of variables to be collected in 2011 by the ad hoc module on employment of disabled people. The second contains the programme of ad hoc modules for the labour force sample survey for the years 2013 to 2015.

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 subsidiarity or proportionality.

WRITTEN PROCEDURES**Anti-dumping - Glyphosate from China**

On 11 February the Council adopted, by written procedure, a regulation extending for one year the suspension of the anti-dumping duty imposed by regulation 1683/2004 on imports of glyphosate originating in China ([6057/10](#)).

Trade with illegally harvested timber

On 28 January the Council agreed on a draft regulation laying down obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the European market ([5571/10 ADD 1](#) + [5571/10 ADD 2](#)).

The future regulation is aimed at minimizing the risk of placing illegally harvested timber and timber products on the EU market. For further details, see [5688/10](#).
