



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



14361/09 (Presse 290)

PRESS RELEASE

2968th Council meeting

Environment

Luxembourg, 21 October 2009

President **Andreas Carlgren**
Minister for the Environment of Sweden

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

*The Council adopted conclusions setting out the **EU position for the Copenhagen climate conference** (7-18 December 2009). These conclusions provide the EU with the basis for negotiating an international agreement on climate protection that is to enter into force when the Kyoto Protocol expires.*

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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.

PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Mr Paul MAGNETTE
Ms Evelyne HUYTEBROECK

Minister for Climate and Energy
Minister of the Brussels Capital Regional Government,
with responsibility for the Environment, Energy and Water
Policy

Bulgaria:

Ms Nona KARADJOVA

Minister for the Environment and Water

Czech Republic:

Mr Ladislav MIKO

Minister for the Environment

Denmark:

Mr Troels Lund POULSEN
Ms Connie HEDEGAARD

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Climate and Energy

Germany:

Mr Sigmar GABRIEL

Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature
Conservation and Reactor Safety

Estonia:

Mr Jaanus TAMKIVI

Minister for the Environment

Ireland:

Mr John GORMLEY

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local
Government

Greece:

Ms Tina BIRBILI

Minister for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change

Spain:

Ms Teresa RIBERA RODRÍGUEZ
Ms Pilar UNZALU

State Secretary for Climate Change
Minister for Environment, Organization of the Territory
and Agriculture and Fisheries of the Basque Country

France:

Ms Chantal JOUANNO

Minister of State with responsibility for Ecology

Italy:

Ms Stefania PRESTIGIACOMO

Minister for the Environment, the Protection of Natural
Resources and the Sea

Cyprus:

Ms Egli PANTELAKIS

Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture,
Natural Resources and Environment

Latvia:

Mr Raimonds VĒJONIS

Minister for the Environment

Lithuania:

Mr Gediminas KAZLAUSKAS

Minister for the Environment

Luxembourg:

Mr Claude WISELER

Minister for the Civil Service and Administrative Reform,
Minister for Public Works

Hungary:

Mr István KLING

State Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Water

Malta:

Mr George PULLICINO

Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs

Netherlands:

Ms Jacqueline CRAMER

Minister for Housing, Spatial Planning and the
Environment

Austria:

Mr Nikolaus BERLAKOVICH

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment
and Water Management**Poland:**

Mr Maciej NOWICKI

Minister for the Environment

Portugal:

Mr Humberto ROSA

State Secretary for the Environment

Romania:

Mr Dan CÂRLAN

State Secretary for Water, Ministry of the Environment

Slovenia:

Mr Karl Viktor ERJAVEC

Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning

Slovakia:

Mr Jaroslav JADUŠ

State Secretary at the Ministry of the Environment

Finland:

Ms Paula LEHTOMÄKI

Minister for the Environment

Sweden:

Mr Andreas CARLGREN

Minister for the Environment

Ms Åsa-Britt KARLSSON

State Secretary to the Minister for the Environment

United Kingdom:

Mr Edward MILIBAND

Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change

Mr Stewart STEVENSON

Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change
(Scottish Government)**Commission:**

Mr Stavros DIMAS

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

Eco-efficient economy

The Council adopted conclusions on an eco-efficient economy. The text is set out in [14891/09](#).

Ship recycling

The Council adopted conclusions on an EU strategy for better ship dismantling. The text is set out in [14890/09](#).

EU position for the Copenhagen climate conference

The Council adopted conclusions setting out the EU position for the Copenhagen climate conference (7-18 December 2009). The text can be found in [14790/09](#).

Electrical and electronic equipment

The Council held a policy debate on the proposed recast of two directives concerning electrical and electronic equipment: The so-called WEEE directive ([17367/08](#)), promoting recycling and recovery of electrical and electronic waste, and the RoHS directive ([17333/08](#)), intended to eliminate as far as possible the use of hazardous substances in such equipment.

Ministers were invited to discuss the scopes of both directives ([14444/09](#)). A majority of delegations supported the idea that the two directives, WEEE and RoHS, could have separate scopes that take account of their different legal bases and objectives. The Commission, on the other hand, underlined that its proposal to maintain the same scopes for both directives and to harmonise them across the EU was intended to improve their implementation and increase legal certainty.

In addition, there was broad support for widening the scope of the RoHS directive to include all electrical and electronic equipment unless explicitly excluded. Some delegations, however, did not agree and pointed out that the costs of this option for producers were unclear and would need to be the subject of an impact assessment.

Concerning the scope of the WEEE directive, some ministers pleaded for defining its scope through a minimum list of covered equipment as in the existing legislation. Others were supportive of an open scope that would in principle include all electrical and electronic equipment, like in the case of RoHS, pointing out that this would increase environmental protection.

Ministers' views will guide further work on the two proposals in the months to come.

The WEEE directive ([2002/96/EC](#)) requires member states to collect waste electrical and electronic equipment separately and establishes targets for its recovery and recycling. The directive, already implementing the principle of producer responsibility, obliges EU countries to annually collect an average of at least 4kg of electrical and electronic waste per inhabitant.

The RoHS directive ([2002/95/EC](#)) is intended to eliminate as far as possible the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. It prohibits the use of lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium as well as certain brominated flame retardants. As it is not always possible to completely abandon these substances, the directive also provides for a number of applications to be exempted from the ban.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Council took note of information concerning the following points:

High-level meeting: Visions for biological diversity beyond 2010

The presidency informed the Council about the high-level meeting on "Visions for biological diversity beyond 2010 - People, ecosystem services and the climate crisis", which took place in Strömstad, Sweden, 7-9 September 2009 ([14372/09](#)).

Forest protection

Spain, supported by a number of other delegations and the Commission, presented a note on forest protection, biodiversity conservation and the fight against forest fires. Given that climate change is expected to increase the frequency of natural disasters with devastating effects on forests, those delegations urged the Commission to prepare a strategic discussion paper on forest protection at EU level ([14563/09](#) + [COR1](#)). The Commission announced that it would present a Green Paper on this subject in early 2010.

Plastic debris in the sea

The Dutch delegation, supported by several delegations and the Commission, highlighted the problem of plastic debris in the sea. It emphasized the importance of clearing up the existing waste, preventing plastic from ending up in the sea and ensuring a closed plastic cycle as well as of international research. The Netherlands asked the Commission to investigate possible responses to this problem and urged other member states to contribute ideas ([14494/09](#)).

Combination effects of chemicals

Denmark drew attention to the fact that the exposure of children to high numbers of chemicals are a public health concern. New studies have indicated that early exposure to multiple endocrine disruptors is linked to serious health effects later in life. Therefore, Denmark reiterated its invitation to the presidency to put this issue on the agenda for the Environment Council in December ([14420/09](#)).

Meeting on international environmental governance

The Italian delegation reported on the preparation for the second meeting of the consultative group of ministers or their high level representatives on international environmental governance, which will take place in Rome, 26-29 October 2009 ([14525/09](#)).

Green Economy Ambassadors' Forum

The Czech delegation presented a note on the Green Economy Ambassadors' Forum (Prague, 7 October 2009). The Forum discussed how to implement the concept of the green economy and how green policies could bring benefits not only for sustainable economic growth and recovery, but also for the environment. It was recommended that meetings of this forum be organised regularly during the next two EU presidencies ([14566/09](#)).

Biofuels

The French delegation produced an information note on the procedure for certification of imported biofuels. France demanded the Commission to take prompt measures to define the content of agreements or voluntary certification schemes that will guarantee the sustainability of imported production and to specify how it intends to remove the risk of distortions of competition between the regimes in force in the EU and those applicable to imports from third countries ([14532/09](#)).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council appointed to the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which ends on 25 January 2010:

– as an alternate member:

Mr Miguel LUCENA BARRANQUERO, Secretario General de Acción Exterior, Andalucía;

– and as members:

Mr Konstantinos SIMITSIS, Mayor of the City of Kavala;

Mr Theodoros GKOTSOPOULOS, Municipal Counselor of the Municipality of Pallini, Attica.
