



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



13027/09 (Presse 260)

PRESS RELEASE

2960th Council meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

General Affairs

Brussels, 14 September 2009

President **Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM**
Minister for EU Affairs of Sweden

* The 2961st meeting on External Relations is the subject of a separate press release (13028/09).

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 9548 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

13027/09 (Presse 260)

1
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Main results of the Council

*The Council adopted a directive requiring member states to maintain minimum **stocks of oil** or petroleum products so as to ensure the availability of oil in the event of a crisis.*

The directive encourages member states to set up central stockholding entities, and will require them to ensure oil stocks of at least 90 days of average net imports or 61 days of average consumption, whichever is greater, as well as 30 days of stocks in the form of refined products. These requirements will apply as from the end of 2012.

*The Council approved a mandate for the Commission to negotiate an **agreement with India on nuclear energy** as regards cooperation in research and training. Cooperation under the future agreement will cover the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.*

*It approved a programme to support cooperation between the European **cinema industry** and cinema professionals outside the EU. The "Media Mundus" programme, with a EUR 15 million budget for the 2011-13 period, will support joint projects promoting the distribution of European films abroad as well as screenings in Europe of works from third countries.*

*The Council also adopted a directive aimed at strengthening protection of the marine environment from **pollution by ships**. Under the new provisions, those responsible for discharges of polluting substances into the sea will be subject to penalties, including criminal penalties.*

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS	5
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ITEMS DEBATED

PREPARATION OF THE OCTOBER EUROPEAN COUNCIL.....	7
--	---

OTHER BUSINESS.....	8
---------------------	---

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED*GENERAL AFFAIRS*

– Cooperation and verification for Bulgaria and Romania - <i>Council conclusions</i>	9
--	---

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

– Union for the Mediterranean - Women in society.....	11
---	----

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

– National central bank of Slovakia.....	11
--	----

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

– Globalisation adjustment fund - Spain and Portugal.....	12
---	----

FISHERIES

– Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation.....	12
--	----

AGRICULTURE

– Fertilisers.....	12
--------------------	----

ENERGY

– Oil stocks.....	13
-------------------	----

– Non-directional household lamps.....	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.

RESEARCH

- EU/India - Cooperation agreement on nuclear energy..... 14

ENVIRONMENT

- Ship-source pollution..... 14

AUDIOVISUAL POLICY

- Support to the cinema industry - Cooperation with third countries 15

APPOINTMENTS

- Committee of the Regions 15

PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Mr Yves LETERME
Mr Olivier CHASTEL

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for European Affairs

Bulgaria:

Ms Rumiana JELEVA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Jan KOHOUT
Mr Štefan FÜLE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for European Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Per Stig MØLLER

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER
Mr Günter GLOSER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ireland:

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

Greece:

Ms Dora BAKOYANNI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Miguel Ángel MORATINOS
Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
State Secretary for the European Union

France:

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER
Mr Pierre LELLOUCHE

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs
State Secretary with responsibility for European affairs

Italy:

Mr Alfredo MANTICA

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Nicholas EMILIOU

Permanent Secretary, Ministry Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Māris RIEKSTIŅŠ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Vygaudas UŠACKAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Immigration

Hungary:

Mr Péter BALÁZS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Richard CACHIA CARUANA

Permanent Representative

Netherlands:

Mr Maxime VERHAGEN
Mr Frans TIMMERMANS

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for European Affairs

Austria:

Mr Hans-Dietmar SCHWEISGUT

Permanent Representative

Poland:

Mr Mikołaj DOWGIELEWICZ

Mr Jacek NAJDER

State Secretary, Office of the Committee for European
Integration
Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**Portugal:**

Ms Teresa RIBEIRO

State Secretary for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Cristian DIACONESCU

Mr Vasile PUSCAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister, Head of the Department for European Affairs

Slovenia:

Ms Dragoljuba BENČINA

Ms Andreja JERINA

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for European Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Miroslav LAJČÁK

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Alexander STUBB

Ms Astrid THORS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Migration and European Affairs

Sweden:

Mr Carl BILDT

Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Mr Frank BELFRAGE

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for European Affairs

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Baroness Glenys KINNOCK

Minister of State for Europe

Commission:

Ms Margot WALLSTRÖM

Vice President

General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

ITEMS DEBATED

PREPARATION OF THE OCTOBER EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Council examined an annotated draft agenda prepared by the presidency for the European Council meeting to be held in Brussels on 29 and 30 October (*doc. [12942/09](#)*).

It will make more detailed preparations for the meeting at its meeting on 26 and 27 October.

The Council in particular took stock of work on energy infrastructures and energy interconnections and on crisis mechanisms relating to the security of energy supplies. The discussion focused on implementation of the EU's economic recovery plan, as regards financial assistance to energy projects, and relations with third countries as concerns energy.

Issues to be addressed by the European Council include:

- institutional issues;
- climate change;
- the economic situation;
- macro-regional strategies;
- illegal immigration.

It is also likely to discuss external relations, in the light of developments.

The annotated draft agenda will serve as the basis for draft European Council conclusions to be prepared by the presidency and submitted to the Permanent Representatives Committee in the run-up to the Council's meeting on 26 and 27 October.

OTHER BUSINESS**- *Informal meeting of heads of state and government***

The Council was briefed by the presidency on arrangements for an informal meeting of heads of state and government to be held in Brussels on 17 September in preparation for a G-20 summit meeting in Pittsburgh (United States) on 24 and 25 September.

- *Visa requirement imposed by Canada on Czech nationals*

The Council was informed by the Czech minister and the Commission on developments with regard to the introduction by Canada of a visa requirement for Czech nationals. It encouraged the Commission to continue to pursue the matter with the Canadian authorities with a view to restoring visa-free travel for Czech nationals as soon as possible.

Canada unilaterally introduced a visa requirement for Czech nationals on 14 July. It also continues to maintain a visa requirement for Bulgarian and Romanian citizens. Canadian nationals are not subject to a visa requirement under regulation 539/2001, which however also provides for reciprocity measures in the event of a country enjoying visa-free travel to the EU introducing visa requirements for citizens of one or several EU member states.

- *Visa reciprocity with Brazil*

The Council took stock of the state of negotiations with Brazil on a visa waiver agreement, in view of the EU-Brazil summit scheduled for 6 October.

Citizens from four EU countries, namely Latvia, Cyprus, Malta and Estonia, currently do not enjoy visa-free travel to Brazil.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**GENERAL AFFAIRS****Cooperation and verification for Bulgaria and Romania - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"Reaffirming its earlier conclusions the Council welcomes the Commission's reports on progress in Romania and Bulgaria under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism. The Council commends the Commission on its work, on the methodology followed and fully shares the objective and balanced analysis contained in those reports. The Council notes the continued good level of co-operation of Bulgaria and Romania with the Commission and the other Member States.

Recalling the importance of the unequivocal political will and dedication for a more decisive, strategic approach in order to take the necessary steps, the Council welcomes the renewed commitment expressed by Bulgaria and Romania and acknowledges the efforts made by these two Member States to make the progress needed to meet the objectives set under the mechanism.

The Council calls on Bulgaria and Romania to intensify their efforts by taking all the necessary steps without delay and by demonstrating tangible and lasting results, especially in the areas highlighted in the reports. The Council concludes that the recommendations put forward in the reports will serve as a useful tool to further focus efforts towards meeting the benchmarks set. The existence in each Member State of an impartial, independent and effective administrative and judicial system, with sufficient resources, is indeed indispensable for enabling EU policies to function properly and for ensuring that citizens have access to all the benefits and opportunities offered by membership of the Union.

On the reform of the administrative and judicial system, the Council notes that Romania has taken a number of welcome steps and established a new momentum. Romania has adopted new Criminal and Civil Codes and the positive track record of the prosecution is starting to be complemented by action of the judiciary. However, the positive changes remain fragmented and have not yet produced practical results for Romanian citizens. In order for Romania to be able to demonstrate sustained progress, a broad political consensus has to be forged to allow the judicial system to work efficiently and independently, and to strengthen the fight against corruption. This will enable Romania to achieve results which are more convincing and more firmly rooted, and demonstrate that the judicial system can function effectively in all areas, in the interest of the Romanian people.

The Council notes a new momentum in Bulgaria's efforts to improve the judiciary and combat corruption and organised crime. It recognises steps undertaken in response to the Commission's assessment of July 2008 to tackle persisting problems. However, these steps were confined to the technical level and had limited impact. In this light, the Council stresses the need for more substantial results in investigating, prosecuting and judging cases of high-level corruption and organised crime in order to secure lasting change in Bulgaria. The Council reiterates the need for unequivocal political commitment in Bulgaria in order to start profound reform of the judiciary. This will allow Bulgaria to achieve substantial and convincing results, thus enabling Bulgaria's citizens to take full advantage of the assistance provided by the EU.

In cooperation with Bulgaria and Romania, the other Member States are ready to continue to grant every necessary assistance in order to meet as soon as possible the objectives set under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism.

Recalling that the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism has now entered its third year, the Council notes that it is an appropriate tool, and that it will remain in place pending the results expected in this framework. In this context, the Council recalls that the Mechanism underpins Bulgaria's and Romania's efforts to fully implement EU policies. The Council will continue to pay careful attention to developments in this area."

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Union for the Mediterranean - Women in society

The Council approved EU guidelines for a second Union for the Mediterranean ministerial meeting on the theme "Strengthening the role of women in society", which will take place in Morocco on 11-12 November.

The guidelines give an overview of EU policy on gender equality, the external dimension of the EU's 2006-2010 roadmap for gender equality, and bilateral actions, as well as the regional EuroMed context. They also include ideas for the subjects to be dealt with at the meeting, including an action plan setting up priorities and actions.

In a declaration issued on 4 November 2008, Union for the Mediterranean foreign ministers insisted on the strengthening of the role of women in society. "As part of the follow-up to the Istanbul ministerial conference held in 2006 on 'Strengthening the role of women in society' and in view of a second ministerial conference in 2009 to be held in Morocco, ministers encourage further concrete initiatives to accelerate implementation of the Istanbul conclusions. A possible outcome could be a concrete set of joint activities in all fields approved in the Istanbul ministerial conclusions", the declaration stated.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

National central bank of Slovakia

The Council adopted a decision approving the appointment of Deloitte Audit as external auditor for the Národná banka Slovenska, the national central bank of Slovakia, for the 2009 financial year ([12456/09](#)).

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Globalisation adjustment fund - Spain and Portugal

The Council adopted a decision mobilising a total of EUR 4.14 million from the EU's globalisation adjustment fund, following applications from Spain and Portugal in connection with lay-offs in the textiles and clothing sector ([12218/09](#)).

EUR 3.31 million are approved for the Cataluña region in Spain and EUR 832 000 for the Norte and Centro regions in Portugal.

The Council also agreed to transfer EUR 4.14 million in commitment appropriations from the reserve for the globalisation adjustment fund and the same amount in payment appropriations from the European social fund to the globalisation adjustment fund ([12219/09](#)).

FISHERIES

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation

The Council adopted a decision establishing the position to be taken by the EU within the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation ([12372/09](#)).

AGRICULTURE

Fertilisers

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending regulation 2003/2003 on fertilisers for the purpose of adapting to technical progress Annexes I, III, IV and V thereto.

In accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the Commission may now adopt the proposed regulation unless the European Parliament opposes it.

ENERGY

Oil stocks

The Council adopted a directive requiring member states to maintain minimum stocks of oil or petroleum products ([11297/09](#), [11972/09](#)).

The directive, which replaces all existing Community legislation in this field (directives 2006/67/EC and 73/238/EEC and decision 68/416/EEC), is intended to improve the functioning of the EU's oil stocks mechanisms so as to ensure the availability of oil in the event of a crisis.

To that end, it seeks to improve the regulatory framework and various aspects of stockholding practice, for example by encouraging the setting-up by member states of central stockholding entities.

Member states will have to ensure that by 31 December 2012, total oil stocks maintained at all times within the EU for their benefit correspond, at the very least, to 90 days of average daily net imports or 61 days of average daily inland consumption, whichever of the two quantities is greater. Furthermore, the directive imposes an obligation on all member states to hold at least 30 days of stocks or a third of their stockholding obligation in the form of refined products.

For further details, see press release [12811/09](#).

Non-directional household lamps

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending regulation 244/2009 as regards ecodesign requirements relating to ultraviolet radiation from non-directional household lamps.

In accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the Commission may now adopt the proposed regulation unless the European Parliament opposes it.

RESEARCH

EU/India - Cooperation agreement on nuclear energy

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations on a cooperation agreement between Euratom (European Atomic Energy Community) and India for research and training dealing with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

ENVIRONMENT

Ship-source pollution

The Council adopted a directive strengthening EU rules on ship-source pollution and on penalties for infringements, with the aim of improving maritime safety and enhancing protection of the marine environment from pollution by ships ([3664/09](#)).

Under the new provisions, ship-source discharges of polluting substances, including in minor cases, are regarded a criminal offence if committed with intent, recklessly or with serious negligence. Persons responsible for such discharges are subject to penalties, including criminal penalties, that must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive. The same applies to legal persons that can be held liable for pollution.

The new directive amends directive 2005/35/EC. Its adoption follows a first-reading agreement reached with the European Parliament under the Parliament-Council co-decision procedure.

Member states will have a year to transpose the directive into national law.

Further information on press release [13197/09](#).

AUDIOVISUAL POLICY

Support to the cinema industry - Cooperation with third countries

The Council approved a EUR 15 million programme, covering the 2011-2013 period, to support cooperation by the European cinema industry with professionals from outside the EU ([3672/09](#)).

The programme is designed to improve the distribution of European films abroad as well as screenings of works from third countries in Europe, with a view to increasing consumer choice, improving the competitiveness of the audiovisual industry in Europe and fostering cultural exchanges.

The so-called *Media Mundus* fund will support joint projects run by filmmakers in Europe and third countries. Actions will cover not only the distribution of movies, but also information exchange and training as well as support to increase visibility and meet public demand for a greater diversity of films. The Commission, which will implement the scheme on the basis of annual plans, can reimburse up to 80% of project costs.

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council adopted a decision appointing Ms Karla M.H. PEIJS as member of the Committee of the Regions in place of Ms Johanna MAIJ-WEGGEN for the remainder of her term of office, which ends on 25 January 2010.
