

13437/1/14 REV 1

(OR. en)

PRESSE 476
PR CO 45

PRESS RELEASE

3333rd Council meeting

Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)

Brussels, 25 and 26 September 2014

Presidents

Federica Guidi
Minister for Economic Development

Sandro Gozi
State Secretary for European Affairs

Stefania Giannini
Minister for Education, Universities and Research

P R E S S

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

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Main results of the Council

Industrial competitiveness

Following a debate, the Council adopted conclusions aimed at systematically integrating industrial competitiveness issues into all relevant EU policy areas (such as environment, climate, energy, trade, competition, state aid, regional policies, etc.) with a view to creating a stronger industrial base for the EU economy.

Federica Guidi, Italian minister for economic development, said that "the Italian Presidency is really pleased with the outcome of the meeting, which is an important landmark in our progress towards mainstreaming industrial competitiveness and strengthening EU policies for the real economy through an enhanced role of the Competitiveness Council. It paves the way towards realizing the task the European Council set for us".

EU strategy for growth and jobs

The Council held a debate on the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs. The debate focused on aspects related to the achievement of a well-integrated internal market and the development of an agenda in support of industrial competitiveness. The main aim of the review is to draw lessons from the first four years of the strategy's implementation and to ensure it continues to be an effective tool for jobs and growth creation in the coming years.

Sandro Gozi, Italian state secretary for European affairs, underlined that "relaunching investments for Europe and reviewing the Europe 2020 Strategy is crucial for the future of the EU. Today's debate in the Competitiveness Council helped us to place these issues in a wider context, in order to enhance the internal market, foster growth and renew our support to the real economy. Investments, growth, competitiveness and employment are top priorities for the Italian Presidency". *He also noted that "a relaunch of the European economy cannot disregard adequate protection for those high-quality products whose features depend on local European traditions and productions. This is why, during the Council, we promoted the first debate on the topic of geographical indications for non-food products."*

Research and innovation

*The Council had a policy debate in the context of the mid-term review of the **Europe 2020 strategy**, focusing on the role of research and innovation (R&I) as sources of renewed growth.*

*In addition, the Council had an exchange of views on the **European Research Area**, based on the Commission's second progress report, which aims to build an open space for knowledge and human capital.*

*The Italian minister for education, universities and research and president of the Council, **Stefania Giannini**, said "European competitiveness needs more effective national research systems, alignment of research strategies and high quality researchers". She observed that "today's debate provided a unique opportunity to rethink R&I policies and investments aimed at tackling global challenges and at creating high quality jobs" and further underlined that "a clear consensus emerged on the need to speed up ERA completion".*

Another important discussion concerned the initiative for a joint Programme for R&I in the Mediterranean Area (called PRIMA), which "registered wide political support and significant financial commitment".

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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.
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PARTICIPANTS

Belgium:

Mr Jean-Claude MARCOURT
Mr Philippe MUYTERS

Mr Olivier BELLE

Vice-President and Minister for Higher Education
Flemish Minister for Finance, the Budget, Employment,
Town and Country Planning and Sport
Deputy Permanent Representative

Bulgaria:

Ms Romyana KOLAROVA
Ms Irena MLADENOVA

Minister for Education and Science
Deputy Minister of Economy and Energy

Czech Republic:

Mr Vladimír BÄRTL
Mr Jakub DÜRR

Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade
Deputy Permanent Representative

Denmark:

Ms Sofie Carsten NIELSEN
Mr Henrik SASS LARSEN

Minister for Higher Education and Science
Minister for Business and Growth

Germany:

Mr Thomas RACHEL

Mr Rainer BAAKE

Mr Guido PERUZZO

Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for
Education and Research
State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and
Energy
Deputy Permanent Representative

Estonia:

Mr Clyde KULL
Mr Jevgeni OSSINOVSKI

Deputy Permanent Representative
Minister for Education and Research

Ireland:

Mr Richard BRUTON
Mr Damien ENGLISH

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Minister of State at the Departments of Education and
Skills & the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and
Innovation with Special Responsibility for Skills,
Research and Innovation

Greece:

Mr Alexandros DERMENTZOPOULOS
Mr Christos VASILAKOS
Mr Andreas PAPASTAVROU

State Secretary for Education and Religious Affairs
General Secretary for Research and Technology
Deputy Permanent Representative

Spain:

Ms Carmen VELA OLMO
Ms Begoña CRISTETO

State Secretary for Research, Development and Innovation
Secretary General for Industry and Small and Medium-
Sized Enterprises

France:

Mr Emmanuel MACRON
Ms Geneviève FIORASO

Minister of the Economy, Industry and the Digital Sector
Secretary of State of Higher Education and Research

Croatia:

Mr Roko ANDRIČEVIĆ
Mr Dražen PROS

Deputy Minister for Science, Education and Sport
Deputy Minister of Entrepreneurship and Crafts

Italy:

Ms Stefania GIANNINI
Ms Federica GUIDI
Mr Sandro GOZI

Minister for Education, Universities and Research
Minister for Economic Development
State Secretary for European Affairs, Prime Minister's
Office

Cyprus:

Ms Maria HADJITHEODOSIOU
Mr Georghios GEORGHIOU

Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Secretary, Directorate General for European
Programmes, Coordination and Development

Latvia:

Ms Ina DRUVIETE
Mr Juris ŠTĀLMEISTARS

Minister for Education and Science
Deputy Permanent Representative

Lithuania:

Ms Svetlana KAUZONIENĖ
Mr Arūnas VINČIŪNAS

Deputy Minister for Education and Science
Deputy Permanent Representative

Luxembourg:

Mr Etienne SCHNEIDER

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Economic Affairs,
Minister for Internal Security, Minister for Defence
Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research

Mr Marc HANSEN

Hungary:

Mr Béla GLATTFELDER
Mr József PÁLINKAS

Minister of State for Economic Regulation
Government Commissioner for Research, Development
and Innovation

Malta:

Mr Christopher AGIUS

Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth
and Sport within the Ministry for Education and
Employment
Deputy Permanent Representative

Mr Neil KERR

Netherlands:

Mr Henk KAMP*
Mr Sander DEKKER
Mr Wepke KINGMA*

Minister for Economic Affairs
State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science
Deputy Permanent Representative

Austria:

Mr Harald MAHRER

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Science, Research and
Economy
Deputy Permanent Representative

Mr Gregor SCHUSTERSCHITZ

Poland:

Mme Lena KOLARSKA - BOBIŃSKA
Mr Andrzej DYCHA

Minister for Science and Higher Education
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of the Economy

Portugal:

Ms Sílvia INÁCIO

MERTENS at the Permanent Representation in Brussels

Romania:

Mr Maricel POPA
Mr Mihnea COSTOIU

State Secretary, Ministry of the Economy
Minister with responsibility for Higher Education,
Scientific Research and Technological Development

Slovenia:

Mr Janko BURGAR

State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Development
and Technology
Deputy Permanent Representative

Ms Metka IPAVIC

Slovakia:

Mr Ratislav CHOVANEC
Mr Vladimír KOVÁČIK

State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy
State Secretary of the Ministry of the Education, Science,
Research and Sport

Finland:

Ms Sirkku LINNA

State Secretary, Ministry of Employment and the
Economy

Sweden:

Mr Håkan EKENGREN

State Secretary (responsible for business development,
competitiveness development and innovation)
Deputy Permanent Representative

Ms Åsa WEBBER

United Kingdom:

Ms Lucy NEVILLE-ROLFE

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business,
Innovation and Skills and Minister for Intellectual
Property
Deputy Permanent Representative

Ms Shan MORGAN

Commission:

Ms Neelie KROES

Mr Michel BARNIER

Mr Neven MIMICA

Mr Ferdinando NELLI FEROCI

Ms Máire GEOGHEGAN-QUINN

Vice-President

Vice-President

Member

Member

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs

The Council held a policy debate on the forthcoming mid-term review of Europe's 2020 strategy. On the basis of a presidency note ([12797/14](#)), it discussed how the strategy could do more to help deliver economic growth.

The debate is a part of the contributions that several Council configurations will make to the review of the strategy. A summary report of the contributions will be forwarded to the European Council in December. It will provide guidance for subsequent Commission proposals aimed at improving implementation of the strategy.

The Council agreed that there should be greater focus on the actual drivers for growth in order to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis on member states' efforts to achieve the goals of the strategy.

Many delegations pointed out that the Europe 2020 strategy represented an opportunity, not only to support recovery from the economic crisis, but to continue that trajectory into supporting renewed industrial competitiveness and growth. Its re-launch would help to achieve two main objectives that were crucial to the economic and competitiveness agenda:

- better alignment of the real and financial economies and
- better integration of single market and industrial competitiveness priorities within the European Semester, which was the main framework structuring the governance process for economic policy coordination.

The majority of delegations acknowledged that the Europe 2020 strategy continued to be a powerful instrument to promote the necessary structural reforms able to create growth and employment.

Many participants also mentioned the need to ensure consistency between different EU policies as a way to improve the efficiency of the strategy in the coming years.

Last March, the European Council assessed implementation of the strategy in the light of a communication by the Commission ([6713/14](#)), which took stock of the Europe 2020 headline targets and initiated the mid-term review. The Commission noted 'mixed progress' so far in achieving initial targets and recognised that more had to be done if these were to be achieved.

Mainstreaming Industrial Competitiveness

The Council held a policy debate on mainstreaming industrial competitiveness, which is the process whereby aspects related to industrial competitiveness are systematically included in all relevant European policies.

The Council also took note of two reports on European competitiveness submitted by the Commission:

- the [2014 European Competitiveness Report "Helping firms grow"](#), which gives a quantitative assessment of the competitive performance of EU industries, and
- the [2014 Member States Competitiveness Report](#), which monitors the progress made by member states in improving the competitiveness of their economies.

Following the debate, the Council adopted the conclusions set out in [13617/14](#).

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Europe 2020 strategy review: Research and innovation as sources of renewed growth

The Council held a policy debate on the mid-term review of Europe's 2020 strategy¹. On the basis of a presidency note ([12778/14](#)), it discussed how the strategy could better contribute to delivering economic growth and jobs under the flagship initiative "Innovation Union", which is at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs.

The outcome of the debate will help the Italian presidency to prepare draft Council conclusions to be forwarded to the December Competitiveness Council.

The Commission report "State of the Innovation Union - Taking stock 2010-2014"² accompanies the communication on "Research and Innovation as sources of renewed growth" ([10897/14](#)), issued in June 2014. The communication explores how the potential of research and innovation (R&I) as drivers of growth can be used to raise the quality of investments in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The communication invites member states to prioritise growth-enhancing expenditure, in particular on R&I, and implement reforms to increase the quality, efficiency and impact of public R&I spending.

Member states broadly endorsed the analysis and recommendations contained in the communication, which concentrates on three priority axes for reform: (1) the quality of strategy development and policy-making processes; (2) the quality of programmes, focusing of resources and funding mechanisms; and (3) the quality of institutions performing R&I.

Many delegations emphasised the need to prioritise, both at national and EU level, those policy areas with the biggest potential to promote innovation. They should include: support for and implementation of smart specialisation strategies; the improvement of education systems while linking academia to industry; efficient use of the Structural Funds; wider circulation of research results to stimulate knowledge transfer and the optimisation of resources to avoid duplication, for instance via joint programming.

Finally, some delegations acknowledged that there were still major shortcomings which needed to be addressed in order to turn Europe into a more innovative society. They also regretted that the impact of the economic crisis had prevented faster progress on the implementation of the commitments of the "Innovation Union" flagship initiative.

¹ The European Council in March assessed implementation of the strategy in the light of a communication from the Commission ([6713/14](#)), which takes stock of the EU 2020 headline targets and initiates the mid-term review.

² [State of the Innovation Union report 2013.pdf](#)

Progress towards the achievement of the European Research Area

The Council exchanged views on progress on the European Research Area (ERA). The debate was based on the second progress report on the ERA approved by the Commission on 15 September ([13197/14](#)).

The report shows that much has already been achieved as regards delivering the ERA and updates indications on possible areas for future action. However, the completion of the ERA remains a gradual process and more efforts are needed to make it fully operational.

In general, member states considered that there was already a solid basis for deployment of the ERA. Many shared the view that action towards full realisation should be speeded up.

In accordance with recent Council conclusions, many showed their determination to develop, in close cooperation with the Commission, an ERA roadmap by mid-2015, which should serve the purpose of facilitating and reinforcing the efforts undertaken by the member states, and a set of tools and best practices.

The [ERA](#) is expected to reinforce excellence in research across Europe, thereby increasing Europe's global competitiveness and its ability to tackle major societal challenges successfully.

Any other business***– Protection of geographical indications for non-agricultural products***

At an informal lunch, ministers for industry and the internal market exchanged ideas on the possibility of introducing, in future, a set of harmonised rules for the protection of geographical indications for non-agricultural products. Mr Michel Barnier, vice-president of the Commission and Mr Michel Lebrun, president of the Committee of the Regions, attended the luncheon meeting.

The contributions to the debate will feed into the Commission's ongoing consultations on the merits of extending EU-level geographical indication protection to non-agricultural products.

Last July, the Commission launched a public consultation in the framework of initiatives on intellectual property that will be closed on 28 October ([12184/14](#)).

While agricultural products with the same characteristics benefit from certain safeguards at European level, at present there are no uniform rules for industrial ones.

– An investment plan for Europe

Ministers took note of a request by the French delegation calling on the Competitiveness Council to actively contribute to the debate on identifying financial means and tools for the deployment of an investment package for the coming years ([13358/14](#)).

On 15 July, the president-elect of the incoming European Commission, Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, presented to the European Parliament his reform agenda, which includes an investment package worth EUR 300 billion to boost growth, employment and competitiveness.

A number of delegations highlighted the importance of setting out favourable framework conditions to stimulate public and private investment in the EU.

– Unitary patent protection system

The Council took note of updated information on the state of play on the implementation of the unitary patent protection system ([13345/14](#)), provided by the chairs of the two committees in charge of preparations for the establishment of the system and of the Unified Patent Court:

- The "select committee": set up in the framework of the European Patent Organisation, consists of representatives of the 25 EU member states participating in enhanced cooperation for the creation of unitary patent protection, and the Commission as an observer.

- The "preparatory committee" for the establishment of the Unified Patent Court:

www.unified-patent-court.org.

The work of both committees is closely connected in order to ensure a consistent approach.

The previous report on the state of play ([9563/14](#)) was submitted to the Council on 26 May 2014.

- ***Defence industries***

The Council took note of a presentation by the Commission on the report "A New Deal for European Defence" ([11358/14](#)), which establishes a roadmap for the activities set out in the communication "Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector" ([12773/13](#)).

The measures detailed in the report seek to strengthen the single market for defence, to promote a more competitive defence industry and to foster synergies between civil and military research, thereby helping to strengthen the EU's common security and defence policy.

- ***Consumer protection***

The Council took note of a report by the Commission on the functioning of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation ([11589/14](#)).

The enforcement of EU legislation concerning consumers' economic interests was strengthened in 2004 with the adoption of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation, which provides a common framework bringing together national authorities from all EU member states. Its primary aim is to tackle cross-border infringements by establishing procedures for information exchange, cross-border enforcement requests and coordinated actions, to prevent offending traders from moving between member states to exploit gaps in jurisdictional boundaries.

Full implementation of the regulation has proven to be difficult due to a number of obstacles. In particular, the ever increasing importance of the digital economy has challenged the effective enforcement of consumer rights given the specificities of dematerialised trade and the speed with which infringements of consumer laws can spread across the EU.

The Council also took note of the outcome of an international conference on the same subject, "The European Union Cooperation for Consumer Rights", held in Rome on 7-8 July ([13206/14](#)).

– ***Big data and cloud computing***

The Council took note of a presentation on the Commission communication "Towards a thriving data-driven economy" ([11603/14](#)).

The European Council's conclusions of October 2013 highlighted the digital economy, innovation and services as drivers for growth and jobs. They called for EU action to provide the right framework conditions for a single market for big data and cloud computing.

The communication is a response to this call. It outlines the main features of the data-driven economy and sets out actions to support and accelerate the transition towards it, including in the field of cloud computing.

The communication points out that a thriving data-driven economy will contribute to the well-being of citizens as well as to socio-economic progress through accelerated innovation, productivity growth and increased competitiveness in data across the whole economy.

– ***Euro-Mediterranean cooperation for research and innovation***

At an informal lunch, ministers for research and innovation exchanged ideas on the project to create a renewed partnership in research and innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean area. Mr Robert-Jan Smits, director general for research and innovation at the Commission, attended the luncheon meeting.

Preparations carried out under the "PRIMA" (Partnership in Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area) initiative have been based on the principles of co-ownership and mutual interest around two specific fields: food safety and water provision, with a view to ensuring sustainable management of common resources, regional socio-economic growth and stability.

The PRIMA preparations for an initiative based on article 185 of the EU treaty have so far involved several EU countries and Mediterranean partner countries.

On 26 May 2014, the Council held its first debate on ways to reinforce and further develop scientific and technological cooperation between the EU and Mediterranean partner countries (*see press release [10226/14](#), page 11*).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa

The Council extended the mandate of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Horn of Africa, Mr Alexander Rondos, until 28 February 2015. At the same time, it allocated a budget of EUR 890 000 for the EUSR's activities in the period from 1 November 2014 to 28 February 2015.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

EUSEC RD Congo

The Council extended the mandate of the European Union mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (EUSEC RD Congo) until 30 June 2015, to extend its final transition period with the aim of handing over its tasks.

For more details, see press release [13310/14](#).

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

EEA agreement (plant protection products)

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the EU, in the EEA joint committee concerning an amendment to annex II to the EEA agreement.

The amendment is necessary in order to incorporate EU legislation on plant protection products in the EEA agreement ([10987/14](#)).

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**EU participatory rights within UNHCR**

The Council adopted the EU position on the arrangements for additional participatory rights for the European Union within the formal and informal bodies of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The European Union has been for many years a key actor in the UNHCR, as a major donor in the field of humanitarian aid and development assistance. Additional participatory rights would allow the European Union, in its areas of competence, to follow the UNHCR's agenda more closely and effectively, thereby improving consistency between the European Union's political, operational and funding priorities in the area of international protection, on the one hand, and UNHCR's political and operational priorities, on the other hand.

The Council also ordered a statement on this subject to be entered in its minutes.

New psychoactive substances

On the basis of a joint report from Europol and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the Council requested that the risks, including the health and social risks, caused by the use of, the manufacture of, and traffic in 1-cyclohexyl-4-(1,2-diphenylethyl)-piperazine (MT-45), the involvement of organised crime and possible consequences of control measures, be assessed, in accordance with Council Decision 2005/387/JHA³ on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances. The General Secretariat of the Council of the EU will notify this request to the EMCDDA.

On the basis of risk assessments provided by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the Council adopted an implementing decision on subjecting 4-iodo-2, 5-dimethoxy-N-(2-methoxybenzyl)phenethylamine (251-NBOMe), 3, 4-dichloro-N-[[1-(dimethylamino)cyclohexyl]methyl]benzamide (AH-7921), 3,4-methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV) and 2-(3-methoxyphenyl)-2-(ethylamino)cyclohexanone (methoxetamine) to control measures ([12921/14](#)), in accordance with Council Decision 2005/387/JHA⁴ on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances.

The Council also ordered publication of the decision in the Official Journal.

³ OJ L 127, 20.5.2005.

⁴ OJ L 127, 20.5.2005.

TRADE

Steel products from Kazakhstan - Accession of Croatia to the EU

The Council updated regulation 1340/2008 on trade in steel products with Kazakhstan to take account of the accession of Croatia to the EU on 1 July 2013 ([11999/14](#)).

EU duty-free quota-free import regime

The Council decided not to object to the adoption by the Commission of three regulations amending the list of beneficiary countries of the EU duty-free quota-free import regime, as established by annex I to regulation 1528/2007.

The regulations add Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Namibia and Swaziland to the list, and re-instate Cameroon and the Fiji Islands.

The regulations are delegated acts pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. They can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.

BUDGETS

Humanitarian aid and food assistance for South Sudan

The Council approved a Commission proposal to increase humanitarian aid and food assistance for South Sudan by EUR 20 million in commitments and payments ([12786/14](#)). This is to react to the food and nutrition crisis in South Sudan, to finance basic emergency services for the displaced population and to provide for the protection of the most vulnerable persons. The amount is financed from the EU emergency aid reserve and brings total EU support to South Sudan in 2014 to EUR 140 million

South Sudan is currently affected by two major crises of an unprecedented scale: since December 2013 the country has been involved in a civil war which has increased the number of internally displaced persons and refugees by 1.3 million. At the same time, it is confronted with a severe food security and malnutrition crisis which is approaching famine conditions. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimate that out of a population of 12 million, seven million are food insecure. This includes 3.9 million people who are severely food insecure, of whom 1.2 million are at risk of famine, and more than 50 000 children under five who are at risk of death if nutrition is not scaled up soon. In addition, there are ongoing epidemic outbreaks such as cholera and hepatitis E.

TRANSPORT**EU rail system interoperability - technical specifications**

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of three regulations updating technical specifications for the interoperability of European railways.

The regulations relate to the accessibility of the EU rail system for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility ([11931/14](#) + [11931/14 ADD 1](#)) as well as to the rail system's 'energy' subsystem ([11932/14](#) + [11932/14 ADD 1](#)) and its 'infrastructure' subsystem ([11933/14](#) + [11933/14 ADD 1](#)).

The draft regulations are subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt them, unless the European Parliament objects.

Requirements for air transport operations - sterile flight crew compartment

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending Commission regulation 965/2012 laying down technical requirements and administrative procedures for air operations, with a view to ensuring safe operation of aircraft ([11811/14](#) + [11811/14 ADD 1](#)).

Regulation 965/2012 implements the provisions on air operations and oversight of regulation 216/2008 on common rules in the field of civil aviation. The draft amending regulation addresses, among other things, a safety issue related to flight deck procedures, and in particular the risks linked to errors due to disturbance or distraction of the flight crew during phases of flight where the crew must be able to focus on their duties (sterile flight crew compartment).

The draft regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. Now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt it, unless the European Parliament objects.

Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a directive which updates directive 2002/59/EC establishing a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system ([11963/14](#) + [11963/14 ADD 1](#)).

The update relates to provisions on electronic messages and the EU maritime information and exchange system [SafeSeaNet](#). The new text reflects technical progress and specifies the EU acts in regard to which SafeSeaNet is currently used.

The draft directive is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt it, unless the European Parliament objects.

Satellite navigation programme EGNOS - provision of services in Africa

The Council authorised the opening of negotiations on an agreement between the EU and its member states and the Agency for Aerial Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar. The agreement would lay down the terms and conditions for the provision of satellite-based augmentation services in Africa based on the European satellite navigation programme [EGNOS](#).

Civil aviation safety regulation - cooperation with the USA

The Council authorised the Commission to negotiate on behalf of the EU an amendment to the agreement between the USA and the European Community on cooperation in the regulation of civil aviation safety. The amendment relates to additional areas of cooperation and acceptance.

SOCIAL POLICY

Delegated regulation on the Fund for the Most Deprived

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of Commission delegated regulation supplementing regulation No 223/2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) ([11741/14](#) + [11741/14 ADD 1](#)). The FEAD regulation requires member states to submit annual and final reports to the Commission containing information regarding the implementation of their operational programmes. In order to ensure appropriate monitoring of the implementation of the Fund and its objectives, the delegated act establishes the content of the annual and final implementation reports, as well as the list of common indicators which need to be reported.

The Commission regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

ENVIRONMENT

Acts subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny

- Shipment of waste

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending annexes IIIB, V and VIII to regulation 1013/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on shipment of waste ([11834/14](#) + [11834/14 ADD 1](#)).

- EU Ecolabel for absorbent hygiene products

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission decision establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the EU Ecolabel for absorbent hygiene products ([11824/14](#) + [11824/14 ADD 1](#)).

- List of waste

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission decision amending decision 2000/532/EC on the list of waste pursuant to directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([11889/14](#), [11889/14 ADD 1](#), [12791/14](#)).

- Waste framework directive

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation replacing annex III to directive 2008/98/EC on waste and repealing certain directives ([11888/14](#), [11888/14 ADD 1](#), [12795/14](#)).

Directive 2008/98/EC sets out measures to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste. Annex III to this directive lists properties of waste which render it hazardous.

- Innovative technologies for reducing CO₂ emissions from cars

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending directive 2007/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission regulation 692/2008 as regards innovative technologies for reducing CO₂ emissions from light commercial vehicles ([12039/14](#), [12039/14 ADD 1](#)).

- Sectors exposed to a risk of carbon leakage 2015-2019

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission decision determining, pursuant to directive 2003/87/EC, a list of sectors and subsectors which are deemed to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage, for the period 2015 to 2019 ([11925/14](#), [11925/14 ADD 1](#)).

- Definition of an INSPIRE metadata element

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation 976/2009 as regards the definition of an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) metadata element ([12112/14](#)).

- Interoperability of spatial data services

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation 1089/2010 implementing directive 2007/2/EC as regards the interoperability of spatial data services ([12141/14](#) + [12141/14 ADD 1](#)).

- Persistent organic pollutants

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation 850/2004 on persistent organic pollutants as regards annexes IV and V ([12113/14](#)).

- Petrol vapour recovery during refuelling of motor vehicles

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission directive amending, for the purposes of its adaptation to technical progress, directive 2009/126/EC on stage II petrol vapour recovery during refuelling of motor vehicles at service stations ([11891/14](#)).

- Water policy

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission directive amending directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy ([12111/14](#)+[12111/14 ADD 1](#)).

- EU Ecolabel for rinse-off cosmetic products

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission decision establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the EU Ecolabel for rinse-off cosmetic products ([12469/14](#)+[12469/14 ADD 1](#)).

These legal acts are subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt them, unless the European Parliament objects.

Biocidal products - Examination of all active substances

The Council decided not to object to a Commission delegated regulation of 4 August 2014 on the work programme for the systematic examination of all existing active substances contained in biocidal products referred to in regulation 528/2012 ([12391/14](#)+[12391/14 ADD 1](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

Export and import of hazardous chemicals

The Council decided not to object to a Commission delegated regulation of 7 August 2014 amending annex I to regulation 649/2012 concerning the export and import of hazardous chemicals ([12449/14](#)+[12449/14 ADD 1](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

ENERGY

Criteria and geographic ranges of highly biodiverse grassland

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation defining the criteria and geographic ranges of highly biodiverse grassland for the purposes of Article 7b(3)(c) of directive 98/70/EC relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels and Article 17(3)(c) of directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources ([11783/14](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

Ecodesign requirements for professional refrigerated storage cabinets and blast cabinets

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation implementing directive 2009/125/EC with regard to ecodesign requirements for professional refrigerated storage cabinets, blast cabinets, condensing units and process chillers ([11898/14](#)).

Under directive 2009/125/EC, the Commission sets ecodesign requirements for energy-related products representing significant volumes of sales and trade, having a significant environmental impact and presenting significant potential for improvement through design in terms of their environmental impact without entailing excessive costs.

This Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

AGRICULTURE

Food hygiene - Handling of animal offal

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending annex III to regulation 853/2004 as regards the handling of certain offal from animals intended for human consumption ([11887/14](#)).

Regulation 853/2004 provides, inter alia, requirements for the production and placing on the market of meat from wild game. Food business operators are to ensure compliance with specific requirements for the further handling of offal such as stomachs of ruminants and feet of ungulates in accordance with annex III to that regulation.

This regulation provides a level playing field for operators, in particular small and medium-sized slaughterhouses, as regards the handling of offal. The requirements in the regulation, including the temperature requirements during storage and transport, ensure that these products can be safely handled and transported to an establishment outside the slaughterhouse, collected from different slaughterhouses and processed.

This Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

Animal health - Rules for transmissible spongiform encephalopathies

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending Annexes II, VII, VIII, IX and X to regulation 999/2001 laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies ([11869/14](#) + [11869/14 ADD 1](#)).

Regulation 999/2001 lays down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) in bovine, ovine and caprine animals. It applies to the production and placing on the market of live animals and products of animal origin and in certain specific cases to exports thereof.

This regulation makes several technical amendments to regulation 999/2011, including rules governing the determination of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) status of member states or third countries or regions thereof based on the international standard established by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code.

This Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

Animal health - Non-commercial movement of animals

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending annex II to regulation 998/2003 on the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movement of pet animals ([11793/14](#)).

Regulation 998/2003 lays down the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movement of pet animals and the rules applicable to checks on such movements. Annex II to this regulation lists the third countries which are free of rabies or have a similar status.

To be included on that list, a third country should demonstrate its status with regard to rabies and that it complies with certain requirements relating to the notification of suspicion of rabies, the monitoring system, the structure and organisation of its veterinary services, the implementation of all regulatory measures for the prevention and control of rabies and the regulations on the marketing of anti-rabies vaccines. According to the information submitted, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia complies with the relevant requirements and should therefore be included in the list set out in annex II to the regulation.

This Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

FISHERIES**Partnership agreement with Greenland and Denmark - Opening of negotiations**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations on behalf of the EU for the renewal of the protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU, on the one hand, and the Government of Denmark and the Home Rule Government of Greenland, on the other hand.

The current protocol should apply until December 2015. The new protocol between the EU and Greenland and Denmark should be in line with the Council conclusions of 19 March 2012 on the Commission communication of 13 July 2011 on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as well as Regulation No 1380/2013 on the CFP⁵.

FOOD LAW**Health claim made on foods**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation authorising the use of the health claim "Supplemental folic acid intake increases maternal folate status. Low maternal folate status is a risk factor in the development of neural tube defects in the developing foetus" on food supplements which provide at least 400 µg of folic acid per daily portion ([11787/14](#) + [11787/14 ADD 1](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt it, unless the European Parliament objects.

Health claims made on foods

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of the four following Commission regulations concerning health claims made on foods:

- a regulation refusing to authorise certain health claims made on foods, other than those referring to the reduction of disease risk and to children's development and health ([12132/14](#) + [12132/14 ADD 1](#));
- a regulation authorising a health claim under certain conditions ([12140/14](#) + [12140/14 ADD 1](#));

⁵ OJ L 354/2013, p. 22.

- a regulation refusing to authorise certain health claims, other than those referring to the reduction of disease risk and to children's development and health ([12282/14](#) + [12282/14 ADD 1](#));
- a regulation authorising and refusing certain health claims made on foods referring to the reduction of disease risk ([12284/14](#) + [12284/14 ADD 1](#)).

The Commission regulations are subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt them, unless the European Parliament objects.

Food additives

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of the three following Commission regulations concerning food additives:

- a regulation amending and correcting annex II to regulation 1333/2008, authorising the use of the food colours cochineal, carminic acid and carmines (E 120) for red pesto cheese and of annatto, bixin and norbixin (E 160b) for red and green pesto cheese ([12310/14](#) + [12310/14 ADD 1](#));
- a regulation amending annex II to regulation 1333/2008, authorising the use of diphosphates as an acidity regulator in yeast-based doughs used as the basis for pizzas, quiches, tarts and similar products ([12339/14](#) + [12339/14 ADD 1](#));
- a regulation amending annex II to regulation 1333/2008 authorising the use of the sweeteners aspartame (E 951), neotame (E 961) and salt of aspartame-acesulfame (E 962) in energy-reduced fruit or vegetable spreads, in addition to energy-reduced jams, jellies and marmalades, as well as other similar fruit spreads such as dried-fruit-based sandwich spreads that are energy-reduced or with no added sugar ([12340/14](#) + [12340/14 ADD 1](#)).

The Commission regulations are subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt them, unless the European Parliament objects.

Derogation for traditionally smoked food - polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a regulation excluding traditionally smoked meat and meat products and/or fish and fishery products in certain member states from the application of lower maximum levels for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons for three years as of 1 September 2014 ([12561/14](#) + *12561/14 ADD 1*). This is to prevent such traditionally smoked products disappearing from the market, resulting in the closure of many small and medium sized enterprises.

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt it, unless the European Parliament objects.

Flavouring substances

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a regulation amending annex I to regulation 1334/2008 related to the European Food Safety Agency's completion of its assessment of eight substances which are currently listed as flavouring substances under evaluation ([12636/14](#) + *12636/14 ADD 1*)

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt it, unless the European Parliament objects.

EMPLOYMENT

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Greece and Romania

The Council adopted three decisions mobilising a total amount of EUR 10 million under the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF).

An amount of EUR 6.1 million has been deployed following the dismissal of 505 workers from two Greek enterprises operating in the food manufacturing industry as a result of the continuing financial and economic crisis. A further EUR 3.6 million has been mobilised after 1 513 workers in two Romanian steel manufacturing enterprises being made redundant following a substantial loss of EU market share on world markets as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation. An amount of EUR 330 000 has been mobilised to cover technical assistance related to the EGF (i.e. monitoring, information exchange, creation of a knowledge base, networking and evaluation).

The EGF helps workers to find new jobs and develop new skills when they have lost their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns, e.g. when a large company shuts down or a factory is moved outside the EU, or as a result of the global financial and economic crisis. The help of the EGF consists in co-financing measures such as job-search assistance, careers advice, tailor-made training and re-training, mentoring and promoting entrepreneurship. It also provides one-off, time-limited individual support, such as job-search allowances, mobility allowances and allowances for participating in lifelong learning and training activities.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

On 25 September 2014, the Council approved:

- the reply to confirmatory application No 26/c/01/14 ([11971/14](#)).

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions - European Economic and Social Committee

The Council appointed Mr O. (Onno) HOES (The Netherlands) ([13050/14](#)), Ms Ann STRIBLEY (United Kingdom) ([13051/14](#)) and Mr Konstantinos AGORASTOS, Mr Dimitrios KALOGEROPOULOS, Mr Stavros KALAFATIS, Mr Alexandros KAHRIMANIS, Mr Ioannis KOURAKIS, Mr Dimitrios MARAVELIAS, Mr Ioannis SGOUROS, Mr Konstantinos TZANAKOULIS and Mr Nikolaos CHIOTAKIS (Greece) ([13087/14](#)), as members of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015.

On 8 September 2014, the Council appointed, by written procedure, Mr Hanspeter WAGNER (Austria) ([12550/14](#)), Mr Giorgio GRANELLO and Mr Giorgio SILLI (Italy) ([12553/14](#)), Mr Francesco PIGLIARU (Italy) ([12585/14](#)) and Mr Alberto GARRE LÓPEZ (Spain) ([12556/14](#)), as members of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015.

On 8 September 2014, the Council appointed, by written procedure, Mr Julien MARRE (France) ([12524/14](#)), Ms Tanja BUZEK (Germany) ([12520/14](#)) and Mr Charles VELLA (Malta) ([12522/14](#)), as members of the European Economic and Social Committee for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 20 September 2015.