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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3705th Council meeting

Environment

Luxembourg, 26 June 2019

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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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ITEMS DEBATED

Chemicals

The Council adopted conclusions which give political guidance on the development of a sustainable EU chemicals policy strategy. The conclusions address in particular the topics of REACH, endocrine disruptors, nanomaterials and pharmaceuticals.

In its conclusions, the Council underlines the need to protect human health and the environment through the sound management of chemicals. It also highlights the need to improve and mainstream the chemical risk assessment and management of chemicals across EU legislation in order to increase the coherence and effectiveness of EU chemicals-related legislation.

Ministers stressed the urgent need for the Commission and the European Chemicals Agency to develop an action plan on dossier compliance for REACH, and they highlighted the importance of improving the REACH authorisation and restriction procedures.

In their interventions, several ministers urged the Commission to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment by minimising exposure to endocrine disruptors and promoting their substitution by safer chemicals, and to provide an action plan with clear and concrete measures and an ambitious timeline for doing so.

In addition, several ministers highlighted the need for the Commission to develop a Union strategy for a non-toxic environment which proposes clear objectives for a comprehensive long-term sustainable EU chemicals policy. They called upon the Commission to include in its proposal for an 8th Environment Action Programme commitments to implement the follow-up measures to the Union strategy for a non-toxic environment.

Full text of the Council [conclusions](#)

For more information, see the [press release](#)

Water reuse for agricultural irrigation

The Council reached a general approach on a new regulation on water reuse to reduce the risk of shortages of water for irrigating crops and help Europe adapt to the consequences of climate change.

The proposed regulation contains new rules to promote and facilitate the use of water reclaimed from urban waste water for agricultural irrigation, whenever this is appropriate and cost-efficient. This is fully in line with the circular economy and will improve the efficient use of water in the EU.

Ministers underlined the importance of ensuring that human and animal health as well as the environment are protected by introducing strict harmonised standards for the quality of reclaimed water and for monitoring compliance with these standards.

Ministers welcomed the possibility to choose whether to apply the new regulation in part of or all their territory, given that the geographic and climatic conditions vary greatly across member states.

Several ministers of those member states which have already acquired practical experience with reclaimed water shared their knowledge and experience with delegates of member states which may choose to start reusing water for agricultural irrigation in the future.

The general approach reached today constitutes the Council's mandate for future negotiations with the European Parliament. Negotiations are expected to start under the Finnish Presidency.

[General approach](#)

[Commission proposal](#) + [ADD 1](#)

For more information, see the [press release](#)

Environmental Implementation Review

Environment ministers had an exchange of views on the findings of the 2019 Environmental Implementation Review (EIR).

Ministers welcomed the EIR including the country reports as a useful tool for receiving feedback from the Commission on the implementation of environment and climate change policy and legislation which they can use to improve implementation. The EIR also provides an opportunity to exchange views on common challenges and share best practices.

The Commission will take the suggestions resulting from the exchange of views into account when preparing the 2021 cycle of the EIR.

[Presidency note](#) on the exchange of views

Commission communication on the "[Environmental Implementation Review 2019: A Europe that protects its citizens and enhances their quality of life](#)" - In this Communication, the Commission defines common trends at EU level, draws conclusions and gives recommendations for improving implementation in the member states

[Annex 1 with priority actions proposed in the country reports, clustered by theme](#)

[Annex 2 - a policy background document introducing the topics in the country reports](#)

Annex 3 to 30: 28 country reports analysing the state of implementation as per 1 January 2019, progress since 2017, good practices and suggested priority actions ([Belgium](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Croatia](#), [Cyprus](#), [Slovakia](#), [Sweden](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Czech republic](#), [France](#), [Hungary](#), [Ireland](#), [Italy](#), [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Malta](#), [Poland](#), [Romania](#), [Slovenia](#), [Spain](#), [The Netherlands](#), [Denmark](#), [Estonia](#), [Finland](#), [Germany](#), [Greece](#), [Austria](#))

Any other business

– *Current legislative proposals*

The Presidency informed the Council on current legislative proposals in the field of environment and climate actions.

- LIFE: [Proposal for a regulation establishing a programme for the environment and climate action \(LIFE\) + ADD 1](#)
- Regulation on monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) for shipping: [Proposal for a regulation amending Regulation \(EU\) 2015/757 in order to take appropriate account of the global data collection system for ship fuel oil consumption data \(+ADD1\)](#)

– *A clean planet for all: strategic long-term vision for a climate neutral economy*

The Presidency informed the Council on the state of play of discussions on the [Commission communication "A clean planet for all"](#)

– *Conference on carbon pricing and aviation taxes (The Hague, 20 and 21 June 2019)*

The Council took note of the [information provided by the Netherlands delegation](#)

– *Workshop on the future Environment Action Programme (Hainburg, Austria, 11-12 June 2019)*

The Council took note of the [information provided by the Austrian delegation](#)

– *Possible European measures to support clean mobility and in particular electromobility*

The Council took note of the [information provided by the Bulgarian delegation](#)

– ***Communication on the draft integrated national energy and climate plans***

The Council took note of the [information provided by the Commission](#)

– ***Reports on main recent international meetings:***

- Triple Conference of the Parties to the Basel (COP 14), Rotterdam (COP 9) and Stockholm (COP 9) Conventions (Geneva, 29 April - 10 May 2019)
- Fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) (Nairobi, 11 - 15 March 2019)
- The Council took note of the information from the Presidency and the Commission on the outcome of these meetings ([10477/19](#) and [10524/19](#))

– ***G7 Environment ministers' meeting (Metz, France, 5 May 2019)***

The Council took note of the [information provided by the French delegation](#).

– ***The management of large carnivores - challenges and solutions***

The Council took note of the [information provided by the Slovenian delegation](#)

– ***Work programme of the incoming Presidency***

The Council took note of the work programme of the incoming Presidency as presented by the Finnish delegation.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Libya - support for the clean-up operations at a former chemical weapons storage site

The Council adopted a decision to extend by 12 months activities in support of OPCW clean-up operations at a former chemical weapons storage site in Libya.

On 12 December 2017, the Council adopted an initial decision in support of these activities ([Decision 2017/2302](#)). This decision forms part of the implementation of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

On 27 March 2019, the OPCW requested the EU to extend the duration of the initial decision by 12 months, thus allowing it to continue its activities and reach its objectives.

European Development Fund contributions

The Council adopted a decision on the financial contributions to be paid by member states to finance the European Development Fund (EDF), including the second instalment for 2019 and a revised ceiling for the annual amount for 2020 ([10195/19](#)).

The EDF contributions to be paid as the second instalment for 2019 total €1.6 billion, including €1.5 billion for the Commission and €100 million for the European Investment Bank.

The ceiling for the annual contributions to the EDF for 2020 is revised at €4.7 billion, including €4.4 billion for the Commission and €300 million for the European Investment Bank.

Relations with Morocco

The Council approved a draft joint declaration by the EU and Morocco and a draft agenda with a view to the 14th EU-Morocco Association Council, to be held in Brussels on 27 June 2019.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

World Customs Organization Council

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU within the World Customs Organization Council with regard to a recommendation to amend the harmonised system nomenclature.

The original harmonised system nomenclature entered into force on 1 January 1988. The nomenclature needs to be regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date, in line with the evolution of trade patterns and the development of new technologies, so that it reflects as closely as possible the needs of users. The proposed recommendation includes numerous sets of amendments that take into account the need to modernise or adapt the nomenclature to its environment.

FISHERIES

2019 fishing opportunities: Council adopts amendments

The Council adopted a regulation amending the existing regulation 2019/124 as regards certain fishing opportunities. Council Regulation 2019/124 fixes for 2019 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in Union waters and, for Union vessels, in certain non-Union waters.

The new regulation amends the existing one by setting some catch limits in line with the new multiannual plan for the Western Waters, the latest scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on some stocks, and decisions made in international fora such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

On 26 June 2019, the Council approved the reply to confirmatory application No 14/c/01/19 (doc. [9496/19](#))