



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

3204th Council meeting

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Brussels, 3 December 2012

President

Mr Neoklis SYLIKIOTIS

Minister for Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Cyprus

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

*The Council adopted conclusions on **renewable energy** setting out lines for future work to support renewables.*

*The Council took note of a progress report on the **follow-up to the 2011 February European Council's conclusions on energy** and held an exchange of views on the progress achieved. Ministers also heard the Commission presentation of its communication "**Making the internal energy market work**".*

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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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Mr Hannes Carl BORG

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United Kingdom:

Ms Shan MORGAN

Deputy Permanent Representative

.....
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Mr Günther OETTINGER

Member

.....
The government of the acceding state was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Ms Irena ANDRASSY

Deputy Permanent Representative

ITEMS DEBATED

Safety of offshore activities

The Council was briefed, in a public session, on the state of play of a legislative proposal on safety of offshore oil and gas activities, aimed at reducing the risk of a major accident in the EU offshore oil and gas sector and limiting the consequences should such an accident nonetheless occur ([16604/12](#)).

The first trilogue with the European Parliament took place on 29 November. Both institutions agreed, for logistical reasons, that the next informal trilogue would be held under the Irish presidency in the beginning of 2013.

In Europe, most oil and gas is produced offshore. A major accident at any one of Europe's offshore installations is likely to entail material losses, damage to the environment, the economy, local communities and society, whilst the lives and health of workers may be put at risk. The possibility of a major accident in EU waters needs to be reduced.

This proposal was adopted by the Commission in October 2011 ([16175/11](#)) and is aimed in particular at:

- ensuring a consistent use of best practices for major hazards control by offshore oil and gas industry operations potentially affecting Union waters or shores;
- implementing best regulatory practices in all European jurisdictions with offshore oil and gas activities;
- strengthening the Union's preparedness and capacity to respond to emergencies potentially affecting the Union's citizens, its economy or the environment;
- improving and clarifying existing Union liability and compensation provisions.

Renewable energy

The Council adopted conclusions on renewable energy ([16205/12](#)).

The objective of achieving a binding target of a 20 % of renewable energies in overall EU energy consumption by 2020, set by the European Council in 2007, is one of the headline targets in the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth.

Building on the Commission communication on the same subject, adopted on 6 June 2012 ([11052/12](#)), these conclusions set out lines for future action on which to base further work in support of renewables, notably in the following areas : internal electricity market opening, better market integration of renewable energy, cooperation and trade, infrastructure and consumers, technology innovation and sustainability, and next steps as regards, inter alia, future deliberations with a view to a post-2020 policy framework on renewables. The conclusions also stress that directive 2009/28/EC on renewable energy sources is providing certainty to investors and will provide a stimulus up to 2020.

The Commission communication explains how renewable energy is being integrated in the single market. It gives some guidance on the current framework up to 2020 and outlines possible policy options for ensuring continuity and stability post-2020, thereby enabling Europe's renewable energy production to continue to grow up to 2030 and beyond.

Follow-up to the European Council

The Council took note of a progress report ([16605/12](#)) on the follow-up to the February 2011 European Council's conclusions on energy and held an exchange of views on the progress achieved. Ministers also heard the Commission presentation of its communication "Making the internal energy market work", adopted on the 15 November.

Ministers held an exchange of views by addressing two questions raised by the presidency : the first focusing on the member states' assessment of progress made in delivering on the orientations set by the European Council and the second concerned the need for more intensive efforts at EU level.

The debate pointed to where further efforts should be directed, especially if the EU wanted to meet the 2014 deadline for the completion of the internal energy market. The discussion expanded on what had been discussed and agreed that day, e.g. as regards future policy developments for renewable energy or infrastructure.

Ministers supported the main elements covered in the Commission Action Plan towards 2014, which was included in its communication: this is essential as, to a large extent, the time is no longer for more legislation at EU level but for more thorough implementation at national level, with the level of political commitments this requires.

The presidency progress report provides an update on the previous year's report ([16632/11](#)) outlining the main steps and initiatives taken in response to the conclusions on energy adopted by the European Council in February 2011 ([2/1/11](#)) and further developed by the TTE Council on 28 February 2011 ([6207/1/11](#)). The report addresses six policy areas for which deadlines or priorities have been set, in particular energy efficiency, renewable energy, the internal energy market, infrastructure, external energy relations and nuclear energy.

The Commission communication ([16202/12](#)) reiterates the benefits of integrated European energy markets and sets out ways to ensure that the market fulfils its potential as soon as possible and satisfies the needs and expectations of EU citizens and businesses. It is one of the 12 priority actions under the communication "Single Market Act II - together for new growth". On the basis of this communication, the Commission is proposing an action plan to ensure the successful operation of the internal energy market.

Other business

Trans-European energy infrastructure

The Council was briefed on the agreement reached with the European Parliament on the regulation on guidelines for trans -European energy infrastructure. The agreement was reached on 27 November and endorsed by the Permanent Representatives Committee on 30 November. Before it can enter into force the text requires formal approval in the Parliament and in the Council.

The new regulatory framework will help to modernise and expand Europe's energy infrastructure in order to allow the EU to meet its core energy policy objectives of competitiveness, sustainability and security of supply.

For more details see press release [17044/12](#).

International relations in the field of energy

The Council was briefed by the presidency and the Commission on events and developments in international relations that have taken place during the Cyprus presidency, or are due to take place soon ([16135/12](#)).

The briefing included, amongst other issues, the Energy Charter Conference (Warsaw, 26-27 November), the 10th meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community (Budva, 18 October), EU-China relations, developments in the Southern Corridor and concerning South Stream, the EU-US Energy Council (Brussels, 5 December), EU-Russia relations including the upcoming meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Energy (Cyprus, 12 December), the Strategic Group for International Energy Cooperation and information on Decision 994/2012/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an information exchange mechanism for intergovernmental energy agreements (published in the Official Journal on 25 October).

Work programme of the incoming presidency

The Irish delegation presented the incoming presidency's work programme in the energy sector ([16431/12](#)). Its work will focus in particular on the legislative proposal on biofuels, including the proposed amendments to the renewables directive and the fuel quality directive, and on the Commission communication on the internal energy market.

The informal ministers' meeting will take place on 23-24 April 2013 and the formal TTE (energy) Councils on 22 February and 7 June 2013.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Afghanistan - restrictive measures

The Council updated the list of Afghan individuals and entities subjected to restrictive measures for their association with the Taliban regime following decisions of the UN Sanctions Committee.

The Council amended the information regarding several individuals subject to sanctions. It also added one individual and a network of Taliban fighters to the list of those targeted with a travel ban and an asset freeze.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Appropriate measures - Republic of Madagascar

The Council adopted a decision ([16208/12](#)) extending the application period of the appropriate measures decided on 7 June 2010 ([2010/371/EU](#)) after the conclusion of consultations with the Republic of Madagascar under Article 96 of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement. The Council decided to extend the period of application until credible elections have taken place and constitutional order has returned to Madagascar, subject to regular review during that period.

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

Iceland - Participation in the European Earth monitoring programme (GMES)

The Council approved the EU's position, within the EEA joint committee, aimed at restoring Iceland's participation in the European Earth monitoring programme (GMES) as from 1 January 2013 ([15135/12](#)).

The participation of Iceland in the GMES programme had been suspended temporarily due to economic constraints.

TRADE POLICY**Anti-dumping - Chamois leather - China**

The Council adopted a regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of chamois leather originating in China following an expiry review pursuant to regulation 1225/2009 ([15931/12](#)).

EU/Russia - tariff-rate quotas for export of wood

The Council adopted a regulation on the allocation of tariff quotas applying to exports of wood from the Russian Federation to the European Union ([59/12](#)).

GENERAL AFFAIRS**Temporary measures for the recruitment of Croatians as EU officials**

The Council adopted a regulation introducing special temporary measures for the recruitment of Croatians as officials and temporary staff of the European Union ([58/12](#)), following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament.

AGRICULTURE**EU-Moldova Agreement - Protection of geographical indications of agricultural products**

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of the agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova on the protection of geographical indications of agricultural products and foodstuffs ([8741/12](#)).

For the EU the agreement provides for expanded protection and use of the geographical indications (GIs) system and intervention at the source of potential misuses of EU GIs. In return, Moldova will develop and protect its current geographical indications in the EU territory and strengthen its relationship with the EU. This agreement should improve the conditions governing bilateral trade whilst promoting quality in the food chain and encouraging sustainable rural development.

EU imports of poultry meat from Brazil and Thailand - Modification of concessions

The Council adopted a regulation concerning the implementation of agreement in the form of exchanges of letters on the modification of concessions with respect to processed poultry meat between the EU and Brazil, and between the EU and Thailand, pursuant to Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 (GATT 1994) and amending and supplementing annex I to regulation 2658/87 on the tariff and statistical nomenclature and on the common customs tariff. This adoption follows a first reading agreement with the European Parliament ([61/12](#)).

Negotiations under Article XXVIII of GATT 1994 concluded on poultry in 2007 and covered tariff lines on poultry meat and some types of processed poultry. Subsequent import data showed a dramatic import surge of processed poultry meat under a tariff line not covered by these negotiations, with exporters apparently benefiting from a relative gap in the EU protection. So as to address comprehensively these substitution effects affecting the EU poultry industry, the Commission had requested authorisation from the Council to renegotiate the concessions on poultry meat with Brazil and Thailand. The negotiations had resulted in agreements in the form of exchanges of letters initialled with Thailand on 22 November 2011 and with Brazil on 7 December 2011.

FISHERIES

Partnership agreement between the EU and Mauritania - Renewal of the protocol

The Council adopted a decision on the signing on behalf of the EU, and on the provisional application of the protocol setting out fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the fisheries partnership agreement (FPA) between the EU and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania ([14282/12](#)).

The partnership agreement in the fisheries sector between the EU and Mauritania was concluded in 2006. The main objective of the protocol to this FPA is to define the fishing opportunities offered to EU vessels and the financial contributions due, respectively, for access rights and sectoral support. Following negotiations, a new protocol was initialled on 26 July 2012, since the previous protocol had expired on 31 July 2012. The new protocol covers a period of two years from the date of its signature. To allow EU vessels to carry on fishing activities the new protocol should be applied from the date of its signature on a provisional basis, pending completion of the procedures for its formal conclusion.

A specific provision has been included in the protocol about its termination in the event of a reduced level of exploitation of the fishing opportunities.

In addition to the signing and provisional application of this new protocol, the Council adopted a regulation concerning the allocation of fishing opportunities between member states ([14278/12](#)).

Trade measures - Supply of certain fishery products to EU processors

The Council adopted a regulation on trade-related measures to guarantee the supply of certain fishery products to EU processors from 2013 to 2015 amending regulations 104/2000 and 1344/2011 and repealing regulation 1062/2009 ([15912/12](#)).

The scope of the common fisheries policy (CFP) extends to EU autonomous trade measures for fishery and aquaculture products. Since the CFP is currently being reformed, the autonomous trade measures applicable to fishery products also need to be revised.

The EU supply of certain fishery products largely relies on imports. In the last 15 years the EU has become more dependent on imports to meet its consumption of fishery products: the EU self-sufficiency rate for fishery products has decreased from 57 % to 38 %. The main purpose of the autonomous trade measures for fishery and aquaculture products is to enable the EU fish processing industry to import, under reduced tariffs or duty-free, third countries' raw materials for further processing.

This regulation will replace, merge and amend, as appropriate, three existing regimes on autonomous quotas and suspensions for fishery products.

ACTS ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

TRANSPORT

Environmental certification of aircraft and related products

By written procedure closed on 30 November, the Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of an update aligning the EU's implementing rules for the airworthiness and environmental certification of aircraft and related products with the amendments made to the Convention on International Civil Aviation ("Chicago Convention") and its environmental protection requirements ([16204/12](#)).

The Commission's draft regulation, which amends regulation 748/2012 laying down those implementing rules, 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.