



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

3224th Council meeting

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Brussels, 22 February 2013

President

Mr Pat RABBITTE

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
of Ireland

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

*The Council held a public policy debate on a draft directive on **indirect land-use change** amending the fuel quality and renewable energy directives, which aims to promote a transition to biofuels that deliver greenhouse gas savings.*

*The Council also held a policy debate on a Commission communication entitled "**Making the internal energy market work**", addressing in particular the completion of the internal energy market by 2014 and the involvement of consumers.*

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

PARTICIPANTS

Belgium:

Mr Melchior WATHELET

State Secretary for the Environment, Energy and Mobility, attached to the Minister for the Interior, and State Secretary for Institutional Reforms, attached to the Prime Minister

Bulgaria:

Ms Petia VASSILEVA

Deputy Permanent Representative

Czech Republic:

Mr Pavel SOLC

Deputy Minister for Energy

Denmark:

Mr Martin LIDEGAARD

Minister for Climate, Energy and Buildings

Germany:

Mr Stefan KAPFERER

State Secretary

Estonia:

Mr Clyde KULL

Deputy Permanent Representative

Ireland:

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Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Minister of State

Mr Fergus O'DOWD

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Deputy Permanent Representative

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Lithuania:

Mr Jaroslav NEVEROVIČ

Minister for Energy

Luxembourg:

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Deputy State Secretary for Green Economy Development, Climate Policy and Key Public Services, Ministry of National Development

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Deputy Permanent Representative

Netherlands:

Mr Derk OLDENBURG

Deputy Permanent Representative

Austria:

Mr Harald GÜNTHER

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Mr Andrzej DYCHA

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Portugal:

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State Secretary for Energy

Romania:

Mr Constantin NIȚĂ

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Slovenia:

Mr Uroš VAJGL

Deputy Permanent Representative

Slovakia:

Mr Dušan PETRÍK

State Secretary for Energy and Transport

Finland:

Ms Marja RISLAKKI

State Secretary

Sweden:

Ms Anna-Karin HATT

Minister for Energy and IT

United Kingdom:

Mr Ed DAVEY

Secretary of State

Commission:

Mr Günther OETTINGER

Member

The government of the acceding state was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Ms Irena ANDRASSY

Deputy Permanent Representative

ITEMS DEBATED

INDIRECT LAND-USE CHANGE

The Council held a public orientation debate on the draft directive on indirect land-use change (ILUC) amending the fuel quality (98/70/EC) and renewable energy (2009/28/EC) directives. The proposed directive aims to promote a transition to biofuels that deliver substantial greenhouse gas savings. The outcome of discussions will provide guidance for further work on this proposal.

Ministers were invited to answer two questions raised by the presidency ([6208/13](#)): the first focussing on whether the draft directive adequately fulfils its objectives of addressing indirect land-use change emissions and encouraging the transition to advanced biofuels, and the second relating to its support for the achievement of the existing energy and climate-change objectives in the EU.

The same questions will serve as a basis for the policy debate at the meeting of the Environment Council on 21 March. The Permanent Representatives Committee decided last December to establish an ad hoc working party on indirect land-use change to ensure that the two directives would be amended in a coherent and consistent way.

When these directives were adopted, the European Parliament and the Council asked the Commission to review negative impacts on greenhouse gas savings that could result from the conversion of land and, if need be, to present a legislative proposal. The draft directive aims to minimise the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from situations where formerly non-agricultural land such as forests is used for food, feed or fibre production because agricultural land previously destined to this type of production being converted to biofuel production.

The draft directive was presented by the Commission in October 2012 ([15189/12](#)). Its aim is to start the transition to biofuels that deliver substantial greenhouse gas savings, through:

- limiting the contribution that conventional biofuels make to attaining the targets of the renewable energy directive;
- improving the greenhouse gas performance of biofuel production processes;
- encouraging a greater market penetration of advanced biofuels;
- improving the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions by estimating ILUC emissions of biofuels.

The European Parliament committee vote is scheduled for July 2013.

INTERNAL ENERGY MARKET

The Council held a debate on the communication entitled "Making the internal energy market work", presented by the Commission at a Council meeting last December ([16202/12](#)).

Ministers focused on two key issues: the completion of the internal energy market by 2014 and the involvement of consumers ([6221/13](#)). The debate will contribute to the preparation of the European Council on Energy that will take place on 22 May 2013 and to Council conclusions to be adopted at the June Energy Council.

The communication 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 includes a proposal for an action plan to ensure the successful operation of the internal energy market.

EUROPEAN SEMESTER 2013

The Council addressed the European Semester 2013, in the light of the annual growth survey.

The 2013 annual growth survey ([16669/12](#)) sets out the economic and social priorities for the EU by providing overall guidance for the member states and the EU in conducting their policies. The European Semester exercise is the cycle of economic policy coordination under the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth.

Ministers were invited to focus ([6292/13](#)) on the main obstacles to the achievement of the Europe 2020 energy objectives and on measures in the energy sector that have the biggest potential to contribute to growth and competitiveness.

The contribution of the Energy Council will be sent by the presidency to the spring European Council of 14-15 March and will form part of the synthesis reports from the sectoral Councils directly involved in Europe 2020.

The EU's 2020 energy policy objectives of increasing the share of renewables in final energy consumption to 20% and moving towards a 20% increase in energy efficiency (together with the objective for greenhouse gas emission reductions) are among the five headline targets agreed by the European Council in 2010 for the overall Europe 2020 strategy.

OTHER BUSINESS

Safety of offshore activities

The presidency briefed the Council on the provisional agreement reached with the European Parliament on the proposal on safety of offshore oil and gas operations ([6105/13](#)). The proposal is aimed at reducing the risk of a major offshore accident in Union waters and limiting the consequences should such an accident nonetheless occur. The last informal trilogue took place on 21 February and the Permanent Representatives Committee will analyse this provisional agreement on 27 February.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**ACTS ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE****Revision of European agreement on road transport vehicle crews (AETR)**

By written procedure closed on 22 February, the Council established the position to be taken by the EU as regards proposals for a revision of the European agreement concerning the work of crews of vehicles engaged in international road transport (AETR) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) ([5826/13](#)). The amendments that the EU intends to propose in the UNECE group of experts on the AETR concern three issues:

- An administrative committee should be set up in the UNECE framework, tasked with defining the technical specifications of the **tachograph** used in road transport for the entire AETR area, in order to achieve a pan-European harmonised implementation of the new rules on the digital tachograph that the EU plans to adopt soon.
- **Accession to the AETR** should be open not only to states, but also to regional integration organisations, so as to make possible a future accession of the EU.
- The AETR countries should establish national electronic **registers of driver cards** and ensure their interconnection, in order to allow a better control of driver cards in the AETR area.