



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

3231st Council meeting

General Affairs

Brussels, 11 March 2013

President

Eamon GILMORE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Trade of Ireland

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council to be held on 14 and 15 March, and discussed preparations for the meeting with President Herman Van Rompuy.

It agreed on the strengthening of conditions for action by EU customs authorities with regard to the enforcement of intellectual property rights. A draft regulation provides for a simplified procedure for the destruction of counterfeit and pirated goods, for instance.

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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:

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Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

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First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign
Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Nicolai WAMMEN

Minister for European Affairs

Germany:

Mr Guido WESTERWELLE

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Matti MAASIKAS

Permanent Representative

Ireland:

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Foreign Affairs and Trade

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State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

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Permanent Representative

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Permanent Representative

Austria:

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER

Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for European and
International Affairs

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Mr Marek PRAWDA

Permanent Representative

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State Secretary attached to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with responsibility for European Affairs

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State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Igor SENČAR

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Ivan KORČOK

Permanent Representative

Finland:

Mr Alexander STUBB

Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade

Sweden:

Ms Birgitta OHLSSON

Minister for EU Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr David LIDINGTON

Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Commission:

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ

Vice President

The government of the acceding state was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Ms Vesna PUSIĆ

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

ITEMS DEBATED

PREPARATION OF THE MARCH EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 14 and 15 March, and held an exchange of views with European Council president Herman Van Rompuy.

The European Council will focus on¹:

- Economic and social policy: promoting competitiveness, growth and jobs; further development of the EU's economic and monetary union.
- Foreign affairs: relations with strategic partners; specific issues in the light of events.

The draft conclusions will be reviewed in the light of the discussion.

As regards competitiveness, growth and jobs, the presidency presented a report providing a synthesis of the discussions and main messages of different Council configurations² involved in the current *European Semester* exercise ([7236/13](#)).

The *European Semester* involves simultaneous monitoring of the member states' fiscal, economic and employment policies during a six-month period every year. In the light of the guidance provided by the European Council, the member states will prepare their national reform programmes (economic and employment policies) and stability or convergence programmes (fiscal policies) for this year.

¹ An annotated draft agenda was discussed by the Council on 4 February ([5639/13](#)).

² Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, Competitiveness Council, Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council, Environment Council, Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**GENERAL AFFAIRS****Bulgaria and Romania - Cooperation and verification mechanism**

The Council adopted conclusions that can be found in [6269/13](#).

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**External auditors of the Central Bank of Cyprus**

The Council adopted a decision appointing KPMG Ltd as external auditors of the Central Bank of Cyprus for the 2013 to 2017 financial years.

TRADE POLICY**Anti-dumping - Coated steel and aluminium foils in rolls - China**

The Council adopted regulations imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty ([6535/13](#)) and a countervailing duty ([6557/13](#) + [COR 1](#)) on imports of certain organic coated steel products originating in China.

It also adopted a regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty and collecting definitively the provisional duty imposed on imports of certain aluminium foils in rolls originating in China ([6421/13](#)).

CUSTOMS UNION

Customs enforcement of intellectual property rights

The Council reached a political agreement on a draft regulation aimed at strengthening the conditions and procedures for action by EU customs authorities with regard to the enforcement of intellectual property rights ([6249/13](#)).

The agreed text will be forwarded to the European Parliament, which will vote in the coming months.

The new regulation will introduce a simplified procedure enabling customs, under certain conditions, to have goods abandoned for destruction without having to undergo formal and costly legal proceedings. For counterfeit and pirated goods, the agreement of the owner to destroy the goods will be presumed if the destruction has not been explicitly opposed, whereas for other situations, the owner of the goods would have to agree explicitly to their destruction.

A specific procedure will apply for small consignments, which will allow for seized goods to be destroyed without the involvement of the right-holder.

The new regulation will not apply to non-commercial goods contained in travellers' personal luggage.

The scope of customs intervention will also be extended to types of infringements not covered by the current rules, such as trade names and certain protected models and designs.

The new regulation will apply as from 1 January 2014 and will replace the current measures that were established under regulation 1383/2003.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Multiannual framework for the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

The Council adopted a decision establishing a multiannual framework for the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for 2013 to 2017 ([10449/12](#)).

See press release [7339/13](#).

ENVIRONMENT**End-of-life vehicles**

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a directive amending annex II to directive 2000/53/EC on end-of-life vehicles ([5522/13](#)).

The draft directive 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.

CO2 emissions from new passenger cars

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending regulation 443/2009 as regards the monitoring of CO2 emissions from new passenger cars ([5220/13](#)).

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.

Chlorfenapyr as an active substance

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a directive amending annex I to directive 98/8/EC to include chlorfenapyr as an active substance ([5221/13](#)).

The draft directive 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.

Biocidal products - Formaldehyde

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a decision concerning the non-inclusion of formaldehyde for product-type 20 in annex I, IA or IB to directive 98/8/EC on the placing of biocidal products on the market ([5222/13](#)).

The draft decision 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.
