



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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3240th Council meeting

General Affairs

Brussels, 21 May 2013

President

Eamon Gilmore

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Trade

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

The Council reviewed draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 22 May, covering:

- energy (internal energy market, energy efficiency, interconnections, and diversification of energy sources); and*
- taxation (tax evasion and tax fraud, automatic exchange of information, taxation of savings interest and measures to counter VAT fraud.*

The Council also discussed developments in the preparation of the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the 2014-20 period.

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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.

APPOINTMENTS

– Committee of the Regions 12

PARTICIPANTS

Belgium:

Mr Didier REYNDERS

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs,
External Trade and European Affairs

Bulgaria:

Mr Ivan NAYDENOV

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Vojtěch BELLING

Secretary of State (Office of the Government)

Denmark:

Mr Nicolai WAMMEN

Minister for European Affairs

Germany:

Mr Michael LINK

Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Matti MAASIKAS

Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Eamon GILMORE

Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for
Foreign Affairs and Trade

Ms Helen BLAKE

Principal Officer, EU Affairs and Coordination Division

Greece:

Mr Dimitrios KOURKOULAS

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Íñigo MÉNDEZ DE VIGO Y MONTOJO

State Secretary for the European Union

France:

Mr Thierry REPENTIN

Minister for European Affairs

Italy:

Mr Enzo MOAVERO MILANESI

Minister responsible for European Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Ioannis KASOULIDES

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Edgars RINKĒVIČS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Vytautas LEŠKEVIČIUS

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Hungary:

Ms Enikő GYŐRI

State Secretary for EU Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Louis GRECH

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for European Affairs
and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto

Netherlands:

Mr Frans TIMMERMANS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Austria:

Mr Reinhold LOPATKA

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Poland:

Mr Marek PRAWDA

Permanent Representative

Portugal:

Mr Miguel MORAIS LEITÃO

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

Romania:

Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Igor SENČAR

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Peter JAVORČÍK

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Jan STORE

Permanent Representative

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

Mr Janusz LEWANDOWSKI

Member

The Government of the Acceding State was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Mr Joško KLISOVIĆ

Deputy Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

ITEMS DEBATED

MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK - public session

The Irish presidency informed ministers on the state of play in the discussions with the European Parliament on the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020, on the basis of a note set out in [9486/13](#). It also asked the Council for guidance on the four issues raised by the Parliament with regard to the next MFF (review, own resources, unity of the budget and flexibility).

The presidency recalled the steps taken so far in discussions with the European Parliament, since the European Council agreement on the MFF in February. The presidency reported that the MFF detailed negotiations with the Parliament started on 13 May with a first formal trilogue.

It also reminded ministers of the important step that the Council made towards the Parliament on 14 May with the political agreement on draft amending budget no. 2 for 2013 and the provision of a first tranche of EUR 7.3 billion targeted on boosting economic growth and creating jobs, and the commitment to return to the issue later in the year.

The presidency reiterated its commitment to reach an agreement with the European Parliament by the end of June. In the presidency's assessment, this objective is still feasible provided that all parties involved were prepared to engage constructively. The presidency stressed that any further delay would be to the detriment of EU citizens who needed predictability.

All member states supported the presidency's efforts for a timely agreement. Many delegations stressed that the Council's political agreement on draft amending budget 2/2013 this early in the year, and for such a significant figure, constituted an important step and asked the European Parliament to show a similar spirit of compromise.

With regard to the four specific issues raised by the European Parliament, delegations reiterated their openness to considering them constructively.

More concretely, delegations were ready to examine a legally binding obligation on the Commission to present a review in 2017, provided that the unanimity requirement for the Council vote on the MFF regulation was respected and pre-allocated envelopes were preserved. On own resources, delegations showed readiness to consider a declaration setting out a political roadmap for work on the future. As far as the unity of the budget is concerned, delegations expressed some openness to having a Commission document annexed to the annual draft budget setting out all expenditures covered by the EU budget. Concerning flexibility, many delegations could consider further discussing the possibility to the carry-over from one year to another of unused margins under the payments ceilings and a frontloading of certain expenditures, such as for the new youth employment initiative.

The presidency confirmed that negotiations with the European Parliament are continuing this week and next, with a further political trilogue scheduled for 28 May. In addition to an agreement on the MFF, the Irish presidency wishes also to reach agreement with the Parliament on the around 70 pieces of sectoral legislation underpinning the EU's funding programmes. This would allow the new programmes to start on time in January 2014.

On 8 February 2013 the European Council reached agreement on the next MFF, providing a mandate to the Irish presidency for the negotiations with the European Parliament ([37/13 + COR 1 REV 1](#)).

On 13 March, the European Parliament adopted a resolution, setting out its [position for the negotiations](#) on the next MFF.

Further information on the negotiations may be found on the Council's MFF webpages: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/special-reports/mff>

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Preparation of the May meeting

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 22 May.

The European Council will discuss energy and taxation.

- Energy: this first of a series of thematic debates with a focus on growth, jobs and competitiveness will put emphasis on implementing the internal energy market, energy efficiency, interconnections, and diversification of energy sources.
- Taxation: focus will be on effective steps to fight tax evasion and tax fraud. The European Council is expected to call for rapid progress on a number of issues, including automatic exchange of information, taxation of savings interest and measures to counter VAT fraud.

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

Preparation of the June meeting

The Council examined an annotated draft agenda for the European Council meeting to be held on 27 and 28 June ([9165/13](#)).

The European Council is due to focus on:

- Economic policy: European Semester, implementation of the Compact for Growth and Jobs, industrial competitiveness and "smart" regulation.
- Economic and monetary union: banking union and Latvia's application to join the euro area.

The Council will hold a further discussion, on the basis of draft European Council conclusions, at its meeting on 25 June.

Follow-up of European Council conclusions

The presidency presented a report on the implementation of European Council conclusions covering all ongoing tasks arising from European Council orientations ([9190/13](#)).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Relations with Russia**

The Council agreed the position of the EU and its member states within the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on the establishment, composition, tasks and functioning of regular senior officials meetings on freedom, security and justice.

The aim of such meetings would be to ensure continuity of the work between the annual sessions of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on freedom, security and justice. The EU sees them as informal gatherings for policy coordination that are not meant to take decisions having legal effects.

Relations with Turkey

The Council adopted the EU position for the 51st EU-Turkey Association Council meeting, to be held in Brussels on 27 May.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**Waste management infrastructure - Court of Auditors' report**

The Council adopted conclusions on special report no. 20/2012 by the European Court of Auditors entitled "Is structural measures funding for municipal waste management infrastructure projects effective in helping member states achieve EU waste policy objectives?".

The conclusions are set out in [9238/13](#).

Cost-effectiveness of cohesion policy - Court of Auditors' report

The Council adopted conclusions on special report no. 21/2012 by the European Court of Auditors concerning the cost-effectiveness of cohesion policy investments in energy efficiency.

The conclusions are set out in [9245/13](#).

TRADE POLICY

Anti-dumping - Polyethylene terephthalate - Asian countries

The Council adopted a regulation imposing a definitive countervailing duty on certain imports of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) originating in India following an expiry review pursuant to regulation 597/2009 ("the EU's basic anti-subsidy regulation") ([8834/2/13](#)).

It rejected a proposal ([8835/13](#)) to impose a definitive anti dumping duty on certain imports of PET originating in India, Taiwan and Thailand following an expiry review pursuant to regulation 1225/2009 ("the EU's basic anti-dumping regulation"), and terminating the expiry review concerning imports of certain PET originating in Indonesia and Malaysia.

The anti-dumping duties against these five countries will therefore be lapsed.

Currently, anti-dumping duties are in force against imports of PET from China (extended in November 2010) and countervailing measures are in force since September 2010 against imports of PET originating in Iran, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

RESEARCH

Atlantic Ocean cooperation with Canada and US

The Council approved a draft statement for the launch of an Ocean Research Alliance with Canada and the United States, providing for Atlantic Ocean cooperation.

The statement is planned to be signed at the occasion of a high-level event "*The Atlantic – a shared resource*", to be held in Galway, Ireland, on 23 and 24 May.

The cooperation is intended to increase knowledge of the Atlantic Ocean and its dynamic systems, to improve ocean health and stewardship and to promote the sustainable management of its resources. It is intended to result in mutual benefits including better ecosystem assessments and forecasts and deeper understanding of vulnerabilities and risk, including those relating to the global climate system and climate change impacts.

FOOD LAW**Labelling of foods with added phytosterols**

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation aimed at ensuring consistency of the information provided in the labelling of foods and food ingredients with added phytosterols, phytosterol esters, phytostanols and/or phytostanol esters ([8481/13](#)).

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

APPOINTMENTS**Committee of the Regions**

The Council appointed Mr Mick ANTONIW, Ms Paula BAKER, Mr Anthony Gerard BUCHANAN and Ms Dee SHARPE (United Kingdom) as a members of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015 ([9367/13](#)).
