



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



10876/13

(OR. en)

PRESSE 251
PR CO 32

PRESS RELEASE

3246th Council meeting

Environment

Luxembourg, 18 June 2013

President

Mr Phil Hogan

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local
Government of Ireland

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

*The Council adopted conclusions on the Commission communication "**An EU strategy on adaptation to climate change**". The aim of the strategy is to contribute to a more climate-resilient Europe by enhancing preparedness and the capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change at local, regional, national and EU levels.*

*The Council took note of a progress report on a draft directive on **indirect land-use change** amending the fuel quality and renewable energy directives, the aim of which is to minimise the impact of indirect changes of land use on greenhouse gas emissions.*

*In the follow-up to the **UN Conference on Sustainable Development**, the Council held an exchange of views on the links between the report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 development agenda and the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also endorsed draft conclusions on the **overarching post-2015 agenda**, which will be adopted by the General Affairs Council on 25 June.*

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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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Under Secretary of State for Resource Management, the
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Mr Paul WHEELHOUSE

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Member

Ms Maria DAMANAKI

Member

Ms Connie HEDEGAARD

Member

The government of the acceding state was represented as follows:

Croatia

Mr Hrvoje DOKOZA

Deputy Minister for Environmental and Nature Protection

ITEMS DEBATED

EU strategy on adaptation to climate change

The Council adopted [conclusions](#) on the Commission communication "An EU strategy on adaptation to climate change".

In the conclusions, the Council welcomes the Commission communication. It recalls, among other issues, that the EU objective of keeping the global mean surface temperature increase below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels requires urgent and ambitious mitigation action by the global community. The Council also calls upon the Commission to continue to take climate change adaptation into account in relevant proposals for EU action and further to facilitate climate-proofing EU action, in particular in key policy areas including: the common agricultural policy, the cohesion policy and the common fisheries policy; facilitating more resilient infrastructure; exploring the need for additional guidance on ecosystem approaches to adaptation, as well as exploring the potential of insurance and other financial products for resilient investment and business decisions.

The Commission adopted its adaptation strategy in April 2013. The aim of the strategy is to contribute to a more climate-resilient Europe by enhancing preparedness and the capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change at local, regional, national and EU levels. The adaptation strategy focuses on three key objectives: promoting action by member states, "climate-proofing" action at EU level by mainstreaming adaptation measures into EU policies and programmes, and better informed decision-making.

It consists of a communication ([8556/13](#)) and several staff working documents, as well as a green paper on insurance in the context of natural and man-made disasters.

For more information on the strategy see the Commission [website](#).

Indirect land-use change

In a public session, the Council took note of a presidency progress report 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 minimise the impact of indirect land-use change on greenhouse gas emissions and to promote a transition to biofuels that deliver substantial greenhouse gas savings.

The progress report ([10207/13](#)) outlines the main issues discussed under the Irish presidency and how they are or could be addressed with a view to facilitating the development of a Council position. The member states generally support the aim of tackling the global occurrence of indirect land-use change resulting from the production of biofuels that compete with food and feed. However, many delegations are concerned about a policy shift that could create uncertainty among investors, jeopardise existing investments and render the achievement of the existing EU renewables objectives more costly and challenging. The report covers the main issues discussed in the working party, in particular: the 5 % threshold for conventional biofuels, ILUC factors, treatment of new installations, the bonus for degraded land, fraud prevention, the review clause and delegated acts. The same report was presented to the TTE (Energy) Council on 7 June.

Policy debates on this proposal were held by the TTE (Energy) Council on 22 February 2013 and the Environment Council on 21 March 2013. The Permanent Representatives Committee decided last December to set up an ad hoc working party on indirect land-use change to ensure that amendments to the two directives would be made coherently and consistently.

When these directives were adopted, the European Parliament and the Council asked the Commission to review the negative effects on greenhouse gas savings which might result from the conversion of land and, if need be, to present a legislative proposal. The aim of the draft directive is to minimise 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 for this type of production is being converted to biofuel production.

The draft directive was presented by the Commission in October 2012 ([15189/12](#)). The European Parliament ENVI committee vote is scheduled for July 2013.

Follow-up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

a) Overarching post-2015 framework

The Council endorsed draft Council conclusions on the overarching post-2015 agenda, which will be adopted by the General Affairs Council on 25 June. These conclusions were also endorsed by the Foreign Affairs Council (Development) on 28 May 2013.

The draft conclusions build on the Commission communication "A decent life for all" ([7075/13](#)), which was presented to ministers at the Environment Council on 21 March 2013. In the conclusions the EU and its member states commit themselves to supporting convergence toward a single overarching post-2015 framework and to playing an active and constructive role in all ongoing processes. The conclusions also underline, inter alia, that the post-2015 process should reinforce the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development and set out a single comprehensive and coherent framework for effective delivery and results at all levels.

b) Rio+20 follow-up

In the context of the follow-up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development of June 2012 (Rio+20), the Council held an exchange of views on the links between the report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 development agenda and the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This was a further opportunity for environment ministers to discuss how the EU and its member states can contribute to the development of an overarching post-2015 framework, expressing their initial views on and reactions to this report. The presidency had prepared three questions to focus the discussion, and namely on whether the illustrative goals and targets proposed in the report adequately reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development, how best to integrate the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda ahead of 2015, and the proposed approach for the implementation of the post-2015 agenda. Ministers generally welcomed the panel's report as a valuable basis for further work. They in particular underlined the importance of an integrated approach, ensuring that the environmental dimension is adequately reflected in forthcoming sustainable development goals, keeping the balance of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Some of these aspects were also addressed by the Commission in its intervention which highlighted in addition as key issues: the need to promote the drivers of the green economy, the important role of sustainable consumption and production, the need to respect planetary boundaries, the key role of financing for sustainable development and the engagement with other partners.

The UN Secretary General launched a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons in July 2012 to provide guidance and recommendations on the post-2015 development agenda. The panel includes representatives from the private sector, academia, civil society and local authorities. Its [report](#) was released in New York on 30 May 2013 and will be presented at the high-level UN General Assembly event on 25 September 2013.

The report outlines five transformational shifts: leave no-one behind; put sustainable development at the core; transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all and forge a new global partnership. It presents a set of 12 illustrative goals with 54 associated measurable targets, which are offered for consideration by the UN Secretary-General in the development of his report to be presented on 25 September 2013 as well as for discussion in other relevant fora.

For more information see the UN Secretary-General's [website](#).

Other business

Emissions trading in the aviation sector

The Commission updated the Council on the state of play of the negotiations on global action to tackle emissions from aviation ([10856/13](#)).

The ongoing negotiations in the framework of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) concern the development of a global market-based approach to this issue as well as agreement on principles guiding the application of national and regional market-based measures as long as a global system is not available. Ongoing negotiations aim to prepare a resolution to be submitted to the ICAO General Assembly in September 2013. In an effort to contribute to finding a global solution at that Assembly in the autumn, the EU decided in April to suspend temporarily the enforcement of its emissions trading scheme (ETS) for international flights to and from Europe.

International meetings and events

The presidency and the Commission provided a brief update to the Council on the main international meetings that have taken place recently.

The briefing included, in particular: the outcome of the 11th Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, the 6th Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, the 6th Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention and the 2nd Simultaneous Extraordinary Meetings of the Parties to the three Conventions covering the area of chemicals and waste (Geneva, 28 April-10 May 2013) ([10840/13](#)) and the outcome of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (Dublin, 15-17 May 2013) ([10865/13](#)).

Current legislative files

The presidency briefed ministers on the state of play of three legislative files. The work on these files will continue during the Lithuanian presidency. The European Parliament committee vote is scheduled for July 2013.

Fluorinated greenhouse gases ([10787/13](#))

The Commission presented a proposal for a regulation on fluorinated greenhouse gases in November 2012 ([15984/12](#)). The proposal aims to replace regulation (EC) No 842/2006 on certain fluorinated greenhouse gases in order to ensure a more cost-efficient contribution to achieving the EU's climate objectives by discouraging the use of F-gases with a high impact on the climate in favour of energy-efficient and safe alternatives, and further improving the containment and end-of-life treatment of products and equipment that contain F-gases.

Environmental impact assessment ([10738/13](#))

The Commission presented its amending proposal of the EIA directive in October 2012 ([15627/12](#)), with the aim of strengthening provisions concerning the quality of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) to achieve a high level of environmental protection. The proposal seeks to streamline environmental assessments, enhance the quality-related elements of the EIA process and reinforce its effectiveness. In addition, it aims to enhance policy coherence and synergies with other EU legislation in order to reduce the administrative burden.

Access to genetic resources ([10744/13](#))

The main objective of this Commission proposal for a regulation ([14641/12](#)), presented in October 2012, is to implement in the EU the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising From their Utilisation to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to enable its ratification by the EU.

Micro-plastic in the environment

The Council took note of the information provided by the Netherlands delegation on the occurrence of micro-plastic in water systems ([10736/13](#)). Some delegations supported the concerns expressed by the Netherlands towards this growing environmental problem. The Commission also recognised such concerns and referred to its green paper and the public consultation launched.

Budapest Water Summit

The Council took note of the information provided by the Hungarian delegation on the forthcoming "Budapest Water Summit" to take place from 8 to 11 October 2013 and its relevance for the discussions on sustainable development goals in relation to water and sanitation. ([10714/13](#)).

Work programme of the incoming presidency

The Lithuanian delegation presented the incoming presidency's work programme and priorities in the area of environment and climate change.

The informal ministers' meeting will take place on 16 and 17 July 2013 in Vilnius and the Environment Council on 14 October and on 13 December 2013.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Guinea-Bissau - restrictive measures

The Council reviewed EU restrictive measures against those threatening the peace, security or stability of Guinea-Bissau and agreed to maintain the EU autonomous sanctions. At the same time, the Council updated the information with regard to one person designated under the UN sanctions regime concerning this country, following a decision by the UN.

CUSTOMS UNION

Security of the supply chain - Council conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions on strengthening the security of the supply chain and customs risk management.

The conclusions can be found in [8761/3/13](#).

The EU shares the common strategic objectives of protecting the security and integrity of the supply chain and the safety of citizens and the financial interests of the EU and its member states and of facilitating and accelerating legitimate trade to promote competitiveness.

ENERGY

Energy labelling of vacuum cleaners

The Council decided not to object to a Commission delegated regulation of 3 June 2013 supplementing directive 2010/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to energy labelling of vacuum cleaners ([9443/13](#)).

The regulation sets out new mandatory information requirements for suppliers placing vacuum cleaners on the market, and for dealers offering these appliances at the point of sale or by distant selling such as via catalogues or the internet.

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council appointed Mr Peter KAISER and Mr Michael STRUGL (Austria) as members of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015 ([10329/13](#)).
