



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

3192nd Council meeting

General Affairs

Luxembourg, 16 October 2012

President

Mr Andreas MAVROYIANNIS
Deputy Minister for European Affairs
of Cyprus

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

*The Council agreed a third partial general approach on further elements of the **cohesion policy legislative package 2014-2020**.*

*It prepared the **European Council** meeting on 18-19 October on the basis of draft conclusions and took note of an annotated draft agenda for the special European Council meeting on 22-23 November.*

*Ministers also held an informal breakfast meeting to discuss the EU's **multiannual financial framework 2014-2020**.*

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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 Dirk WOUTERS

Permanent Representative

Bulgaria:

Mr Nickolay MLADENOV

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

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:

Ms Lucinda CREIGHTON

Minister of State for European Affairs (Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs and Trade)

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 Bernard CAZENEUVE

Minister with responsibility for European Affairs, attached to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Italy:

Mr Enzo MOAVERO MILANESI

Minister responsible for European Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Andreas MAVROYIANNIS

Deputy Minister to the President of the Republic of Cyprus for European Affairs
Director for European Affairs

Ms Rea YIORDAMLIS

Latvia:

Mr Edgars RINKĒVIČS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Vytautas LESKEVICIUS

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Hungary:

Mr János MARTONYI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Tonio BORG

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Ben KNAPEN

Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation

Austria:

Mr Reinhold LOPATKA

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs

Poland:

Mr Piotr SERAFIN

Secretary of State for European Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Miguel MORAIS LEITÃO

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

Romania:

Ms Luminița ODOBESCU

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Igor SENČAR

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Miroslav LAJČÁK

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for 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

Mr Johannes HAHN

Member

The Government of the Acceding State was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Ms Vesna PUSIĆ

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

Mr Joško KLISOVIĆ

Deputy Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

ITEMS DEBATED

Cohesion policy - public session

The Council agreed a third partial general approach¹ on the new rules for EU cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 period ([14287/2/12 REV 2](#)).

The purpose of cohesion policy is to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the EU's various regions.

The partial general approach agreed today complements the two partial general approaches agreed on 24 April ([8925/12](#))² and 26 June ([11221/12](#))³.

Care has been taken to ensure that these partial general approaches do not prejudice the outcome of negotiations on other elements of cohesion policy or on the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020.

All three partial general approaches were agreed on the principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, meaning that they may be subject to change as a result of these other negotiations.

¹ A general approach is a political agreement of the Council pending the adoption of a first-reading position by the European Parliament. The general approach on the cohesion policy legislative package is partial since some elements are excluded, in particular the sums to be devoted to cohesion policy and the eligibility of different regions.

² This partial general approach covered the following six items: programming; ex ante conditionality; management and control; monitoring and evaluation; eligibility; major projects.

³ This partial general approach covered the following four items: thematic concentration; financial instruments; net revenue generating operations and private public partnerships; performance framework.

The partial general approach agreed today covers the following seven thematic blocs:

- Information and communication, technical assistance, as set out in [14287/12 ADD 1 REV 2](#). This part of the partial general approach is aimed at ensuring visibility of EU cohesion policy and informing potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities. It also seeks to allow technical assistance, such as for project preparation and appraisal, to be supported by the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, subject to certain limits¹.
- European territorial cooperation, as set out in [14287/12 ADD 2 REV 1](#). European territorial cooperation seeks to encourage regions from different member states and also, under certain conditions, third countries to work together and learn from each other through joint projects and programmes. It is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and covers three types of cooperation:
 1. cross-border cooperation between adjacent regions from two or more member states or between neighbouring border regions from at least one member state and one third country;
 2. transnational cooperation over larger transnational territories;
 3. interregional cooperation.
- Territorial development, as set out in [14287/12 ADD 3 REV 1](#). This part of the partial general approach contains provisions notably on community-led local development and sustainable urban development. Community-led local development is aimed at mobilising local communities to contribute to achieving the Europe 2020 strategy goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Sustainable urban development is about integrated actions to tackle the economic, environmental, climate and social challenges of urban areas.

¹ As a general rule, 4% of the total amount of the funds allocated to operational programmes in a member state under each category of region, and 4% of the cohesion fund allocated to operational programmes in a member state.

- Financial issues not covered in the negotiations on the MFF for 2014-2020, as set out in [14287/12 ADD 4 REV 2](#). These provisions provide clarity inter alia on the transferability of resources from one category of regions to another and on the condition of additionality (in other words EU support from cohesion policy may not replace the national expenditure by a member state).
- Country-specific recommendations, as set out in [14287/12 ADD 5 REV 1](#) and [14287/12 ADD 8 REV 2](#). This part of the partial general approach clarifies the role which the country-specific recommendations and the national reform programmes play in assuring the link between the EU strategy for jobs and growth on the one hand and cohesion policy on the other.
- Management and control, as set out in [14287/12 ADD 6 REV 1](#). These provisions amend the partial general approach agreed on 24 April in order to take account of the political agreement reached on the financial regulation in June 2012 ([11872/12](#)).
- Indicators, as set out in [14287/12 ADD 7 REV 1](#). This part of the partial general approach is aimed at providing for the necessary means to assess the impact of the supported measures.

Most of the elements of the cohesion policy package are now covered by the Council. One outstanding issue on which a further partial general approach still needs to be agreed in the coming months is the common strategic framework since the Commission presented an amended proposal on this in September.

The new cohesion policy rules are closely linked to the MFF negotiations; they are only expected to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council once an agreement on the MFF has been reached.

Preparation of the October European Council

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 18-19 October, prepared by the President of the European Council in cooperation with the presidency and the Commission.

The European Council is due to focus on:

- Economic policy: review of progress in the implementation of the compact for growth and jobs, future of the Economic and Monetary Union; assessment of progress as regards the single European banking supervision mechanism;
- Strategic partners: exchange of views on relations with strategic partners;
- Other issues: specific foreign policy issues may be addressed.

An annotated draft agenda was discussed by the Council on 24 September ([13386/12](#)).

During lunch, ministers held an exchange of views on the draft conclusions with the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy.

Preparation of the November European Council

The Council examined a draft annotated agenda, drawn up by the President of the European Council in cooperation with the presidency and the Commission, for the special European Council meeting to be held on 22 and 23 November ([14500/12](#)).

The European Council is dedicated exclusively to the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2014-2020 (*see first item*).

Follow-up of the implementation of the European Council conclusions

The presidency presented its report on the follow-up of the implementation of priority orientations set out in the conclusions agreed at the European Council ([14658/2/12 REV 2](#)).

The report provides an overview of ongoing work within the Council and is aimed at giving member states a common picture of the state of play. This should allow the Council to assess whether further steps are needed to keep work on track for meeting the targets of the European Council.

The report covers elements of the compact for growth and jobs, economic and financial affairs, justice and home affairs, and trade.

Multiannual financial framework

During an informal breakfast meeting (which was not on the official Council agenda) ministers discussed the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the 2014-2020 period. This meeting was also attended by representatives of the European Parliament and of the cabinet of the President of the European Council.

The Cyprus presidency intends to issue a newly revised negotiating box after the European Council of 18-19 October. The President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, will hold bilateral consultations starting from 5 November. The aim is to reach agreement on the MFF package at the special European Council on 22-23 November.

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

Other business

Integrated maritime policy

The Cyprus presidency informed ministers about the outcome of the informal ministerial conference on the integrated maritime policy "The Limassol Declaration", which took place in Limassol (Cyprus) on 8 October 2012 ([14792/12](#)).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Access by the European Parliament to classified information

The Council approved an interinstitutional agreement on access by the European Parliament to classified information on matters other than common foreign and security policy ([8060/12](#) + [14592/12 ADD 1](#)). It authorised the presidency to sign the agreement on its behalf once the equivalence of standards for the protection of classified information in the European Parliament and in the Council has been determined. The Council also approved internal implementing arrangements for the interinstitutional agreement ([14595/12](#)).

EMPLOYMENT

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for five member states

The Council adopted six decisions mobilising a total of EUR 25.4 million under the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), providing support for workers made redundant in France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Ireland and Spain.

An amount of EUR 12.0 million is allocated to workers in the French automotive sector who have been dismissed because a drop in consumer demand has led to a fall in sales of vehicles. An amount of EUR 4.3 million is mobilised for workers in the Swedish pharmaceutical sector who have become redundant as a consequence of the reorganisation of production processes and the relocation of certain activities to lower-cost non-EU countries. A further EUR 2.9 million is made available for workers made redundant in the Dutch construction sector where demand for new houses has decreased due to a reduction in loans to the sector and to individuals, and EUR 1.5 million is deployed for former workers in the Dutch aluminium sector which has been severely affected by a sudden drop in consumer demand. An amount of EUR 2.7 million is allocated to dismissed workers of the Irish customer service Talk Talk in Waterford which has reorganised its telecom services and relocated certain activities to lower-cost non-EU countries. A further EUR 2.0 million is deployed for workers made redundant from the Spanish shipbuilding sector, which has faced a constant decrease in production orders since 2008.

HEALTH**Testing of human tissues and cells**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission directive amending directive 2006/17/EC as regards certain technical requirements for the testing of human tissues and cells ([13079/12](#)).

The Commission directive is subject to the so called regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that, 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 Marc HENDRICKX (Belgium) and Ms Dagmar MÜHLENFELD (Germany) as members of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015 ([14579/12](#) and [14459/12](#)).
