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PRESSE 62
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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3503rd Council meeting

Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)

Brussels, 28 and 29 November 2016

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CONTENTS¹

ITEMS DEBATED

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY	5
Geo-blocking: removing barriers to e-commerce	5
Competitiveness 'check-up': Skills mismatch and future needs.....	5
Single market strategy.....	6
Unitary patent protection system	8
Future of the European automotive industry.....	9
SPACE POLICY	10
Space strategy for Europe	10
RESEARCH and INNOVATION.....	12
Support to young researchers and scientific careers	12
International cooperation in research and innovation	12
Networks for excellence in the European research area	13
ANY OTHER BUSINESS.....	14
– Reform of the type-approval system for cars	14
– Consumer protection: cooperation between national authorities.....	14
– SME envoys network	14
– Collaborative economy.....	14
– Industrial policy in the 2017 Commission work programme	15
– Social rights pillar and competitiveness	15

¹

- 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.

–	Patentability of plants	16
–	Reform of the copyright framework	16
–	Open science	17
–	Quantum technologies	17
–	European bioeconomy	17
–	Azores International Research Centre for the Atlantic ocean.....	18
–	Clean energy innovation.....	18
–	Work programme of the incoming Presidency	18

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

INTERNAL MARKET

–	Chemicals (REACH) - bis (pentabromophenyl) ether.....	19
---	---	----

BUDGETS

–	2017 EU budget - Approval by the Council	19
---	--	----

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

–	Acquisition and cross-servicing agreement between EU and the USA.....	20
–	EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine	20

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

–	Bank capital requirements - Central securities depositaries	20
---	---	----

ENVIRONMENT

–	Ecological criteria for the EU Ecolabel.....	21
---	--	----

AGRICULTURE

–	Transformation of animal by-products into biogas or compost.....	22
–	Hygiene of foodstuffs and official controls on products of animal origin.....	22
–	Prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies	23
–	Scientific panels of the European Food Safety Authority: names and areas of competence	23
–	Peste des petits ruminants.....	23
–	List of active substances in statistics on pesticides.....	24

TRANSPORT

–	Civil aviation safety - airworthiness.....	24
–	Civil aviation safety - approval of certain aeroplane operations and training	24
–	Inland transport of dangerous goods	25

TRANSPARENCY

–	Public access to documents	25
---	----------------------------------	----

ITEMS DEBATED

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

Geo-blocking: removing barriers to e-commerce

In public deliberation, the Council agreed on a general approach on a draft regulation aimed at banning unjustified geo-blocking within the internal market.

Geo-blocking is a discriminatory practice that prevents online customers from accessing and purchasing products or services from a website based in another member state.

The regulation is intended to remove discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment and to boost e-commerce.

The general approach will serve as the Council's common position to start negotiations with the European Parliament under the EU's ordinary legislative procedure.

For further details, see the [press release](#).

Competitiveness 'check-up': Skills mismatch and future needs

Ministers exchanged views on the skills mismatch and future needs.

The debate was introduced by the Commission, which presented the situation in Europe, underlining the need to address the changing nature of jobs and the skills mismatch.

It also referred to the [Skills Agenda for Europe](#), adopted last June, which provides a framework for boosting the skills needed for a competitive economy by focusing on three objectives:

- (1) developing and upgrading basic and higher skills;
- (2) improving transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications; and
- (3) generating better and more timely information about labour market skill needs.

Many delegations highlighted the importance of the [Council resolution](#) on the Skills Agenda adopted at the Education Council on 21 November and, in particular, those actions which are of particular relevance to the competitiveness of the economy, including:

- promoting the development of flexible, future-proof vocational education and training systems;
- upskilling the workforce, notably through the proposal for establishing a [Skills Guarantee](#);
- validating skills acquired and facilitating recognition across companies, sectors and countries;
- supporting the skills profiling and validation of refugees for easier integration into the labour market;
- better anticipating future skill needs, including through the set-up of sectoral blueprints in key sectors of the economy and the set-up of national and local coalitions for digital jobs and skills.

The 'competitiveness check-up' is a regular working method that allows ministers to put forward priorities and respond to urgent issues and developments in the real economy. It helps the Competitiveness Council to carry out an analysis of horizontal and sectoral economic issues as well as the monitoring of competitiveness mainstreaming.

Single market strategy

The Council exchanged views on the state of implementation of the [single market strategy](#) and assessed the progress made one year after its launch.

The debate was structured by means of a [Presidency document](#).

Ministers shared the view that the single market policy must focus on effective application and enforcement of existing rules, supplemented by a limited number of targeted policy initiatives.

To this end, they outlined a number of initiatives in the strategy with the biggest potential to create economic growth and called on member states to intensify efforts with a view to their swift implementation.

Delegations stressed that the selection and implementation of specific measures must be based on economic evidence and have the greatest positive impact on growth and global competitiveness, while improving the overall functioning of the single market.

Many delegations stressed the importance of services for the EU economy, as they account for more than 65% of EU GDP and 70% of total employment, with 9 out of 10 jobs being created in service sectors. Yet, cross-border services only account for 5% of EU GDP, compared with 17% for goods.

The Commission replied by announcing that a new package of initiatives for the services sector will be presented shortly and a number of other new initiatives to deepen the single market will follow in 2017.

Ministers committed to continue to closely monitor the strategy and to pursue efforts to create a stable and predictable environment for consumers and businesses.

Commissioner Bieńkowska presented the latest initiative of the single market strategy: the [Start-up and Scale-up Initiative](#), released on 22 November.

This initiative seeks to make the ecosystem for start-ups and scale-ups in Europe more efficient, which will have a direct beneficial effect on jobs and growth. It is grounded in the idea that starting and scaling a company across Europe has to become simpler.

The Council agreed with the ambitious approach of the new initiative and confirmed its support to take it forward.

The overall objective of the single market strategy is to eliminate the remaining economic barriers from the single market. These barriers tend to limit consumer choices and to impede the emergence of new business models, thus limiting innovation and job creation.

The actions included in the strategy for the internal market cover three areas:

- creating opportunities for consumers, professionals and businesses,
- encouraging and enabling modernisation and innovation,
- ensuring results that benefit consumers and businesses in their daily lives. To this end, the strategy includes a roadmap for the years 2016 to 2018.

Unitary patent protection system

Ministers exchanged views on the finalisation of implementation and entry into operation of the unitary patent and the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

They welcomed the confirmation by the United Kingdom delegation to start preparations for the ratification of the agreement for the establishment of the Unitary Patent Court.

The announcement paves the way for the unitary patent package to enter into operation as soon as possible in 2017.

Many delegations stressed that the prerequisite of ratification of the UPC agreement should be achieved as soon as possible, to allow operationalisation of the system with the broadest possible geographical coverage.

The unified patent package is built on three pillars:

- a [regulation establishing unitary patent protection](#)
- a [regulation on the translation arrangements](#)
- an intergovernmental [agreement setting up the UPC](#) for the settlement of disputes relating to European patents and European patents with unitary effect.

To take effect, the package requires ratification of the UPC agreement by 13 member states including France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Future of the European automotive industry

Over an informal working lunch, ministers exchanged views on the future of the automotive sector, with a focus on low- and zero-emission mobility and automated and connected vehicles.

Building upon the [strategy for low-emission mobility](#) adopted this summer, in its 2017 work programme, the Commission announced its intention to work in an integrated way on mobility, connectivity and the future of the automotive industry.

The working lunch was attended by Commissioner Bińkowska and by the president of the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), Dieter Zetsche.

SPACE POLICY

Space strategy for Europe

During a public session, the Commission presented the new space strategy for Europe as an introduction for a ministerial policy debate.

The Director General of the European Space Agency (ESA), Johann-Dietrich Wörner, was invited to give a presentation at the beginning of the debate. He stressed the need to foster the fruitful existing collaboration between the EU and the ESA by referring to the [EU-ESA joint statement](#) on a shared vision signed on 26 October 2016.

http://m.esa.int/About_Us/Welcome_to_ESA/Joint_statement_on_shared_vision_and_goals_for_the_future_of_Europe_in_space_by_the_EU_and_ESA

The debate was structured by means of a [Presidency note](#).

Ministers responsible for space policy welcomed the European space strategy for the coming years and supported its overarching objectives.

All delegations agreed on the huge potential to create new business opportunities in the area of space and underlined some of the actions and measures proposed in the strategy that can have a major positive impact in competitiveness and bring tangible benefits to European citizens and companies in terms of economic growth and job creation.

Many delegations considered that a top priority in the implementation of the strategy should be to boost the competitiveness of the economy through the exploitation of space data by industry, SMEs and start-ups in Europe, while guaranteeing the broadest possible geographical balance.

Close and inclusive cooperation of all relevant players in the field of space was considered a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the strategy. In particular, the partnership between the EU and the ESA was considered to be one of the cornerstones.

Given the strategic importance of space capacities, ministers also underlined the need to reinforce Europe's autonomy in accessing and using space in a secure and safe environment.

The Commission adopted the communication on the [Space strategy for Europe](#) on 26 October 2016 with the aim of developing and creating new services and promoting Europe's leadership in space.

The strategy revolves around four strategic goals:

- 1) maximising the benefits of space for society and the EU economy
- 2) fostering a globally competitive and innovative European space sector
- 3) reinforcing Europe's autonomy in accessing and using space in a secure and safe environment
- 4) strengthening Europe's role as a global actor in space and promoting international cooperation

Europe owns world-class space systems with Copernicus¹ for Earth observation, EGNOS² and Galileo³ for satellite navigation and geo-positioning. With 18 satellites currently in orbit and over 30 planned in the next 10 to 15 years, the EU is the largest institutional customer for launch services in Europe.

Space technologies, data and services have become indispensable in the daily lives of European citizens. They support numerous EU policies including the competitiveness of the economy, migration, climate change, the digital single market and the management of natural resources.

¹ [European Earth Observation Programme](#).

² [European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service](#), which augments GPS signals over Europe.

³ [European Global Navigation Satellite System](#), similar to the GPS.

RESEARCH and INNOVATION

Support to young researchers and scientific careers

The Council adopted conclusions to support early stage researchers and to raise the attractiveness of scientific careers.

The [conclusions](#) contain a set of commitments to create better conditions for new generations of scientists and researchers which, as the driving force for innovation and economic growth, are of vital importance to Europe's future competitiveness and leadership.

The conclusions build on the [Bratislava declaration of young researchers](#).

International cooperation in research and innovation

During a public session, the Council exchanged views on the implementation of the EU's strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation (R&I).

The debate was based on a [Presidency document](#) and on the second [Commission report](#) on the implementation of the strategy.

The debate focused on the following topics:

- the framework conditions to boost international cooperation
- the measures to strengthen international cooperation in/beyond Horizon 2020 and
- the role of science diplomacy.

Ministers were of the view that there is a need to collaborate at global level across disciplines and sectors to find effective solutions to global challenges.

Many delegations suggested improving the attractiveness of EU research programmes to increase the participation of researchers from third countries.

A number of delegations referred to the ["PRIMA" initiative](#) for research projects with neighbouring Mediterranean countries as a good example of science diplomacy.

The 2012 strategy for international cooperation for R&I supports the objectives of strengthening the EU's R&I excellence, attractiveness and economic and industrial competitiveness, tackling global societal challenges, and supporting the EU's external policies.

These objectives apply in different ways depending on the international partner country or region.

Networks for excellence in the European research area

The research and innovation Council session was preceded by an informal lunch of research ministers, who discussed, together with Commissioner Moedas, cooperation and networks for excellence, including young researchers, in the European research landscape. Professor Dr Michal Juríček, from the Basel University's Chemistry department, was the key-note speaker.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

– *Reform of the type-approval system for cars*

The Presidency reported, in public deliberation, on the state of play of the ongoing examination of a [draft regulation to improve the current type-approval](#) system of motor vehicles ([14569/16](#)).

The objective of the draft regulation is to revise the EU's legal framework for the type-approval of motor vehicles, which is set out in [directive 2007/46/EC](#). The revision seeks to modernise the system to adapt it to new technologies available on the market and to improve control tests on car emissions data in order to address shortcomings identified in the existing type-approval system.

– *Consumer protection: cooperation between national authorities*

The Presidency informed the Council about the state of play on the ongoing examination of a draft regulation aimed at improving cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws ([14604/16](#)).

The general objective of the proposal is to modernise cooperation mechanisms to further reduce the consumer damage caused by cross-border infringements to Union consumer law.

On 25 May, the Commission presented the [proposal on the review of the consumer protection cooperation](#) as part of a broader package including proposals on cross-border parcel deliveries and on tackling unjustified geo-blocking.

– *SME envoys network*

Commissioner Bieńkowska presented the [SME envoys network](#) annual report, which was adopted at the [SME Assembly](#) that took place in Bratislava, Slovakia, from 23 to 25 November ([14414/16](#)).

– *Collaborative economy*

The Presidency informed the Council about the outcome of a [conference on collaborative economy](#) that took place on 15 November in Brussels ([14677/16](#)).

The Commission committed to continue working to facilitate the exchange of best practices between member states as well as to continue closely monitoring developments in the field of the collaborative economy.

Ministers held a first discussion on the collaborative economy during the [Competitiveness Council](#) meeting on 29 September 2016.

– ***Industrial policy in the 2017 Commission work programme***

The German and the Luxembourg delegation ([14343/16](#)) requested further discussions at the Competitiveness Council on ways to prioritise industrial policy in the context of the [Commission's work programme for 2017](#).

Many delegations supported the request to give a more prominent role to industrial policy with a view to better integrating it into other EU policies.

Some delegations also mentioned the need to strengthen the links between industrial policy, innovation and digitalisation of services and products.

– ***Social rights pillar and competitiveness***

The Hungarian delegation, with the support of other delegations, drew attention to the competitiveness aspects of the European pillar of social rights ([14578/16](#)).

In March 2016, the Commission launched a public consultation on a European pillar of social rights, which aims to strengthen the focus on employment and social aspects and to make the European social model fit for the challenges of the 21st century. The consultation runs until the end of this year.

Commissioner Thyssen explained that the social rights pillar should become a reference framework to promote growth and social progress in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity.

This subject will be discussed at the Employment and Social Policy Council meeting on 8 December.

– *Patentability of plants*

The Commission presented the main lines of an [explanatory notice](#) clarifying certain articles of [directive 98/44](#) on the protection of biotechnical inventions.

Some delegations welcomed the Commission notice.

The Commission notice seeks to clarify the demarcation line between patentable biotechnological inventions and plant varieties obtained through conventional breeding, for whom a separate system of protection exists which includes the 'plant breeders' privilege'.

The notice, which was published on 8 November, states that products created through essential biological processes should be excluded from patentability.

It comes in response to recent decisions of the European Patent Office on the patentability of plant material obtained through conventional breeding methods, and the impact of these decisions on the plan breeder's privilege.

The breeder's privilege of the [Community plant variety](#) rights system enables breeders to use any plant variety, whether protected by a Community plant variety right or not, for the creation of new ones.

– *Reform of the copyright framework*

The Commission formally presented to the Council the second copyright package, with the purpose of raising awareness on the political importance of the modernisation of the EU copyright framework for the development of the digital single market.

The overall objective of this package, presented on 14 September 2016, is to make EU copyright rules fit for the digital age ([14447/16](#)).

– *Open science*

The Commission informed the Council about the latest developments of important aspects contained in the Council conclusions on the [transition towards an Open Science system](#) from May 2016 ([14520/16](#)).

The [Open Science Policy Platform](#) works in support of the European Open Science policy to promote the uptake by stakeholders of best practices, including on issues such as adapting reward and evaluation systems, alternative models for open access publishing, management and reuse of research data and other aspects of open science.

– *Quantum technologies*

The Commission briefed the Council on preparations for the Quantum Technologies flagship initiative. Preparations for the initiative started last September. The Commission intends to launch an operational ramp-up phase within Horizon 2020 starting in 2018 ([14579/16](#)).

At the conference 'Quantum Europe 2016: A New Era of Technology', which was held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on 17 and 18 May, a European team of scientists, industries and policy makers presented a "[Quantum Manifesto](#)" with a proposal for the set-up of a flagship initiative in the field of quantum technologies.

A conference to promote interest in quantum technologies will be organised in Valletta, Malta, in February 2017.

– *European bioeconomy*

The Slovak Presidency briefed the Council on the outcome of a high-level conference organised on 17 October in Bratislava with the title "[The role of regions in the European Bioeconomy](#)".

At the Agriculture Council on 14 and 15 November, agriculture ministers exchanged views on EU agricultural research and innovation in preparation for the upcoming review of the European bioeconomy strategy, due by 2017, and the working programme for 2018 and 2020 under the Horizon 2020 research programme.

– *Azores International Research Centre for the Atlantic ocean*

The Portuguese delegation invited EU member states to join an international cooperation project for the development of a world class research infrastructure on the Azores Islands: the Azores International Research Centre (AIR Centre) ([14593/1/16 REV 1](#)).

– *Clean energy innovation*

The Commission provided preliminary information on its communication on 'Accelerating Clean Energy Innovation', to be issued on 30 November.

– *Work programme of the incoming Presidency*

The [Maltese delegation](#) gave a short overview of the priorities of its EU Presidency term during the first half of 2017 in the fields of internal market, industry, research and innovation and space.

Top priorities under the Maltese Presidency will include the development of the digital single market, the mobilisation of private investment, taking forward the upcoming package for services and further enhancing the environment for SMEs.

As regards research and innovation, there will be a focus on making progress on the priorities of the European Research Area and on taking forward the PRIMA initiative for strengthening cooperation with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean area. The future Presidency will also aim to streamline the monitoring and reporting in research.

In the field of space policy, the incoming Presidency will concentrate on moving forward the space strategy for Europe.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

INTERNAL MARKET

Chemicals (REACH) - bis (pentabromophenyl) ether

The Council did not oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending the REACH system as regards regards bis (pentabromophenyl) ether.

The new Commission regulation will amend annex XVII to the [REACH regulation](#) (regulation 1907/2006 on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals) ([12832/16](#) and [12832/16 ADD 1](#)).

Bis (pentabromophenyl) ether ("decaBDE") is used as an additive flame retardant with applications in different sectors such as plastics, textiles, adhesives, sealants, coatings and inks.

The draft Commission regulation is subject to the 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.

BUDGETS

2017 EU budget - Approval by the Council

The Council gave its final go-ahead to the 2017 EU budget by approving the deal reached with the European Parliament on 17 November. If the Parliament endorses the agreement at its vote on 1 December, the 2017 EU budget will be considered adopted.

The 2017 EU budget contains €157.86 billion in commitments, leaving a leeway of €1.1 billion to react to unforeseen needs. Payments are set at €34.49 billion, which is 1.6% lower than the 2016 EU budget after having been aligned to the actual needs.

The 2017 EU budget focuses on measures aimed at tackling the migration crisis, reinforcing security, boosting growth and creating jobs. It also provides for significant increases to programmes such as Erasmus+ that benefit young people in particular.

For details, see [flash](#)

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Acquisition and cross-servicing agreement between EU and the USA

The Council authorised the signature of the acquisition and cross-servicing agreement between the European Union and the United States of America. This agreement allows the EU and the USA to provide each other with logistic support, supplies and services in return for either cash payment or the reciprocal provision of the facilitated help.

The agreement will be used in the framework of military CSDP operations and exercises, or when help is needed due to unforeseen circumstances. The main objective is to enhance the interoperability, readiness, and effectiveness of the respective military forces through increased logistical cooperation.

EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine

The Council approved a budget of EUR 20.8 million for the European Union Advisory Mission for civilian security sector reform in Ukraine, EUAM Ukraine for the period from 1 December 2016 to 30 November 2017.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Bank capital requirements - Central securities depositaries

The Council decided not to object to a Commission regulation supplementing regulation [575/2013](#) on bank capital requirements with regard to regulatory technical standards for additional liquidity outflows corresponding to collateral needs resulting from the impact of an adverse market scenario on an institution's derivatives transactions ([14452/16](#) + [13910/16](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.

The Council decided to extend by two months the period for raising objections for three Commission regulations supplementing regulation [909/2014](#) on central securities depositaries.

They relate to regulatory technical standards:

- further specifying the content of the reporting on internalised settlements ([14410/16](#));
- on authorisation, supervisory and operational requirements for central securities depositories ([14412/16](#) + ADD 1);
- on certain prudential requirements for central securities depositories and designated credit institutions offering banking-type ancillary services ([14415/16](#) + ADD 1).

The Council now has until 11 February if it wishes to object to the three delegated acts.

ENVIRONMENT

Ecological criteria for the EU Ecolabel

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of two Commission decisions on the ecological criteria for the award of the EU Ecolabel ([12030/1/16 REV1+REV1 ADD1](#) and [12011/1/16 REV1+REV1 ADD1](#)).

The first decision establishes the criteria for tourist accommodation to get the EU Ecolabel. The second decision concerns the ecological criteria for wood, cork and bamboo-based floor coverings.

The two Commission decisions are subject to the so called regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that, now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the decisions, unless the European Parliament objects.

AGRICULTURE**Transformation of animal by-products into biogas or compost**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation 142/2011 as regards parameters for the transformation of animal by-products into biogas or compost, conditions for imports of pet food and for the export of processed manure ([13411/16](#) + [13411/16 ADD 1](#)).

Regulation 142/2011 lays down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption.

Hygiene of foodstuffs and official controls on products of animal origin

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation designating the EU reference laboratory for diseases caused by capripox viruses (lumpy skin disease and sheep and goat pox) ([13322/16](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

The regulation also lays down additional responsibilities and tasks for this laboratory and amends Annex VII to regulation 882/2004. The latter lays down the rules that competent authorities of member states must adopt for official controls performed to ensure that businesses comply with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

The Council also decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation laying down transitional measures for the application of certain provisions of regulations 853/2004 and 854/2004 ([13167/16](#)).

Regulation 853/2004 lays down specific hygiene rules for the hygiene of foodstuffs, while regulation 854/2004 relates to official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption.

The transitional measures mentioned above concern, in particular, the direct supply of small quantities of meat from poultry and lagomorphs, imports of products of animal origin and food containing both products of plant origin and processed products of animal origin, and public health procedures concerning imports of products of animal origin.

Prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending certain Annexes to regulation 999/2001 laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies ([13182/16](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

Regulation 999/2001 lays down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) in bovine, ovine and caprine animals. It applies to the production and placing on the market of live animals and products of animal origin and in certain specific cases to exports thereof.

Scientific panels of the European Food Safety Authority: names and areas of competence

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation 178/2002 as regards the names and the areas of competence of the scientific panels of the European Food Safety Authority ([13896/16](#)).

Regulation 178/2002 lays down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishes the European Food Safety Authority and lays down procedures in matters of food safety.

Peste des petits ruminants

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation designating the EU reference laboratory for peste des petits ruminants, laying down additional responsibilities and tasks for this laboratory and amending Annex VII to regulation 882/2004 ([13705/16](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

Regulation 882/2004 lays down the rules that competent authorities of member states must adopt for official controls performed to ensure that business comply with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

List of active substances in statistics on pesticides

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation 1185/2009 concerning statistics on pesticides, as regards the list of active substances ([13524/16](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

Regulation 1185/2009 concerns statistics on pesticides. The above-mentioned Commission regulation amends its Annex III on the harmonised classification of substances.

TRANSPORT

Civil aviation safety - airworthiness

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation correcting the Bulgarian, Dutch, Estonian and German language versions of regulation 1321/2014 on the continuing airworthiness of aircraft and aeronautical products, parts and appliances, and on the approval of organisations and personnel involved in these tasks ([13179/16](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that, now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

Civil aviation safety - approval of certain aeroplane operations and training

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending regulation 965/2012 as regards the specific approval of single-engined turbine aeroplane operations at night or in instrument meteorological conditions and the approval requirements for dangerous goods training relating to commercial specialised operations, non-commercial operations of complex motor-powered aircraft and non-commercial specialised operations of complex motor-powered aircraft ([13305/16](#) + [13305/16 ADD 1](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that, now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

Inland transport of dangerous goods

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a directive adapting for the fourth time the annexes to directive 2008/68/EC on the inland transport of dangerous goods to scientific and technical progress ([14331/16](#)).

The Commission directive is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that, now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the directive, unless the European Parliament objects.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

The Council approved the reply to confirmatory application No 22/c/01/16 ([12943/16](#)).
