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## OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3384th Council meeting

**Foreign Affairs**

**Trade issues**

Brussels, 7 May 2015

President **Edgars Rinkēvičs**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia

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- <sup>1</sup>
- 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>).
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## **ITEMS DEBATED**

### **EU-US TRADE AND INVESTMENT NEGOTIATIONS**

The Council took stock of ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive trade and investment agreement (TTIP) with the United States. It discussed investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) on the basis of a concept paper prepared by the Commission services setting out ideas for further improvements to the EU's ISDS text in TTIP.

The Council encouraged the Commission to maintain its efforts aimed at achieving meaningful progress across all three components of the agreement by the summer of 2015. This will enable the negotiators to tackle more delicate issues of a political nature thereafter.

It reiterated its call for more transparency and for better access to negotiating documents.

The Council welcomed the Commission's paper on ISDS and its suggestions. It urged it to step up its dialogue with national parliaments and with civil society, as well as planning and communication with respect to the preparatory work on ISDS. This will enable the Commission to engage fully with the US as early as possible.

The Council will continue to closely monitor the work of its preparatory bodies and - as needed - provide the necessary political guidance.

The Commission's paper on ISDS builds on ideas presented by Commissioner Cecilia Malmström in March 2015 to the European Parliament's committee on international trade and at an informal meeting of EU trade ministers in Riga.

It follows a public consultation, which identified four areas for further work: 1) protection of the right to regulate; 2) the establishment and functioning of arbitral tribunals; 3) the review of ISDS decisions for legal correctness via an appellate mechanism, with permanent members established directly under the TTIP, while exploring in parallel options for setting up a multilateral appeal mechanism; 4) defining the relationship between domestic judicial systems and ISDS.

The Commission will issue a more detailed paper on the reformed ISDS in TTIP before the 2015 summer recess, after the adoption by the European Parliament of a resolution on TTIP in June.

It is expected that the TTIP will be made up of three components: market access; regulatory issues and non-tariff barriers; and rules.

Nine negotiating rounds have been held, the latest in New York from 20 to 24 April 2015. Ten consolidated negotiating texts have been tabled, combining both sides' proposals in a single document. The Commission aims to make maximum progress before the 2015 summer recess.

In March 2015, the European Council called for every effort to be made "to conclude negotiations on an ambitious, comprehensive and mutually beneficial agreement by the end of the year". It said that "member states and the Commission should step up efforts to communicate the benefits of the agreement and to enhance dialogue with civil society".

The Commission is leading the negotiations on behalf of the EU and its member states, on the basis of a mandate agreed by the Council in June 2013. The Council decided in October 2014 to make public its negotiating directives.

[EU negotiating mandate for TTIP](#)

[Commission webpage on trade with the US](#)

## **DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA - ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS**

The Council discussed preparations for the 10th WTO ministerial conference, to be held in Nairobi on 15-18 December 2015.

To define the structure of a deal in Nairobi on the WTO's Doha Development Agenda (DDA), it reiterated the need for a comprehensive, realistic, feasible and balanced work programme.

The Council welcomed the trade liberalisation efforts being pursued in parallel to the DDA talks, in particular plurilateral negotiations on an environmental goods agreement. It discussed the possible coverage of the talks.

A deadline has been set for July 2015 for agreeing a work programme following the last ministerial conference, held in Bali in December 2013.

The negotiations to liberalise trade in environmental goods were launched by the EU and 13 other WTO members in July 2014. This followed a commitment made in 2012 by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum to reduce tariffs on 54 environmental goods. The aim is to create a 'living agreement' that can respond to new technologies and to which new products can be added in the future.

The first round of negotiations took place in Geneva in July 2014. Over the course of five negotiating rounds, a list of product nominations covering 10 categories of environmental goods has been developed.

On 1 April 2015, the EU tabled a complete list of product nominations. All product nominations were compiled in April. The aim of the sixth round of negotiations, scheduled for 4-8 May 2015, is to finalise the list of environmental goods to be included in the agreement.

Currently only some WTO members have chosen to take part in the talks. But once a critical mass has been reached to get an agreement, the benefits of this plurilateral initiative will be applied to all WTO members, using the most-favoured-nation principle. Ideally, the agreement will be made part of the package of WTO accords so other WTO members can open their own markets.

In May 2014, the Council adopted conclusions and negotiating directives on a multilateral "green goods initiative" in order to guide the Commission in negotiating on behalf of the EU.

[2014 conclusions on the green goods initiative](#)

**OTHER BUSINESS**

– *EU-Canada economic and trade agreement*

The Council took note of concerns raised by Greece regarding protection for geographical indications, in particular Greek "feta cheese", in the draft comprehensive economic and trade agreement with Canada.

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Over lunch, ministers discussed the trade aspects of the EU's **Eastern Partnership** with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

## MEETING IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL

### – *Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting on trade*

Ministers met their counterparts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine for the first-ever Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting on trade.

The following statement was issued:

"Joint statement of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Trade

On 7 May 2015 the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, in close cooperation with the Commission, organized the first Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Trade. The meeting was co-chaired by Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Edgars Rinkēvičs, and European Commissioner for Trade Ms Cecilia Malmström.

The EU Trade Ministers and their Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarus, Georgian, Moldovan and Ukrainian counterparts met in the afternoon of 7 May to discuss the achievements of the Eastern Partnership in the area of trade, as well as the opportunities for and challenges to the further development of a successful trade dimension of the Eastern Partnership.

In light of the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga and the ongoing European Neighbourhood Policy review, Trade Ministers exchanged views on current trade relations between the EU and the Eastern Partners. The Ministers also discussed the possibilities for further cooperation, taking into account the diverse interests of the Eastern Partners with regard to their trade relations with the EU.

The Presidency and the Commission stressed the importance of trade as a part of the Eastern Partnership policy and underlined the need to strive for inclusive and sustainable economic development. The participants acknowledged the importance of trade and increased market opportunities for creating growth and jobs.

They welcomed the start of the implementation of Association Agreements with Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, urging a continuation of the reform process. They remarked positively on the increase in trade between the EU and Georgia and the Republic of Moldova respectively, since the application of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) and looked forward to the provisional application of the DCFTA with Ukraine starting on 1 January 2016.

The Presidency and the Commission expressed respect for the individual choices of the Eastern Partners, and confirmed their readiness to work on strengthened but differentiated trade relations with each of the Partners."



## **OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

### **TRADE POLICY**

#### **Myanmar/Burma - labour rights**

The Council is endorsed a decision by the Commission for the EU to join an initiative to promote fundamental labour rights and practices in Myanmar/Burma.

The Commission took its decision on 26 March 2015. The initiative was launched by Myanmar/Burma, the United States, Japan, Denmark and the International Labour Organisation in November 2014.

[Commission decision of 26 March 2015](#)

### **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

#### **Central African Republic - restrictive measures**

The Council amended EU restrictive measures against the Central African Republic to take account of decisions at the UN (UN Security Council resolution 2196 / 2015).

It amended the criteria for travel bans and asset freezes on persons or entities in view of the situation in the Central African Republic.

#### **South Sudan - restrictive measures**

The Council adopted new legal acts on restrictive measures in view of the situation in South Sudan.

The new legislation implements UN Security Council resolution 2206 (2015), while integrating it in the same legal instrument as the existing EU autonomous sanctions. At the same time, the Council repealed decision 2014/449/CFSP, which has been in force until now.

The EU's autonomous measures include an arms embargo. In addition, two South Sudanese military leaders have been subject to an EU travel ban and asset freeze since July 2014, on account of their responsibility for obstructing the political process in South Sudan and for serious human rights violations.

## **EU-Switzerland - free movement of persons**

The Council adopted a decision on the EU position in the EU-Switzerland joint committee concerning an amendment to annex III of the EU-Switzerland agreement on free movement of persons.

Annex III of the agreement relates to the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. The proposed amendment is needed in order to incorporate into the agreement new EU legal acts ([6719/15](#)).

## **JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

### **Visa waiver agreements**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the signing and the provisional application of agreements with Saint Lucia, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Vanuatu, Timor-Leste, Samoa and Trinidad and Tobago on short-stay visa waivers.

The agreements will be provisionally applicable from the date of signature.

The Council also decided to forward a draft decision on the conclusion of the agreements to the European Parliament for its consent once the agreements have been duly signed.

### **Eurojust**

The Council approved the election of Ms Michèle Coninx as President of Eurojust.

On 21 April 2015 the college of Eurojust re-elected Ms Coninx, member for Belgium, as president.

Under Article 28 of the [Council Decision](#) setting up Eurojust, the college of Eurojust elects a president from among its national members. The result of the election is submitted to the Council for approval.

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

### **Appellations of origin - review of the Lisbon agreement**

The Council authorised the opening of negotiations on a revised Lisbon agreement on appellations of origin and geographical indications.

The Lisbon system for the international registration of appellations of origin is currently under review. A diplomatic conference for the adoption of a revised Lisbon agreement on appellations of origin and geographical indications will convene in Geneva, Switzerland, on 11 May 2015.

## **CUSTOMS UNION**

### **Rules of origin - Denmark and Faroe Islands**

The Council adopted its [position](#) within the joint committee established by the EU - Denmark/Faroe Islands agreement concerning the application of preferential rules of origin laid down in the [Regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin](#).

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **G20 agriculture meeting**

The Council endorsed draft EU guidelines and the first draft ministerial communiqué for a Group of Twenty (G20) agriculture ministers meeting in Istanbul on 7-8 May 2015

On 30 November 2014 Turkey stepped in as G20 presidency for 2015. Turkey will focus the G20's efforts on ensuring inclusive and robust growth through collective action. It announced that it would lay emphasis on development in its G20 agenda, with particular attention given to supporting food security in the developing world, and a focus on sustainable food systems and on improving the productivity of smallholder farms. Turkey will be the first G20 presidency to implement the G20's food security and nutrition framework. On previous occasions, e.g. during Mexico's G20 presidency, the Council prepared guidelines on agriculture matters to be used by EU participants at G20 meetings.

The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation and decision-making. Its members Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Union.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Pollution from ships and safety at sea**

The Council adopted approved the position to be taken by the EU at meetings of the International Maritime Organization's marine environment protection committee and maritime safety committee on the adoption of amendments to:

- the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships (MARPOL);
- the international convention for the safety of life at sea (SOLAS);
- 2009 guidelines for exhaust gas cleaning systems.

The MARPOL convention is the main international convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. It was adopted in 1973 and entered into force in October 1983 together with the 1978 MARPOL protocol.

The SOLAS convention was adopted in 1974 and entered into force in 1980.

[http://www.imo.org/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-\(MARPOL\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-(MARPOL).aspx)

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Air transport agreements**

The Council adopted two decisions in the field of aviation to take account of Croatia's accession to the EU. The decisions will permit the inclusion of Croatia in the following agreements:

- Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreement between the EU and its member states and Jordan
- Common Aviation Area Agreement between the EU and its member states and Moldova.

[Council decision on the signing and provisional application of a Protocol amending the Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreement with Jordan to take account of Croatia's accession to the EU](#)

[Protocol amending the Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreement with Jordan to take account of Croatia's accession to the EU](#)

[Statement concerning the agreement with Jordan](#)

[Council decision on the signing and provisional application of a Protocol amending the Common Aviation Area Agreement with Moldova to take account of Croatia's accession to the EU](#)

[Protocol amending the Common Aviation Area Agreement with Moldova to take account of Croatia's accession to the EU](#)

[Statement concerning the agreement with Moldova](#)

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