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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3444th Council meeting

General Affairs

Brussels, 18 January 2016

President **Bert Koenders**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

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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.

ITEMS DEBATED

Presidency programme

In public session the Council exchanged views on the [work programme](#) of the Netherlands presidency for the duration of its term of office (January to June 2016).

Preparation for the European Council

The Council examined an [annotated draft agenda](#), drawn up by the President of the European Council in cooperation with the presidency and the Commission, for the European Council meeting to be held on 18 and 19 February 2016.

The European Council will focus on:

- the United Kingdom: following the discussion at the December 2015 European Council on the UK plans for an in-out referendum, the European Council should agree on mutually satisfactory solutions in all four areas
- migration: the European Council will assess progress in the implementation of the decisions it has taken in response to the migration and refugee crisis
- other items: the European Council will be invited to endorse the Euro area recommendation

The annotated draft agenda will serve as the basis for draft conclusions, to be prepared in the run-up to the meeting.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

TRADE POLICY

WTO - Export competition and development issues

The Council adopted a decision confirming the position taken by the EU at the 10th WTO ministerial conference as regards export competition and development issues.

Representatives of the governments of the member states adopted a decision confirming their common accord as regards matters falling within the member states' competence.

Meeting in Nairobi, the WTO ministerial conference concluded on 19 December 2015 with an agreement on a series of trade initiatives. These included a commitment to abolish export subsidies for farm products.

The Council, however, was not in a position to adopt its decision before the closing session in Nairobi. It therefore agreed that the EU's position confirming the consensus would be presented to the WTO and reflected in the written conclusions of the conference.

[Foreign Affairs Council \(Trade\): Nairobi, 15-19 December 2015](#)

Generalised scheme of preferences - Kyrgyzstan

The Council decided not to object to a Commission regulation adding Kyrgyzstan to the list of countries benefiting from the EU's 'GSP+' special incentive tariff arrangement for developing countries ([14707/15](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act in application of regulation [978/2012](#) on a scheme of generalised tariff preferences. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.

ENVIRONMENT**List of energy products for environmental economic accounts**

The Council decided not to object to a Commission delegated regulation concerning the specification of the energy products ([14624/15](#) + [ADD1](#)). This delegated act supplements regulation 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts.

The European environmental economic accounts are organised in a set of modules, one of them concerning physical energy flow accounts. This module provides a framework to assess energy production and consumption, resource use and air pollution. It sheds light on the resource and environmental aspects of energy demand for macroeconomic analyses. A list of energy products is essential to determine the scope of these statistics, to allow comparability of data and to ensure the internal consistency of the accounts.

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 decided not to object to it, the act can be published and enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Safety requirements for candles

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a decision aimed at improving safety standards for candles that are available to the general public, pursuant to directive 2001/95/EC on general product safety.

It includes dinner/tapered candles, pillar candles, floating candles, container candles, tea lights and gel candles. The decision also applies to candle supports, containers and accessories.

The [Commission decision](#) is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the decision unless the European Parliament objects.

