



Council of the  
European Union

**Brussels, 4 April 2016  
(OR. en)**

**6811/16  
ADD 1**

**PV/CONS 11  
ENV 143  
CLIMA 23**

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

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Subject: **3452<sup>nd</sup>** meeting of the Council of the European Union (**ENVIRONMENT**),  
held in Brussels on 4 March 2016

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## PUBLIC DELIBERATION ITEMS<sup>1</sup>

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"B" ITEMS (doc. 6438/16 OJ CONS 11 ENV 90 CLIMA 19)

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<sup>1</sup> Deliberations on Union legislative acts (Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union), other deliberations open to the public and public debates (Article 8 of the Council's Rules of Procedure).

## NON-LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

### "B" ITEMS

#### **3. Follow-up to CoP 21 (Climate change)**

- Policy debate

*(Public debate in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)*

6006/16 CLIMA 10 ENV 59 ONU 13 DEVGEN 18 ECOFIN 87 ENER 19

FORETS 6 AGRI 57 MAR 42 AVIATION 22 COMPET 47

6251/16 CLIMA 17 ENV 78 ONU 18 DEVGEN 22 ECOFIN 115 ENER 33

FORETS 9 AGRI 71 MAR 52 AVIATION 28 COMPET 61

The Council held a policy debate on the follow-up to COP 21 on the basis of two questions set out in the Presidency headline reading of the Paris Agreement (6006/16) and the Commission communication on “The road from Paris” (6743/16). Following interventions by all delegations and the Commission, the President summarised the debate as follows:

All delegations agreed to the headline reading by the Presidency on the outcome of COP 21 and welcomed the Commission communication on the next steps towards the low carbon transition in the framework of the Energy Union. Many Ministers highlighted the need to maintain the Paris momentum and to focus on the implementation, covering all elements of the Paris outcome, both at international level, but also domestically, in particular in relation to nationally determined contributions (INDCs). Many delegations supported maintaining the EU 2030 climate target to reduce EU greenhouse emissions by at least 40% relative to 1990 emissions and stressed the importance of a timely conclusions of the necessary legislation to meet this target. Some delegations called for an increased ambition. There was a broad support for a thorough EU internal preparation for and active participation in the 2018 facilitative dialogue as well as formulation of a new mid-century low emission development strategy.

The President concluded that the Presidency would reflect further on the Ministers' contributions and will send a letter to the President of the European Council summarising this debate.

## 5. Circular Economy Strategy

### Communication from the Commission on Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy

– Policy debate

*(Public debate in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)*

6266/16 ENV 80 COMPET 63 AGRI 74 TRANS 49 MI 89 IND 34 CONSOM 35  
ECOFIN 117 ENER 35 RECH 25 SAN 54

14972/15 ENV 768 COMPET 557 AGRI 642 TRANS 402 MI 779 IND 201  
CONSOM 212 ECOFIN 954 ENER 417 RECH 305 SAN 424

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The Council held a policy debate on the Circular Economy action plan on the basis of a note from the Presidency, including three questions. Ministers broadly supported the revised package and the objectives of the EU action plan for a circular economy and recognised that a Circular Economy has a lot of potential for green economic growth. Ministers also greatly welcomed the intention to address the production stage of products, in addition to the waste phase, through eco-design principles with a view to increase their durability, reparability and reusability.

The need to address the use of hazardous substances in products with a view to phasing them out was also raised. Synergies with other areas, such as water, climate and bio-economy, were highlighted.

Some delegations, while welcoming ambitious goals, urged to take into account the competitiveness of EU producers as well as the different situations across Member States. In this context, they stressed the importance that the Commission carries out proper Impact Assessments when preparing proposals to implement the measures proposed in the plan.

Creating viable markets for waste and secondary raw materials was considered to be a key prerequisite for a circular economy, while tackling any technical barriers which undermine such markets; ensuring the quality of, and increasing demand for, such materials, through standards and securing a level playing field, was also deemed important.

Information access to consumers was also underlined and the roles of voluntary measures, such as EMAS and Ecolabel, were recognised in this regard; strengthening research and innovation was seen as a crucial step to develop the necessary technologies needed to stimulate the transition to a circular economy; existing financial mechanisms should be used for their uptake. The role of Green Public Procurement was particularly recognised in this context.

Finally, monitoring the transition towards a Circular Economy and reporting on the progress made was given its due recognition, with some Ministers suggesting to do so within existing process, such as the European Semester.

## 7. Any other business

### c) Minamata package

#### i) **Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on mercury, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1102/2008 (First reading)**

*Interinstitutional file: 2016/0023 (COD)*

*(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)*

#### ii) **Proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion of the Minamata Convention on Mercury**

*Interinstitutional file: 2016/0021 (NLE)*

*(Public debate in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)*

#### – Information from the Commission

5771/16 ENV 41 COMER 7 MI 55 ONU 8 SAN 38 IND 23 CODEC 118

+ ADD 1

+ ADD 2

5772/16 ENV 42 COMER 8 MI 56 ONU 9 SAN 39 IND 24

+ ADD 1

The Commission presented to the Council the Minamata package on mercury, which includes a proposal for a regulation and a proposal for a Council decision. The Council took note of the information provided.