

12245/20

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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3777th Council meeting

Environment

Brussels, 23 October 2020

President **Svenja Schulze**
Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature
Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany

P R E S S

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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.

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ITEMS DEBATED

European climate law

The Council reached agreement on its partial negotiating position on the European climate law. Its aim is to set in legislation the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050, an objective which was endorsed by the European Council in December 2019.

[European climate law - partial general approach](#)

[Recording](#)

European climate law: Council agrees its partial negotiating position ([press release, 23 October 2020](#))

European Council conclusions, 15-16 October 2020 ([press release, 16 October 2020](#))

European Council conclusions, 12 December 2019 ([press release, 12 December 2019](#))

[Amended proposal for a European climate law by the European Commission](#)

[Original proposal for a European climate law by the European Commission](#)

[Commission communication on ‘Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition’](#)

Climate change: What the EU is doing ([background information](#))

EU biodiversity strategy for 2030

The Council adopted conclusions on biodiversity, endorsing the objectives of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, which aims at setting biodiversity on the path to recovery. Member states are deeply concerned about the global rate of biodiversity loss and recognise the need to step up efforts by addressing the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity and nature loss, namely the overexploitation of natural resources, climate change, pollution, invasive alien species and the way we use land and sea.

The conclusions adopted today give political guidance as regards the implementation of the strategy.

[Conclusions on biodiversity - the need for urgent action](#)

[Recording](#)

Council adopts conclusions on the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 ([press release, 23 October 2020](#))

[Commission communication on the ‘EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives’](#)

[Addendum to Commission communication on the ‘EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives’](#)

UN Biodiversity Summit: Council sends a united signal to step up global ambition for biodiversity ([press release, 21 September 2020](#))

Biodiversity - Council adopts conclusions ([press release, 19 December 2019](#))

Biodiversity: how the EU protects nature ([background information](#))

Any other business

– ***Environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context (Espoo MOP-8)***

The Lithuanian delegation informed ministers about the eighth session of the meeting of the parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo MOP-8), which is due to take place in Vilnius from 8 to 11 December 2020.

Information from the Lithuanian delegation

– ***Proposal for a reform of the EU ETS***

The Polish delegation presented its proposal for improvements to the EU emissions trading system to drive transformation towards climate neutrality in the EU.

[Recording](#)

Information from the Polish delegation ([11766/20](#)).

– ***Communication on the EU chemicals strategy for sustainability***

The Commission presented its communication on the EU chemicals strategy for sustainability to ministers.

[Recording](#)

Information from the Commission ([11976/20](#)).

– ***Access to justice in environmental matters: communication on access to justice in member states***

The Commission presented its communication on access to justice in environmental matters in member states to ministers.

[Recording](#)

Information from the Commission ([11854/20](#)).

– ***Access to justice in environmental matters: regulation amending the Aarhus Regulation***

The Commission presented the current legislative proposal for a regulation amending the Aarhus Regulation ((EC) No 1367/2006) to ministers.

[Recording](#)

Information from the Commission ([11853/20](#)).

– ***8th environment action programme***

The Commission presented its decision on the 8th environment action programme to ministers.

[Recording](#)

Information from the Commission ([11987/20](#)).

– ***Climate adaptation summit (CAS 2021)***

The Netherlands delegation informed ministers about this summit, which is scheduled to take place on 25 January 2021.

[Recording](#)

Information from the Netherlands delegation ([12021/20](#)).

– ***World circular economy forum high-level meeting on the circular economy, Climate Nexus (WCEF+climate)***

The Netherlands delegation informed ministers about this event, which is scheduled to take place on 15 April 2021.

[Recording](#)

Information from the Netherlands delegation ([12007/20](#)).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ENVIRONMENT

Drinking Water Directive

The Council formally adopted its position at first reading to revise the Drinking Water Directive, based on the compromise reached in the negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament.

Under the new rules, the quality standards for drinking water are brought up to date, and a cost-effective risk-based approach to monitoring water quality is introduced. The revision is a direct result of the first-ever successful European citizens' initiative.

[Press release](#) on the Council's position at first reading

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

22nd EU Annual Report on Arms Exports

The Council adopted the 22nd annual report defining the common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment.

The report is compiled by the European External Action Service, based on data provided by member states, including data from the United Kingdom, on their arms exports in 2019.

Following the adoption of the 2008 Common Position, the EU and its member states commit to **strengthening the control of the export of military technology and equipment** and to **reinforcing cooperation and promoting convergence** in the field of the export of military technology and equipment within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Council Decision concerning restrictive measures against the Republic of Guinea

The Council decided to extend the country-specific EU restrictive measures against the Republic of Guinea for one more year, until 27 October 2021. **EU sanctions** against the **Republic of Guinea** were first introduced in 2009 in response to the violent crackdown by security forces on demonstrators in Conakry in September 2009.

Egypt restrictive measures: Draft reply

The Council approved the draft reply to extend the deadline for the submission of observations by one of the persons targeted by EU restrictive measures on Egyptian authorities.

On 21 March 2011, the Council adopted Decision 2011/172/CFSP concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities and bodies in view of the situation in Egypt. These measures will remain in place until 22 March 2021.

Council Decision on the EU position within the EU-Armenia Partnership Committee as regards the amendment to the list of arbitrators

The Council adopted the decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the Partnership Committee established by the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part, as regards the amendment to the list of individuals to serve as arbitrators in dispute settlement proceedings.

The decision follows Armenia's decision to remove one arbitrator from the original list of arbitrators, therefore leading the Council to adopt a new list of arbitrators, at the suggestion of the Commission.

TRANSPORT

International Maritime Organisation committees

The Council adopted a decision amending Council Decision 2020/721 on the EU's position within the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee at its 102nd session (MSC 102) from 4 to 11 November 2020 and within the Marine Environment Protection Committee at its 75th session (MEPC 75) from 16 to 20 November 2020 ([11351/20](#); [11340/20](#)).

Pandemic contingency plan for freight transport - Council conclusions

The Council approved conclusions on policy considerations for a pandemic and crisis contingency plan for the European freight transport sector ([press release](#); [12060/20](#)).

International occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus

The Council adopted a decision on the signing of a Protocol to the Agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus (Interbus Agreement) ([11815/20](#); [11438/20](#); [9687/20](#)).

The Council also reached an agreement in principle on a decision on the conclusion of the same Protocol and decided to forward it, together with the text of the protocol, to the European Parliament for its consent ([11815/20](#); [11441/20](#); [11442/20](#)).

TRADE

Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia

The Council Decision ([11561/20](#)) on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the Association Committee meeting in trade configuration established by the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other.

Association Agreement between the EU and Central America

The Council adopted two decisions ([6046/1/20](#)) related to the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America.

The first decision concerns the signing and provisional application of a Protocol to the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Central America, of the other, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union.

The second one relates to the conclusion of the Protocol, and more specifically requesting the European Parliament's consent.

ENERGY

The Council adopted a Report on the implementation of the obligations under the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, with a view to the 7th Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties, which is due to take place in Vienna from 24 May to 4 June 2021.

The Report covers the status of implementation of the obligations arising under the Joint Convention in the Euratom Community up to June 2020, and describes how the challenges identified in the last review meeting have been addressed ([12023/20](#) [12025/20](#)).

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Brexit: EU position on the Joint Consultative Working Group's rules of procedure.

The Council adopted a decision on the EU's position regarding the rules of procedure of the Joint Consultative Working Group.

This Joint Consultative Working Group was established by the Withdrawal Agreement of the United Kingdom from the European Union as a forum for the exchange of information and mutual consultation on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.
