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Environment

Luxembourg, 10 June 2021

President **João Pedro Matos Fernandes**
Portuguese Minister for the Environment and Climate
Action

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press>

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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

Strategy on adaptation to climate change

The Council approved Council conclusions on forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change.

The new climate adaptation strategy outlines a long-term vision of how the EU can become a climate-resilient society that is fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change by 2050.

[Watch the recording of the public debate](#)

[Council endorses new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change \(press release, 10 June 2021\)](#)

[Draft Council conclusions on Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#)

[Commission Communication on a new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#)

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

Batteries and waste batteries

EU ministers took stock of the progress made on discussions regarding the proposal for a regulation on batteries and waste batteries, presented by the Commission on 10 December 2020.

Batteries are a key element of the clean energy transition. The proposal to update EU legislation on batteries and waste batteries aims to reduce the environmental and social impacts of batteries throughout all stages of the battery life cycle - from sourcing of materials to production, use, recycling and disposal.

[Watch the recording of the public debate](#)

[Batteries and waste batteries – Presidency progress report](#)

[Commission proposal for a regulation on batteries and waste batteries](#)

Zero pollution action plan

Ministers exchanged views on the Commission's communication on the EU action plan on zero pollution.

As a key element of the European Green Deal, the action plan sets out a vision for zero pollution in the EU by 2050. It aims to reduce pollution in the air, water and soil, and to create a toxic-free environment. The Action Plan outlines key 2030 targets for various types of pollution, and defines a number of actions and flagship initiatives to achieve the zero pollution ambition, including several ongoing and planned legislative proposals.

[Watch the recording of the public debate](#)

[Presidency background paper](#)

[Commission Communication on a Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil'](#)

Any other business

8th Environment Action Programme

The Presidency updated Environment ministers on the 8th Environment Action Programme (EAP). The proposal for a Decision on the 8th EAP, presented by the Commission on 14 October, will serve as an overarching guide for European environmental policy until 2030. The proposal for a Decision builds upon the European Green Deal and the list of actions detailed in it.

Ambassadors of EU member states approved a mandate on 17 March that will serve as the Council's position to start negotiations with the European Parliament on the 8th EAP. Among other things, as the 8th EAP runs until 2030, member states added provisions regarding the need to define further actions when the European Green Deal's key actions have been put in place by 2024. After the European Parliament adopts its position, the Council and the Parliament will start trilogue negotiations.

[8th Environment Action Programme: Member States ready to start negotiations with Parliament \(press release, 17 March 2021\)](#)

Access to justice

The Presidency updated ministers on the state of play on the proposal for a revision of the Aarhus Regulation on access to justice in environmental affairs. The Aarhus Regulation (EC) No 1367/2006 sets out how the EU and its member states implement the international Aarhus Convention, which aims to guarantee access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.

The proposal responds to findings by the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee in case C-32 of 2008 that the EU was in non-compliance concerning some aspects of the Convention, and aims at correcting the situation.

The Council reached a general approach on the proposal on 17 December 2020. Since then, the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee ('ACCC') has issued its advice on the Commission proposal, and the European Parliament has also adopted its position. Trilogue negotiations between the Council and the Parliament to find a political agreement on the file started on 4 June 2021.

Fraud in the biofuels sector

The Dutch delegation, supported by the Belgian and Luxembourg delegations, drew the attention of ministers to the subject of preventing fraud in the biofuels sector.

[Information note from the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg](#)

Transport Decarbonisation Alliance

The Dutch delegation informed ministers on the Transport Decarbonisation Alliance (TDA) and speeding up the transition to a fair and zero carbon transport system via the TDA and by ensuring the quality of exported used vehicles.

[Information note from the Netherlands](#)

International water convention

The Estonian delegation presented information about a meeting of the international water convention.

[Information note from Estonia](#)

EU taxonomy for sustainable economic activities

The Czech delegation invited ministers to reflect on the EU taxonomy for sustainable economic activities and possible further steps in this regard. The Taxonomy Regulation (EU) 2020/852 provides a framework for classifying economic activities that can qualify as environmentally sustainable. The Regulation was followed up by the first Climate Commission Delegated Act released on 21 April 2021, classifying economic activities with regard to their contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Economic and Financial Affairs Council is the lead for this file.

[Information note from Czechia](#)

Decline of pollinators

The Swedish delegation, supported by France and Luxembourg, drew the attention of ministers to the subject of reversing the decline of pollinators. On 27 May 2021, the Commission published a report on the implementation of the EU Pollinators Initiative, which the Commission adopted in 2018 to address the decline of wild pollinating insects. Based on this, and further stakeholder consultation in the second half of 2021, the Commission will then revise the EU Pollinators Initiative.

[Information note from Sweden](#)

Slovenian Presidency

Lastly, the Slovenian delegation presented the work programme for its upcoming presidency.

[Watch the recording of the morning session](#)

[Watch the recording of the afternoon session](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ENVIRONMENT

Bern Convention on conservation of wildlife and natural habitats

The Council adopted a Council Decision authorising the Commission to negotiate, on behalf of the Union, in relation to matters falling within its competence, amendments to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). The Decision includes an Annex containing negotiating directives.

The amendments concern proposals on the financing of the Bern Convention and on initiating the establishment of a new system of obligatory financial contributions by Parties.

The European Parliament will be informed in accordance with Article 218(10) TFEU ([9358/21](#)).

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Pension Scheme Arrangements

The Council decided not to raise objections in relation to the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) extending the transitional period referred to in Article 89(1), first subparagraph, of Regulation (EU) No [648/2012](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council. This transitional period is set out under Article 89(1) of Regulation on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories (EMIR) and provides further time for central counterparties (CCPs), PSAs and clearing members to develop viable technical solutions, which would allow PSAs to meet the cash variation margin calls of CCPs.

The temporary exemption has been extended over the years and the Commission is proposing to extend the existing exemption by an additional year, by means of this Delegated Act.

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

Rules concerning the alcohol interlock installation facilitation in motor vehicles

The Council decided not to object to a Commission delegated regulation regarding detailed rules concerning the alcohol interlock installation facilitation in motor vehicles.

The proposed regulation requires vehicle manufacturers to make available on their websites a document with clear instructions for installation of the alcohol interlocks ('installation document') in order to allow for proper installation of an alcohol interlock in a certain vehicle model. It also establishes specific requirements concerning the alcohol interlock installation facilitation in motor vehicles.

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects ([7997/21](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

Type-approval of motor vehicles regarding driver drowsiness and attention warning systems

The Council decided not to object to a Commission delegated regulation laying down detailed rules concerning the specific test procedures and technical requirements for the type-approval of motor vehicles with regard to their driver drowsiness and attention warning systems.

The regulation provides for a reference scale to be used by type-approval authorities and technical services to measure driver drowsiness and a reference test procedure to be carried out with human participants. It applies to motor vehicles with design speed exceeding 70 km/h.

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects ([8164/21](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

Automated exchange of evidence

The Council decided to exercise the right of scrutiny regarding the Commission draft implementing regulation setting out technical and operational specifications of the technical system for the cross-border automated exchange of evidence and application of the 'once-only' principle in accordance with regulation 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([9289/21](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#)).