



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



7805/08 (Presse 83)

PRESS RELEASE

2861st Council meeting

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Luxembourg, 7 April 2008

President **Mr Radovan Žerjav**
Minister of Transport of Slovenia

P R E S S

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7805/08 (Presse 83)

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Main results of the Council

*The Council reached a general approach on a proposal on the further implementation of the **EGNOS** and **Galileo** programmes, which constitute a key project for the European Union. The proposal lays down the rules for the implementation of these programmes, including those on governance, and the financial contribution of the European Community.*

*The Council held a public policy debate on three **road transport** proposals, namely access to the international **road haulage market**, the occupation of **road transport operator** and the international market for **coach and bus** services. The Council broadly supported the presidency compromise as a good basis for further work and invited Coreper to pursue examination of the outstanding issues with the objective of reaching a political agreement on all these proposals at the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council in June.*

*The Council also reached a political agreement on a proposal on **airport charges**.*

*The Council adopted conclusions on the Commission communications entitled "**Towards a rail network giving priority to freight**", and "**An agenda for sustainable future in general and business aviation**".*

In addition, the Council adopted without debate:

- *a decision on a negotiating mandate for an **aviation agreement** with **Israel**;*
- *conclusions on a first report on the implementation of the **European single sky legislation**;*
- *a directive establishing common **rules on consumer credit**.*

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 - 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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PARTICIPANTS

The governments of the member states and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Etienne SCHOUPPE

Secretary of State for Mobility

Bulgaria:

Mr Petar Vassilev MUTAFCHIEV

Mr Plamen VATCHOV

Minister for Transport

Chairman of the State Agency for Information Technologies and Communications

Czech Republic:

Ms Daniela KOVALČÍKOVÁ

Deputy Minister for Transport, Legislation Section

Denmark:

Ms Carina CHRISTENSEN

Mr Bendt BENDTSEN

Minister for Transport

Minister for Economic Affairs, Trade and Industry

Germany:

Mr Matthias VON RANDOW

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Juhan PARTS

Minister for Economic Affairs and Communications

Ireland:

Mr Noel DEMPSEY

Minister for Transport and the Marine

Greece:

Mr Konstantinos HADJIDAKIS

Minister for Transport and Communications

Spain:

Mr Fernando PALAO

Secretary General for Transport

France:

Mr Dominique BUSSEREAU

Minister of State with responsibility for Transport

Italy:

Mr Andrea ANNUNZIATA

State Secretary for Transport

Cyprus:

Mr Nicos NICOLAIDES

Minister for Communications and Works

Latvia:

Mr Janis MARSANS

Secretary of State, Ministry of Transport

Lithuania:

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State Secretary at the Ministry of Transport and Communications

Luxembourg:

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Hungary:

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State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Transport

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State Secretary at the Ministry of Transport

Slovakia:

Mr Ľubomír VÁŽNY

Minister for Transport, Post and Telecommunications

Finland:

Ms Anu VEHVILÄINEN

Minister for Transport

Sweden:

Ms Åsa TORSTENSSON

Minister for Infrastructure

United Kingdom:

Ms Rosie WINTERTON

Minister of State for Transport

Commission:

Mr Jacques BAROTT

Vice-President

ITEMS DEBATED**ROAD TRANSPORT**

The Council held a public policy debate on three legislative proposals¹ that seek to modernise, replace and merge legislation governing road transport operators and access to the road transport markets.

Ministers were invited to agree in principle to the outline of the presidency compromise package ([7852/08](#)) on the key elements of two of the three proposals.

The Council broadly supported the presidency compromise as a good basis for further work on these proposals and invited Coreper to pursue examination of the outstanding issues with the objective of reaching a political agreement on all these proposals at the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council in June. The presidency compromise focuses in particular on two main issues, cabotage and national electronic registers.

The Commission submitted these proposals in May 2007 with the aim of reducing distortions of competition and improving transport operators' compliance with the provisions of social legislation on road safety rules. With a view to further integration of the road transport market, the proposed legislative instruments do not only streamline the rules and control mechanism for cabotage, but also introduce uniform and enforceable provisions for access to the profession of transport operator.

- access to the international road haulage market

The proposal for a regulation on access to the international road haulage market seeks to simplify and harmonise further the current rules by consolidating and merging Regulations 881/92 and 3118/93 on access to the road transport market.

¹

- Proposal for a regulation on common rules for access to the international road haulage market (recast) ([10092/2/07](#));
- Proposal for a regulation establishing common rules concerning the conditions to be complied with to pursue the occupation of road transport operator ([10114/1/07](#));
- Proposal for a regulation on common rules for access to the market of coach and bus services ([10102/2/07](#)).

During the discussions in the Council's bodies all delegations expressed their support in principle for the Commission proposal. Following the work carried out in the working party, some provisions of the Commission's proposal were adapted in order to reach consensus on most parts of the draft regulation. These modifications concern in particular: scope and definitions, format for the Community licence, certified copies and the driver attestation; mutual assistance and penalties and a list of security features to avoid manipulation and forgery of the Community licence and driver attestation documents.

A majority of delegations supported the presidency compromise on cabotage. This compromise follows the Commission's proposal allowing for up to 3 transport operations consecutive to an international journey within 7 days. In addition, the Commission will be invited to assess in a report whether progress in the harmonisation of certain rules (i.e. enforcement and taxation) allows for a further opening of domestic transport markets, including in the field of cabotage. In addition, several delegations asked to consider the possibility of including in the text additional cabotage operations on the return trip if the lorry takes the shortest route back.

- road transport operator

The draft regulation on access to the occupation of road transport operator aims to rectify certain shortcomings identified in the Commission's impact assessment and public consultation and replaces the existing Directive 96/26/EC.

Delegations shared in principle the objectives of the Commission's proposal to revise the current rules on market access in road transport to enhance the clarity and enforceability of these rules and to better regulate the existing regime.

A majority of delegations supported the presidency compromise on this proposal, which includes in particular the national electronic register issue. The presidency proposed the following:

- Member states will have to establish a national register 18 months after entry into force of this regulation;
- these registers will be interconnected by 31 December 2012;
- serious infringements will be included in the register from 1 January 2015.

Other elements of the compromise concern in particular the following elements: subject matter and scope, transport manager, examination and registration of applications and checks.

- access to the international market for coach and bus services

The draft regulation is aimed at revising and consolidating the current legislative framework (Regulations 684/92 and 12/98) by clarifying the scope, simplifying procedures and establishing a uniform format for the Community licence and certified copies.

All member states welcomed this Commission proposal and agreed on the need to simplify and further harmonise the current rules by eliminating legal uncertainty, reducing the administrative burden and improving the exchange of information.

The technical examination of this proposal will continue in the working party. However, as delegations identified in this proposal issues similar issues to those in the first two previous proposals, they agreed to apply as appropriate, the solutions found for the relevant articles of the market access proposal and the transport operator proposal to the coach and bus services proposal also.

The European Parliament is expected to deliver its first reading opinion on all three proposals this spring.

RAIL NETWORK GIVING PRIORITY TO FREIGHT - Council conclusions

The Council's conclusions can be found in [7553/08](#).

EUROPEAN SATELLITE RADIO NAVIGATION PROGRAMMES

The Council reached a general approach on an amended proposal for a regulation on the further implementation of the European satellite radio navigation programmes (EGNOS² and Galileo³), which constitute a key project for the European Union.

The text agreed ([8046/08](#)) is the result of work carried out within the Council's bodies and of the presidency's informal negotiations with the European Parliament. On this basis, the European Parliament will adopt its first-reading opinion at its April or May session. This amended proposal constitutes the legal basis for the budgetary implementation of the programmes during the current financial period 2007-2013. It therefore needs to be finalised as quickly as possible and adopted by both institutions in the framework of the codecision procedure.

The draft regulation reflects the principles defined in the Council conclusions adopted at the TTE Council of 30 November 2007 on launching the European global navigation satellite system programmes (*see press release [15891/07](#), p. 22*). It lays down the rules for the implementation of the European GNSS programmes, including those on governance, and the financial contribution of the European Community.

² The EGNOS (European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service) system is an infrastructure monitoring and correcting signals emitted from existing global satellite navigation systems (the US GPS and Russian GLONASS systems). It comprises earth stations and several transponders installed on geostationary satellites.

³ The fully deployed Galileo system will consist of 30 satellites and ground stations providing information on the positioning of users in various sectors. It will provide five navigation services: open service, safety of life service, commercial service, public regulated service and search and rescue service. The Galileo programme consists of a definition phase (ended in 2001), a development and validation phase (should end in 2010), a deployment phase (should run from 2008 to 2013) and an exploitation phase. The system should be operational by 2013.

Due to significant changes in the course of the programme, the draft regulation provides for a series of amendments to the Commission's initial proposal, taking into account in particular the abandonment of the concession scheme for the deployment phase. The main modifications are the following:

- the European Community will assume responsibility for the deployment of the system;
- budgetary resources needed to finance both programmes for the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013 are set at EUR 3.4 billion;
- the EGNOS programme is included in the regulation as one of the two pillars of European satellite radio navigation policy and the EGNOS system should be declared operational as soon as possible ;
- the public governance of the programme is strengthened by strictly defining the responsibilities of the European Community (represented by the Commission), the European GNSS Supervisory Authority and the European Space Agency, and by declaring the Commission responsible for the management of the programme.

Further modifications in the text agreed by the ministers are the result of the negotiations with the European Parliament. They concern in particular the following issues:

- role of the European GNSS Supervisory Authority (GSA) - the GSA will ensure the security accreditation of the system and the operation of the Galileo security centre and contribute to the preparation of the commercialisation of the systems. In addition, the GSA will also be able to accomplish other tasks entrusted to it by the Commission, in particular the promotion of applications and services and ensuring the certification of the components of the systems;

- the Galileo Interinstitutional Panel (GIP) - in view of the importance, uniqueness and complexity of the European GNSS programmes, the European Parliament, the Council, and the European Commission agreed to meet in the GIP, which will in particular follow the progress on the implementation of the programmes and will have as a main purpose to ensure a comprehensive exchange of information. The GIP will be composed of three representatives from the Council, three from the European Parliament and one from the Commission and will meet in principle four times a year;
- comitology issues - in the framework of the comitology procedure, in particular the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the institutions agreed on a balanced solution providing for further involvement of the European Parliament.

The Commission will present an annual report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of the programmes. A mid-term review of the programmes will be carried out in 2010. It will include in particular a review of costs, risks and likely revenues from the services offered by Galileo.

Together with the mid-term review, the Commission is invited to submit an appropriate proposal for the next financing programming period starting in 2014 on the public funds needed for the exploitation phase. In this context, the Commission will examine the advantages and disadvantages of any form of participation of the private sector in the operation of the system.

AIRPORT CHARGES

The Council reached in a public deliberation a political agreement ([8017/08](#)) on a proposal for a directive on airport charges.

The Council will consequently adopt its common position at a forthcoming meeting after finalisation of the text, and will forward it to the European Parliament for a second reading in the framework of the codecision procedure.

The purpose of the Commission proposal ([5887/07](#)), submitted in January 2007, is to define a number of basic principles to be respected by airport operators when they determine their airport charges. It aims to re-define the relationship between airport operators and airport users by requiring total transparency, user-consultation and application of the principle of non-discrimination when calculating charges levied on users. In addition, it aims to create a strong, independent national authority to arbitrate and settle disputes in order to achieve their speedy resolution.

The Council's bodies worked on the basis of the general approach agreed at the TTE Council of 29 and 30 November 2007 and the amendments adopted by the European Parliament at first reading in January 2008 ([5260/08](#)). In order to facilitate a second reading agreement with the European Parliament, the text of the political agreement includes those amendments which were acceptable to all delegations.

The Council had already agreed in its general approach on a number of changes to the text of the Commission proposal designed to enhance its clarity but also to accommodate concerns expressed by member states. The main modification concerns the scope of the directive. The Commission initially proposed including all airports with an annual traffic of more than 1 million passengers. The Council increased this threshold to 5 million and the directive will also apply to the largest airport in each member state.

COMPUTERISED RESERVATION SYSTEMS

The Council reached in a public deliberation a general approach on a proposal for a regulation on a code of conduct for computerised reservation systems ([7047/08](#)).

The code of conduct for computerised reservation systems was established in 1989 (Regulation 2299/89), when the majority of airline bookings were made through computerised reservation systems and most of the computerised reservation systems were owned and controlled by airlines.

Following significant market developments such as the introduction of alternative booking channels (the airlines' internet websites or their call centres, etc.), the code of conduct needs to be updated to the current market conditions in order to avoid impeding competition and to contribute to fair distribution costs. According to the Commission, about 40% of all airline tickets in the EU are booked via alternative channels and about 60% via travel agents and computerised reservation systems.

The draft regulation submitted by the Commission in November 2007 ([14526/07](#)), is aimed at simplifying the code of conduct and reinforcing competition between the providers of computerised reservation systems. At the same time, basic safeguards against potential competitive abuses should be maintained in order to ensure the provision of neutral information to consumers. In addition, the proposal ensures that rail services, which are integrated into air transport computerised reservation systems, are given non-discriminatory treatment in the computerised reservation systems.

The text agreed by the Council does not modify the substance of the Commission's proposal. The modifications made by the Council improve and clarify the Commission proposal, particularly as regards provisions on rules applicable to principal displays.

The proposal will replace Regulation 2299/89 as amended by Regulations 3089/93 and 323/99.

The European Parliament is expected to adopt its first-reading opinion in July or September 2008.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN GENERAL AND BUSINESS AVIATION - Council conclusions

The Council's conclusions can be found in [7668/08, COR 1](#).

COMPLIANCE WITH FLAG STATE REQUIREMENTS

The Council held a public policy debate on a proposal for a directive on compliance with flag State requirements.

The Commission transmitted its proposal ([6843/06](#)) to the Council in February 2006 as part of its third maritime package of seven legislative proposals, which aim to reinforce the safety of maritime transport in Europe⁴. The Council already adopted six political agreements on the basis of five of the proposals. The respective common positions will be transmitted shortly to the European Parliament with a view to reaching an agreement to ensure that their implementation will start as soon as possible.

The Commission's proposal is aimed at ensuring that member states discharge their obligations as flag States in accordance with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Conventions on maritime safety and the prevention of pollution caused by ships. To this end the proposal seeks to make compulsory parts of the IMO Code for the implementation of the IMO mandatory instruments (Flag State code) and the Voluntary IMO member state Audit Scheme.

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- The seven proposals of the package are the following:
- a proposal for a Directive on compliance with flag state requirements ([6843/06](#));
 - a proposal for a Directive on common rules and standards for ship inspection and survey organisations and for the relevant activities of maritime administrations (recasting) ([5912/06](#));
 - a proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2002/59/EC establishing a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system ([5171/06](#));
 - a proposal for a Directive establishing the fundamental principles governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector and amending Directives 1999/35/EC and 2002/59/EC ([6436/06](#));
 - a proposal for a Directive on the civil liability and financial guarantees of ship-owners ([5907/06](#));
 - a proposal for a Directive on port state control ([5632/06](#));
 - a proposal for a Regulation on the liability of carriers of passengers by sea and inland waterways in the event of accidents ([6827/06](#))

The Council took note of the progress report prepared by the Council bodies ([7630/08](#)).

During the policy debate all member states underlined the importance they attach to improving maritime safety and the prevention of pollution caused by ships. They considered that fulfilment of the related flag State requirements was an essential element to achieve this objective and that in particular the IMO Flag State Code and the IMO Member State Audit Scheme constitute the appropriate means to this effect. Member states reaffirmed their commitment to taking the necessary measures to implement the international Conventions with a view to ensuring a level playing field among the maritime administrations of member states and underlined the importance of sharing best practices to this effect.

Ministers, furthermore, underlined the need for a level playing field worldwide as regards the way flag States comply with their international obligations, thus contributing to the improvement of maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment and to the elimination of sub-standard ships.

A majority of ministers stated that in their opinion the legislative proposal in question is not the most effective way to achieve the abovementioned objectives. In consequence, the presidency concluded that at this stage the Commission's proposal is not supported by a qualified majority of member states. The proposal remains on the table, but the Slovenian presidency did not see sufficient political support to be able to work on the original proposal in the near future.

CIVIL LIABILITY AND FINANCIAL GUARANTEES OF SHIPOWNERS

The Council held a public policy debate on a proposal for a directive on the civil liability and financial guarantees of shipowners. This proposal is part of the third maritime safety package (see above).

The aim of the draft directive, as proposed by the Commission, is to set up, at the EU level, a civil liability scheme for shipowners, on the basis of the 1996 Convention on the limitation of liability for maritime claims (LLMC 1996) and to introduce a compulsory insurance scheme. To this end, the Commission firstly proposed that all member states become contracting parties to that convention and that those rules are incorporated into Community law. As a second step, the Commission, on the basis of a mandate given by the Council, would negotiate at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) level the revision of the level at which shipowners lose their right to limit their liability.

Ministers examined a progress report ([7632/08](#)) on the state of play of the discussions on this legislative proposal.

During the debate, the Council reaffirmed its strong commitment to take the necessary measures in order to strengthen maritime safety. The Council also recalled that it already adopted six political agreements on the basis of five Commission proposals of the third maritime safety package and that the related common positions will be shortly transmitted to the European Parliament in order to reach a quick agreement and start their implementation as soon as possible.

The debate showed that the legislative proposal is not supported by a large majority of member states. Ministers, although agreeing with the above aim as proposed by the Commission, considered that the proposed directive would not be the most appropriate means to achieve this objective. Member states stated that a solution should be found at international (IMO) level and not through the proposed Commission directive on civil liability.

In view of the above, a majority of member states committed themselves to take the necessary steps to ratify and fully implement the LLMC 1996 and other related international conventions, in order to help to prevent damage caused by ships to third parties and to effectively respond to the interests of accident victims.

The presidency concluded that this proposal does not receive qualified majority support and that member states instead reaffirmed their commitment to examine all possible solutions to achieve the outlined above objectives.

OTHER BUSINESS**– Results of the Environment Council of 3 March 2008**

The presidency briefed the Council on issues examined by the Environment Council of 3 March 2008 directly related to transport, in particular the climate - energy legislative package, CO2 emissions for passenger cars and vans, Euro VI emissions standards for lorries and emissions from shipping. *See press release [6847/08](#).*

– Scanning of containers

At the request of the French delegation, the Council took note of the information provided by the Commission on the US requirements on the scanning of freight containers bound for the US.

– Informal meeting of transport ministers (Brdo, 5 and 6 May 2008)

The Council took note of the information provided by the presidency on the informal meeting of transport ministers on "A sustainable transport system - a challenge for the future", which will take place in Brdo on 5 and 6 May 2008.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**TRANSPORT****Air transport agreement with Israel**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations with Israel on a comprehensive air transport agreement.

The Commission requested this mandate in November 2007, in the framework of the process of creating a common aviation area with the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbours by 2010. The agreement will provide for gradual market opening and a high level of regulatory convergence in the areas of aviation safety, security, air traffic management, competition, state aid, environmental and consumer protection and research.

First Report on the implementation of the European Single Sky Legislation - achievements and the way forward - *Council conclusions*

The Council's conclusions can be found in document [7355/08](#).

Agreements on air services with Australia and Nepal

The Council adopted decisions approving the signing and provisional application of agreements on air services with Australia and Nepal.

The agreements are the result of negotiations carried out by the Commission under a mandate granted by the Council in June 2003 with a view to bringing member states' existing bilateral aviation agreements into line with Community law.

Inland transport of dangerous goods

The Council adopted a common position on a proposal for a directive on the inland transport of dangerous goods ([6920/3/08](#) + [ADD1](#)). The proposal seeks to ensure the uniform application of safety rules and a high level of safety for national and international transport operations.

The text will be sent to the European Parliament for a second reading in the framework of the codecision procedure.

The Commission presented the proposal to the Council in December 2006 ([5080/07](#)). The draft directive updates the existing four directives¹ and two Commission decisions on the transport of dangerous goods, integrating them into one piece of legislation and extending the scope of EU rules to cover not only road and rail transport but also inland waterway transport. The proposal brings the existing rules for international transport into Community law and, in addition, it extends the application of the international rules to national transport.

The text agreed by the Council includes some modifications compared to the Commission proposal:

- it exempts a member state which has no railway system from the obligation to transpose and implement this directive insofar as rail is concerned;
- it also allows member states which have no inland waterways or whose inland waterways are not linked to those of other member states not to apply the directive as far as the inland waterway transport of dangerous goods is concerned;
- it provides for a transitory period of up to two years for the application of its provisions in respect of inland waterways, to allow sufficient time for the adaptation of national provisions establishing legal frameworks and the training of personnel;

¹

- Directive 94/55/EC on the approximation of the laws of the member states with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by road;
- Directive 96/49/EC on the approximation of the laws of the member states with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by rail;
- Directive 96/35/EC on the appointment and vocational qualification of safety advisers for the transport of dangerous goods by road, rail and inland waterway; and
- Directive 2000/18/EC on minimum examination requirements for safety advisers for the transport of dangerous goods by road, rail or inland waterway.

- the directive will further enhance safety in the transport of dangerous goods by all three inland modes of transport, support the protection of the environment and facilitate the transport of dangerous goods and the internal market for transport operators by harmonising the conditions of transport. It is a good example of the simplification of legislation and of better regulation.

COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

Belarus - Extension of restrictive measures - Statement by the Council and the Commission

The Council adopted a common position extending for a further year, until 10 April 2009, the travel restrictions and freezing of financial assets against certain Belarusian officials, in view of the situation in the country.

These measures, building on initial measures introduced in 2004, were adopted against persons responsible for the fraudulent elections and referendum in October 2004, violations of international electoral standards in the March 2006 elections and the crackdown on civil society and the democratic opposition. The list of persons affected by the restrictive measures remains unchanged. The list may be reviewed at any time on the basis of its review criteria and in the light of events on the ground.

The Council and the Commission adopted the following joint statement:

"The Council and the Commission welcome the release of five of the six internationally recognised political prisoners in Belarus.

The Council and the Commission reiterate their position that the unconditional release of all political prisoners would be considered by the EU as a concrete step towards Belarusian compliance with core European values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This would provide for a possibility to review the restrictive measures in place against certain officials of Belarus, and to enable the EU to progressively re-engage with Belarus, in connection with further steps by Belarus in that direction.

The Council and the Commission also note in this respect the particular importance of the conduct of the upcoming parliamentary elections in accordance with international electoral standards, which would provide an opportunity for the assessment of the situation in Belarus and for possible positive steps.

The Council and the Commission recall that Council Common Position 2006/276/CFSP is kept under constant review and can be modified in light of political developments in Belarus. The release of all political prisoners and the conduct of September 2008 parliamentary elections would provide specific occasions for such a review."

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

European Defence Agency

The Council adopted a joint action amending Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP on the establishment of the European Defence Agency ([15859/1/07](#)).

The amendments relate to the creation of the post of a second Deputy Chief Executive post and a review clause requiring the submission of a new report to the steering board on the implementation of the joint action no later than 30 June 2010.

Military Staff of the European Union

The Council adopted a decision amending Council Decision 2001/80/CFSP of 22 January 2001 on the establishment of the Military Staff of the European Union ([7235/08](#)).

The amendments take account, notably, of the EU Military Staff's ability to conduct planning at the strategic level for EU-led operations, as requested by the Council in May 2007.

EU/Central African Republic agreement on status of EU-led forces - EUFOR Tchad/RCA operation

The Council adopted a decision approving the conclusion of an agreement with the Central African Republic aimed at facilitating the deployment and transit in that country of EU-led forces involved in the EUFOR Tchad/RCA operation ([5472/08](#)).

In September 2007, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1778(2007), approving the establishment of a multidimensional presence in the Central African Republic and in Chad, including a UN mission (MINURCAT), and authorising the EU to deploy in those countries, for a period of one year, an operation aimed at supporting the UN mission. The resolution also requested the governments of Chad and the Central African Republic and the EU to conclude status-of-forces agreements.

In January 2008, the EU launched the bridging military operation in Eastern Chad and North Eastern Central African Republic "EUFOR TCHAD/RCA".

For more information:

www.consilium.europa.eu/eufor-tchad-rca

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**Italy - Gas oil and LPG used for room heating - Taxation**

The Council adopted a decision authorising Italy to continue to apply reduced rates of taxation to gas oil and LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) used for room heating purposes in some areas with a high level of heating costs ([7521/08](#)).

By derogating from EU common rules on taxation, the decision allow Italy to apply, until 31 December 2012, reduced rates for gas oil and LPG with a view to partially offsetting excessively high heating costs borne by residents in certain geographical areas.

Support to workers in Malta and Portugal – EU globalisation adjustment fund

The Council adopted a decision aimed at allocating EUR 3.1 million in support of redundancies in the textiles sector in Malta and in the automobile sector in Portugal, resulting from the closure of production activities ([6777/08](#) and [6849/08](#)).

The decision, to be confirmed by the European Parliament, will provide financial aid from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to redundant workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns in order to assist them with their integration into the labour market.

In the case of Malta, EUR 681 207 will be deployed for redundancies following the loss of jobs in two textile manufacturing companies.

In the case of Portugal, EUR 2.4 million will be deployed for redundancies following the loss of jobs in three automobile manufacturing companies.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Agreement with South Africa on trade, development and cooperation

The Council adopted a decision on the signing of an agreement with South Africa amending the agreement on trade, development and cooperation ([7437/08](#)).

RESEARCH**EU/Jordan agreement on scientific and technological cooperation**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to negotiate an agreement on scientific and technological cooperation with Jordan.

FISHERIES**EU/Chile cooperation framework on swordfish and other species**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations with Chile for a fisheries cooperation framework on swordfish and other species of common interest in the South Pacific Ocean.

TRADE POLICY**Anti-dumping - Electronic microcircuits - Korea**

The Council adopted a regulation repealing the countervailing duty imposed on imports of certain electronic microcircuits known as DRAMs (Dynamic Random Access Memories) originating in the Republic of Korea ([7471/08](#)).

CONSUMERS PROTECTION

Credit agreements for consumers

The Council adopted a directive establishing common rules on consumer credit aimed at harmonising certain aspects of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions on consumer credit in the internal market ([3603/08](#) and [7633/08 ADD 1+ADD 2](#)). The Netherlands delegation voted against and the Belgian, Greek and Luxembourg delegations abstained.

The directive will cover personal loans of between EUR 200 and EUR 75 000 repayable after more than a month. It will not apply to mortgages or to deferred debit cards.

The directive will enter into force after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU, and member states will have two years to incorporate the new rules in their national legislation. It will be applicable from 2010.

For more information see press release [7993/08](#).

SOCIAL POLICY

Protection of workers - Risks of exposure to electromagnetic fields

The Council adopted a decision postponing the deadline for the transposition of Directive 2004/40/EC on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields) ([3611/08](#)).

The transposition of Directive 2004/40/EC into the EU member states' national law will be postponed until 30 April 2012, in order to assess new scientific studies on the impact of the exposure limit values.

The postponement may also allow the provisions of the directive to be updated in the light of the latest scientific findings on the impact of electromagnetic radiation on health, which were not available at the time of its adoption.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

The Council adopted:

- the reply to confirmatory application 04/c/01/08 made by Mr David CRONIN, with the Finnish and Swedish delegations voting against ([6650/08](#));
- the reply to confirmatory application 05/c/01/08 ([7196/08](#));
- the reply to confirmatory application 06/c/01/08, the Danish and Swedish delegations voting against ([7203/08](#)).

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council adopted a decision appointing for the remainder of the current term of office, which ends on 25 January 2010:

- (a) as members
- Ms Marianne FÜGL, Vizebürgermeisterin, Marktgemeinde Traisen,
 - Mr Erwin MOHR, Bürgermeister, Marktgemeinde Wolfurt,
 - Linda GILLHAM, Member of Runnymede Borough Council,

- Dave WILCOX, Member of Derbyshire County Council,
- Iain MALCOLM, Member of South Tyneside Council (change of mandate),
- Doris ANSARI, Member of Cornwall County Council,
- Christine CHAPMAN, Member of the National Assembly of Wales,
- Keith BROWN, Member of the Scottish Parliament,
- Irene OLDFATHER, Member of the Scottish Parliament,
- Adam JARUBAS, marszałek województwa świętokrzyskiego,
- Lech JAWORSKI, radny m.st. Warszawy,
- Marek NAWARA, marszałek województwa małopolskiego (change of mandate),
- Jacek PROTAS, marszałek województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego,
- Józef SEBESTA, marszałek województwa opolskiego,
- Stanisław SZWABSKI, przewodniczący Rady Miasta Gdyni,
- Krzysztof SZYMAŃSKI, marszałek województwa lubuskiego,
- Marek TRAMŚ, radny powiatu polkowickiego (change of mandate),
- Ludwik WĘGRZYN, radny powiatu bocheńskiego (change of mandate),

- Tadeusz WRONA, prezydent Częstochowy (change of mandate),
 - Mr Dirk VAN MECHELEN, Flemish Minister for Finance and the Budget and Town and Country Planning,
 - Ms R. KRUISINGA, gedeputeerde van de provincie Noord-Holland (change of mandate);
- (b) as alternate members
- Mr Mihai Dan GROZA, local counsellor and acting mayor of the municipality of Oradea,
 - Mr Johannes PEINSTEINER, Bürgermeister, Marktgemeinde St. Wolfgang,
 - Mr Markus LINHART, Bürgermeister der Stadt Bregenz,
 - Kathy POLLARD, Member of Suffolk County Council,
 - Doreen HUDDART, Member of Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Council,
 - Feryat DEMIRCI, Member of London Borough of Hackney,
 - Cindy HUGHES, Member of Darlington Borough Council,
 - Nerys EVANS, Member of the National Assembly of Wales,
 - Allison McINNES, Member of the Scottish Parliament,
 - Ted BROCKLEBANK, Member of the Scottish Parliament,
 - Adam BANASZAK, radny Sejmiku Województwa Kujawsko-Pomorskiego,

- Jan BRONŚ, burmistrz Oleśnicy,
 - Lech DYMARSKI, przewodniczący Sejmiku Województwa Wielkopolskiego,
 - Jan DZIUBIŃSKI, prezydent Tarnobrzega,
 - Robert GODEK, starosta powiatu strzyżowskiego,
 - Michał KARALUS, radny powiatu pleszewskiego (change of mandate),
 - Marzena KEMPIŃSKA, radna powiatu świeckiego (change of mandate),
 - Józef KOTYŚ, radny Sejmiku Województwa Opolskiego,
 - Tadeusz KOWALCZYK, przewodniczący Sejmiku Województwa Świętokrzyskiego,
 - Andrzej MATUSIEWICZ, przewodniczący Sejmiku Województwa Podkarpackiego,
 - Norbert OBRYCKI, marszałek województwa zachodniopomorskiego,
 - Ewa PANASIUK, radna Sejmiku Województwa Lubelskiego,
 - Czesław SOBIERAJSKI, radny Sejmiku Województwa Śląskiego,
 - Robert SOSZYŃSKI, przewodniczący Sejmiku Województwa Mazowieckiego,
 - Tadeusz TRUSKOLASKI, prezydent Białegostoku,
 - Mr H. DIJKSMA, gedeputeerde van de provincie Flevoland (change of mandate).
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