



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



7564/09 (Presse 62)

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2932nd Council meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

General Affairs

Brussels, 16 March 2009

President

Alexandr VONDRA

Deputy Prime Minister responsible for European Affairs of
the Czech Republic

- * The 2933rd meeting on External Relations is the subject of a separate press release (7565/09).

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Main results of the Council

*The Council examined proposals aimed at providing an additional EUR 5 billion in support to energy projects and other infrastructure investments under the European **economic recovery plan**.*

The presidency indicated its intention to obtain an agreement on the proposals in the run-up to the European Council's meeting on 19 and 20 March.

*The Council also adopted conclusions on **EUFOR Tchad/RCA**, welcoming the fulfilment of the operation's mandate and underlining the exemplary cooperation between the EU and the UN from the launching of the operation to its successful handover.*

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¹ • 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.

APPOINTMENTS

– Committee of the Regions 16

PARTICIPANTS

The governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Karel DE GUCHT Minister for Foreign Affairs

Bulgaria:

Mr Boyko KOTZEV Permanent Representative

Czech Republic:

Mr Alexandr VONDRA Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for European Affairs

Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Per Stig MØLLER Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Michael ZILMER-JOHN State Secretary for Foreign and Security Policy, EU Policy and EU Coordination

Germany:

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Günter GLOSER Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Bobby MCDONAGH Permanent Representative

Greece:

Ms Dora BAKOYANNI Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr. Miguel Ángel MORATINOS Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

France:

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

Mr Bruno LE MAIRE State Secretary with responsibility for European affairs

Italy:

Mr Franco FRATTINI Minister for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Marcos KYPRIANOU Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Māris RIEKSTIŅŠ Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Vygaudas UŠACKAS Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT Minister for European Affairs and Immigration

Hungary:

Ms Kinga GÖNCZ Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Tonio BORG Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Maxime VERHAGEN Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Frans TIMMERMANS Minister for European Affairs

Austria:

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

Poland:

Mr Radosław SIKORSKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Ms Teresa RIBEIRO

State Secretary for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Cristian DIACONESCU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Samuel ŽBOGAR

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Mitja GASPARI

Minister without Portfolio Responsible for Development and European Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Miroslav LAJČÁK

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Alexander STUBB

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ms Astrid THORS

Minister for Migration and European Affairs

Sweden:

Mr Carl BILDT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Minister for European Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr David MILIBAND

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Ms Caroline FLINT

Minister of State for Europe

Commission:

Ms Margot WALLSTRÖM

Vice President

Ms Dalia GRYSBAUKAITĖ

Member

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Member

General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

ITEMS DEBATED

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

The Council examined proposals aimed at providing additional support to energy projects and other infrastructure investments under the European economic recovery plan.

Concluding the debate, the presidency indicated its intention to obtain an agreement, on the basis of a compromise proposal, in the run-up to the European Council's meeting on 19 and 20 March.

The economic recovery plan, approved by the European Council in December, provides a framework for measures taken by each member state in response to the global financial crisis and economic slowdown, and identifies a number of actions to be undertaken at EU level.

As part of the plan's implementation, the Commission has presented proposals for the provision by the EU of an additional EUR 5 billion investment in infrastructure projects, in particular in the fields of energy, broadband internet and rural development. The presidency's compromise proposal also suggests the means by which the projects would be financed.

At its meeting on 23 February, the Council acknowledged the need to reach an agreement as soon as possible and before the parliamentary recess in the run-up to the European elections in June.

PREPARATION OF THE SPRING MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Council examined draft conclusions prepared by the presidency for the spring meeting of the European Council, to be held in Brussels on 19 and 20 March.

The European Council is due to focus on:

- the economic and financial situation;
- energy and climate change;
- Eastern partnership;
- the Treaty of Lisbon.

As concerns the economic and financial situation, it will examine progress achieved in ensuring greater stability and better supervision and transparency in financial markets, implementation of the European economic recovery plan approved in December, the way forward for the EU's Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, the functioning of the EU's internal market and preparations for the G20 summit in London on 2 April.

On energy and climate change, it is due to discuss means of ensuring the EU's energy security in the medium and longer term, as well as preparations for the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen in December.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Security procedures for exchanging classified information with Israel

The Council adopted a decision approving the conclusion of an agreement with Israel on security procedures for the exchange of classified information.

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

EUFOR Tchad/RCA - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. In accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1778 (2007), 1834 (2008) and 1861 (2009), the transfer of authority between EUFOR Tchad/RCA and MINURCAT took place, as planned, on 15 March 2009, one year after the declaration that EUFOR had achieved its initial operating capability.
2. The Council welcomes the fulfilment of EUFOR's mandate and underlines the exemplary cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations from the launching of the operation to its successful handover. It stresses that the planning of this transition was carried out smoothly in order to avoid a security vacuum. Lessons will have to be learned from that cooperation, but can already serve as a basis for future collaboration.
3. The Council notes that, throughout its mandate, EUFOR has made a tangible contribution towards protecting civilians in danger, and in particular refugees and displaced persons who have been profoundly affected by the neighbouring crisis in Darfur. EUFOR, in observance of its mandate, has acted in an impartial, neutral and independent manner. In helping to improve overall security in its operational area, EUFOR has also facilitated the activities of humanitarian workers. It has contributed towards protecting the staff of the United Nations and humanitarian organisations, thereby enabling relations of trust to be established with the latter. Moreover, the EUFOR patrols have helped to deter attacks against the civilian population in the operational area. Security in the area has also been improved through the establishment of the Chadian "Détachement Intégré de Sécurité" (DIS) supported by MINURCAT.

4. In addition to the 23 Member States, three third countries (Albania, Croatia and Russia) have taken part in this operation; up to 3 700 men have been involved in what was the first autonomous military operation of this scale, conducted in a particularly wide area under difficult overall conditions. The lessons from an experience of this kind need to be learned.
5. The Council welcomes the global and regional approach which has been followed by the European Union in planning and conducting this operation. The actions of EUFOR in the framework of the ESDP in the political and diplomatic fields, on the one hand, and in the humanitarian and development fields, on the other, have been both complementary and coordinated, thereby maximising the EU's impact on the ground.
6. The Council would point out that EUFOR's redeployment does not mark the end of the European Union's involvement in Chad, in the Central African Republic or in the region as a whole. Around 2 000 soldiers currently serving under EUFOR will in future come under the MINURCAT banner, which further underlines European support to UN peacekeeping operations. Moreover, the European Union will remain active at a political and diplomatic level in Chad, in the Central African Republic and especially in Sudan, where the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Darfur peace process is crucial to the stabilisation of the region. The European Union will also continue to be active in the region in the field of humanitarian and development activities."

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Climate change and development - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"Key messages to the European Council

1. Climate change is seriously undermining efforts to achieve sustainable development and reduce poverty and is becoming a major threat to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by reversing progress made in the last decade. It may also have a considerable impact on security issues.

2. With a view to reaching an ambitious and comprehensive post-2012 climate change agreement in Copenhagen in December 2009, the Council stresses the importance of properly addressing development issues in the ongoing negotiating process, and of ensuring a Development presence at the appropriate level in the different stages of this process and in Copenhagen.
3. Recalling the right of all countries to development, the Council underlines that both mitigation and adaptation to climate change are integral parts of sustainable development. Policies to address climate change mitigation and adaptation will only be fully effective if they are integrated into national sustainable development strategies, including those for poverty reduction where they exist.
4. Ongoing and potential responses to tackle climate change have major implications on financing for development and will incur substantial additional costs on all countries. Additional resource mobilization, including from the private sector, will be required particularly for developing countries, in order to support appropriate national adaptation and mitigation strategies and actions.

General aspects

5. The Council recalls the developing countries' primary responsibility for their development and the importance of national ownership. Mitigation and adaptation actions should be properly integrated into national development strategies, which should address issues of inclusive growth, transparent and effective democratic governance and poverty reduction, including the reduction of inequalities, in particular gender, as well as environment issues. Financial and technical support to help designing these strategies should be provided, particularly to the least developed countries (LDCs).
6. The Council underlines the need for participation by all governments and other stakeholders at various levels, including local communities, both women and men, in order to reach an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen, which should pay particular attention to the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

7. The Council recognises that a wide range of financial sources will be needed to provide adequate, predictable and sustainable flows of finance and leverage private investments. The EU is prepared to take its fair share of this financing, in the framework of a global and comprehensive Copenhagen agreement and an appropriate burden sharing between the EU, other developed countries and the most advanced developing countries.
8. The current financial architecture needs to be reviewed and, where necessary, reformed in order to meet the challenge. The Council emphasizes that existing channels for aid delivery should be efficiently used and, if needed, strengthened, before creating new mechanisms. The principles of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, transparency, accountability, coherence, predictability and sound financing management should apply.

Adaptation

9. Adaptation to climate change is a global challenge and of particular importance for the poorest and most vulnerable developing countries, particularly in light of the forecasts for the substantial associated costs. The Council therefore underlines the EU's willingness to provide support to developing countries, particularly LDCs, small island developing states (SIDS) and African countries at risk of floods, drought and desertification, in their ongoing adaptation efforts, in particular through long term, cross-sectoral and participatory local level approaches.
10. Effective adaptation policies should aim at building resilience and ensuring capacity to respond to urgent and immediate needs, as well as move towards a long-term strategic approach. In this respect, the Council recalls its proposal for a Framework for Action on Adaptation (FAA).

Mitigation

11. The Council notes that, along with substantial reduction commitments from developed countries collectively¹, recent analysis indicates that consistency with the 2°C objective will require developing countries as a group, particularly the most advanced ones, to achieve a substantial and quantifiable limitation of their emissions growth rate, in the order of 15-30% below business as usual by 2020, respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.
12. Low-carbon development strategies should be encouraged in all developing countries, as they can increase the potential for sustainable growth and poverty reduction. The Council calls on these countries, in particular the most advanced ones, to propose ambitious low-carbon strategies and plans, or meaningful actions that will form part of them, distinguishing between actions that can be taken autonomously and those requiring international support. For the LDCs and SIDS, the preparation of these strategies and plans should be supported financially and technically. Priority should be given to low cost abatement strategies and actions intended to develop synergies between adaptation and mitigation, such as sustainable forest management.

Financial support, capacity building and technology cooperation

13. Developed countries' enhanced support to capacity building, in particular for LDCs and SIDS, will be crucial to achieve their adaptation and mitigation objectives, including in the period preceding the entry into force of the post-2012 climate change agreement. Cooperation on technological innovation will also be critical. In this respect, mitigation and adaptation efforts must be supported by significantly enhanced collaboration on technology research, development, deployment and diffusion. The EU is ready to enhance its work with developing countries in this respect and explore how joint research efforts could be taken forward.

¹ Conclusions on Climate Change - Contribution to the Spring European Council (19-20 March 2009): Further development of the EU position on a comprehensive post-2012 climate agreement (doc. 7128/09, paragraph 9).

14. Support for developing countries should be delivered in accordance with the principles of aid effectiveness¹. In this regard, the delivery of climate finance should be based on common strategies, shared values and mutual accountability and should avoid creating parallel and additional systems of delivery.
15. Underlining the important contribution of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Adaptation Fund and EU development assistance, including bilateral actions and the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), as well as the contribution of other multilateral development programmes and funds, notably those of the UN and the World Bank, such as the Climate Investment Funds, and other bilateral action, the Council stresses the need to coordinate funding initiatives, promote sharing of best practices and capitalise on experience gained in this respect.
16. Support to appropriate national adaptation and mitigation strategies and actions in developing countries, as well as support to capacity building and technology, will require additional resource mobilization from a wide range of financial sources (public and private, domestic and international), potentially including innovative forms of financing. In this context, the Council highlights the relevance of the experience of the OECD/DAC on ODA reporting."

Consultations with Guinea within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement

The Council approved a letter to be sent to the Guinean authorities inviting them to consultations under Article 96(2) of the ACP-EU partnership agreement in response to the crisis situation in Guinea

The aim of the consultations will be to give the military junta in Guinea an opportunity to present its proposals for ending the crisis and allow the European Union to judge whether and how it could support initiatives tending towards respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law.

¹ Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action.

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Report on the progress achieved by the EU in 2008

The Council took note of a draft report of the European Council on the progress achieved by the EU in 2008 ([6788/1/09](#)).

The document will be sent to the European Parliament for information.

Work in the Council's different configurations

The Council took note of a report on proceedings in its different configurations ([7278/09](#)).

CUSTOMS UNION

Intellectual property rights - Action plan to combat infringements

The Council adopted a resolution endorsing an EU customs action plan, for the 2009-12 period, aimed at combating infringements of intellectual property rights.

The action plan is intended to tackle the growing threat posed by counterfeit goods to health and safety and to the environment, through strengthened cooperation between administrations and between customs authorities and businesses.

The resolution calls on the member states and the Commission to implement the plan effectively. It can be found in document [5947/1/09 REV 1](#).

FISHERIES

General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

The Council adopted a decision for the establishment of the Community position in the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) (7265/09). The GFCM may, on the basis of scientific evidence, make binding recommendations designed to maintain the populations of stocks of living aquatic resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea at levels which will permit the maximum sustainable catch for food and other purposes.

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council adopted a decision appointing as members for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2010:

- Mr Giovanni CHIODI, Presidente della Regione Abruzzo;
- Ms Yoomi RENSTRÖM, Ovanåker kommun (change of mandate).

The Council adopted a decision appointing as an alternate member for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2010:

- Ms Ewa LINDSTRAND, Ledamot i kommunfullmäktige, Timrå kommun.
-