



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

GENERAL AFFAIRS



11.12.09

Council Conclusions

General Affairs Council Meeting
7th December 2009

The Council adopted conclusions on EU enlargement and on the stabilisation and association process for the Western Balkans.

As concerns Serbia, having regard to the efforts undertaken in its cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the Council agreed to implement the EU-Serbia interim agreement as soon as possible.

The Council also approved a second tranche of financing for the EU's economic recovery plan.

In addition, the Council took note of the presentation prepared by the three future presidencies which are the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian delegations. [Click here](#) to view the draft 18 month programme of the Council

[Click here](#) to view the main conclusions in further detail

European Council

First European Council under the Lisbon Treaty
10/11 December 2009

The new Treaty of Lisbon will allow the Union to fully concentrate on addressing the challenges ahead. Work will continue in the coming months to ensure its full implementation, particularly as regards the setting up of the European External Action Service and the adoption of legislation on the citizens' initiative. Noting that the economic situation is starting to show signs



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

of stabilisation, the European Council stressed the importance of developing credible and coordinated strategies for exiting from the broad-based stimulus policies once the recovery is fully secured. Over the past months the EU has made good progress in strengthening its regulatory framework, in particular with the agreement reached by the Council on a fundamentally new structure for financial supervision in Europe. Given the important structural challenges facing the EU, it is necessary to evaluate the impact of the Lisbon Strategy and develop a new strategy which also responds to new challenges. The European Council adopted a new multi-annual programme for the years 2010- 2014, the Stockholm Programme, which will allow for the further development of an area of freedom, security and justice. The European Council exchanged views on how the EU could best contribute to a successful outcome at the Copenhagen Conference on climate change. Reconfirming the position it had agreed at its October meeting, it stated the readiness of the EU and its Member States to contribute with fast-start funding of EUR 2.4 billion annually for the years 2010 to 2012. The European Council adopted declarations on Iran and on Afghanistan.

[Click here](#) to view the conclusions in further detail

COM (2009) 673 – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

The purpose of this communication is to set out the Commission's views on the scope of the delegated acts, the framework for delegations of power, the working methods the Commission intends to use for preparing the adoption of delegated acts and, finally, the conditions under which the legislator might exercise control over the way the powers conferred on the Commission are implemented.

This communication takes account of the exploratory contacts with the departments of the European Parliament and the discussions that took place with the Council in the weeks before its adoption. The Commission believes that this communication will enable the three institutions to organise the delegations of power conferred under Article 290 of the new Treaty in the most harmonious way possible. In line with the ideas set out in this communication, the Commission encloses herewith several models for articles in future legislative acts conferring on it the power to adopt delegated acts.

Regional Policy

Commissioner Samecki presents an orientation paper on future cohesion policy – **08/12/2009**

Commissioner Samecki has presented an orientation paper on the future cohesion policy. The paper looks at the goals that cohesion policy should pursue to meet the challenges of the 21st



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

century, with Europe's regions as essential actors in providing responses to these challenges. It argues that the policy should continue to focus on addressing market failures and ensure that regions make full use of their development potential in the context of European economic integration. It also looks at ways in which future cohesion policy can become more focused on performance and results and how to simplify its delivery.

Finally, the paper presents an important contribution on the debate launched earlier this year on the rationale, goals and delivery system of European cohesion policy. This reflection process on the future cohesion policy takes place in an evolving European policy context and is one where the policy's stakeholders play an important role.

[Click here](#) to view the Orientation Paper on the future cohesion policy by Commissioner Samecki.

Enlargement

Montenegro hands over replies to the questionnaire - 10/12/2009

On 9 December, Montenegro's Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic handed over to Commissioner Rehn Montenegro's replies to the Questionnaire for the preparation of the Commission's Opinion on Montenegro's application for EU membership. Olli Rehn congratulated Montenegro for this new symbolical and real step on its European path and called on Montenegro to continue the reform process especially on the effective implementation of laws and consolidation of rule of law. He further emphasized that the Commission's mandate and aim is to prepare a fair and balanced Opinion on Montenegro's readiness to comply with the criteria for membership and make a proposal to the Council on the next stages of Montenegro's EU accession course. Based on the Commission's Opinion, the Member States will decide whether to grant candidate status or open membership negotiations with Montenegro. For further reference [click here](#)

Statistics

EU Member States granted protection to 76 300 asylum seekers in 2008 – 08/12/2009

The EU27 Member States granted protection to 76 300 asylum seekers in 2008. The largest groups of beneficiaries of protection status in the EU27 were citizens of Iraq (16 600 persons or 22% of the total number of persons granted protection status), Somalia (9 500 or 12%), Russia (7 400 or 10%), Afghanistan (5 000 or 7%) and Eritrea (4 600 or 6%). This data on the results of asylum applications in the EU27 are taken from a report issued by Eurostat, the Statistical



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

Office of the European Communities. They are published on the occasion of the Human Rights Day which occurred on 10 December. [Click here](#) for further reference

A statistical portrait of the lifestyle of young people – 10/12/2009

Young people make up a significant proportion of the EU population: on 1 January 2009, there were 95 million persons aged 15 to 29 in the EU27, almost a fifth of the total population. Statistics on young people reveals differences in their behaviour between Member States. The publication which is hyperlinked below focuses on:

What is the average age of young people when leaving the parental home? What is the difference in unemployment rates according to the level of education? What proportion of young people are employed on a temporary contract? How often do young people go to the cinema and other cultural events?

[Click here](#) to view answers to these questions and many more. This publication is issued in connection with the adoption of a resolution by the Council on 27 November 2009, on a new EU Youth Strategy for 2010-2018.

One person in two in the EU27 uses the internet daily – 08/12/2009

In the EU27, 65% of households had access to the internet during the first quarter of 2009, compared with 60% during the first quarter of 2008, and 56% had a broadband internet connection in 2009, compared with 49% in 2008.

These data published by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, represent only a small part of the results of a survey on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in households and by individuals in the EU27 Member States, the candidate countries, Norway, Iceland and Serbia. As well as internet use and broadband connections, the survey also covers other indicators such as e-shopping, e-government and advanced communication and content related services. [Click here](#) for further reference