



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

# GENERAL AFFAIRS



**23.10.09**

## Statistics

**COM (2009) 542** – Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 48/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 December 2003 on the production of annual Community statistics on the steel industry for the reference years 2003-2009

In order to implement the Community policies on the steel industry, it was deemed necessary to continue collecting statistics on the steel industry after 31 December 2002. As no other existing statistical system at a European level was able to satisfy the need for such statistics, a new Regulation based on the Treaty establishing the European Community, i.e. Regulation (EC) No 48/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 December 2003 on the production of annual Community statistics on the steel industry for the reference years 2003-2009, was adopted. Regulation (EC) No 48/2004 provides for a transitional phase running from 2003 to 2009 in order to determine whether steel statistics can be integrated into other statistical systems.

This report reflects the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 48/2004. According to Article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 48/2004, within five years of the entry into force of Regulation (EC) No 48/2004 the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on its implementation. In particular, the report shall:

- assess the benefits accruing to the Community, the Member States and the providers and users of statistical information of the statistics produced in relation to their costs;
- assess the quality of the statistics produced;
- verify synergy with other Community activities;
- propose any changes considered necessary to improve the operation of Regulation (EC) No 48/2004.



## Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

**COM (2009) 535** - Proposal for a Regulation (EC) No .../... of the European Parliament and of the Council of [...] on waste statistics (Codified version)

The purpose of this proposal is to undertake a codification of Regulation (EC) No 2150/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2002 on waste statistics. The new Regulation will supersede the various acts incorporated in it; this proposal fully preserves the content of the acts being codified and hence does no more than bring them together with only such formal amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself.

The codification proposal was drawn up on the basis of a preliminary consolidation, in all official languages, of Regulation (EC) No 2150/2002 and the instruments amending it, carried out by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, by means of a data-processing system. Where the Articles have been given new numbers, the correlation between the old and the new numbers is shown in a table set out in Annex V to the codified Regulation.

**Construction output down by 0.4% in the euro area and down by 0.5% in the EU27 – 20/10/2009**

In the construction sector, seasonally adjusted production decreased by 0.4% in the euro area (EA16) and by 0.5% in the EU27 in August 2009, compared with the previous month. In July, production fell by 1.4% and 0.5% respectively. Compared with August 2008, the output in August 2009 dropped by 11.3% in the euro area and by 11.1% in the EU27. These first estimates are released by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

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**Tourism in Europe during the first half of 2009 – 22/10/2009**

In the first 6 months of 2009, the number of nights spent in hotels and similar establishments in EU-27 dropped by 7.4% compared with the same period of the previous year.

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**Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee**

## Enlargement

### COM (2009) 534 – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Kosovo - Fulfilling its European Perspective

The purpose of this communication is to take stock of developments since then, identify the challenges on Kosovo's road to Europe, confirm the measures it should take to address these challenges, and propose Community instruments to help Kosovo further its political and socio-economic development. As Kosovo shares its European perspective with the rest of the Western Balkans, the regional context is of particular importance. Kosovo needs to keep pace with developments in the region to promote economic growth and foster political stability. This is in the interest of Kosovo as well as the Western Balkans and the European Union as a whole. To date, Kosovo's independence has been recognised by 62 countries. At the request of the UN General Assembly, the International Court of Justice is preparing an advisory opinion on whether Kosovo's declaration of independence is in accordance with international law. The Court's opinion is expected in 2010.

This communication identifies the Community instruments the EU can mobilise to promote Kosovo's political and socio-economic development. Kosovo has achieved a certain political stability, but the security situation remains fragile. Kosovo must not be left behind as the Western Balkans region progresses towards the EU. As Kosovo progresses in the implementation of its European agenda, the Commission proposes to:

- Move forward with a structured approach to bring Kosovo's citizens closer to the EU through a visa dialogue with the perspective of eventual visa liberalisation when the necessary reforms will have been undertaken and the conditions met;
- Extend the Autonomous Trade Measures and, once Kosovo meets the relevant requirements, propose negotiating directives for a trade agreement in due time;
- Facilitate Kosovo's participation in the pan-euro-med cumulation of origin, once a trade agreement is in place;
- Progressively integrate Kosovo into the economic and fiscal surveillance framework that has been established with the Western Balkans;
- Examine the opportunity of a framework agreement with Kosovo on the general principles of its participation in Community programmes, and on this basis prepare negotiating directives;
- Strengthen and deepen Kosovo's participation in the Stabilisation and Association Process through establishing a regular 'SAP Dialogue';
- Progressively activate the IPA cross-border co-operation component (component II) for Kosovo.



## Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

The Commission will support the above initiatives through financial and technical assistance.

### Other Matters

**COM (2009) 550** – Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament Extension of the External Service: Opening of a delegation in Iceland and an office in Libya

In a communication adopted on 23 December 2008, the Commission announced its decision to open a new delegation to the Council of Europe and a new delegation in Uzbekistan. The same communication arranged for upgrading of the regionalised delegations in Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Tajikistan, Togo and Yemen. These actions should be finalised by the end of the year.

The development and consolidation of the network mentioned in the communication of 23 December 2008 required 16 redeployments of officials' posts within the External Service or from Relex family Directorates-General to the delegations. Any further development of the External Service can only be achieved with additional resources and therefore only the most urgent actions can be undertaken. Against this background, the present communication addresses, on the one hand, the fact that Iceland applied on 23 July 2009 for membership in conformity with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union and, on the other hand, the prospect of a new contractual basis for relations with Libya.

**COM (2009) 575** - Proposal for a Council Decision on the financial contributions to be paid by the Member States to finance the European Development Fund (3rd instalment 2009)

The Internal Agreement and Financial Regulation of the 10th EDF provide for a new procedure for the calls for contributions to be paid by Member States to finance the EDF. According to Article 157 of the Financial Regulation, this new procedure shall apply for the first time for the contributions of 2009 ("N+2" in the sense of that contingency provision).

In accordance with Article 57(5) of the Financial Regulation, this proposal covers:

- The amount of the third instalment of the contribution for 2009 ("n+1" in the sense of the permanent procedures laid down in that Article);

In accordance with Article 57(7) of the Financial Regulation, the amount managed by the Commission and the amount managed by the EIB are specified for each.

In accordance with Article 145 of the Financial Regulation, the EIB has sent the Commission its updated estimates of commitments and payments under the instruments it manages.



## Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

In accordance with Article 57(5) of the Financial Regulation, the Council must decide on this proposal at the latest 21 calendar days following the presentation by the Commission of its proposal and Member States must pay the third instalment of the contribution at the latest 21 calendar days following the date on which the Council decision is notified to them.

Article 58(2) of the Financial Regulation provides that calls for contributions first use up the amounts laid down for previous EDFs, one after the other. The calls for contributions in this proposal therefore concern amounts under the 9th EDF.

Note that Article 60(1) of the Financial Regulation provides that a Member State which fails to pay the instalment of the contribution due by the deadline will be required to pay interest on the amount unpaid; the arrangements for the payment of interest are specified in the same Article.

### **The Upcoming General Affairs Council Meeting**

26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> October 2009

The Council will start next Monday featuring preparations for the October meeting of the European Council. It will examine draft conclusions presented by the presidency in preparation for the meeting. Issues to be addressed by the European Council set out in an annotated draft agenda issued last month include: institutional issues; climate change; the economic situation; macro-regional strategies; illegal immigration and external relations. Furthermore, the presidency is due to present a report on guidelines for the establishment of a European External Action Service.

The Council will also discuss the communication from the Commission concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The Council is due to adopt conclusions, on the basis of this communication. The strategy, to be adopted by the European Council at its meeting on 29 and 30 October, is intended to address common challenges faced by the countries of the region, including environmental challenges, and to contribute to both economic, social and territorial cohesion and competitiveness. It is also intended as a pilot case for other macro-regional strategies.

The Council will then continue on Tuesday with a session on external relations, focusing on the situation in Afghanistan/Pakistan, as well as the Western Balkans, the Middle East and Sri Lanka.

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**Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee**

## **European Council Meeting**

29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> October 2009

The European Council is expected to focus mainly on institutional issues, on climate change, on the economic and financial situation as well as on illegal immigration:

- Concerning institutional issues, it is due to discuss the situation as the Lisbon treaty ratification process approaches its completion.
- As regards climate change, it will take stock of preparations for the international conference on climate change to be held in Copenhagen in December and take the appropriate decisions, including on financing.
- Dealing with the economic situation, it will assess the latest developments, take stock of progress on the setting up of a new framework for EU supervision and, if necessary, provide further direction to this work.
- It will be invited to adopt a Strategy on the Baltic Sea Region.
- On illegal immigration, it will take note of proposals and measures taken by the Commission since the European Council session in June 2009.

In addition, the European Council may have an exchange of views on a number of topics in the field of external relations.

The European Council meeting will be preceded by a Tripartite Social Summit where the heads of state or government and the employment ministers of Sweden, Spain and Belgium ("troika" of the current and the two subsequent presidencies) as well as the president of the European Commission and the commissioner for employment will meet with representatives of the main European social partners.

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