



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

GENERAL AFFAIRS



30.10.09

Reducing Administrative Burdens

COM(2009) 544 – Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament Action Programme for Reducing Administrative Burdens in the EU Sectoral Reduction Plans and 2009 Actions

In January 2007 the Commission presented an ambitious Action Programme to eliminate unnecessary administrative burdens on businesses in the EU. The Action Programme is an essential part of the Commission's overall Better Regulation Agenda – intervening where there is a need to do so, involving stakeholders fully, and keeping burdens on public authorities, businesses and citizens to the minimum necessary to achieve societal goals.

At the beginning of 2009, the Commission made a commitment to present Sectoral Reduction Plans for all 13 priority areas¹ and prepare additional measures to reduce administrative burdens before the end of its mandate in order to do everything within its competencies to achieve the 25 % target in 2012. Both aspects are covered in this Communication which provides an overview of achievements so far, lessons learned and steps ahead.

General Affairs Council Conclusions

26/10/2009

- The Council reached broad agreement on guidelines for the establishment of a European External Action Service (EEAS), to be submitted to the European Council for approval at its October meeting.
- It also endorsed an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region, which is intended to address common challenges faced by the countries of the region, including environmental and

¹ These are: Agriculture / Agricultural Subsidies; Annual Accounts / Company Law, Cohesion Policy, Environment, Financial Services, Fisheries, Food Safety, Pharmaceutical Legislation, Public Procurement, Statistics, Taxation / Customs, Transport, Working Environment



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economic challenges. The strategy is due to be adopted by the European Council at its October meeting.

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- The Council discussed the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in particular how the EU should further engage in the region. Following the debate, it adopted conclusions and an action plan which prioritise EU's policies and describe how to implement them.
- As regards Guinea, the Council adopted measures targeting the members of the CNDD (Conseil national pour la démocratie et le développement) and individuals associated with them, responsible for the violent crackdown or the political stalemate in the country. The Council also decided to impose an arms embargo.
- Furthermore, the Council decided not to renew the remaining restrictive measures with regard to Uzbekistan set out in common position 2008/843/CFSP with a view to encouraging the Uzbek authorities to take further substantive steps to improve the rule of law and the human rights situation on the ground.

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Statistics

Industrial new orders up by 2.0% in euro area and up by 1.2% in EU27 – 23/10/2009

In August 2009 compared with July 2009, the euro area¹ (EA16) industrial new orders index rose by 2.0%. In July the index increased by 3.0%. In the EU27¹ new orders grew by 1.2% in August 2009, after an increase of 1.6% in July. Excluding ships, railway & aerospace equipment, for which changes tend to be more volatile, industrial new orders, rose by 2.4% in the euro area and by 2.0% in the EU27.

In August 2009 compared with August 2008, industrial new orders decreased by 23.1% in the euro area and by 22.3% in the EU27. The total industry, excluding ships, railway and aerospace equipment dropped by 22.7% in the euro area and by 22.2% in the EU27.

These estimates are released by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities

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European Council – Presidency Conclusions

29/30th October 2009

Stressing that the Union needs rapid clarity on its institutional set up in order to be able to function effectively, the European Council looked forward to the rapid completion of the ratification process so that the Treaty enters into force by the end of the year. The European Council established the position of the EU with regards to the forthcoming Copenhagen Conference on climate change, which will allow the EU to play a constructive role during the final phase of the negotiation, particularly on key issues such as financing, technology transfer, adaptation, mitigation and good governance. The European Council took stock of the economic, financial and employment situation, stressing in particular the need to prepare a coordinated strategy for exiting from broad-based stimulus policies when recovery is secured. It adopted the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, which constitutes an integrated framework to address common challenges. It took stock of progress made on implementing measures regarding illegal immigration and called for further efforts to be made, in particular as concerns the enhancement of FRONTEX. Finally, the European Council addressed the situation in Afghanistan/Pakistan.

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

Other Matters

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 European Development Fund (EDF) provide for a new procedure for the calls for contributions to be paid by Member States to finance the EDF.

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



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the amount unpaid; the arrangements for the payment of interest are specified in the same Article.

Enlargement

COM (2009) 533 – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010

The present communication sets out the progress made and the key challenges faced by the countries engaged in the enlargement process. It outlines the Commission's approach to guiding and supporting their efforts in the coming year. In addition, in an accompanying document, the Commission sets out a path for Kosovo¹, to further progress towards integration with the EU, in line with the European perspective of the region.

COM (2009) 588 - Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)

An amendment has to be introduced to Annex II of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) by adding Iceland in the list of the potential candidate countries.

COM (2009) 595 – Communication from the Commission A financial package for the accession negotiations with Croatia

In its Communication of 5 November 2008 to the Council and the European Parliament "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008-2009"(COM(2008) 674 final), the Commission indicated that subject to Croatia maintaining overall progress in its preparations, the Commission will present a Communication in the course of 2009 on a financial package for the accession of Croatia.

Taking into account the overall progress achieved thus far by Croatia in the accession negotiations, this Communication provides the main elements of a financial package for Croatia so that the Council can debate these issues towards the end of 2009. On this basis, the Commission will subsequently present to the Council draft common positions for negotiations in the fields of agriculture and rural development, regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments and financial and budgetary provisions. This Communication at the same time provides an assessment of the financial impact of Croatia's accession in these policy areas.



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For the purposes of this Communication, the working hypothesis for the accession of Croatia in January 2012, which assumes the conditions of membership are met. This includes the required capacities for the management and control of Community financial instruments being in place. As the current financial framework covers the period 2007-2013, the financial package for Croatia covers the two-year period 2012-2013.

The Commission's proposals for Croatia outlined in section II are based on the existing *acquis* as well as on the principles and methodology underlying the financial packages developed for the negotiations with the twelve newest Member States. This includes a ten year phasing-in schedule for agricultural direct payments and a two-year phasing-in of expenditure for cohesion policy, rural development and the European Fisheries Fund. As there is currently no financial framework covering 2014, the assumed third year of accession, Croatia should be treated equally with other Member States for the still to be defined expenditure items in the financial framework from 2014. Figures provided in this Communication are expressed in current prices.

Regional Policy

[COM \(2009\) 590](#) - Report from the Commission Annual Report of the Instrument for Structural Policy for Pre-Accession (ISPA) 2008

Following the Brussels European Council in June 2004, which awarded *candidate country* status to Croatia, the country benefited from ISPA as of 1st January 2005. Croatia thus followed the previous ISPA beneficiary countries which received ISPA assistance from when the instrument was launched in 2000. On January 1st 2007 Bulgaria and Romania became members of the European Union and ceased being beneficiaries of pre-accession funding including ISPA. The accession of these two countries left Croatia as the only remaining recipient of ISPA funding. This report therefore only covers the ISPA activities carried out by Croatia.