



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy



10.12.09

TTE Council meet again on the 7th of December

The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council met again on the 7th December 2009. Ministers took note of the state of play concerning three proposals aimed at improving energy efficiency: directives on energy performance of buildings and on energy labelling, as well as a regulation on labelling of tyres.

In the context of the security of energy supply, the Council:

- took note of a progress report on the proposal for a regulation on the security of gas supply and hold a policy debate on that proposal;
- took note of a progress report on the proposal for a regulation concerning the notification to the Commission of investment projects in energy infrastructure within the European Community;
- hold an exchange of views concerning regulation 663/2009 establishing a programme to aid economic recovery by granting Community financial assistance to projects in the field of energy.

Ministers also had an exchange of views on the Commission communication "Investing in the Development of Low-Carbon Technologies (SET-Plan)".

Over lunch, the Presidency and the Commission informed ministers of recent developments in international relations in the field of energy.

In the margins of the Council, the following events took place:

- an Intergovernmental Conference of the representatives of the governments of the member states in order to formally adopt a decision concerning the seat of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), which will be located in Ljubljana;
 - the signature of the memorandum of understanding regarding the Central Eastern European Forum for Electricity Market Integration.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

For a full provisional version of the report please visit:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/trans/111791.pdf

Selection of offshore wind and carbon capture and storage projects for the European Energy Programme for Recovery



The origin of the European Energy Programme for Recovery (EPR) is the global €200 billion European Economic Recovery Plan presented by the Commission on 26 November 2008. The focus of the Plan is on containing the impact of the crisis: protecting jobs and purchasing power, boosting infrastructure and creating jobs in the low carbon sectors of the future. The Recovery Plan sets out how Member States and the European Union could coordinate their policies in order to provide new stimulus to the European economy and increase Union spending in strategic sectors. Investments in energy projects were considered an important tool to support the economic recovery. The Plan was

endorsed by the European Council in December 2008 where the Commission was invited to present a list of concrete energy projects.

The EPR Regulation, which established the EPR programme, was proposed by the Commission in January 2009, adopted in July and entered into force in August of the same year. The EPR proposed a significant Union contribution of almost €4 billion to co-finance specific energy projects within three sub-programmes: gas and electricity interconnections, offshore wind energy, and carbon capture and storage. It is expected that the EPR contributes to the recovery of European economy by responding to the key security and environmental challenges in the energy sector.

The EPR helps to speed up and secure investments in the energy sector, which will have a direct impact on the EU economy and employment. It will also help to improve the security of supply of the most vulnerable Member States and link 'energy islands' to the rest of the EU energy market. The EPR will also speed up the implementation of the 20/20/20 objectives for 2020, by supporting the deployment of innovative technologies in the fields of renewable energy and carbon capture and storage.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

More information on carbon capture projects, eligibility criteria and funding conditions can be found here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/543&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Telecoms: Commission endorses amended version of Austrian broadband access market definition

The European Commission has given its green light to the amended definition of the wholesale broadband access market (WBA) notified by the Austrian regulator RTR (Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs GmbH). On 5 October 2009, the Commission had expressed serious doubts about the market definition as originally notified by RTR on 3 September 2009. RTR has now provided sufficient evidence that mobile broadband connections are substitutes to fixed line broadband connections for Austrian residential customers. RTR has also modified its wholesale market definition and now excludes all bitstream access for residential customers from regulation. Nevertheless, the Commission invites RTR to closely monitor market developments and to change the market definition if its forecasts on the continued substitutability of fixed and mobile broadband products and next generation access network (NGA) roll-out prove to be incorrect.

Background

To avoid distortions of competition, WBA is currently regulated in almost all EU Member States by the national telecoms regulators (NRAs). Where an NRA determines that a relevant market is not effectively competitive, it shall identify operators with significant market power and impose appropriate regulatory obligations. NRAs are required to notify their regulatory proposals to the Commission and other national regulators under the so-called Article 7 consultation procedure. The Commission may make comments on notified draft measures and, after an in-depth investigation, require a regulator to withdraw a proposed measure due to lack of compatibility with EU law.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

Internet Access in Europe – Eurostat report

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. The 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.

Household internet access ranges from 30% in Bulgaria to 90% in the Netherlands. In 2009, the proportion of households with internet access was three quarters or more in the Netherlands (90%), Luxembourg (87%), Sweden (86%), Denmark (83%), Germany (79%), Finland (78%) and the United Kingdom (77%). The lowest shares were registered in Bulgaria (30%), Greece and Romania (both 38%).

The proportion of households with a broadband connection in 2009 was highest in Sweden (80%), the Netherlands (77%) and Denmark (76%). Almost 40% of individuals shop online.

Nearly three quarters of those aged 16-24 in the EU27 used the internet on average daily or almost daily in the first quarter of 2009, compared with nearly half of all individuals aged 16-74. The highest shares for those aged 16-24 were found in the Netherlands (90%), Denmark and Estonia (both 88%), Finland and Sweden (both 87%), and the lowest in Romania (41%), Greece (57%) and Ireland (58%).

In 2009, 37% of individuals aged 16-74 in the EU27 had bought or ordered goods or services over the internet in the last 12 months. This share varied considerably between Member States, ranging from 2% in Romania, 5% in Bulgaria and 8% in Lithuania to 66% in the United Kingdom, 64% in Denmark and 63% in the Netherlands and Sweden. In the EU27, 40% of men had ordered goods or services over the internet, compared with 34% of women. The share for men was higher than for women in almost all Member States.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

Commissioner Borg wins Greek Shipping Award for International Personality of the Year

On the 4th of December Joe Borg, EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, has won this year's Lloyd's List Greek Shipping Award for International Personality of the Year in recognition of his outstanding work over the past five years in shaping an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union. Mr Borg was praised for his contribution to raising public awareness of the shipping industry and his efforts to ensure that its unique features and economic importance are taken into account within the Integrated Maritime Policy. This is the third honour to have been bestowed upon Commissioner Borg in the past three months for his achievements in furthering the goals of the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy and Common Fisheries Policy.

The Greek Shipping Awards, launched by **Lloyd's List** – the maritime newspaper established in 1734 - in conjunction with the industry, are awarded each year in fifteen categories. The non-pecuniary International Personality of the Year Award honours public figures for their outstanding contributions to Greek shipping, or to the maritime industries in general, during the past twelve months. Commissioner Borg was selected by an independent judging panel from an extensive list of nominees. The awards ceremony will take place in Athens this evening.

Commissioner Borg's nomination for the International Personality of the Year of the Greek Shipping Awards comes just a month after he received the Kungsfenan Swedish Seafood Award for his vital work to make EU fisheries more sustainable. In October, he was also awarded the Elisabeth Mann Borgese prize from the Government of Schleswig-Holstein, for his efforts to contribute to the creation of an Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU.