



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



7332/10 (Presse 55)

PRESS RELEASE

3001st Council meeting

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Brussels, 11-12 March 2010

President

Mr José Blanco López
Minister of Public Works of Spain
Mr Pedro Luis Marín Uribe
Secretary of State for Energy

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7332/10 (Presse 55)

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Main results of the Council

*On **transport**, the Council agreed a general approach on a draft directive on **transportable pressure equipment** and a draft regulation on **investigation and prevention of accidents and incidents** in civil aviation.*

*It reviewed progress in the **second-stage air services negotiations with the United States**.*

*Moreover, the Council adopted, without discussion, its positions at first reading on proposals for regulations on **rights of ship passengers and of bus and coach passengers**.*

*On **energy**, the Council*

- reached a political agreement on the proposal for a Council regulation concerning the **notification to the Commission of investment projects in energy infrastructure** within the European Union;*
- adopted conclusions on the **Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan)**;*
- heard a presentation from the Commission of its communication "**EUROPE 2020**" and held an exchange of views on energy issues on the basis of that communication, in order to prepare its contribution to the European Council of 25 and 26 March;*

Over lunch, Ministers discussed the Commission's work programme on energy with the new Energy Commissioner, Günther Oettinger.

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- 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.

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PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Mr Etienne SCHOUPPE

State Secretary for Mobility, attached to the Prime Minister

Mr Paul MAGNETTE

Minister for Climate and Energy

Bulgaria:

Mr Alexander TSVETKOV

Minister for Transport, Information Technology and Communications

Mr Traicho TRAIKOV

Minister for the Economy, Energy and Tourism

Czech Republic:

Mr Gustáv SLAMEČKA

Minister for Transport

Denmark:

Mr Hans Christian SCHMIDT

Minister for Transport

Ms Lykke FRIIS

Minister for Climate and Energy and Minister for Gender Equality

Germany:

Mr Peter RAMSAUER

Federal Minister for Transport, Building and Urban Development

Mr Jochen HOMANN

State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology

Estonia:

Mr Juhan PARTS

Minister for Economic Affairs and Communications

Ireland:

Mr Eamon RYAN

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Greece:

Mr Dimitris REPPAS

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Networks

Mr Yannis MANIATIS

Deputy Minister for Energy

Spain:

Mr José BLANCO LÓPEZ

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

Mr Pedro Luis MARÍN URIBE

State Secretary for Energy

Ms Concepción GUTIÉRREZ DEL CASTILLO

State Secretary for Transport, Ministry of Public Works

France:

Mr Philippe LEGLISE-COSTA

Deputy Permanent Representative

Italy:

Mr Claudio SCAJOLA

Minister for Economic Development

Cyprus:

Mr Constantinos CHRISTOFIDIS

Attaché, Permanent Representation

Latvia:

Mr Arturs BERGHOLCS

Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Communications

Lithuania:

Mr Arvydas SEKMOKAS

Minister for Energy

Mr Rimvydas VASTAKAS

Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications

Luxembourg:

Mr Claude WISELER

Minister for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Hungary:

Mr Lajos CSEPI

State Secretary, Ministry of Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Malta:

Mr George PULLICINO

Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Camiel EURLINGS

Minister for Transport, Public Works and Water
Management**Austria:**

Ms Doris BURES

Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation and
Technology

Mr Reinhold MITTERLEHNER

Minister for Economic Affairs, the Family and Youth

Poland:

Mr Marcin KOROLEC

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economic Affairs

Mr Radosław STĘPIEŃ

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure

Portugal:

Mr José Carlos ZORRINHO

State Secretary for Energy and Innovation

Romania:

Mr Adrian VIDEANU

Minister for Economic Affairs, Trade and the Business
Environment

Mr Constantin DASCALU

State Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure

Slovenia:

Mr Patrik VLAČIČ

Minister for Transport

Slovakia:

Mr Milan MOJŠ

State Secretary, Ministry of Transport, Post and
Telecommunications

Mr Luboš HALÁK

State Secretary, Ministry of the Economy

Finland:

Ms Riina NEVAMÄKI

State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs

Sweden:

Ms Maud OLOFSSON

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Enterprise and
Energy

Ms Åsa TORSTENSSON

Minister for Infrastructure

United Kingdom:

Mr Andy LEBRECHT

Deputy Permanent Representative

Commission:

Mr Siim KALLAS

Vice-President

Mr Günther OETTINGER

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

TRANSPORTABLE PRESSURE EQUIPMENT

The Council reached a general approach, pending the European Parliament's position at first reading, with regard to a draft directive on transportable pressure equipment ([6856/10](#)).

However, the issue of the procedural provisions on delegation of powers to the Commission for implementing acts is still open and will be further discussed during the negotiations with the European Parliament on the text.

The draft legislation is a revision of directive 1999/36 on the same subject which was adopted in order to enhance transport safety for such equipment and to ensure its free movement in a single transport market. The text contains rules on the obligations of the different economic operators, the conformity of the equipment, and inspection and monitoring bodies and their mutual recognition.

The purpose of the revision is to update and streamline the provisions of the 1999 directive in the light of recent EU and international legislative developments, in particular directive 2008/68 on the inland transport of dangerous goods as well as regulation 765/2008 and decision 768/2008, which set the framework for the marketing of products in the single European market. This will eliminate conflicting rules and simplify the regulatory framework, especially as regards conformity assessment procedures, without substantially modifying the scope or measures provided for by the existing directive.

As a consequence of this revision, several directives relating to pressure equipment will be repealed.

The Commission submitted its proposal in September 2009 ([13566/09](#)). The Council intends to reach an early agreement with the European Parliament so that the two institutions can adopt the text at first reading.

AVIATION SECURITY CHARGES

The Council took note of a progress report on a proposal for a directive establishing common principles for the levying of security charges at EU airports ([6439/10](#)).

The common framework proposed is designed to guarantee non-discrimination and transparency, to give adequate scope for consultation regarding the level of the security charges and to ensure that they are directly related to the cost of providing aviation security. Furthermore, an independent supervisory authority should be established in each Member State to ensure correct application of the directive.

The state of play on this proposal has not changed much since the last progress report presented to the Council at its December meeting (see press release [17456/09](#)). The Council therefore agreed to await the European Parliament's position at first reading, which is likely to be adopted in April 2010, and invited its preparatory bodies to resume examination once the European Parliament has voted on the proposal.

The key issue where positions differ is still the scope of the proposed legislation. Under the original Commission proposal, the directive would apply to all EU airports. Several member states, however, favour limiting the scope to airports whose annual passenger traffic exceeds a certain threshold. Whilst a threshold of five million passenger movements would be acceptable for a majority of delegations, a number of member states would prefer to include all commercial airports or to lower the threshold. As a compromise, the Spanish presidency suggested a threshold of two million passenger movements, but that proposal was opposed by a majority of member states, which fear that lowering the threshold might entail a major administrative burden.

The provisions on impact assessment and cost-relatedness as well as a possible exemption from the obligation to have an independent supervisory authority are also issues still under discussion.

The Commission submitted its proposal in May 2009 ([9864/09](#)) in response to a commitment it made to the European Parliament in 2007 during the negotiations leading to the adoption of framework regulation 300/2008 on aviation security.

INVESTIGATION AND PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS IN CIVIL AVIATION

The Council agreed on a general approach, pending the European Parliament's position at first reading, concerning a draft regulation on investigation and prevention of accidents and incidents in civil aviation ([7085/10](#)).

The overall objective of the draft regulation is to ensure that safety investigations are carried out expeditiously and to the highest standards in order to prevent future accidents, without apportioning blame or liability. To this end, current informal cooperation among national safety investigation authorities will be transformed into a European network of civil aviation safety investigation authorities. The cooperation thus strengthened will be complemented by a set of compulsory rules for safety investigations.

Discussing the draft regulation, the delegations that still had reservations on some issues were able to lift them. However, some member states pointed out that certain issues, such as the relationship between safety investigations and judicial investigations, would need to be further discussed in the course of negotiations with the European Parliament on the text. Moreover, the Commission considers that the obligation to investigate should also cover serious incidents involving smaller aircraft and intends to bring up this issue in the forthcoming discussions with the Parliament.

As regards the time limit for making available the list of persons on board an aircraft when an accident occurs, the Council agreed that such a list should be produced as soon as possible, but at the latest within two hours after the accident so that relatives of persons on board can be informed without delay.

The network to be established will be composed of the heads of the civil aviation safety investigation authorities or their representatives and be chaired by one of its members for a mandate of three years. Its purpose is to contribute to better implementation of EU civil aviation investigation legislation and enhanced availability of investigation capacity throughout the Union. Cooperation through the network includes exchange of information, promotion of best practices, sharing of resources and provision of assistance. The network will also facilitate cooperation with the Commission and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). It will have an advisory and coordination role and will not have the status of a new EU body. Responsibility for safety investigations will rest with the national authorities.

As regards the conduct of safety investigations, the draft regulation includes in particular the following common requirements:

- every accident has to be investigated by an independent body, that is, the safety investigation authority of the member state in which the accident occurred; such an investigation also has to be undertaken in the case of a serious incident involving aircraft with a maximum take-off mass of over 2250 kg;
- the state of registry, the state of the operator, the state of design and the state of manufacture of the aircraft concerned will be invited to designate accredited representatives to participate in the safety investigation
- the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) should, when appropriate, be invited to appoint a representative to participate as an advisor in investigations under the control and at the discretion of the national authority in charge;
- coordination has to be ensured between safety investigations and possible judicial investigations instituted in parallel.

The text sets out the rights and obligations of safety investigators and provides for protection of sensitive information and procedures for follow-up of safety recommendations issued as a result of the investigations. It also contains provisions on assistance to victims and their families.

The proposed regulation is designed to upgrade and modernise the existing EU legal framework in this field. It will replace directive 94/56, which laid the foundations of the European investigation and prevention system in civil aviation.

The Commission submitted its proposal ([15469/09](#)) in October 2009.

SECOND-STAGE AIR SERVICES NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

The Council was briefed by the Commission on the state of play of the negotiations on a second-stage air services agreement with the United States, which is to further develop the EU-US "Open Skies" agreement signed in 2007 and provisionally applied since March 2008.

The seventh and latest round of negotiations took place in Madrid on 15-17 February 2010. The Council welcomed the significant progress achieved in that round in areas such as environmental protection, labour standards, competition rules and reciprocal recognition of regulatory decisions. In previous rounds common ground had already been found in particular on aviation security issues and on the management of the agreement.

The Council reiterated that it is important to achieve a new transport agreement in 2010. It noted, however, that some obstacles still need to be overcome. Ministers underlined in particular the importance of opening further transatlantic investment opportunities for the airline industry. The Council urged the Commission to continue negotiations.

A further round of negotiations is to be held on 23-25 March in Brussels, with the aim of reaching agreement on the outstanding issues.

The 2007 "Open Skies" agreement established a framework for regulatory cooperation with the US and brought new commercial freedoms for airline operators. However, it did not fully open access to the US domestic market. It therefore included a roadmap for further negotiations, which were initiated in May 2008.

NOTIFICATION OF INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Council reached political agreement on this proposal ([6687/10](#)) which establishes a common framework for the notification by member states of data and information on investment projects in energy infrastructure in the oil, natural gas, electricity (including from renewable sources), and bio-fuel sectors, and on investment projects related to the capture and storage of carbon dioxide. More and better data on planned investments will contribute to drawing up a clear and complete picture of development and needs of energy infrastructure in the Union and subsequently allow for the anticipation of potential risks and for better coordination between member states concerned and at Community level.

This regulation constitutes an important link in the Union's energy policy instruments, taking into account the changing nature of the energy structure within and outside the Community, the increasing inflow of energy from renewable sources from a growing number of producers and recurring supply problems, the security of energy supply, the completion of the internal market and the transition towards a low-carbon economy.

Reporting under this regulation will concern projects on which construction has started or on which a final investment decision has been taken; in addition, member states may report on projects on which construction work is scheduled to start in five years or which are scheduled to be decommissioned within three years. As regards all existing energy infrastructure in operation, only the total volume of installed production, transmission and storage capacities has to be reported. The Commission is preparing a notification template which will be presented at a later stage.

The current proposal is a follow-up to the Action Plan 2007-09 on Energy Policy for Europe¹ and to the Second Strategic Energy Review²: the Commission and the member states had been invited to identify investment required to satisfy EU strategic needs in relation to gas and electricity supply and demand. Consultation of the European Parliament was optional but the Council has included amendments from Parliament in the text.

¹ [7224/07](#), Annex I.

² [6692/09](#)

INVESTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOW-CARBON TECHNOLOGIES (SET-PLAN) - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan) ([6688/10](#) + [6688/10 COR 1](#)), on the basis of the Commission communication "Investing in the Development of Low Carbon Technologies" ([14230/09](#)), presented at the TTE (Energy) Council in December 2009.

The SET Plan will contribute to accelerating the development and widespread application of clean, sustainable and efficient energy technologies, while promoting the EU leadership in the Research & Development areas concerned, as well as the EU's competitiveness and security of supply. These technologies will also make it possible to achieve the EU's ambitious energy and climate goals for 2020 (at least quadrupling the global investments in energy R&D, in particular in the area of renewable energy and energy efficiency), as well as the EU's intention to make the transition to a low-carbon economy by 2050.

The implementation of the SET Plan has progressed well: the European Industrial Initiatives (EII)¹, have developed their Technology Roadmaps (2010-2020) and are working towards the establishment of effective European programmes, the European Energy Research Alliance (EERA) is ready to launch its first research activities and the Smart Cities initiative is being developed. All identified EIIs should be launched by 2011 at the latest and already in 2010 those EIIs that demonstrate their maturity, as well as their cost-effectiveness.

¹ The European wind initiative, the solar Europe initiative, the European electricity grid initiative, the sustainable bio-energy Europe initiative, the European CO₂ capture, transport and storage initiative, the sustainable nuclear fission initiative, and the initiative on fuel cells and hydrogen.

**PREPARATION OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON 25 AND 26 OF MARCH 2010:
EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND JOBS**

Ministers heard the presentation of the Commission's communication "EUROPE 2020" ([7110/10](#)) by Commissioner Oettinger.

One of the "EUROPE 2020" three priority areas is promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy, which includes achieving the EU's climate/energy goals. Concerning energy, the "Resource efficient Europe" is one of seven flagship initiatives put forward by the Commission and it aims at dissociating economic growth from the use of resources, including energy resources, supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy, increasing the use of energy from renewable sources, modernising the transport sector and promoting energy efficiency.

The Communication was well received by ministers and constituted the background for the exchange of views, in the framework of the two questions prepared by the presidency:

1. How can European energy policy, and in particular the development of energy infrastructure - as established in the Second Strategic Energy Review -, contribute to stronger economic growth and more job creation in Europe?
2. How - in practical terms - can the TTE (Energy) Council contribute to the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs?

Ministers considered that an Energy Policy for Europe should be based on the three pillars of competitiveness, security of supply and sustainability. The TTE (Energy) Council had a crucial role in actively supporting the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Several of the actions listed under the flagship initiative "Resource efficient Europe" already match Council priorities regarding infrastructure, in particular, completion of the internal market, revision of the Energy Efficiency Action Plan, investing in energy efficient buildings, integrating renewable energy into the grid (smart grids and super-grids), promoting hybrid and electric cars.

Investment in energy infrastructure is all closely linked with energy security and therefore a clear, energy cooperation policy should be established, making full use of EU financial instruments so as to establish public-private partnerships. The internal market should also constitute a means for making affordable energy available to individuals and businesses.

The transition to a low-carbon economy on the one hand requires significant R&D development, and on the other hand, the new skills and human resources needed to the deployment of renewable energy will foster job creation or conversion, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses and other small-scale organisations throughout the EU. The use of information and communications technology will in turn require training, another component of the EU 2020 strategy.

The implementation of these policies by the Commission will have to be carried out in a consistent and carefully scheduled manner, focusing on initiatives with a clear European added value, both at internal and external level, and should be centred on three areas: physical capital (infrastructure); technological capital (low-carbon, renewable energy), human capital (education).

On the basis of the debate, the presidency drew conclusions which will be conveyed to the European Council via the General Affairs Council.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

TRANSPORT

Single European Sky conference

The Council took note of information provided by the presidency on the results of the Single European Sky conference held in Madrid on 25-26 February 2010. The conference, jointly organised by the Spanish presidency and the Commission, brought together policy makers and representatives of the aviation sector to discuss the roadmap towards implementing the second legislative package under the Single European Sky initiative.

In their final conclusions ([6708/10](#)), the participants in the conference underlined the importance of the goals of the initiative, that is, cutting the cost and reducing the environmental impact of flying, increasing capacity and further improving safety. They stressed that in order to reach these goals it is urgent, in particular, to achieve enhanced performance of air traffic management, improved governance, deployment of SESAR, the technological pillar of European air traffic management, as well as adequate social dialogue and training of staff.

Informal Transport Council

The Spanish presidency briefed ministers on the outcome of the informal transport Council meeting held in La Coruña on 12 February 2010 ([7118/10](#)). The meeting focused on two main topics: urban mobility, on which the presidency intends to submit draft conclusions to the Transport Council at its next meeting in June; and civil aviation security, in particular the issue of body scanners, which could be one of the possible options in the framework of a common EU strategy in this field. The Commission will present a report on the use of new technologies in security control in April.

International Transport Forum

The German delegation informed the Council about the forthcoming International Transport Forum (ITF) to be held in Leipzig on 26-28 May 2010 ([6648/10](#)). Transport ministers from 52 ITF member states will discuss with representatives from science and industry the topic "transport and innovation - unleashing the potential".

The Cypriot delegation noted that Cyprus, which is not yet a member of the ITF, had requested to be granted the status of observer at the annual ITF meetings.

The ITF is a global platform for transport, logistics and mobility issues in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The German city of Leipzig has been established as the permanent venue for its annual meeting.

Train accident in Buizingen (Belgium)

The Council took note of information provided by the Commission and Belgium on the train accident which took place in Buizingen (Belgium) on 15 February 2010. Belgium pointed out that investigations are still ongoing to establish the causes of the accident. In this context, the Commission highlighted the importance of timely deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS).

Trans-European transport network ministerial conference

The Council took note of information from the presidency and the Commission regarding the annual ministerial conference on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) ([7288/10](#)). This year's conference, organised jointly by the Spanish presidency and the Commission in Zaragoza on 8-9 June, will focus on the methods to be employed for drawing up the future TEN-T planning and implementation framework. The funding strategy and the external dimension of Europe's transport networks will also be discussed.

EU measures planned to promote electric mobility

The presidency briefed ministers on the results of the debate on electric vehicles held at the informal meeting of the Competitiveness Council in San Sebastián on 9 February 2010 ([7119/10](#)). It also informed them on the outcome of discussions related to this topic at the regular Competitiveness Council meeting on 1 and 2 March in Brussels.

Several member states have already started actions to promote e-vehicles. In San Sebastián, ministers agreed on concerted action, in particular as regards standardisation, support for research, incentive measures, upgrading of electricity production capacity and coordination. At the Council meeting on 1 and 2 March, ministers invited the Commission to present an action plan for clean and energy-efficient vehicles, including fully electric cars and plug-in hybrids.

ENERGY

Informal energy ministerial meeting

The presidency informed the Council on the outcome of the meeting in Seville, on 15-16 January 2010, on the basis of information contained in document [6689/10](#).

International relations in the energy field between Russia and Ukraine

Commissioner Oettinger informed the Council on the state of play concerning relations between Russia and Ukraine in the energy field, on the basis of an information note ([6690/10](#)).

Report on the internal gas and electricity market (2009)

Commissioner Oettinger presented to the Council the Commission's annual report on the functioning of the internal market for gas and electricity ([7474/10](#)), summarised in an information note ([6691/10](#)).

Visegrad Group Energy Security Summit

The Hungarian minister briefed the Council on the outcome of the Visegrad Group (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) Energy Security Summit that was held in Budapest, on 24 February 2010, on the basis of an information note ([6954/10](#)).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

TRANSPORT

First-reading positions on rights of ship and bus and coach passengers*

The Council adopted its positions at first reading on two proposals for regulations aimed at improving the rights of ship passengers ([14849/09](#) + [6979/1/10 ADD 1 REV 1](#)) and of bus and coach passengers ([5218/3/10 REV 3](#) + [6978/10 ADD 1](#)). It also adopted the corresponding statements of the Council's reasons ([14849/3/09 REV 3 ADD 1](#) and [5218/3/10 REV 3 ADD 1](#)). The positions will now be transmitted to the European Parliament for a second reading.

Both proposals lay down rules, adapted to their specific field of application, on non-discrimination and assistance to disabled persons or persons with reduced mobility. With regard to all categories of passengers, the texts contain in particular provisions on passengers' rights in the event of delays or cancellations, information to be provided to passengers and handling of complaints. In addition, the proposal on bus and coach passengers' rights provides for compensation for death or injury as well as for loss of or damage to luggage in the event of accidents.

The two proposals form part of a general EU policy to ensure equal treatment of passengers, irrespective of the mode of transport chosen, while reinforcing passenger rights, with particular attention paid to non-discrimination against persons with disabilities or reduced mobility. Similar legislation has already been adopted for passengers travelling by air or by rail.

Political agreement had been reached on the ship passengers' rights regulation on 9 October 2009, and on the bus and coach regulation on 17 December 2009.

Tests for motor vehicles - Road-safety - Comitology procedure

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a directive adapting to technical progress directive 2009/40/EC, in order to improve motor vehicle roadworthiness testing in the EU ([5841/10](#) and [6286/10 ADD 1](#)).

EU position on the Interbus agreement

The Council adopted the European Union's position as regards the management of and the applicable rules under the Interbus agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus ([6087/10](#)).

The position includes three elements:

- the rules of procedure of the joint committee responsible for the management of the agreement and representing all its contracting parties;
- adaptation of the lists of applicable rules in order to take account of new EU legislation adopted since the entry into force of the agreement; those rules concern the conditions applying to road passenger transport operators, the technical standards applying to buses and coaches (e.g. roadworthiness tests, recording equipment, emissions) and social provisions;
- a recommendation that the non-EU contracting parties should use a technical report for coaches and buses in order to facilitate monitoring of the application of the technical standards set in the agreement.

Those elements will be submitted to the joint committee for adoption.

The Interbus agreement entered into force on 1 January 2003. Its contracting parties are the EU, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and Turkey. Its main objective is the liberalisation of passenger transport. The joint committee in charge of the implementation of the agreement meets at least once every five years.

Cooperation agreement on satellite navigation between the EU and Norway

The Council adopted a decision on the signing of a cooperation agreement on satellite navigation between the EU and Norway and its provisional application. This agreement aims to settle the principles of cooperation and the rights and obligations of Norway in relevant areas that are not covered by the existing Galileo acquis.

RESEARCH**EU/Faroe Islands agreement on scientific and technological cooperation**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the signature and provisional application of an agreement on scientific and technological cooperation with the Faroe Islands, associating this country in the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research 2007-2013 ([5475/10](#)).

EXTERNAL RELATIONS**Status of the "EUTM Somalia" mission - negotiations with Uganda**

The Council authorised the High Representative, assisted by the General Secretariat of the Council, to open negotiations pursuant to Article 37 TEU and Article 218 TFEU in order to conclude an agreement between the EU and the Republic of Uganda on the Status of the European Union-led Forces in Uganda.

Arms control activities in the Western Balkans

The Council adopted a decision in support of arms control activities of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) in the Western Balkans. This decision is focused on the destruction of small arms and light weapons (SALW), the improvement of stockpile management and the collection and registration of weapons.

ENVIRONMENT**CITES conference on endangered species (March 2010)**

The Council adopted the EU position on proposals submitted to the 15th conference of the parties to the Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES), to take place in Doha, Qatar, from 13 to 25 March 2010.

The decision aims to preserve biodiversity by restricting international commerce in endangered species in the framework of CITES. The EU position on the proposed amendments of CITES is based on the conservation status of the species in question. It supports greater focus on the effective enforcement of CITES controls in order to reduce poaching and illegal trade.

In particular, the EU is concerned by the poor conservation status of Atlantic bluefin tuna, for which it supports a ban on international trade, provided that a number of conditions are fulfilled in order to ensure a viable future for fishermen affected by the new measures.

The EU remains opposed to a resumption of commercial ivory trade unless adequate mechanisms ensure that this will not increase the illegal killing of elephants. The EU encourages all elephant range states to cooperate in the conservation and management of the species.

Moreover, it considers that climate change and the habitat loss resulting from reduced sea ice constitute the main threat affecting polar bears. In this light, measures to address climate change, as proposed by the EU in ongoing international negotiations, will be essential and more appropriate in limiting the decline of the population of the species.

The EU proposes that tighter controls of commerce in corals enter into force with a delay of 18 months while it will consider how to alleviate possible consequences on artisans within the EU.
