



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



6945/08 (Presse 40)

**PROVISIONAL VERSION**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

2850th Council meeting

**General Affairs and External Relations**

## **GENERAL AFFAIRS**

Brussels, 18 February 2008

President            **Mr Dimitrij Rupel,**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia

\* The 2851st meeting on External Relations is the subject of a separate press release (6946/08).

# **P R E S S**

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6945/08 (Presse 40)

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**EN**

## **Main results of the Council**

*The Council approved updated accession partnerships with **Turkey** and the Former Yugoslav Republic of **Macedonia** and the updates of similar partnerships with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.*

*It also approved the extension of the mandates of five EU **special representatives**, in the Middle East, Afghanistan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the South Caucasus.*

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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 Karel DE GUCHT Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Bulgaria:**

Mr Ivailo KALFIN Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Czech Republic:**

Mr Alexandr VONDRA Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for European Affairs

Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Denmark:**

Mr Per Stig MØLLER Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Michael ZILMER-JOHN State Secretary for Foreign and Security Policy, EU Policy and EU Coordination

**Germany:**

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Günter GLOSER Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Estonia:**

Mr Urmas PAET Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Ireland:**

Mr Dermot AHERN Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Greece:**

Ms Dora BAKOYANNI Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Ioannis VALINAKIS State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

**Spain:**

Mr. Miguel Ángel MORATINOS Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Mr Albert NAVARRO GONZÁLEZ State Secretary for the European Union

**France:**

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

Mr Jean-Pierre JOUYET Minister of State for European Affairs

**Italy:**

Mr Massimo D'ALEMA Minister for Foreign Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister

**Cyprus:**

Ms Erato KOZAKOU-MARCOULLIS Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Latvia:**

Mr Māris RIEKSTIŅŠ Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Lithuania:**

Mr Petras VAITIEKŪNAS Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Žygimantas PAVILIONIS Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with responsibility for EU affairs

**Luxembourg:**

Mr Jean ASSELBORN Deputy Prime Minister, Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

**Hungary:**

Ms Kinga GÖNCZ Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Malta:**

Mr. Richard CACHIA CARUANA Permanent Representative

**Netherlands:**

Mr Maxime VERHAGEN Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Frans TIMMERMANS Minister for European Affairs

**Austria:**

Ms Ursula PLASSNIK

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

**Poland:**

Mr Radosław SIKORSKI  
Mr Mikołaj DOWGIELEWICZ

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Secretary of the Committee for European Integration,  
Secretary of State of the Office of the Committee for  
European Integration, Deputy Chairman of the European  
Committee of the Council of Ministers

**Portugal:**

Mr Luís AMADO  
Mr Manuel LOBO ANTUNES

Ministro de Estado, Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary for European Affairs, attached to the  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Romania:**

Mr Adrian CIOROIANU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Slovenia:**

Mr Dimitrij RUPEL  
Mr Janez LENARČIČ

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary at the Government Office for European  
Affairs

**Slovakia:**

Mr Ján KUBIŠ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Finland:**

Mr Ilkka KANERVA  
Ms Astrid THORS

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Migration and European Affairs

**Sweden:**

Mr Carl BILDT  
Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for European Affairs

**United Kingdom:**

Mr David MILIBAND

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

.....  
**Commission:**

Ms Margot WALLSTRÖM

Vice President

.....  
**General Secretariat of the Council:**

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

**ITEMS DEBATED**

**PREPARATION OF THE SPRING MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL**

The Council examined an annotated draft agenda prepared by the presidency for the spring meeting of the European Council, to be held in Brussels on 13 and 14 March. (6259/08)

The European Council will focus on:

- the launch of a new three-year cycle of the EU's strategy for growth and jobs, for the 2008-10 period;
- an integrated climate change and energy policy;
- the stability of financial markets.

As regards the growth and jobs, the main accent of the new three-year cycle will be on implementation and delivery of reforms, given that the strategy is now considered to be delivering on its objectives. The current priorities – knowledge and innovation, employment, the business environment and energy and climate change – continue to be valid. And whilst evolving challenges need to be addressed, economic and employment guidelines are seen not to need an overhaul.

The annotated draft agenda will serve as the basis for draft European Council conclusions to be prepared by the presidency and submitted to the permanent representatives committee.

The European Council will also review the international situation if necessary.

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

**EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

**EU special representatives - Extension of mandates**

The Council adopted joint actions extending, with some amendments, the mandates of five EU special representatives (EUSRs).

The joint actions extend the mandates of:

- Marc Otte, EUSR for the Middle East peace process, until 28 February 2009 (5484/08).

The mandate is also adjusted to the role the EUSR has been assigned in relation to the EU police mission in the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) and to the EU border assistance mission for the Rafah crossing point (EU BAM Rafah), in line with the new command and control structure for EU civilian crisis management operations.

- Francesc Vendrell, EUSR for Afghanistan, until 31 May 2008 (5302/08)

As Mr Vendrell is not available to serve as EUSR beyond that date, the Council is expected to appoint a new EUSR for the remaining period of the mandate until 28 February 2009.

- Erwan Fouéré, EUSR in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, until 28 February 2009 (5090/08).
- Miroslav Lajčák, EUSR in Bosnia and Herzegovina, until 28 February 2009 (5212/08).
- Peter Semneby, EUSR for the South Caucasus, until 28 February 2009 (5384/08).

**Zimbabwe - Restrictive measures and suspension of aid**

The Council adopted a common position renewing restrictive measures against Zimbabwe for a further year, until 20 February 2009 (5886/08).

The restrictive measures, first introduced in February 2002, consist of a ban on entry into the EU and a freeze on financial assets for individuals who engage in activities that seriously undermine democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Zimbabwe. An embargo on the supply of arms and equipment intended for military operations is also in force.

The Council also adopted a decision extending for 12 months the suspension of support to Zimbabwe under the European development fund, given that essential provisions of the ACP-EU partnership agreement continue to be violated by the Zimbabwean government.

Support remains suspended in all areas except those in direct support of the Zimbabwean population, reorientation of support in favour of social sectors, democratisation, respect for human rights and the rule of law. The signing of new EDF support also remains suspended.

The suspension of support was first decided in 2002, subsequent to consultations under the ACP-EU partnership agreement.

### **Relations with Moldova - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council notes the positive dynamics in EU-Republic of Moldova relations over the past 12 months, as witnessed by the entry into force of the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements on 1 January 2008, the opening of a Common Visa Application Centre in Chisinau in April 2007 and the initial contacts between the Commission and the Republic of Moldova with a view to exploring the possibilities for agreeing a pilot mobility partnership within the framework of the global approach to migration. The Council underlines EU efforts to contribute to the conflict settlement in Transnistria, and notes the effective engagement of the EUSR for Moldova in the region and the prolongation of the mandate of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) for another two years from 1 December 2007. The Council welcomes the active alignment by the Republic of Moldova with CFSP Declarations and looks forward to the entry into force on 1 March 2008 of the Regulation on granting additional autonomous trade preferences for the Republic of Moldova.

The EU attaches great importance to further strengthening the relationship, and to ensuring the continuation of the process of political and economic reforms in the Republic of Moldova. The Council welcomes the progress made by the Republic of Moldova in the implementation of the ENP Action Plan over the last three years. However, further and continuous efforts are needed in order to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of the media, *inter alia* in the run-up to the parliamentary elections, and to reinforce the fight against corruption, as well as to improve the investment climate, in particular the transparency and predictability of the regulatory framework. In the light of the above, the full respect of the EU-Moldova Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the ENP Action Plan, notably their investment-related provisions, are of utmost importance.

The Council looks forward to the Commission's Progress Report foreseen for April 2008, which will provide a good opportunity to further evaluate the situation. On the basis of sustained progress in Action Plan implementation, the EU is ready to start reflection on a new agreement with the Republic of Moldova going beyond the PCA."

### **Albania - European partnership**

The Council adopted a decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the EU's European partnership with Albania (5347/08).

The decision is based on regulation 533/2004 on the establishment of partnerships in the framework of the stabilisation and association process for the Western Balkans. It updates the current partnership, identifying renewed priorities for further work on the basis of the findings of the Commission's 2007 progress report on Albania's preparations for further integration with the EU.

The European partnership is a key feature of the pre-accession strategy, identifying new as well as remaining priorities for action and providing guidance for financial assistance.

The decision repeals decision 2006/54/EC.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina - European partnership**

The Council adopted a decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the EU's European partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina (5349/08).

The decision is based on regulation 533/2004 on the establishment of partnerships in the framework of the stabilisation and association process for the Western Balkans. It updates the current partnership, identifying renewed priorities for further work on the basis of the findings of the Commission's 2007 progress report on Bosnia and Herzegovina's preparations for further integration with the EU.

The European partnership is a key feature of the pre-accession strategy, identifying new as well as remaining priorities for action and providing guidance for financial assistance.

The decision repeals decision 2006/55/EC.

### **Serbia - European partnership**

The Council adopted a decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the EU's European partnership with Serbia<sup>1</sup> (5353/08).

The decision is based on regulation 533/2004 on the establishment of partnerships in the framework of the stabilisation and association process for the Western Balkans. It updates the current partnership, identifying renewed priorities for further work on the basis of the findings of the Commission's 2007 progress report on Serbia's and Kosovo's (as defined by UNSCR 1244), preparations for further integration with the EU.

The European partnership is a key feature of the pre-accession strategy, identifying new as well as remaining priorities for action and providing guidance for financial assistance.

The decision repeals decision 2006/56/EC.

### **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Stabilisation and association agreement**

The Council adopted a decision approving the signing of a protocol to the stabilisation and association agreement with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in order to take into account the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU (6244/08).

## **EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY**

### **Palestinian territories - EU police mission**

The Council adopted a decision allocating EUR 5 million to EUPOL COPPS, the EU's police mission for the Palestinian territories, as from 1 March to 31 December 2008 (5841/08).

The decision implements joint action 2005/797/CFSP.

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<sup>1</sup> including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999.

EUPOL COPPS (EU police co-ordinating office for Palestinian police support) is aimed at facilitating the establishment of sustainable and effective policing arrangements under Palestinian ownership, in accordance with best international standards.

For more information on EUPOL COPPS, see : <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eupol-copps>

## **ENLARGEMENT**

### **Croatian ecological and fisheries protection zone - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council recalls its conclusions of December 2007, calling on Croatia to fully respect the agreement of 4 June 2004 and not to apply any aspect of the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone to the EU Member States until a common agreement in the EU spirit is found. The Council calls again on Croatia to live up to its commitments in this regard. The Council will return to this matter at a forthcoming meeting and invites the Commission to continue its dialogue with the Croatian authorities and report back to the Council. "

### **Accession partnership with Turkey**

The Council adopted a decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the EU's accession partnership with Turkey (5815/08).

The decision is based on regulation 390/2001 on assistance to Turkey in the framework of the pre-accession partnership, and on establishment of the accession partnership. It updates the current partnership, identifying renewed priorities for further work on the basis of the progress expected in the implementation of short-term priorities for further integration with the EU.

The accession partnership is a key feature of the pre-accession strategy, identifying new as well as remaining priorities for action and providing guidance for financial assistance.

The decision repeals decision 2006/35/EC.

### **Accession partnership with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

The Council adopted a decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the EU's accession partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (5351/08).

The decision is based on regulation 533/2004 on the establishment of partnerships in the framework of the stabilisation and association process for the Western Balkans. It updates the current partnership, identifying renewed priorities for further work on the basis of the findings of the Commission's 2007 progress report on FYROM's preparations for further integration with the EU.

The accession partnership is a key feature of the pre-accession strategy, identifying new as well as remaining priorities for action and providing guidance for financial assistance.

The decision repeals decision 2006/57/EC.

### **DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

#### **European development fund committee - Rules of procedure**

The Council approved a decision adapting the rules of procedure of the European development fund committee in order to take account of the provisions of the EU's internal agreement on the financing of Community aid for the period 2008 to 2013 (16659/07).

#### **10th European development fund**

The Council adopted a regulation laying down financial rules for implementation of the 10th European development fund (EDF) (16660/07 and 5234/08).

Some changes in comparison with the 9th EDF financial regulation have been introduced in the light of practical experience in order to simplify and facilitate EDF implementation and the realisation of the policy objectives.

The financial framework for EDF funding covers commitments beginning on 1 January 2008 for a period of six years. In order to implement the framework, the EU's internal agreement of 17 July 2006 established a 10<sup>th</sup> EDF and required the adoption of a financial regulation.

### **Programming intra-ACP cooperation**

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the EU within the ACP-EC committee of ambassadors on guidelines for programming intra-ACP cooperation.

Intra-ACP cooperation is defined in the ACP-EU partnership agreement as all the regional operations covering measures which benefit "many or all ACP states".

### **TRADE POLICY**

#### **Anti-dumping - Tartaric acid from China**

The Council adopted a regulation amending the scope of the anti-dumping measures imposed by regulation 130/2006 on imports of tartaric acid originating in China (5729/08).

### **GENERAL AFFAIRS**

#### **Proceedings in the Council's different configurations**

The Council took note of a report from the presidency on proceedings in its different configurations (6293/08).

### **JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

#### **Schengen - SIS II**

The Council adopted a regulation and a decision on the testing of a second-generation Schengen information system (SIS II) (6070/08 and 6071/08).

The texts lay down the way in which tests are conducted in order to assess whether SIS II can work in accordance with technical and functional requirements as defined in the SIS II legal instruments, as well as with non-functional requirements such as robustness, availability and performance.

**TRANSPORT**

**Agreements on air services**

The Council adopted decisions approving the conclusion of agreements on air services with the following countries: Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Moldova, Panama, Paraguay, Singapore and Uruguay.

It also adopted a decision approving the conclusion of protocols amending such agreements with Georgia, Lebanon, Maldives, Moldova, Singapore and Uruguay in order to take account of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU.

The agreements are the result of negotiations carried out by the Commission under a mandate granted by the Council in June 2003 with a view to bringing member states' existing bilateral aviation agreements into line with Community law.

**TRANSPARENCY**

**Public access to documents**

The Council adopted the reply to confirmatory application 01/c/01/08, the Swedish delegation voting against (5689/08).

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