



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

2655th Council meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

General Affairs

Luxembourg, 25 April 2005

President **M Jean ASSELBORN**
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Immigration of Luxembourg

- * The [2656th](#) meeting on External Relations is the subject of a separate press release ([8036/05 Presse 87](#)).

P R E S S

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Main results of the Council

On the basis of a new negotiating document, the Council discussed the framework to be established for the **EU budget** for the period 2007-2013. The Presidency is still aiming at an agreement being reached on this matter at the European Council meeting on 16 and 17 June 2005.

Among the items approved without debate, the Council approved the **accession to the European Union** of Bulgaria and Romania as from 1 January 2007. The ceremony for the signing of the Accession Treaty took place on the day of the meeting¹.

The Council also approved the application of additional customs duties on imports of certain products originating in the **United States** until such time as that country puts an end to the anti-dumping compensation measures (the Byrd Amendment) which were deemed illegal by the World Trade Organisation.

The Council extended the restrictive measures applied against **Burma/Myanmar**. It also adopted the EU's position for the next Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

¹ See Press Release 8414/05.

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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.
- The documents whose references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site <http://ue.eu.int>.
- 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 abovementioned Council 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
Mr Didier DONFUT

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for European Affairs, attached to the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Cyril SVOBODA
Mr Vladimír MÜLLER

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Deputy Foreign Minister for Europe

Denmark:

Mr Friis PETERSEN

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Hans MARTIN BURY

Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Mr Yoannis VALINAKIS

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Miguel Ángel MORATINOS CUYAUBÉ
Mr Alberto NAVARRO GONZÁLEZ

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
State Secretary for the European Union

France:

Mr Michel BARNIER
Ms Claudie HAIGNERÉ

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister with responsibility for European Affairs, attached
to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Dermot AHERN T.D.

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Italy:

Mr Roberto ANTONIONE

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr George IACOVOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Artis PABRIKS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Antanas VALIONIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Immigration
Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and
Immigration

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT

Hungary:

Mr Ferenc SOMOGYI
Mr Etele BARÁTH

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister without portfolio responsible for European affairs

Malta:

Mr Michael FRENDO

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Bernard R. BOT
Mr Atzo NICOLAÏ

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for European Affairs

25.IV.2005

Austria:

Ms Ursula PLASSNIK

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Poland:

Mr Adam Daniel ROTFELD

Mr Jaroslaw PIETRAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary, Office of the Committee for European
Integration

Portugal:

Mr Diogo FREITAS DO AMARAL

Mr Fernando NEVES

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Portuguese Communities
Abroad

State Secretary

Slovenia:

Mr Božo CERAR

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Eduard KUKAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Ms Paula LEHTOMÄKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Trade and Development

Sweden:

Ms Laila FREIVALDS

Mr Lars DANIELSSON

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office

United Kingdom:

Mr John GRANT

Permanent Representative

.....
Commission:

Mr José Manuel BARROSO

Ms Dalia GRYBAUSKAITE

President

Member

.....
General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General of the Council of the European
Union/High Representative for the CFSP

ITEMS DEBATED

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE 2007-2013

The Council discussed a revised version of the negotiating box which the Presidency had drawn up to assist the preparation of the financial framework envisaged for the EU budget for the period 2007-2013 (8292/05). The discussion focussed on the "cohesion" aspects. After the discussion, the Presidency said the Council would return to the financial perspective at the next meeting on the basis of an overall negotiating box.

The Presidency's aim is to enable the European Council to reach a political agreement when it meets on 16 and 17 June 2005. To do that, the Presidency said it would adjust and supplement the negotiating box – a method used successfully during negotiations on the two previous financial packages – in the light of developments in the discussions.

The Council, in its "General Affairs" configuration, is responsible for conducting the negotiations, although the specific interest of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council is acknowledged.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Burma/Myanmar – Extension of restrictive measures

The Council adopted a Common Position extending restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar for one year and amending Common Position 2004/423/CFSP¹ of April 2004 (7930/05, 7932/05).

On 25 October 2004 the Council had adopted Common Position 2004/730/CFSP on additional restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar, which took the form of restrictions concerning State-owned enterprises; that Common Position was amended on 21 February 2005 (by Common Position 2005/149/CFSP²).

The amendments made when the restrictive measures were extended concern *inter alia* the list of persons associated with the Burmese/Myanmar regime and the members of their families covered by the restrictive measures (Annex I to the Common Position).

Relations with Japan – Preparation for the summit

The Council noted the stage reached in the preparations for the 14th EU-Japan summit, which will take place in Luxembourg on 2 May 2005.

The summit will be an opportunity to look at a wide range of international and multilateral issues and to take stock of the progress made in strengthening the bilateral partnership. The implementation of the Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation adopted in 2001 will also be examined.

¹ OJ L 125, 28.4.2004, p. 61.

² OJ L 49, 22.2.2005, p. 37.

International Criminal Court – cooperation and assistance agreement

The Council authorised the Presidency, assisted by the Secretary-General/High Representative, and by the European Commission as appropriate, to negotiate a cooperation and assistance agreement between the EU and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Support for the ICC is a priority for the Union (see Council Common Position of 2001, updated in 2003 – *OJ L 150, 18.6.2003, pp. 67-69*).

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The Council adopted a Common Position relating to the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (*7768/05*).

The objective of the European Union is to strengthen the international nuclear non proliferation regime by promoting, inter alia, the following essential elements:

- undertaking efforts to preserve the integrity of the NPT and strengthen its implementation;
- recognising that the NPT is a unique and irreplaceable multilateral instrument for maintaining and reinforcing international peace, security and stability, in that it establishes a legal framework for preventing increased proliferation of nuclear weapons; and
- working towards universal accession to the NPT.

This Common Position brings up to date and builds on the objectives set out at the most recent NPT review conference in 2000 (see Common Position 2000/297/PESC).

Code of Conduct on arms exports – list of equipment

The Council adopted an updated version of the common list of EU military equipment covered by the European Union Code of Conduct on arms exports.

Annual report on the CFSP

The Council approved an annual report for presentation to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including the financial implications for the general budget of the EU (7961/05).

The document focuses on a description of CFSP activities (including common positions, joint actions and implementing decisions¹), whilst also referring to other areas in order to provide a comprehensive view of activities in the field of external relations, and also looks at the prospects for future action.

The report is drawn up pursuant to the Interinstitutional Agreement – between Parliament, the Council and the Commission – of 6 May 1999 on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure.

Association agreement with Tunisia – EU enlargement

The Council adopted a Decision granting approval for the signing and provisional application of a Protocol to the association agreement between the European Union and Tunisia to take account of the accession of ten new Member States to the European Union in May 2004 (5509/05).

Association agreement with Romania – EU enlargement

The Council adopted a Decision granting approval for the conclusion of a Protocol to the association agreement between the European Union and Romania to take account of the accession of ten new Member States to the European Union in May 2004 (13165/04 + COR 1).

¹ Since 2004 the complete summary lists of CFSP instruments (declarations, démarches, reports by Heads of Mission and political dialogue meetings) have been published in a separate document, issued twice a year. The information covering 2004 is contained in 6735/05 PESC, available on the Council website: <http://register.consilium.eu.int>.

European Neighbourhood Policy – Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council recalls its conclusions of 14 June 2004 on European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and reaffirms the special role of this policy for the European Union's external relations, offering the possibility of increased political, security, economic and cultural cooperation between the European Union and its neighbours. The Council confirms its desire for the European Union's commitment in the Mediterranean, Eastern European and South Caucasus regions to be carried forward.

The Council reaffirms the importance that the European Union attaches to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia and Lebanon as neighbours and partners. The EU hopes that these five countries will maintain close links with the Union, on the basis of common values of democracy, the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights, including the freedom of the media, and common interests, as defined in the framework of the ENP.

The Council welcomed the Commission communication of 2 March on European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as the national reports for the five countries, drawn up in close cooperation with the SG/HR. It endorsed the main thrust of these documents and thought they would form an excellent basis for further development of the ENP.

The national reports give a clear and accurate account of the progress made by each country, but also of the challenges to be taken up by each of them both in political and in economic and social terms. These reports, pointing out the priorities for action which the Union would like to pursue with those five countries, form the basis on which the European Union should be able to enter into joint preparations for the ENP action plans.

The Council notes that the Commission has already begun discussions to prepare an action plan jointly with Egypt and Lebanon. The timetable for consultations with Lebanon will be determined by the development of the internal political situation in that country. The Commission is invited as of now to initiate joint discussions to prepare an action plan for each of the three South Caucasus countries. The Commission will contact the partner countries concerned, in close cooperation, for questions connected with political cooperation and the CFSP, with the Presidency and the Secretary-General/High Representative and, where appropriate, with the Special Representative for the South Caucasus for the countries for which he is responsible.

The Council notes that Member States will be kept fully informed of the progress of those consultations. The Council notes the Commission's intention to finalise the ENP action plans as far as possible by the end of this year. The Association or Cooperation Councils concerned will be invited to approve the action plans after their adoption by the Council. The action plans should run for a minimum period of three years and be renewable by common agreement. Their implementation will be monitored in the framework of the institutions provided for in the relevant Association or Cooperation Agreements. The Council reiterates that the structures laid down for the Agreements in question should, if necessary, be re-examined so that all the priorities set out in the framework of the ENP are duly taken into account.

The Council believes the action plans will prove to be useful tools by means of which the European Union will be able to strengthen its relations with the countries in question and actively encourage the necessary rapprochements.

The Council stresses that the ENP action plans to be negotiated with each of the partners will be on a level of intensity and ambition reflecting the real extent to which common values are shared, the state of relations with each country, its needs and capabilities, and common interests. The Council also notes that possible difficulties which could arise in the joint preparation of an action plan with a partner should not impede the adoption of action plans with the others.

With regard to the South Caucasus countries, particular attention will be paid to encouraging regional cooperation and progress in conflict resolution. On this point, the Council welcomes the determination expressed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to use the action plans as essential instruments for strengthening regional cooperation.

The Council notes with satisfaction the recent ratification of the Association Agreement by the Algerian Parliament and notes the Commission's intention to draw up a national report on Algeria.

The ENP, including the action plans which will start being negotiated with the five neighbouring countries, is tangible proof of the EU's desire to continue strengthening its commitment in the regions of Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and the Mediterranean and to help the countries of those regions to attain a significant degree of economic integration and enhance their political cooperation. The Council wants the action plans to become a solid platform enabling progress to be made on that path, in the interest of the parties and in accordance with common strategic priorities."

ENLARGEMENT

Accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU

The Council adopted a Decision accepting the applications for admission of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union (7116/05).

The accession negotiations with these two countries were concluded in December 2004, and the final text of the Treaty of the Act of Accession was approved by the parties on 11 February 2005.

The Treaty of Accession was signed in Luxembourg on 25 April 2005 (*see press release 8418/05 Presse 100*).

EC-Turkey Association Council

The Council adopted the European Union's position with a view to the 44th EC-Turkey Association Council meeting, held on 26 April 2005.

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Council activities

The Council took note of a report on proceedings in the various Council configurations (8163/05).

COMMERCIAL POLICY

United States – additional customs duties – Byrd Amendment

The Council adopted a Regulation establishing additional customs duties on imports of certain products originating in the United States of America, because of the failure of the United States to comply with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules (7752/05 +COR 1).

(For further information please see press release 8417/05).

Anti-dumping – China – furfuraldehyde

The Council adopted a Regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of furfuraldehyde originating in China following an expiry review pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 384/96 (7680/05).

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council adopted Decisions appointing certain members and alternate members to the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the term of office still to run, namely until 25 January 2006:

(a) as members:

Mr Francesco CROCETTO
Consigliere Provinciale di Potenza
Provincia di Potenza – presso Presidenza del Consiglio
in place of Mr Silvano MOFFA,

Ms Sonia MASINI
Presidente Provincia di Reggio Emilia
in place of Ms Mercedes BRESSO,

Mr Guido MILANA
Consigliere Provinciale di Roma
in place of Mr Alfonso ANDRIA;

(b) as an alternate member:

Mr Vincenzo GIULIANO
Consigliere Provincia di Potenza
in place of Mr Francesco BISOGNO.
