



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



13513/09 (Presse 272)

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PRESS RELEASE

2963rd Council meeting

Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry and Research)

Brussels, 24 and 25 September 2009

President

Ms Maud Olofsson

Minister for Enterprise and Energy

Dr Ewa Björling

Minister for Trade

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13513/09 (Presse 272)

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Main results of the Council

The Council adopted conclusions on practical measures aimed at improving the functioning of the **internal market**, including the effective implementation of the **services directive**.

The Council held two public debates in preparation for the review of the Community **innovation policy**, from the point of view of the competitiveness and of the development of the European Research Area, respectively.

The Council held a debate on a draft directive aimed at simplifying the business environment for **micro-enterprises** in order to enhance their competitiveness.

The Council was updated by the Commission on the latest developments affecting the **automotive industry** in Europe, and in particular the situation of the company Opel.

Without discussion, the Council adopted the three regulations forming the **road transport package**.

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS..... 5

ITEMS DEBATED

Reviewing innovation policy..... 7

Measures to improve the functioning of the internal market - *Council conclusions*..... 8

Services directive: state of play of implementation..... 9

Simplification of business environment for micro-enterprises 10

European Research Area and Innovation 11

Other business..... 13

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

– International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia - Support for the mandate 16

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

– Schengen Information System database - Amending budget 2009..... 16

AGRICULTURE

– Protection of animals at the time of slaughter * 16

– Sustainable use of pesticides..... 18

– Placing plant protection products on the market 19

– Machinery for pesticide application 20

¹

- 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.

ENVIRONMENT

- Greenhouse gas emissions - Comitology proposals.....20
- Emissions from petrol service stations.....21

TRANSPORT

- Train driving licences - Interoperability of the rail system - Comitology proposals.....21
- Road package.....21

ENERGY

- Eco-design directive*22

TRADE POLICY

- Anti-dumping measures: pipes and tubes of iron or steel - aluminium foil - hand pallet trucks.....22

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

- Fiji Islands - Appropriate measures.....23

APPOINTMENTS

- Committee of the Regions23

PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Mr Vincent VAN QUICKENBORNE
Mr Benoît CEREXHE

Minister for Enterprise and Simplification
Minister of the Brussels Capital Regional Government,
with responsibility for Employment, Economic Affairs,
Scientific Research, Fire Prevention and Emergency
Medical Aid

Bulgaria:

Mr Traicho TRAIKOV
Mr Sergey IGNATOV

Minister for Economy, Energy and Tourism
Deputy Minister for Education, Youth and Science

Czech Republic:

Mr Martin TLAPA
Mr Vlastimil RŮŽIČKA

Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade
Vice Minister for Education, Youth and Sports

Denmark:

Mr Michael DITHMER

State Secretary, Ministry of Economics and Business
Affairs

Mr Uffe TOUDAHL PEDERSEN

State Secretary, Ministry of Science, Technology and
Innovation

Germany:

Mr Frieder MEYER-KRAHMER

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education and
Research

Mr Peter HINTZE

Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for
Economic Affairs and Technology

Estonia:

Mr Gert ANTSU

Deputy Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Conor LENIHAN

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade
and Employment, at the Department of Education and
Science, and at the Department of Communications,
Energy and Natural Resources (with special responsibility
for Science, Technology, Innovation, the Information
Society and Natural Resources)

Greece:

Mr Léonidas ROKANAS

Deputy Permanent Representative

Spain:

Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO
Ms Silvia ORDIÑAGA RIGO

State Secretary for the European Union
General Director of Trade of the Autonomous Valencian
Community

Ms Cristina GARMENDIA MENDIZÁBAL
Ms Teresa SANTERO QUINTILLÁ

Minister for Science and Innovation
Secretary General for Industry

France:

Mr Christian ESTROSI

Minister for Industry

Italy:

Mr Giuseppe PIZZA

State Secretary for Education, Universities and Research

Cyprus:

Mr Efsthios CHAMBOULLAS

General Director, Ministry of Commerce

Latvia:

Mr Mareks GRUŠKEVICS

State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Science

Lithuania:

Mr Rimantas ŽYLIUS
Ms Nerija PUTINAITĖ

Deputy Minister for the Economy
Deputy Minister for Education and Science

Luxembourg:

Ms Michèle EISENBARTH

Deputy Permanent Representative

Hungary:

Mr István VARGA

Minister for National Development and Economic Affairs

Malta:

Mr George PULLICINO

Mr Jason AZZOPARDI

Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs
Parliamentary Secretary for Revenues and Land in the
Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment

Netherlands:

Mr Peter W. KOK

Deputy Permanent Representative

Austria:

Mr Reinhold MITTERLEHNER

Federal Minister for Economics, Family and Youth

Poland:

Mr Marcin KOROLEC

Mr Jerzy SZWED

Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Science and Higher
Education

Portugal:

Mr José MARIANO GAGO

Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education

Romania:

Mr Vasile PUSCAS

Minister, Head of the Department for European Affairs

Slovenia:

Ms Darja RADIĆ

Mr Jozsef GYÖRKÖS

State Secretary, Ministry of the Economy
State Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science
and Technology

Slovakia:

Mr Pavol KRIŠTOF

Mr Jozef HABÁNIK

State Secretary, Ministry of the Economy
State Secretary, Ministry of Education

Finland:

Mr Mauri PEKKARINEN

Ms Anni SINNEMÄKI

Ms Riina NEVAMÄKI

Minister for Economic Affairs
Minister for Labour
State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs

Sweden:

Ms Maud OLOFSSON

Ms Ewa BJÖRLING

Mr Tobias KRANTZ

Mr Jöran HÄGGLUND

Mr Gunnar WIESLANDER

Mr Peter HONETH

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Enterprise and
Energy
Minister for Trade
Minister for Higher Education and Research
State Secretary to the Minister for Enterprise and Energy
State Secretary to the Minister for Trade
State Secretary to the Minister for Higher Education and
Research

United Kingdom:

Mr Andy LEBRECHT

Deputy Permanent Representative

Commission:

Mr Günter VERHEUGEN

Mr Janez POTOČNIK

Mr Charlie MCREEVY

Vice president

Member

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

Reviewing innovation policy

The Council held a public debate in preparation for the review of the Community innovation policy, with a view to providing political guidance for the preparatory process which is intended to lead to the adoption of integrated conclusions on a competitive, innovative and eco-efficient Europe at the Competitiveness Council on 3 and 4 December 2009.

These conclusions will serve as a contribution to the post-2010 EU strategy for growth and jobs.

Ministers welcomed the Commission communication "Reviewing Community innovation policy in a changing world" ([12905/09](#))¹, and the future plans for the creation of a European Innovation Act.

Ministers expressed views on the basis of a questionnaire ([13079/09](#)) drawn up by the Presidency and agreed on fundamental elements to be taken into consideration in the future EU innovation strategy, including:

- That a broader approach to innovation should be adopted in order to bring about a social transformation within the knowledge economy, while moving towards a low-carbon economy;
- To make progress in the standardisation process for products in the internal market;
- To strengthen interactions and cooperation between business and the producers of knowledge;
- To create the necessary legal framework conditions to allow EU companies to innovate, with a special attention to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- To promote the creation of more public/private partnerships to foster a culture of innovation;

¹ The communication is accompanied by five working papers: innovation in services ([12956/09](#)), making public support for innovation more effective ([12957/1/09](#)), assessing Community innovation policies ([12958/1/09](#)), Lead Market Initiative mid-term progress report ([12959/1/09](#)), financing SME innovation ([12960/09](#)).

- Spending on research and innovation in an efficient way so as to translate innovation into growth and jobs, with a simplified and less bureaucratic system;
- To improve venture capital markets;
- The need to make improvements in the field of intellectual property rights in Europe.

The Council also agreed that in a context of economic crisis, it is time to step up a gear and propose an innovation plan which puts society at its heart and addresses the main societal challenges.

The Commission communication, published on 2 September, takes stock of Community policies in support of innovation in recent years and assesses the progress made in their implementation. It also identifies gaps and shortcomings as part of preparations for a future European innovation plan.

Measures to improve the functioning of the internal market - *Council conclusions*

The Council held a discussion on practical measures to improve the functioning of the single market and adopted the following conclusions:

[*\(13024/09\)*](#)

Services directive: state of play of implementation

The ministerial working lunch was devoted to the analysis of the state of play regarding implementation of the directive on services in the internal market.

After hearing information from the Commission, ministers exchanged views on the basis of a background note and a questionnaire produced by the Swedish Presidency ([12930/09](#)).

At the end of the debate, the Presidency underlined the commitment of all member states to step up efforts towards full implementation of the provisions of the Services directive before the deadline of 28 December 2009.

It was emphasised that the Services directive could serve as a tool to help Europe recover more rapidly from the economic crisis. Furthermore, its effective and timely implementation is a prerequisite for business and consumers in order to take full advantage of the opportunities of a truly integrated internal market in services.

In order to implement the Services directive, the member states must bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with it. In this process, member states must review national rules, and set up a point of single contact for service providers, put in place electronic procedures and intensify administrative cooperation. The review of national legislation must be submitted to the Commission in December 2009 and will be the main object for mutual evaluation next year.

Simplification of business environment for micro-enterprises

In public deliberation, the Council held a policy debate on a draft directive aimed at simplifying the business environment, and particularly the financial reporting requirements, for micro-enterprises in order to enhance their competitiveness and release their growth potential.

The outcome of the debate provides political guidance for further work to be continued within the Council.

The debate focused on two key issues:

- the significance of the proposed directive in a broader context of the simplification process of the 4th and 7th company law directives ("Accounting directives"), which was announced in the Commission's legislative work programme; and
- the optional nature of the proposal: member states that wish to reduce administrative burdens on micro-entities caused by the requirement to draw up and publish annual accounts, would be allowed to exclude them from the scope of the 4th company law directive. However, some concerns have been raised that the optional nature of the proposal would result in de-harmonisation of rules at EU level in the field of accounting.

In February 2009, the Commission presented, as a part of its economic recovery plan, a proposal for amending directive 78/660/EEC on the annual accounts of certain types of companies ("the 4th company law directive"). The proposed directive ([7229/1/09](#)) would enable member states to exclude very small enterprises (so-called "micro-entities", which employ fewer than ten persons) from the scope of the 4th company law directive and thus exempt them from its administrative and accounting requirements.

The European Parliament has not yet adopted its opinion on the proposal, which falls under the legislative codecision procedure.

European Research Area and Innovation

The Council held a public debate on the development of the European Research Area (ERA) and policy issues concerning research-based innovation.

The debate constitutes a preliminary step to the December 2009 Competitiveness Council, where the current EU Presidency intends to submit a set of conclusions in order to provide an input for the future European Innovation Act, for which the next European Commission is expected to table proposals by early 2010.

The ministerial debate, which was structured by means of a questionnaire ([13047/09](#)), showed a clear convergence of views on the urgent need to establish research priorities at an EU level and to pool resources across member states so as to respond to those major societal challenges that cannot be resolved without a greater focus on research, coordinated with innovation and other relevant policies.

In addition, there is a large consensus on the need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of national research systems and the ERA as a whole through systematic and coordinated efforts by member states and the Commission, in order to eliminate redundancies and maximise synergies between all research and other policies and policy instruments that impact on the development of the ERA and the evolution of a knowledge-based society. The December 2009 Competitiveness Council is expected to decide on an update of the coordination structures and priorities.

Furthermore, the importance of a high level of efficient research, innovation and education investment as well as better streamlined international cooperation with third countries was highlighted, notably in view of the current economic context.

The Council meeting was preceded by an informal ministerial seminar on 24 September bringing together representatives of the European Parliament and the Commission, which examined possible broad orientations for the research beyond 2010. The seminar referred in particular to the Presidency note "The world in 2025" ([13070/09](#)), the Lund declaration on reshaping the ERA¹ and the Gothenburg resolution on the "knowledge triangle".

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Over lunch the chair of the panel of the **European Research Council** (ERC) made a presentation on the review of the ERC.

¹ http://www.se2009.eu/lund_declaration

Other business

The Council took note of information regarding the following issues:

– ***"Better regulation" agenda***

The Swedish Presidency announced its intention to prepare a set of draft conclusions for the December meeting of the Competitiveness Council, setting out the Council's priorities for the future Better regulation agenda beyond 2010, taking into account the latest developments on the "Better regulation" initiative to reduce administrative burdens for the benefit of EU enterprises and to simplify Community legislation ([13544/09](#)).

– ***Memorandum of understanding with the Brazilian competition authorities***

The Commission provided information on enhanced cooperation with Brazil in competition policy matters ([13451/09](#)).

– ***Competitiveness of the agro-food industry***

The Commission provided information on the progress made by the High Level Group on the competitiveness of the agro-food industry.

– ***Automotive industry***

The Council was updated by the Commission on the latest developments affecting the automotive industry, and in particular the situation of the company Opel.

– ***Consumers protection***

The Commission presented two communications referring to:

- a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer complaints and enquiries ([11978/09](#) + [ADD 1](#)); and
- the enforcement of the consumer acquis ([11817/09](#)).

The Presidency presented the outcome of the conference "Safe products – At the core of the EU single market", which took place in Stockholm on 11 September 2009. It focused on market surveillance and free movement of goods in the internal market ([13545/09](#)).

– ***International cooperation in research***

The chair of the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation in Research (SFIC) gave an overview of the work being carried out by the SFIC, which concentrate on priority topics and objectives and on countries and instruments of shared interest, and is aimed at contributing to the internationalisation of European science and research.

– ***ITER project for nuclear fusion***

The Commission provided information on recent developments in the ITER project, with a view to the next ITER Council meeting in November 2009. The Commission also underlined the importance of maintaining the pace to ensure the sustainable success of ITER and to move ahead with the project ([13418/09](#)).

– ***Joint programming process for research***

The chairs (previous and current EU presidencies) of the High Level Group for joint programming in research made a presentation on the progress achieved up to now and on the next steps to be carried out with a view to submitting a first set of proposals at the December 2009 Competitiveness Council.

The Council conclusions of 2 December 2008 ([16775/08](#)) gave a mandate to member states' representatives in order to identify and substantiate suitable areas for joint programming.

– ***Joint programming initiative on combating neurodegenerative diseases***

The Commission provided information on a recommendation for the launch of a joint programming initiative on combating neurodegenerative diseases, in particular Alzheimer's ([12953/09](#)).

In December 2008, the Council adopted conclusions recognising the necessity of launching a pilot research project on combating neurodegenerative diseases, in particular Alzheimer's, and inviting the Commission to submit a proposal in 2009.

On 22 July 2009, the Commission presented its proposal for a Council recommendation on measures to combat neurodegenerative disorders, in particular Alzheimer's disease, through joint programming of research activities. Experts from some 20 countries are currently involved in the examination of the proposal.

– ***Informal Council under the Swedish Presidency***

The Presidency gave a brief overview of the preparations for the next informal Competitiveness Council meeting, to take place in Umeå from 14 to 16 October.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia - Support for the mandate

The Council adopted a common position extending, until 10 October 2010, common position 2004/694/CFSP on further measures in support of the effective implementation of the mandate of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (12896/09).

The common position renews, for a further period of 12 months, the measures adopted in October 2004 under common position 2004/694/CFSP, with the aim of freezing all funds and economic resources belonging to persons who have been indicted by the ICTY for war crimes but who are not in the custody of the ICTY (*published in Official Journal of the EU L315 of 14.10.2004, p. 52*).

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Schengen Information System database - Amending budget 2009

The member states meeting within the Council adopted an amending budget 2009 for the C.SIS (Central Schengen Information System) with a view to covering the need to extend the operational maintenance contracts for the system ([11782/09](#)).

AGRICULTURE

Protection of animals at the time of slaughter *

The Council adopted a regulation improving the welfare of animals at slaughter ([11272/09](#), [12195/09 ADD1](#)) by a qualified majority, with the Estonian, Netherlands and Romanian delegations abstaining.

The regulation aims at revising the legislation in force in the light of new technical and scientific elements. It also introduces a new approach - mirroring the one followed in the food safety field - increasing operators' responsibilities concerning welfare.

The new regulation makes the following changes compared to the existing legislation:

- changing from a directive to a regulation: it provides for uniform and simultaneous application, avoiding administrative burdens and inequalities sometimes due to national transpositions and allowing faster implementation. It also establishes a single set of rules that will be clearer and easier to apply both for EU operators and trading partners;
- better integration of animal welfare concerns into the production process through the requirement of Standard Operating Procedures for operators and the appointment of Animal Welfare Officers in certain slaughterhouses to assist them in ensuring compliance with the rules laid down in the regulation;
- increasing the level of competence of the operators and officials concerned, proper training and issue of certificates of competence for personnel involved in killing and related operations;
- updating of a number of technical standards in view of scientific progress;
- regular monitoring of the efficiency of stunning techniques;
- animal welfare to be taken on board in the design, construction and equipment of slaughterhouses;
- promotion of innovation and a common approach in relation to stunning and killing techniques;
- improving protection of animals during mass killing operations;
- in the case of meat imported from third countries, an attestation accompanying the health certificate will be required, certifying that requirements at least equivalent to those laid down in chapters II and III of the regulation have been met.

Sustainable use of pesticides

The Council adopted a directive aimed at establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides so as to reduce the risks to human health and the environment and the dependency on the use of pesticides ([3607/09](#)).

This directive will apply to pesticides and its scope will be extended to cover biocidal products at a later stage.

Under the new directive, EU Member States should:

- Adopt national action plans to set up quantitative objectives, targets, measures, and timetables to reduce risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment, and to encourage the development and introduction of integrated pest management and of alternative approaches in order to reduce dependency on the use of pesticides. National action plans should also include harmonised risk indicators that are to be established to measure the progress achieved in the reduction of risks and adverse impacts from pesticide use, as well as for risk management and reporting purposes.
- Take all necessary measures to promote low pesticide-input farming, including integrated pest management, and to ensure that professional users of pesticides shift towards a more environmentally-friendly use of all available crop protection measures, giving priority to low-risk, non-chemical alternatives wherever possible, and to the products with minimum impact on human health and the environment among the ones available for the same pest problem. Member States have to ensure that all professional users of pesticides implement the general standards for integrated pest management at the latest by 1 January 2014.
- Set up systems of training for distributors, advisors, and professional users of pesticides so that those who use or will use pesticides are fully aware of the potential risks to human health and the environment and of the appropriate measures to reduce those risks as much as possible.
- Make sure that the handling of pesticides does not endanger human health or the environment. They should also make sure that the aquatic environment and drinking water supplies as well as Natura 2000 sites are safe from the impact of pesticides and that their use is minimised or prohibited in specific areas used by the general public or by vulnerable groups.
- Ban aerial spraying and only allow it in special cases approved by competent authorities.
- Ensure that pesticide application equipment is inspected at regular intervals.

Placing plant protection products on the market

The Council adopted a regulation concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and repealing directives 79/117/EEC and 91/414/EEC so as to ensure a high level of protection of both human and animal health and the environment and to improve the functioning of the internal market through the harmonisation of the rules on the placing on the market of plant protection products, while improving agricultural production ([3608/09](#)).

The regulation lays down the rules for the authorisation of plant protection products in commercial form and for their placing on the market, use and control within the Community. It lays down rules both for the approval of active substances, safeners and synergists, which plant protection products contain or consist of, and for adjuvants and co-formulants.

Strict cut-off criteria for the approval at EU level of active substances are laid down in the new regulation which will ban from the market the most toxic substances currently available. However, in exceptional cases, temporary derogations from these criteria could be granted in case of a serious threat to plant health.

The procedures for the approval of active substances and authorisation of plant protection products have been harmonised and simplified, deadlines have been tightened, and the roles of the Member States, the Commission, and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have been clarified.

In exceptional cases Member States should be permitted to authorise plant protection products not complying with the conditions provided for in this regulation, where it is necessary to do so because of a danger or threat to plant production or ecosystems which cannot be contained by any other reasonable means.

Under this regulation Member States should regularly examine plant protection products containing substances which pose a high risk for human health or the environment with the aim of replacing them by plant protection products containing active substances which require less risk mitigation or by non-chemical control or prevention methods. In addition, incentives should be given for the placing on the market of low-risk plant protection products.

The regulation also sets out a system of three geographical zones for the mutual recognition of plant protection products which will increase the availability of plant protection products throughout the EU and reduce the workload for Member States. Nevertheless Member States will have the possibility to limit or reject the authorisations granted in another Member State in certain environmental or agricultural circumstances.

The new regulation also includes, in particular, rules on data protection, classification, packaging and labelling, advertising, record-keeping, parallel trade and on seeds treated with plant protection products.

The regulation provides that the use of non-animal test methods should be encouraged, testing on vertebrate animals shall only be undertaken as a last resort, and duplication of studies involving vertebrates should be avoided.

Machinery for pesticide application

The Council adopted a directive aimed at improving the construction and maintenance of machinery for pesticide application, with a view to reducing the adverse effects of pesticides on human health and the environment ([3662/09](#)).

The new directive, which amends directive 2006/42/EC on machinery, applies to the essential requirements with which machinery for pesticide application must comply, before being placed on the market and/or put into service. It introduces requirements for member states to set up a system for the regular maintenance and inspection of equipment in use.

ENVIRONMENT

Greenhouse gas emissions - Comitology proposals

The Council decided not to oppose to the adoption by the Commission of decisions:

- approving the unilateral inclusion of an additional greenhouse gas by Austria in the Community emissions trading scheme (pursuant to article 24 of directive 2003/87/EC); and
- amending decision 2007/589/EC as regards the inclusion of monitoring and reporting guidelines for greenhouse gas emissions from the capture, transport and geological storage of carbon dioxide.

In accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the Commission may now adopt the proposed decisions unless the European Parliament opposes this.

Emissions from petrol service stations

The Council adopted a directive aimed at decreasing harmful emissions from petrol vapour at service stations ([3669/09](#) + [13330/09 ADD 1](#)).

For more details see press release [13576/09](#).

TRANSPORT

Train driving licences - Interoperability of the rail system - Comitology proposals

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of decisions aimed at:

- setting up basic parameters for the registers of train driving licences;
- amending annex VII to directive 2008/57/EC on the interoperability of the rail system within the Community; and
- amending decisions 2006/679/EC and 2006/860/EC concerning technical specifications of interoperability relating to subsystems of the trans-European conventional rail system.

In accordance with the EU's regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the Council can oppose the adoption of legal acts by the Commission. Consequently, unless the European Parliament objects, the Commission can adopt the decisions.

Road package

The Council adopted three regulations that seek to modernise, replace and merge provisions governing road transport operators and access to the road transport markets, following a second-reading agreement with the European Parliament under the codecision procedure.

The regulations concern access to the international road haulage market, the occupation of road transport operator and access to the international market for coach and bus services.

For additional information see press release [13594/09](#).

ENERGY

Eco-design directive*

The Council adopted a revised eco-design directive ([3663/09](#), [13329/09 ADD 1 REV 1](#)), following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament.

The new directive extends the scope of the existing directive 2005/32 by covering in principle all energy-related products. This will improve the energy and resource efficiency of a much wider range of products and reduce demand on natural resources, contributing to the security of energy supply and to the achievement of greenhouse gas emission targets in the EU.

For additional information see press release [13626/09](#).

TRADE POLICY

Anti-dumping measures: pipes and tubes of iron or steel - aluminium foil - hand pallet trucks

The Council adopted regulations:

- imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty and collecting definitively the provisional duty imposed on imports of certain seamless pipes and tubes of iron or steel originating in China ([13014/09](#));
- imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty and collecting definitively the provisional duty imposed on imports of certain aluminium foil originating in Armenia, Brazil and China ([12984/09](#)); and
- terminating the 'new exporter' review of regulation 1174/2005 imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty and collecting definitively the provisional duty imposed on imports of hand pallet trucks and their essential parts originating in China, re-imposing the duty with regard to imports from one exporter in this country and terminating the registration of these imports ([12831/09](#)).

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Fiji Islands - Appropriate measures

The Council extended by six months measures for the Fiji Islands in order to assist the country's return to democracy, the respect for human rights and the rule of law ([13087/09](#)).

For further details see press release [13627/09](#).

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council adopted decisions appointing as members of the Committee of the Regions:

- Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN, member of Kildare County Council,
- Mr Francisco Javier López Álvarez, Presidente del Gobierno Vasco,
- Mr Stanislav Eichler, President of Liberec Region,
- Mr Josef Novotný, President of Karlovy Vary Region,
- Mr Jaroslav Palas, President of Moravia-Silesia Region,
- Mr Jiří Zimola, President of South Bohemian Region.