



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



8478/09 (Presse 83)

**PROVISIONAL VERSION**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

2936th Council meeting

### **Justice and Home Affairs**

Luxembourg, 6 April 2009

President

**Mr Jiří POSPÍŠIL**  
Minister for Justice  
**Mr Ivan LANGER**  
Minister of Interior

# **P R E S S**

---

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6083 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026  
[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

8478/09 (Presse 83)

1  
**EN**

## **Main results of the Council**

*The Council reached agreement on a general approach for a framework decision concerning the prevention and settlement of **conflicts of jurisdiction in criminal proceedings**.*

*Ministers for justice held a first exchange of views on new proposals aimed at stepping up efforts in the fight against **sexual abuse and exploitation of children and the trafficking in human beings**.*

*In the field of legal migration, ministers of interior continued the examination of a future instrument for establishing a **single permit and a common set of rights for foreign workers in the EU**.*

*They took note of the outcome of the visit paid last March by a EU delegation to the new US Administration in Washington.*

*Without debate, the Council adopted a decision transforming the European Police Office (known as **Europol**) into a EU agency. Europol's mandate is also extended to all serious cross-border crimes in order to facilitate assistance to the member states in cross-border criminal investigations. A new director for Europol was appointed by unanimity.*

\* \* \*

*In the field of environment, the Council formally adopted the various legal acts configuring the **climate change and energy package**.*

*It also adopted without discussion a recovery plan for **bluefin tuna** in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean see.*

**CONTENTS**<sup>1</sup>

**PARTICIPANTS..... 5**

**ITEMS DEBATED**

CONFLICTS OF JURISDICTION IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS ..... 7

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN ..... 8

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS..... 9

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE VICTIMS ..... 10

SINGLE PERMIT AND COMMON RIGHTS FOR FOREIGN WORKERS ..... 11

EUROPOL..... 12

EUROPOL/RUSSIA COOPERATION ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE ..... 13

MIXED COMMITTEE ..... 14

OTHER BUSSINES ..... 16

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

*JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS*

– Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment..... 18

– Compensation to victims of aircraft damages and arising from acts of unlawful interference..... 18

– European Criminal Records Information System ..... 20

– EUROPOL/Israel cooperation agreement..... 20

– Cooperation on preventing and combating crime..... 20

– EU agreements on short-stay visa waiver with third countries..... 21

<sup>1</sup>

- 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.

*EXTERNAL RELATIONS*

- EU/Belarus.....21

*TRADE POLICY*

- Anti-dumping measures - Steel ropes and cables - Castings.....22

*DEVELOPMENT POLICY*

- Mauritania - Consultations under the ACP/UE agreement .....23
- EU/ South Africa agreement on trade and development - Protocol on EU enlargement.....23
- Economic partnership agreements with ACP countries - High level dialogue.....23
- Revision of the ACP/UE Cotonou agreement - European Investment Bank.....24

*FISHERIES*

- Bluefin tuna – Recovery plan\* .....24

*HEALTH*

- Medicinal products - Supplementary protection certificate.....25

*ENVIRONMENT*

- Climate-energy legislative package\* .....25
- Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants.....26

## **PARTICIPANTS**

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

**Belgium:**

Mr Jean DE RUYT

Permanent Representative

**Bulgaria:**

Mr Mihail Raykov MIKOV

Minister for the Interior

**Czech Republic:**

Mr Jiří POSPÍŠIL

Minister for Justice

Mr Ivan LANGER

Minister for the Interior

**Denmark:**

Ms Birthe Rønn HORNBECH

Minister for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs

**Germany:**

Mr Wolfgang SCHÄUBLE

Federal Minister for the Interior

**Estonia:**

Mr Rein LANG

Minister for Justice

Mr Jüri PIHL

Minister for the Interior

**Ireland:**

Mr Conor LENIHAN

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, at the Department of Education and Science, and at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (with special responsibility for Integration Policy)

**Greece:**

Mr Patroklos GEORGIADIS

General Secretary, Ministry of the Interior

Mr Constantinos BITSIOS

General Secretary, Ministry of the Interior

**Spain:**

Mr Juan Carlos CAMPO MORENO

State Secretary for Justice

Ms María Consuelo RUMÍ IBÁÑEZ

State Secretary for Immigration and Emigration

**France:**

Ms Rachida DATI

Keeper of the Seals, Minister for Justice

**Italy:**

Mr Angelino ALFANO

Minister for Justice

Mr Nitto Francesco PALMA

State Secretary for the Interior

**Cyprus:**

Mr Louas LOUCA

Minister for Justice and Public Order

Mr Neoklis SYLIKIOTIS

Minister for the Interior

**Latvia:**

Mr Reinis BĒRZIŅŠ

Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the Interior

Ms Inga SKUJINA

Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Justice

**Lithuania:**

Mr Paulius GRICIUNAS

State Secretary, Ministry of Justice

**Luxembourg:**

Mr Luc FRIEDEN

Minister for Justice, Minister for the Treasury and the Budget

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT

Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

**Hungary:**

Mr Tibor DRASKOVICS

Minister for Justice and Law Enforcement

Ms Judit FAZEKAS LÉVAYNÉ

State Secretary (with special responsibility), Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement

**Malta:**

Mr Carmelo MIFSUD BONNICI

Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

**Netherlands:**

Mr Ernst HIRSCH BALLIN

Minister for Justice

**Austria:**

Ms Claudia BANDION-ORTNER

Federal Minister for Justice

Ms Maria FEKTER

Federal Minister for the Interior

**Poland:**

Mr Andrzej CZUMA

Minister for Justice

Mr Piotr STACHAŃCZYK

Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of the Interior and Administration

**Portugal:**

Mr Rui PEREIRA

Minister for the Interior

Mr João Tiago SILVEIRA

State Secretary, Ministry of Justice

**Romania:**

Mr Dan NICA

Vice Prime Minister, Minister for the Interior

Mr Gabriel TANASESCU

State Secretary, Ministry of Justice

**Slovenia:**

Mr Boštjan ŠKRLEC

State Secretary, Ministry of Justice

**Slovakia:**

Mr Robert KALIŇÁK

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior

Ms Anna VITTEKOVA

State Secretary, Ministry of Justice

**Finland:**

Ms Tuija BRAX

Minister for Justice

Mr Antti PELTTARI

State Secretary, Ministry of the Interior

**Sweden:**

Ms Beatrice ASK

Minister for Justice

Mr Tobias BILLSTRÖM

Minister for Migration

**United Kingdom:**

Mr Phil WOOLAS

Minister of State for Borders and Immigration

Lord BACH

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice

Mr Fergus EWING

Minister for Community Safety (Scottish Government)

**Commission:**

Mr Jacques BARROT

Vice-President

**ITEMS DEBATED**

**CONFLICTS OF JURISDICTION IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS**

The Council reached agreement on a general approach for a draft framework decision concerning the prevention and settlement of conflicts of exercise of jurisdiction in criminal proceedings ([5208/09](#)).

The agreement on the general approach (agreement awaiting the opinion of the European Parliament) followed a debate focusing on outstanding issues such as: the role of Eurojust in dealing with cases where competent authorities could not find consensus; the interaction with rules of European Community competition law, and the implementation period for the new legislation.

In line with the ministerial discussions on 27 February, the scope of the instrument has been restricted to situations where the same person(s) is (are) subject to parallel criminal proceedings in different member states in respect of the same facts, which might lead to an infringement of the "ne bis in idem" principle.

The framework decision contains the following measures:

- a procedure for establishing contact between the competent authorities of Member States, with a view to confirming the existence of parallel criminal proceedings in respect of the same facts involving the same person(s);
- rules on the exchange of information, through direct consultations, between the competent authorities of two or more Member States conducting such parallel criminal proceedings(s), with a view to reaching consensus on any effective solution aimed at avoiding the adverse consequences arising herefrom.

The framework decision does not affect any right of individuals to argue that they should be prosecuted in their own or in another jurisdiction, if such right exists under national law.

This proposal is a joint initiative put forward by the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Sweden last January.

**SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN**

The Council held a first exchange of views on a draft framework decision aimed at improving the fight against sexual abuse and exploitation of children ([8150/09](#)).

The debate followed a Commission presentation on this proposal issued on 25th March 2009.

Member states undertook the commitment to increase initiatives and means to fight against these crimes.

The new proposal, which is intended to replace the framework decision 2004/68/JHA, covers the following main priorities related to:

- criminal law, serious forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation currently not covered by EU legislation would be criminalised;
- use of new technologies, new forms of sexual abuse and exploitation facilitated by the use of the Internet would be criminalised, such as "grooming" (on-line solicitation of children for sexual purposes);
- criminal investigation and initiation of proceedings, a number of provisions would be introduced to assist with investigating offences and the bringing about of charges, in the absence of reporting by the child victim;
- prosecution of offences committed abroad, rules on jurisdiction would be amended to ensure that child sexual abusers or exploiters from the EU face prosecution even if they commit their crimes in a non-EU country;
- protection of victims, in order to ensure that abused children have easy access to legal remedies and do not suffer for participating in criminal proceedings;
- prevention of offences, through special programmes to be implemented throughout the EU and mechanisms to block access to websites with child pornography.

## **TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

The Council held a first exchange of views on a draft framework decision aimed at strengthening the fight against trafficking in human beings ([8151/09](#)).

The debate followed a Commission presentation on this proposal issued on 25th March 2009.

Member states undertook the commitment to increase initiatives and means to fight against these crimes.

The new proposal, which is intended to replace the framework decision 2002/629/JHA, is aimed at improving the existing instruments used to combat trafficking in human beings and to provide victims support, including:

- definition of the crime, aggravating circumstances and higher punishment;
- extraterritorial jurisdiction allowing to prosecute EU nationals for crimes committed abroad and to use investigative tools such as phone listening and access to financial data;
- special treatment of the victims in criminal proceedings including non-punishment of the victims who bear the consequences of criminal activities;
- higher standard of protection and assistance to the victims. Special protective measures are envisaged for children;
- preventive measures aimed at discouraging the demand that foster trafficking.

The new proposal seeks to reinforce further the commitment of member states in order to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, which are mostly women and children. The proposal will contribute to the approximation of national legislations in this field as well as to the improvement of international law enforcement and judicial cooperation.

It incorporates all legal instruments governing decisions in relation to prosecution, victim support, prevention and monitoring.

**PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE VICTIMS**

The Council took note of conclusions drawn by the Presidency on a conference regarding the protection of vulnerable victims and their standing in criminal proceedings, held in Prague on 17 and 18 March.

The conclusions can be found in document [7855/1/09](#).

## **SINGLE PERMIT AND COMMON RIGHTS FOR FOREIGN WORKERS**

The Council held a political debate on a proposal for establishing a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in a member state and a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in the EU.

The exchange of views focused mainly on the scope of the directive and was conducted on the basis of a Presidency compromise text. The Council instructed its preparatory bodies to continue the examination of the proposal with a view to concluding negotiations on the directive as soon as possible.

This proposal seeks to simplify admission procedures for the purpose of work, thus contributing to a better control of immigration. To that effect, it provides for a "one-stop-shop" system for third-country nationals wishing to live and work in a member state. It envisages a single application procedure, thereby simplifying, shortening and accelerating the procedure, both for employers and migrants.

The conditions pursuant to which the third-country national can be admitted are not defined in the proposal, which remains a national matter. If granted, the permit to stay and work should be issued in a single act. The "single permit" will adopt the existing harmonised EU format for residence permits.

By acknowledging that legally employed third country nationals contribute to the European economy the same way that EU citizens do, the proposal further grants basic socio-economic rights on an equal footing with EU citizens. Equal treatment would include working conditions, health and safety at the workplace, education, vocational training, recognition of qualifications, social security, export of pensions, etc.

The proposal ([14491/07](#)), submitted by the Commission in October 2007, was the subject of extensive debates under previous Presidencies leading to a substantial level of agreement on a large number of provisions. It requires unanimity within the Council.

The European Parliament delivered its opinion in November 2008.

**EUROPOL**

***- Appointment of new director***

The Council adopted a decision appointing Mr Rob WAINWRIGHT (United Kingdom) as new director of Europol for a four-year period.

Mr WAINWRIGHT will replace Mr Max-Peter RATZEL (Germany), whose mandate as director of Europol expires on 15 April 2009.

***- Establishment of Europol as a EU agency***

Without discussion, the Council adopted a decision establishing the European Police Office, known as Europol), under which Europol becomes a Community agency as from 1 January 2010([8706/3/08](#)).

The change of status, which follows a political agreement reached by the Council in April 2008, is aimed at improving the operational and administrative functioning of Europol.

The decision also extends the mandate of Europol to serious criminality which is not strictly related to organized crime with a view to facilitating the support provided by Europol to the member states in assisting them to cross-border criminal investigations where involvement of organized crime is not demonstrated at the start.

Europol will be financed through the EU's general budget.

The role of the European Parliament in the control of Europol will also increase and democratic supervision of over Europol at European level will be enhanced.

A number of transitional provisions have been included in order to ensure a smooth transition.

The European Police Office (Europol) was created in 1995 on the basis of a Convention between member states.

It has its seat in The Hague, the Netherlands.

See also: <http://www.europol.europa.eu/>

### **EUROPOL/RUSSIA COOPERATION ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

The Council exchanged views on a possible authorisation to Europol to enter into negotiations with Russia with a view to concluding an operational cooperation agreement.

It agreed to include this issue on the agenda of the next Ministerial Troika meeting in May in Kaliningrad.

In 2003, the Council approved an agreement between Russia and Europol which does not include the exchange of personal data.

In 2000, the Council included Russia on the list of third countries and non-EU related bodies with which the Europol director can enter into negotiations for concluding agreements.

**MIXED COMMITTEE**

In the margins of the Council, the Mixed Committee (the EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) took note of the state of play on the second generation of the Schengen Information System « SIS II », following the conclusions adopted by the Council on 26 February ([6896/09](#)).

In the framework of the SIS, the ministers of the Mixed Committee discussed conclusions on the development of the SIRENE Bureaux<sup>1</sup>. These conclusions were adopted today by the Council ([8107/09](#)).

The Mixed Committee was briefed by the Presidency and the Commission on the state of play regarding the deployment of the Visa Information System (VIS).

It also took note of information following the lifting of air border controls in Switzerland for the Schengen area on 29 March. Land border controls with Switzerland were lifted on 12 December 2008.

The Mixed Committee was briefed on Schengen related issues following the visit of Vice-President Barrot and Czech Minister of Interior Langer to the United States on 16 and 17 March.

**Guantanamo**

Ministers of interior of the Mixed Committee exchanged views on the issue of Guantanamo. At the end, the Presidency summed up the debate along the following lines:

"Minister Langer and Commissioner Barrot reported to ministers on their successful trip to Washington. The US provided information to the EU and, on this basis, work can be taken forward.

---

<sup>1</sup> SIRENE stands for Supplementary Information Request at the National Entry and outlines the main task of the "SIRENE Bureaux" established in all Schengen states. SIRENE Bureaux provides supplementary information on alerts and coordinate measures in relation to alerts in the SIS.

At the EU/US summit in Prague on 5 April, President Obama asked for EU assistance to the closure of Guantanamo in the form of a EU supportive framework for resettling former detainees.

Ministers agreed to work towards a EU response to the closure of Guantanamo.

Decisions to accept detainees would be taken on a case by case basis and within the exclusive competence of the hosting member state. The member states will assess independently of the US the risk of receiving a particular detainee based *inter alia* on comprehensive information and intelligence received from the US.

As a result of Schengen rules, a decision to accept a former detainee by one member state would be relevant for other member states. Therefore consultation and information sharing between member states is needed. Iceland, Norway and Switzerland should be associated. For the first time, ministers had a discussion with Schengen partners on this issue.

Ministers tasked the EU Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) to present a proposal on a EU framework under which member states could accept detainees. COREPER will also consider other opened questions such as a possible Memorandum of Understanding with the US.

The closure of Guantanamo and the EU assistance would allow both sides to pave the way for strengthening cooperation on counter-terrorism and justice and home affairs in the future."

**OTHER BUSSINES**

**e-Justice: overview of EU funds available**

The Council was informed by the Commission on the current situation of the EU funds available for the e-Justice project. The launch of the e-Justice portal is scheduled for December 2009.

**Financial crisis: "what can be done in the area of justice?"**

As regards responses to the financial crisis, the Council took note of information provided by the Presidency and other Member States on the legislative and non-legislative measures and other actions undertaken in the field of justice to adapt relevant instruments, to the new situation, as well as to counter some negative aspects of the economic crisis.

**Conference on succession and wills in Europe**

The Council was briefed by the Presidency on the preparations for a conference on succession and wills in Europe, to be held in Prague on 20 and 21 April.

**Information on the G-8 Justice and Home Affairs ministerial meeting**

The Council took note of information provided by the Italian delegation on the upcoming G-8 ministerial meeting, to be held in Rome from 28 to 30 May 2009.

### **EU delegation visit to Washington on 16 and 17 March**

The Council was briefed by the Vice-President of the Commission J. Barrot and the Czech Minister of Interior I. Langer on the outcome of the meeting with the US Administration. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest, which included: the visa-waiver programme and border and migration issues, the use of modern technologies, the state of the ratification of the mutual legal assistance and extradition agreements, the Passenger Name Record data by air carriers and the closure of Guantanamo centre. Both sides agreed on the convenience of strengthening cooperation in the transatlantic relations.

### **Third Global Forum on migration and development**

The Council took note of information provided by the Greek delegation on the preparations of the Third meeting of the Forum to take place in Athens on 2 and 3 November 2009.

The Global Forum on migration and development is an inter-governmental and informal consultative process open to all states members and observers of the United Nations.

### **Public hearing: "European conscience and crimes of totalitarian communism: 20 years after"**

The Council was briefed by the Presidency on the public hearing held at the European Parliament on 18 March 2009.

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

**JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

**Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment**

The Council adopted a decision approving the accession of the European Community to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment (the "Cape Town Convention") and its protocol on aircraft equipment ([15013/08](#)).

**Compensation to victims of aircraft damages and arising from acts of unlawful interference**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to negotiate a multilateral agreement on compensation to third party victims for damage caused by aircraft and arising from acts of unlawful interference or from general risk.

**Development of the SIRENE Bureaux in the framework of the Schengen Information System  
- *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council,

*Reaffirming* that the SIS is a pivotal tool in securing the controls on persons at external borders and in enhancing security and justice within the Schengen area,

*Taking note* of the statistical analysis that shows that the total number of alerts in SIS has practically tripled in eight years; and that the number of hits has substantially risen, especially since 10 new participating States have joined,

*Recognising* that the Member States could nonetheless further optimise the operational contribution of SIS, whilst the growth in the workload of the SIRENE Bureaux related to the increase in the number of alerts and hits in SIS and also to other tasks (EAW, etc.) has not been covered by a corresponding increase in numbers of staff; this situation has a substantial negative impact on SIRENE's operational ability and should be dealt with expeditiously,

*Acknowledging* that in the near future a further increase in the number of alerts and hits as well as in the SIRENE workload should be taken into account and relevant measures undertaken,

*Underlining* that the training of SIRENE operators should be supported at EU level in order to achieve common qualification standards,

- (1) *Welcomes* the considerable contribution of the Schengen Information System, including SIRENE cooperation, in protecting the area without internal border checks, especially in the context of the enlargement of the Schengen area;
- (2) *Welcomes* the statistics on alerts and hits in the Schengen Information System and *invites* the SIS/SIRENE Working Party to provide them to the Council annually;
- (3) *Calls on* the Member States to take steps to further enhance the use of the Schengen Information System;
- (4) *Notes* the significant growth in the workload at SIRENE Bureaux and *appeals* to the Member States to take appropriate and prompt measures to cope with this development and to ensure the rapidity and high quality of cooperation between SIRENE Bureaux, especially in the area of manpower;
- (5) *Strongly supports* activities to establish common training for SIRENE operators in order to maintain high professional standards."

## **European Criminal Records Information System**

The Council adopted a decision establishing a European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) ([14571/08](#)).

The creation of the ECRIS supplements the framework decision on the exchange of information extracted from criminal records between EU member states adopted on 26 February ([13017/08](#)), by laying the legal foundation for the development a decentralized information technology system for the exchange of information extracted from criminal records.

It sets out the elements of a standardised format for an envisaged electronic exchange as well as general and technical implementing aspects of the information exchange.

## **EUROPOL/Israel cooperation agreement**

The Council adopted a decision authorising the director of Europol to enter into negotiations with Israel with a view to concluding an operational cooperation agreement.

## **Cooperation on preventing and combating crime**

The Council took note of the evaluation on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on agreements between police, customs and other specialised law enforcement services in relation to the prevention and combating of crime.

In its Recommendation of 27 April 2006 the Council recommended the EU member states to improve the cooperation between their police, customs and other specialist law enforcement authorities in preventing and combating crime, by establishing formal agreements or other arrangements at national level. The Council wished to be informed within 3 years of the measures taken in response to the Recommendation (*see EU Official Journal C 124 of 25.5.2006, p. 1*).

## **EU agreements on short-stay visa waiver with third countries**

The Council adopted decisions authorising the signature of agreements on short-stay visa waiver with Antigua and Barbuda ([7514/09](#)), the Bahamas ([7522/09](#)), Barbados ([7518/09](#)), Mauritius ([7520/09](#)), Saint Kitts and Nevis ([7528/09](#)) and the Seychelles ([7526/09](#)).

The agreements will be applied on a provisional basis pending the completion of the procedures for their formal conclusion.

Ireland and the United Kingdom will not be bound by these decisions or subject to their application, in accordance with the protocols annexed to the EU treaties.

## **EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

### **EU/Belarus**

#### ***- Human Rights Dialogue - Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council recalls its conclusions on Belarus from 16 March 2009, in which the Council looked forward to the launch of a Human Rights Dialogue with the Republic of Belarus.
2. The Council notes that the objectives of the Human Rights dialogue with the Republic of Belarus are on the one hand to raise human rights issues in Belarus and in the European Union and, on the other hand, to discuss questions of mutual interest and enhance dialogue on human rights topics in multilateral fora.
3. The Council decides to launch a structured Troika Human Rights Dialogue with the Republic of Belarus. The dialogue should be held at least once per year, with meetings convened alternately in the Republic of Belarus and in the European Union."

***- Restrictive measures***

The Council adopted a common position extending for one year, until 15 March 2010, the restrictive measures against certain officials of Belarus adopted in 2006 and suspending for a period of nine months, until 15 December 2009, the application of travel restrictions imposed on certain officials of Belarus ([7713/09](#)).

The measures are intended to encourage the adoption and implementation of further concrete measures towards democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Belarus.

The Council will be monitoring the situation in Belarus and may consider the possibility of lifting the restrictive measures or, if necessary, of re-applying the travel restrictions.

**TRADE POLICY**

**Anti-dumping measures - Steel ropes and cables - Castings**

The Council adopted regulations:

- amending regulation 1858/2005 imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of steel ropes and cables originating, inter alia, in India ([7662/09](#)); and
- amending regulation 1212/2005 imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of certain castings originating in China ([7617/09](#)).

**DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

**Mauritania - Consultations under the ACP/UE agreement**

The Council adopted a decision concerning the conclusion of consultations with Mauritania under the ACP/UE agreement ([7857/1/09](#)).

*More details can be found in press release 8508/09.*

**EU/ South Africa agreement on trade and development - Protocol on EU enlargement**

The Council adopted a decision approving an additional protocol to the agreement on trade, development and cooperation with South Africa, to take account of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU ([16447/08](#)).

**Economic partnership agreements with ACP countries - High level dialogue**

The Council approved the sending of a letter to the President-in-office of the ACP Summit concerning the level of consultations on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) ([8161/09](#)).

The letter of reply follows the suggestion made by the President of Ghana, and current President of the ACP Summit, to hold ACP-EU Heads of State and Government consultations on the EPAs.

The Council shares the view that a global vision of the different developments at regional level is desirable and suggests to jointly review the best way to hold a political debate in high level meetings, during which it will be possible to ascertain the next steps to further deepen and accelerate the EPA process.

The 6th Summit of the ACP states took place in Accra, Ghana, in October 2008.

## **Revision of the ACP/UE Cotonou agreement - European Investment Bank**

The Council adopted a decision on a Community position to be adopted within the ACP-UE Council of Ministers regarding the revision of the Annex II to the Cotonou ACP/UE partnership agreement ([7279/09](#)).

The decision is aimed at facilitating European Investment Bank own resources lending to ACP countries subject to Heavily Indebted Poor Countries and other internationally-agreed debt sustainability initiatives, in line with similar provisions already applied through the Investment Facility.

## **FISHERIES**

### **Bluefin tuna – Recovery plan\***

The Council adopted a Regulation concerning a multi-annual recovery plan for bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean<sup>1</sup> ([7116/09](#)+[COR1](#) and [7598/1/09 REVI](#), [7598/1/09 REVI ADD1](#) and [ADD2](#)). The plan transposes into Community law the decisions taken in 2008 by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), to which the Community is a contracting party.

The recovery plan provides for:

- the establishment of national fisheries plans and the attribution of individual quotas to vessels over 24 metres long ;
- the immediate freeze of fishing capacity of EU fleets at 2007-2008 levels before the establishment of programmes to reduce this capacity;
- the shortening by four months of the fishing season for purse seiners (15 April-15 June);

---

<sup>1</sup> It amends Regulation (EC) No 43/2009 and repeals the previous plan adopted in December 2007 (Regulation (EC) No 1559/2007)

- a ban on the use of aircraft or helicopters for searching for bluefin tuna;
- the establishment of specific quotas for sports and recreational fishing, imputable to national quotas;
- a ban on transferring tuna to farms without the prior authorisation of the fishing vessel's flag state;
- an obligation to make video recordings during fishing and farming activities available to inspectors;
- the establishment of a strict control framework for joint fishing operations.

## **HEALTH**

### **Medicinal products - Supplementary protection certificate**

The Council adopted a codified version of the regulation concerning the supplementary protection certificate for medicinal products ([3602/09](#)).

The new regulation replaces the various acts incorporated into regulation 1768/92, while fully preserving their content.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Climate-energy legislative package\***

The Council approved the climate-energy legislative package containing measures aimed at fighting climate change and promoting renewable energy.

The package is designed to achieve the EU's overall environmental target of a 20 % reduction in greenhouse gases and a 20 % share of renewable energy in the EU's total energy consumption by 2020.

*For more information see press release 8434/09.*

### **Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants**

The Council adopted a decision establishing the position to be adopted on behalf of the European Community with regard to proposals for amending Annexes A, B and C to the Stockholm Convention at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will be held in Geneva on 4 - 8 May 2009.

The Stockholm Convention was adopted in May 2001. The European Community and its Member States are parties to the Convention and its provisions are implemented in the EU law by regulation 850/2004 on persistent organics pollutants and by way of regulation 689/2008 concerning the export and import of dangerous chemicals.

