



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



13056/07 (Presse 202)

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

2819th Council meeting

### **- Agriculture and Fisheries -**

Brussels, 26 September 2007

President: **Mr Jaime Silva**  
Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and  
Fisheries of Portugal

# **P R E S S**

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13056/07 (Presse 202)

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**EN**

## **Main results of the Council**

*Following an exceptionally fast procedure, and in close cooperation with the European Parliament, the Council unanimously adopted a Regulation reducing to zero the **set-aside** rate for the autumn 2007 and spring 2008 sowings.*

*The Council reached a political agreement on a package of Regulations aimed at speeding up the restructuring of the **sugar** sector.*

*In accordance with the texts approved jointly by the Council and the European Parliament under the conciliation procedure in an exchange of letters on 20 and 21 June 2007, the Council adopted without debate the three legislative proposals making up **the third railway package** aimed at making rail transport more competitive and more attractive: a Directive on **the development of the Community's railways**, a Directive on the **certification of train drivers** operating locomotives and trains and a Regulation on **rail passengers' rights and obligations**.*

*It also adopted a Regulation reforming the **fruit and vegetable** sector and a legislative package modifying the **milk product** sector.*

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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:

Ms Sabine LARUELLE

Minister for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses, the Liberal Professions and the Self-Employed and Agriculture

Mr Kris PEETERS

Flemish Minister for Public Works, Energy, the Environment and Nature

Mr Benoît LUTGEN

Minister for Agriculture, Rural Affairs, the Environment and Tourism (Walloon Region)

### Bulgaria:

Mr Nihat KABIL

Minister for Agriculture and Forestry

### Czech Republic:

Mr Petr GANDALOVIČ

Minister for Agriculture

### Denmark:

Ms Eva Kjer HANSEN

Minister for Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

### Germany:

Mr Gert LINDEMANN

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection

### Estonia:

Mr Helir-Valdor SEEDER

Minister for Agriculture

### Ireland:

Ms Mary COUGHLAN

Minister for Agriculture and Food

### Greece:

Mr Christos AVGOULAS

Secretary General, Ministry of Rural Development and Food

### Spain:

Ms Elena ESPINOSA MANGANA

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Ms Mercè AMER RIERA

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries of the Autonomous Community of Balearic Islands

### France:

Mr Michel BARNIER

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

### Italy:

Mr Paolo DE CASTRO

Minister for Agricultural and Forestry Policy

### Cyprus:

Mr Panicos POUROS

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment

### Latvia:

Mr Mārtiņš ROZE

Minister for Agriculture

### Lithuania:

Ms Kazimira Danutė PRUNSKIENĖ

Minister for Agriculture

### Luxembourg:

Mr Fernand BODEN

Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, Minister for Small and Medium-sized Businesses, the Liberal Professions and the Self-Employed, Tourism and Housing

### Hungary:

Mr József GRÁF

Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

### Malta:

Mr Francis AGIUS

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Environment

**Netherlands:**

Ms Gerritje VERBURG

Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

**Austria:**

Mr Walter GRAHAMMER

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Poland:**

Mr Wojciech MOJZESOWICZ

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

**Portugal:**

Mr Jaime SILVA

Mr Luís VIEIRA

Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries  
State Secretary for Agriculture and Fisheries, attached to  
the Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and  
Fisheries**Romania:**

Mr Decebal Traian REMEȘ

Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

**Slovenia:**

Mr Iztok JARC

Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food

**Slovakia:**

Mr Vladimír PALŠA

State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

**Finland:**

Ms Sirkka-Liisa ANTTILA

Minister for Agriculture and Forestry

**Sweden:**

Mr Eskil ERLANDSSON

Minister for Agriculture

**United Kingdom:**

Mr Jonathan SHAW

Parliamentary Under-Secretary and Minister for the  
South-East, Department for Environment, Food and  
Rural Affairs

Mr Richard LOCHHEAD

Minister for Environment and Rural Development  
(Scottish Executive)**Commission:**

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Member

Ms Mariann FISCHER BOEL

Member

## **ITEMS DEBATED**

### **GMO**

The Council was unable to establish a qualified majority, either for or against, on three proposals for decisions on the marketing of certain varieties of genetically modified maize – variety 59122 ([11744/07](#)), variety NK603xMON810 ([11786/07](#)) and variety 1507xNK603 ([11860/07](#)). The decision will therefore be referred back to the Commission.

In March, April and May 2006 the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) gave three favourable opinions in accordance with Articles 6 and 18 of Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 and concluded that it is unlikely that the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of, or produced from the maize concerned as described in the respective applications will have adverse effects on human or animal health or the environment.

On 8 and 25 June 2007 the Commission consulted the relevant Regulatory Committee, which was unable to achieve the qualified majority required to issue an opinion.

Consequently, on 9, 11 and 12 July 2007 respectively the Commission submitted the three proposals to the Council, which must act by a qualified majority within three months of the date of submission (i.e. by 9, 11 and 12 October 2007 respectively).

## SUGAR

After a "tour de table", the Presidency noted that the conditions were in place for a **political agreement, by a qualified majority**, on the compromise drawn up by the Presidency in agreement with the Commission on a package of two Regulations, one amending the Regulation establishing a temporary scheme for the restructuring of the sugar industry in the Community<sup>1</sup> and the other amending certain provisions of the common organisation of the markets in the sugar sector<sup>2</sup>. The agreed text is that appearing in the Annex to *12796/07*, as amended at the meeting.

The European Parliament's opinion was delivered on 25 September.

The common organisation of the sugar market underwent a reform in 2005, coupled with a temporary restructuring scheme<sup>3</sup>. In the light of the results of the first marketing year, with the renunciation of quotas having failed to reach the levels originally expected, the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal to encourage the giving up of a further 3,8 million tonnes with the aim of reaching a total of 6 million tonnes by 2010.

The main points of the Regulations are as follows:

- Undertakings that have already made renunciations for the 2008/2009 marketing year will be able to submit an additional request for renunciation for this period, in order to avoid the uncompensated reduction which the Commission may implement in 2010 if voluntary renunciations are insufficient (**2-phase** procedure);
- Beet **producers** will themselves be able to take the **initiative** to give up their quotas, up to a percentage not exceeding 10% of the undertaking's quota;
- Beet producers will receive **additional** aid of **EUR 237,5** per tonne of the quota given up for the 2008/2009 marketing year, renewable under certain conditions for the following marketing year and **retroactive** so as not to penalise producers who took their decision to give up during the first two years of the reform;
- Undertakings that give up part of their quota in 2008/2009 will be **exempted** from paying the restructuring levy in respect of the part of the quota that was subject to preventive withdrawal during the 2007/2008 marketing year;
- The **final** reduction of quotas in **2010** will partly take into account the restructuring already achieved by Member States and undertakings.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EC) No 320/2006 (OJ L 58, 28.2.2006, p. 42).

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EC) No 318/2006 (OJ L 58, 28.2.2006, p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Applicable until 2010.



## **WINE**

The Council held a policy debate on a proposal for a Regulation submitted in July 2007 ([11361/07](#)) on reform of the wine sector.

The debate focussed on two questions from the Presidency ([12996/07](#)), one on planting rights, the other on abolishing the use of sugar (chaptalisation).

On the first question, some delegations confirmed their support for abolishing planting rights and liberalising the market as from 2014, to make the sector more competitive. Certain other delegations wanted liberalisation to come sooner and in any event in 2010, as provided for under the current legislation. Those delegations accordingly wanted consideration to be given to the introduction of transitional measures enabling them to liberalise planting rights from 2010. Other delegations, however, thought that the present time was too early to take a decision to liberalise rights in 2014; they preferred the idea of "fixing a date" in 2013 to assess the impact of the other market reform measures before deciding on the possibility of liberalising planting rights.

As to chaptalisation, a large number of delegations said they favoured this oenological practice which was associated with climatic conditions. Others, however, supported the Commission proposal to do away with the possibility of enriching wine by adding sugar, while abolishing aid for musts, regarding this as a non-negotiable element of balance in the reform.

The Council instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to continue its discussions with a view to reaching an agreement during the Portuguese Presidency.

The European Parliament's opinion is due in early December.

On 16 July 2007, the Commission presented to the Council its proposal on reforming the common organisation of the wine market, the objectives of which are to boost the competitiveness of EU wine producers, win back markets, balance supply and demand, simplify rules, preserve the best traditions of European wine production, reinforce the social fabric in rural areas and respect the environment<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission's primary aim is to optimise use of the budget (EUR 1,3 billion), which will remain unchanged.

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<sup>1</sup> See press release summarising the exchange of views by Ministers at the presentation ([11680/07](#)).

## **CROSS-COMPLIANCE**

The Commission presented to the Council the proposal it had recently adopted (*12585/07*) which aims to make certain improvements to the cross-compliance rules. The proposal was a follow-up to a Commission report on which the Council had adopted conclusions<sup>1</sup> in June 2007.

The Council instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to study the proposal with a view to agreement being reached during the Portuguese Presidency so that the Regulation could be implemented in 2008.

The Commission proposes to apply the following improvements as from 2008:

- phasing-in over three years (from 2009) of the statutory management requirements in the new Member States that have opted for the single area payment scheme (SAPS);
- simplification of the rules for determining whether farmers are entitled to the single payment (the 10-month rule is abandoned in favour of the condition that the parcels are at the disposal of farmers on 15 June of the year in question);
- clarification of the farmer's responsibility vis-à-vis cross-compliance in the case of transfer of land during the calendar year;
- introduction of the possibility for Member States not to impose aid reductions for minor infringements ("measure of tolerance") and to apply a threshold of EUR 50 per farmer/per year ("*de minimis*" rule).

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<sup>1</sup> Conclusions of Council meeting on 11 June 2007  
(<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st10/st10682.en07.pdf>).

The proposal also changes the date for identifying the parcels in the new Member States (30 June 2006 instead of 30 June 2003) and amends the special provisions governing complementary national direct payments in Cyprus.

Cross-compliance was one of the cornerstones of the 2003 CAP reforms. It enables direct payments to farmers to be discontinued or reduced if they do not comply with certain standards. There are two aspects to it: statutory management requirements (SMR) and good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC). The SMR are based on 19 legislative texts, while the GAEC standards are to be determined by the Member States on the basis of a Community framework.

## **SET-ASIDE**

The Council unanimously adopted a proposal for a Regulation reducing the set-aside rate for sowing this autumn and in the spring of 2008 from 10 % to 0 % of agricultural land (12965/07).

The Regulation will be published in the Official Journal in the next few days, so that the Regulation can be implemented for the earliest autumn sowings.

This measure, which is on a voluntary basis and without prejudice to stricter national provisions on environmental protection, should enable European cereal production to be increased from 10 million to 17 million tonnes.

In 2006 the total harvest in the 27 Member States of the Community was 265,6 million tonnes, which is less than predicted, and the same downward tendency is seen in the estimate for the 2007 harvest because of unfavourable weather conditions.

Some delegations raised the situation in the cereals market which lay behind the price increases in their countries, and others encouraged the Commission to pay the greatest possible attention to the effects on biodiversity.

One delegation asked that measures to relieve the situation on the market for pigmeat should be considered, such as export refunds or aid for private storage.

The Commission has undertaken to examine the future of the mandatory set-aside system in depth during the "CAP Health Check", particularly as regards its positive effects on the environment. The return of land to cultivation remains optional, and those farmers who wish to do so may continue with environmental programmes.

The mandatory set-aside rate was originally determined each year, but since 1999/2000 it has been set permanently at 10 %, in the interests of simplification.

3,8 million hectares are currently under mandatory set-aside in the EU. By reducing the set-aside rate to zero, the European Commission believes that between 1,6 and 2,9 million hectares could be returned to agricultural production.

The European Parliament delivered its opinion on 26 September, having accepted the use of the urgent procedure.

**OTHER ITEMS****(a) Avian influenza**

The Council took note of the latest written information provided by Commissioner Kyprianou on developments regarding avian influenza H5NI in the EU. The situation is stable, with a few cases being recorded during the summer.

**(b) Bluetongue**

The Council took note of information provided by the Netherlands delegation, supported by the Belgian, Italian, Luxembourg, Spanish, Slovak and German delegations (13120/07), calling for a proactive common approach to develop and approve a vaccine capable of curbing bluetongue, which is raging in northern Europe<sup>1</sup>, as rapidly as possible.

The serious financial consequences which arise from animal movement bans covering very large areas are putting considerable stress on farmers and their families.

The Council was also informed of the appearance of a first case in the United Kingdom, in Suffolk.

Bluetongue is a viral animal disease, transmitted by biting insects (*Culicoides*). It does not affect humans and does not require the slaughter of animals or public health measures.

12 000 cases have been declared in 2007 (Germany, Belgium, France and the Netherlands).

The Commission representative assured the Council that the regulatory framework to precede any vaccination campaign would be rapidly drawn up and that every effort would be made to guarantee that vaccines were available in case of emergency.

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<sup>1</sup> Until now bluetongue has been limited to the southern parts of Europe, where the insect which carries the disease has its habitat.

**(c) Bluetongue**

The Council also took note of the French request for exceptional economic measures to help farmers (13119/07). Commissioner Fischer Boel explained that this type of assistance came within the portfolio of Commissioner Kyprianou, particularly as regards preventive measures including vaccination, and eradication.

The Spanish delegation pointed out the need for Community support for Mediterranean third countries where the disease is endemic.

**(d) Foot-and-mouth disease**

The Council took note of information about the most recent case of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom on 18 September 2007, in Surrey (13169/07). The most likely hypothesis for the origin of the outbreak remains the escape of a live virus from the Pirbright laboratory.

Full details of the epidemiological investigation are available on the website of the UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA):  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/find/default.htm>

Commissioner Kyprianou called on the other Member States to remain vigilant, particularly those which have borders with third countries which have reported outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease.

**(e) Situation on the world cereals market**

The Council took note of the concerns expressed by the Spanish delegation, supported by the Cyprus, Hungarian, Greek, Latvian, Slovenian, Polish, Romanian, Italian and Bulgarian delegations, concerning the situation on the cereals market worldwide.

On average Spain produces 20 million tonnes per year and imports 9 million tonnes to cover its domestic needs, which have to some extent been increased by the demand for cattle feed. The Spanish delegation asked the Commission to propose other measures to the Council, to complement the suspension of the obligation to set aside land in order to remedy the situation, such as a temporary reduction in customs tariffs to facilitate imports.

The French delegation, while it shared Spain's worries, emphasised the need for a cautious approach when deciding on possible measures, especially measures relating to tariffs, and preferred to emphasise the need for optimal development of potential production and tools for cyclical management to safeguard autonomy of supply within the Community.

Commissioner Fischer Boel referred to the international context that had preceded the current situation and confirmed that her services would soon propose new measures to rectify it.

**(f) World Food Day**

The Council noted the German delegation's comments on the holding on 16 October next, the anniversary of the founding of the FAO, of a World Food Day devoted this year to the "right to food" (12697/07). The Presidency highlighted the importance which the Community and its Member States attached to the fight against hunger and malnutrition, especially within a reformed FAO.

**(g) WTO-DDA negotiations**

Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel briefed the Council on the progress of the agricultural strand of the WTO negotiations. The Council, while voicing some concerns, especially on non-trade-related matters, reiterated its support for the Commission's goal of reaching a balanced agreement in all areas of the negotiations.

**(h) Fires**

The Council took note of the seriousness of the human and agricultural situation in Greece where 200 000 hectares of agricultural land had been destroyed by the fires. 65 victims had lost their lives in the fires as had 30 000 farm animals; 3 000 hectares of vineyards, 15 000 beehives, 4 500 000 olive trees and 355 000 trees of other varieties had been burnt (13194/07).

The Greek delegation's representative thanked the Member States for their expressions of support and sympathy during these difficult times.

Mariann Fischer Boel told the Greek delegation about the different Community mechanisms available (State aid, regional aid, rural development). She went on to say that some farmland was still eligible for the single payment and that for aid which was still coupled, a hardship clause could resolve the problem.

**(i) Increase in milk quotas**

The Council took note of a request by the Polish delegation (*12932/07*), supported by many other delegations, to increase its national milk-production quota to meet growing demand.

Commissioner Fischer Boel noted the pressing request made by a large majority of Member States to increase quotas soon. She said that she had instructed her services to undertake an in-depth analysis, which would be the subject of a report by the end of the year so that suitable measures could be considered.

**(j) Baltic Sea**

The Council noted the German delegation's information on the HELCOM Action Plan for the Baltic Sea aimed at restoring its good ecological status by 2021 (*13168/07*). This Action Plan will have consequences for agriculture, particularly at the economic and environmental levels, and the German delegation drew the Commission's attention to the need to verify the compatibility of this action plan with Community legislation, in particular on water quality.

On behalf of Commissioner Dimas, Commissioner Fischer Boel announced that the delegations would be briefed in greater detail on this subject at the meeting at the end of October (Environment Council).

**(k) Denunciation of the Sugar Protocol**

The Council took note of a joint request by the French and German delegations (*13240/07*) on achieving consistency between the conditions for access to the European market for sugar from the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific States) during the period 2009-2015 and the provisions of the Common Market Organisation in this recently reformed sector, underlining the need to monitor the situation in the sugar sector on the European mainland and in the outermost regions.

Commissioner Fischer Boel confirmed that this consistency requirement was duly taken into account in the market access offer included in the draft Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), of which she mentioned the key points, as well as in the arrangements for ACP States, the beneficiary states of the measures under the "Everything But Arms" agreement and the European Union sugar sector respectively, emphasising that the Commission undertook to follow closely the evolution of the sugar market within the European Union, including its outermost regions (ORs).



## **OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

### **AGRICULTURE**

#### **Fruit and vegetables \***

The Council adopted a Regulation reforming the fruit and vegetable sector (*12576/07 and 12786/07 ADD 1*).

The key element of the reform is the transfer of funds earmarked for processing aid to the decoupled *Single Payment Scheme (SPS)*.

The role of *producer organisations (PO)* has been strengthened and the rules governing them simplified.

The Member States and the POs will develop **Operational Programmes** which should include at least two **environmental** measures as well as campaigns to promote the consumption of fruit and vegetables, paying special attention to **children**.

#### **Milk \***

The Council adopted<sup>1</sup> a legislative package for the reform of the market in milk products, concerning respectively the introduction of flat-rate aid for the school milk scheme, whatever the fat content of the milk (EUR 16,11/100 kg), the alignment of the protein content of European milk with the international standard set at 34% (standardisation) and indication of the exact fat content, the latter measure being intended to improve consumer information (*12750/07, 13004/07, 13006/07 and 12790 ADD1*).

### **EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

#### **Agreement with Liechtenstein on trade in agricultural products**

The Council adopted a Decision concerning the conclusion of an additional Agreement between the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein extending to the Principality of Liechtenstein the Agreement between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on trade in agricultural products (*6978/07*).

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<sup>1</sup> The French delegation abstained from the vote.

The new Agreement will simplify the three-sided relationship between the Parties in trade in agricultural products, concerning both tariff and non-tariff questions.

### **Relations with Switzerland**

The Council adopted a Regulation opening autonomous and transitional Community tariff quotas for the import of certain agricultural products originating in Switzerland (11816/07).

## **EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA**

### **Amendments to the Agreement on the European Economic Area**

The Council approved a Decision, to be adopted by the EEA Joint Committee, amending Annex I (Veterinary and phytosanitary matters), Annex II (Technical regulations, standards, testing and certification) and Protocol 47 (Abolition of technical barriers to trade in wine) to the EEA Agreement (12343/07).

## **TRADE POLICY**

### **International Coffee Agreement**

The Council approved directives for the negotiation of an international agreement amending or replacing the International Coffee Agreement 2001, further to the negotiating mandate given to the Commission on 29 January 2007.

## **DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

### **Tropical Timber Agreement \***

The Council adopted a Decision on the signing and provisional application by the European Community of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006 (11936/07 + ADD 1).

The aims of this Agreement are to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests and to promote the sustainable management of tropical timber-producing forests.

## **ATOMIC QUESTIONS**

### **Convention on Nuclear Safety**

The Council took note of a report on the implementation of the obligations under the Convention on Nuclear Safety, drawn up by Euratom (13005/07 ADD 1).

The European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) is a party to the UN Convention on Nuclear Safety. Under that Convention, each party must submit a report on the measures it has taken to implement each of the obligations of the Convention. Those reports will be examined at the 4th Convention review meeting, to be held at the IAEA headquarters in April 2008.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Third railway package \***

The Council adopted the three legislative proposals making up the third railway package, which is intended to make rail transport more competitive and attractive, viz. a Directive on the development of the Community's railways (*PE-CONS 3635/1/07 and 12514/07 ADD 1*), a Directive on the certification of train staff operating locomotives and trains (*PE-CONS 3636/1/07*) and a Regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations (*PE-CONS 3637/07 and 12516/07 ADD 1*).

The three legal acts were adopted in accordance with joint texts on which the Council and the European Parliament had reached agreement by exchange of letters on 20 and 21 June 2007 under the conciliation procedure.

*For further information see Press Release 11081/07.*

## **APPOINTMENTS**

### **Committee of the Regions**

On a proposal from the Spanish government, the Council adopted a Decision appointing

(a) as members:

- Mr Francesc ANTICH i OLIVER, Presidente del Gobierno de la Comunidad Autónoma Islas Baleares,

- Mr Paulino RIVERO BAUTES, Presidente de la Comunidad Autónoma de Canarias,
- Mr Guillermo FERNÁNDEZ VARA, Presidente de la Junta de Extremadura,
- Ms Dolores GOROSTIAGA SAIZ, Vicepresidenta del Gobierno de Cantabria y Consejera de Empleo y Bienestar Social (change of mandate),

and

(b) as alternate members:

- Mr Vicente RAMBLA MOMPLET, Vicepresidente Primero y Consejero de Presidencia, Comunidad Valenciana,
- Mr Jaime RABANAL GARCÍA, Consejero de Economía y Asuntos Europeos, Comunidad Autónoma del Principado de Asturias,
- Mr Gabriel AMER AMER, Delegado del Gobierno de las Islas Baleares en Bruselas, Comunidad Autónoma Islas Baleares,
- Mr José Félix GARCÍA CALLEJA, Director General Asuntos Europeos y Cooperación al Desarrollo, Comunidad Autónoma de Cantabria,
- Ms María de DIEGO DURANTEZ, Directora General Relaciones Institucionales y Acción Exterior, Comunidad Autónoma Castilla y León,
- Ms Lucía MARTÍN DOMÍNGUEZ, Directora General de Acción Exterior, Comunidad Autónoma de Extremadura,
- Mr Antonio GONZÁLEZ TEROL, Director General de Asuntos Europeos, Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid,

for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2010.

## European Economic and Social Committee

The Council adopted a Decision appointing as members:

- Mr Gundars STRAUTMANIS to replace Mr Andris BĒRZIŅŠ, proposed by the Latvian government;
- Ms Mette KINDBERG to replace Ms Randi IVERSEN, proposed by the Danish government;
- Mr Marco FELISATI to replace Mr Paolo NICOLETTI, proposed by the Italian government,

for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 20 September 2010.

### **DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE WRITTEN PROCEDURE**

#### **Credit agreements for consumers \***

The Council adopted, by qualified majority<sup>1</sup>, its common position on the amended Commission proposal for a Directive on credit agreements for consumers and repealing Council Directive 87/102/EEC, and forwarded it to the European Parliament for the second reading under the co-decision procedure (9948/2/27).

The aim of the revised Directive is to harmonise certain aspects of the Member States' legislative, regulatory and administrative provisions on credit agreements for consumers.

The most important provisions of the Council's common position concern the following main areas: (1) basic information to be included in advertisements, (2) pre-contractual and contractual information to be included in credit agreements, (3) the right of withdrawal, (4) early repayment and the creditor's right to compensation and (5) calculation of the Annual Percentage Rate (APR).

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<sup>1</sup> The Netherlands and Greek delegations voted against and the Belgian and Luxembourg delegations abstained.