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President **Athanasios TSAFTARIS**
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Main results of the Council

Fruit and vegetable sector

*The Council held an exchange of views on a report on the functioning of the **fruit and vegetable sector since the reform of 2007**.*

The President of the Council, Minister Tsafaris, noted that "all member states had the opportunity to give their view on this issue and the discussion will continue in the Council". For most of the member states there is a need to simplify the current system in order to increase the overall organisation rate of producers, and reduce the imbalance in levels of organisation between regions and member states.

Milk quota system

*The Council discussed the question of the legal basis for the **payment of the surplus levy** due when quotas are exceeded after March 2015 when the EU milk quotas is abolished.*

The Council's legal service took the view that the provisions concerning the milk quota system will continue to apply for the whole campaign 2014-2015, including the operations of recovery and payment of the surplus levy to be carried out after 31 March 2015.

Other items approved

*The Council decided not to oppose a set of eleven Commission **delegated acts in the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform package** which was adopted last year. This first wave of delegated regulations implements significant elements of the CAP reform.*

*In the field of the internal market, the Council formally adopted a number of decisions, including a legislative package for the reform of the **audit market** in the EU, a directive laying down harmonised rules for making **radio equipment** available on the internal market and a directive aimed at spreading the use of **electronic invoicing in public procurement**.*

*As regards the environment the Council adopted a regulation amending the **EU emissions trading scheme** directive (2003/87/EC). Furthermore, it adopted an amended **environmental impact assessment** directive. It also adopted a regulation on **fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases)**, which will allow a reduction of F-gas emissions in the EU by two-thirds of today's levels by 2030.*

*Concerning health, the Council adopted a regulation aimed at facilitating and speeding up the authorisation procedure for **clinical trials**.*

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- 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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ITEMS DEBATED

Report on the fruit and vegetables sector since the 2007 reform

Ministers held an exchange of views on a recent report from the Commission on the implementation of the provisions concerning producer organisations, operational funds and operational programmes in the fruit and vegetables sector since the 2007 reform. The debate was organised around a questionnaire prepared by the Presidency ([8402/14](#)).

Member states welcomed the report already presented by the Commission at the last Agriculture Council in March ([7312/14](#)). Most of them agreed that the best way to raise the level of organisation in the fruit and vegetables sector throughout the EU would be to make the system more accessible, in particular by simplifying existing tools or instruments. They underlined the need for greater legal certainty for existing producer organisations (POs) and for reducing the administrative burden for producers and national administrations.

Several delegations were of the opinion that the imbalance in the degree of organisation in the fruit and vegetables sector between member states and/or regions could be redressed by targeted actions. Some member states suggested, for example, that well-established producer organisations could share best practices with regions or countries where the rate of organisation in the sector was low.

Some member states envisaged an increase in the budget for this sector whereas a number of others insisted on the importance of maintaining budget neutrality.

Some member states pointed out that, at this stage, there was already a need for further improvement in the use of crisis prevention and management instruments, while other considered that the reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) already provided the necessary tools.

The 2007 reform aimed to strengthen the role of fruit and vegetable POs by providing a wider range of tools to enable them to prevent and manage market crises. Incentives were created to encourage mergers between POs, associations of POs (APOs) and transnational cooperation. The report points out that there is persistently little or no organisation in the fruit and vegetables sector, particularly in some southern member states and some member states that joined the EU in 2004 and later. According to the Commission this means that the benefits of specific aid foreseen for the sector are not being reaped; it also weakens the bargaining power of producers within the supply chain. Furthermore according to the Commission the very scant use of crisis prevention and management instruments by the POs shows that they need to be improved.

The Commission further indicated that in the light of discussions on the report in the Council and the European Parliament, the Commission would continue to reflect on how best to adjust the existing legal framework. The Council will discuss this issue in one of its future meetings.

Milk quota system

Following the discussion at the last Agriculture Council in March on the "soft landing" in the milk sector with a view to abolishing the quota system, the Austrian delegation requested a clarification from the Council Legal Service on the legal basis for the payment of the surplus levy due when quotas are exceeded, after 31 March 2015, when the EU milk quota is abolished ([8664/14](#)).

Addressing the Austrian delegation request, the Council Legal Service took the view that the new Single CMO Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013) should be interpreted in the sense that the provisions covering the milk quota system provided for in the old Single CMO Regulation will continue to apply for the whole 2014-2015 campaign, including as regards operations for the recovery and payment of the surplus levy to be carried out after 31 March 2015 which are an inseparable part of that campaign.

Several delegations, supporting the Austrian delegation questioned the legal basis for the surplus levy after March 2015 and asked whether it would be possible to reduce the penalties for those countries which risk exceeding their national milk quotas, by adjusting for example the fat correction coefficients. However, a number of delegations were opposed to this request, and considered that the rules defined in 2008 for the end of quota regime should be applied strictly to avoid a distortion of competition within the EU.

The Commission is due to present to the Council and the European Parliament a report by 30 June 2014 on the development of the market situation in the milk sector, as provided for in the "Milk Package" regulation. It is possible that it will also set out whether additional measures for this sector are necessary.

Any other business**– *Drought in Cyprus***

The Cyprus delegation briefed the ministers about the consequences for agriculture of the drought which affected Cyprus this winter ([8054/1/14 REV 1](#)).

The drought resulting from the dry 2013/2014 winter and combined with Cyprus ongoing financial and economic difficulties and small allocation for rural development risks putting many farmers in a difficult situation. Some member states expressed support to Cyprus delegation requesting an intervention from the Commission in the context of the crisis management tool provided for in the first pillar of the CAP.

The Commission explained that the crisis management tool in the first pillar is not really fit for this type of situation and mentioned instead measures in the rural development framework and the possibility for a member states to ask for an exemption allowing for the use of *de minimis* state aids.

– *Latvian winter crops sector*

Ministers took note of a request from the Latvian delegation about the difficult situation its winter crops sector is currently facing due to the unfavourable climatic conditions ([8819/14](#)).

Due to the long and warm autumn followed by a frost from January to March 50%-80% of area sown with winter crops has been destroyed across Latvia. Many farmers will therefore require additional financial support for the purchase of spring crop seeds and for the re-sowing of the areas which have been damaged by the unforeseen climatic conditions.

In this case, the Commission took a view similar to that expressed for the request from Cyprus (See above).

– *Regional conference week*

The Romanian delegation presented to the Council the outcome of the "European Regional Conference Week" organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and hosted by Romania, which took place between 29 March and 4 April 2014 ([8752/14](#)).

Every two years, the FAO holds regional conferences for each of its organisation's geographical regions. This time the Conference Week for Europe (including Israel and Central Asia) was hosted by Romania in Bucharest. As part of the Conference Week were held:

- on 29 and 30 March 2014 the NGOs/CSOs consultation meeting, which issued a declaration to the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC),
- on 31 March 2014 the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on the Committee of World Food Security (CFS) related to the 29th session of the Regional Conference for Europe,
- on 1 and 2 April 2014: the 38th session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA),
- from 2 to 4 April 2014 the 29th session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC).

The main issue of the conference was an exchange of views on food losses and waste in Europe and Central Asia. Other subjects of discussions at the Conference Week, were:

- priorities for FAO activities in the region;
- the question of gender statistics in the agricultural and rural sector;
- FAO governance in the region and the future organisation of the ECA;
- the International Year of Family Farming in Europe and Central Asia.
- ***Russian ban on pork***

The Romanian delegation briefed the Council about the consequences of an extension to Moldova of the existing Russian ban on live pig, fresh pig meat and meat preparations from the EU.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**AGRICULTURE****CAP reform - delegated acts**

The Council decided not to oppose a set of eleven Commission delegated act in the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform package which was adopted last year. This first wave of delegated regulations implements significant elements of the CAP reform.

- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (Rural Development Regulation) and introducing transitional provisions ([7637/14](#) + [7637/14 ADD 1](#))
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (Horizontal Regulation) with regard to the integrated administration and control system and conditions for refusal or withdrawal of payments and administrative penalties applicable to direct payments, rural development support and cross compliance ([7642/14](#))
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (Horizontal Regulation) with regard to public intervention expenditure ([7641/14](#) + [7641/14 ADD 1](#))
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (Horizontal Regulation) with regard to paying agencies and other bodies, financial management, clearance of accounts, securities and use of euro ([7640/14](#) + [7640/14 ADD 1](#))
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy (Direct Payments Regulation) and amending Annex X to that Regulation ([7646/14](#) + [7646/14 ADD 1](#)).
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 (Direct Payments Regulation) as regards the basis of calculation for reductions to be applied to farmers by Member States due to the linear reduction of payments in 2014 and financial discipline for calendar year 2014 ([7656/14](#)).
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation) by amending Regulation (EC) No 555/2008 as regards new measures under the national support programmes in the wine sector ([7636/14](#))

- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 (Single CMO) and Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (Horizontal Regulation) by amending Regulation (EU) No 543/2011 relating to the fruit and vegetables and processed fruit and vegetables sectors ([7658/14](#)).
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 (Single CMO Regulation) as regards the support programmes for the olive-oil and table-olives sector ([7654/14](#))
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 (Single CMO Regulation) by amending Regulation (EC) No 826/2008 as regards certain requirements related to the agricultural products benefiting from private storage aid ([7648/14](#) + [7648/14 ADD 1](#))
- Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 (Single CMO Regulation) by amending Regulation (EC) No 288/2009 as regards the granting of aid for accompanying measures in the framework of a School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme ([7657/14](#)).

The Commission has announced its intention to adopt a second wave of delegated acts after the European Parliament recess. For further information, please see press release ([8951/14](#)).

Trade arrangements for goods resulting from processed agricultural products

The Council adopted a regulation laying down the trade arrangements applicable to certain goods resulting from the processing of agricultural products. This follows a first reading agreement with the European Parliament ([PE-CONS 124/13](#)).

This regulation replaces the trade arrangements for processed agricultural products/non-Annex I goods, currently laid down in regulation 1216/2009². It also includes provisions from Regulation 614/2009 on the common system of trade for ovalbumin and lactalbumin. It brings the provisions in line with the legal obligation to differentiate between the Commission's delegated and implementing powers, introduced by articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Further adaptations also improve the clarity and transparency of the existing texts.

¹ Annex I TFEU establishing list of agriculture and fisheries products

² OJ L 328, 15.12.2009, p. 10.

Imports of rice from Bangladesh - Alignment on Lisbon Treaty

The Council adopted a regulation on imports of rice originating in Bangladesh. This follows a first reading agreement with the European Parliament ([PE-CONS 40/14](#)).

This regulation aligns Regulation (EC) No 3491/90¹ concerning imports of rice from Bangladesh on articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU, or Lisbon Treaty) as regards the implementing and delegated powers conferred upon the Commission.

Articles 290 and 291 TFEU distinguish two different types of Commission acts.

- Article 290 allows the legislator to delegate to the Commission the power to adopt non-legislative acts of general application to supplement or amend certain non-essential elements of a legislative act. Legal acts adopted by the Commission in this way are referred to as "delegated acts" (article 290(3)).
- Article 291 of the TFEU allows member states to adopt all measures of national law necessary to implement legally binding EU acts. Those acts can confer implementing powers on the Commission where uniform conditions for implementing them are needed. Legal acts adopted by the Commission in this way are referred as "implementing acts" (article 291(4)).

Regulation (EC) No 3491/90 establishes the conditions to apply to the preferential import arrangements granted by the EU to rice originating from Bangladesh. These arrangements involve a reduction in the levy of imports into the EU within the limits of those quantities traditionally imported. This regulation belongs to a package of texts on agriculture the alignment of which has been ongoing since 2010.

Partnership agreement against illegal logging with Indonesia

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of a voluntary partnership agreement between the EU and the Republic of Indonesia on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products to the EU (FLEGT) ([11767/2/13 REV 2](#), [11769/1/13 REV 1](#)).

The agreement was signed on 30 September 2013 ([13708/13](#)). The European Parliament gave its consent to its conclusion at its session from 24 to 27 February 2014.

¹ [OJ L337, 1.12.1990, p. 1](#)

In October 2003 the Council adopted conclusions on an EU action plan for forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT) presented by the Commission which called for measures to address illegal logging through the development of voluntary partnership agreements with timber producing countries. The EU already has FLEGT partnership agreements with Ghana, Congo, Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Liberia.

Determination of the levels of dioxin and PCBs in feed

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation 152/2009 as regards the determination of the levels of dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls ([7395/14](#)).

Regulation 152/2009¹ includes methods for the determination of the levels of dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in feed.

The amendments set out additional requirements concerning screening methods which identify the samples with significant levels of some of those chemical compounds (polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDFs) and dioxin-like PCBs). Where the results achieved with the screening method exceed the cut-off value, the original sample should be analysed by means of a confirmatory method capable of identifying and quantifying the substances contained in the sample.

This Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

FISHERIES

Partnership agreement between the EU and Gabon - Conclusion of the protocol

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of the protocol between the EU and the Gabonese Republic setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for by the fisheries partnership agreement (FPA) between the two parties ([11676/13](#)).

¹ OJ L 54, 26.2.2009, p. 1

The FPA in the fisheries sector between the EU and Gabon was concluded in 2006. The main objective of the protocol to this agreement is to define the fishing opportunities for EU vessels in Gabonese waters within the limits of the available surplus, in accordance with the best available scientific advice and recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The protocol also establishes the financial contribution due, separately, for access rights and for sectoral support.

Following negotiations, a new protocol was signed by the Council and Gabon in July 2013. In order to allow EU vessels to carry out fishing activities, the new protocol applied on a provisional basis since then, pending the completion of the procedures for its formal conclusion. The new protocol covers a period of three years from the date of provisional application. The European Parliament gave its consent for the conclusion of this protocol on 5 February 2014.

Partnership between EU and Madagascar - Negotiations for a renewal of the protocol

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations on behalf of the EU for a renewal of the protocol to the fisheries partnership agreement (FPA) with Madagascar.

The current protocol should apply until December 2014. The new protocol between the EU and Madagascar should be in line with the Council conclusions of 19 March 2012 on the Commission communication of 13 July 2011 on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as well as Regulation No 1380/2013 on the CFP¹.

Agreement on access to Mayotte waters for fishing vessels from the Seychelles

The Council adopted a decision on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, and on the provisional application of the agreement between the European Union and the Republic of the Seychelles on access for fishing vessels flying the flag of the Seychelles to waters and marine biological resources of Mayotte, under the jurisdiction of the EU ([7953/14](#)).

This agreement follows the status change of Mayotte which became an outermost region of the EU on 1 January 2014. On that date the current exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Mayotte became EU waters. This agreement will enable Seychelles flagged vessels to have access to Mayotte from the date of its signature. The fees paid by the Seychelles operators to obtain fishing authorisations to exploit highly migratory species should be paid, following previous practice, to Mayotte. The fees are meant to enable Mayotte to develop its management and control system, as well as for fisheries governance and capacity building.

¹ OJ L 354/2013, p. 22.

ENVIRONMENT

Access to genetic resources

The Council adopted a regulation on compliance measures for users from the Nagoya protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization in the Union ([PE-CONS 131/13](#)).

Today's final adoption of the legislation by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament. The European Parliament voted at its plenary session of 11 March 2014.

The regulation is aimed at establishing a framework governing compliance with requirements for access to genetic resources and for benefit-sharing in accordance with the Nagoya protocol. Its implementation will also contribute to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components.

For more details see press release [8825/14](#).

Environmental impact assessment directive *

The Council adopted a directive amending directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment ([PE-CONS 15/14](#), [7927/14 ADD 1](#)).

Today's final adoption of the legislation by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament. The European Parliament voted at its plenary session of 12 March 2014.

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) entails the systematic collection and analysis of information about the environmental effects of a project by the developer in order to enable the competent authority to decide if and how the project should be carried out.

The directive is aimed at ensuring a high level of protection of the environment and human health through the establishment of common minimum requirements for the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. The amendments adapt the current directive to the policy, legal and technical contexts, which have evolved considerably.

For more details see press release [8774/14](#).

Fluorinated greenhouse gases *

The Council adopted a regulation on fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases) ([PE-CONS 1/14](#), [PE-CONS 1/14 COR 1](#), [7929/14 ADD 1](#)).

The new regulation will allow a reduction of F-gas emissions in the EU by two-thirds of today's levels by 2030. The use of F-gases in some new equipment, such as refrigerators and air conditioners, will be banned where viable and more climate-friendly alternatives are readily available. The new regulation will not only contribute to the achievement of the EU climate and environmental objectives, but it will also create business opportunities for EU companies on the market for alternative technologies.

The regulation is aimed at protecting the environment by reducing emissions of F-gases. It establishes rules regarding containment, use, recovery and destruction of those gases. In addition, the new law imposes conditions on the placing on the market of products and equipment containing or relying upon F-gases, whilst setting out quantitative limits for the placing on the market of hydrofluorocarbons (HFC).

For more details see press release [8655/14](#).

European environmental economic accounts *

The Council adopted a regulation amending regulation 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts ([PE-CONS 37/14](#), [8249/14 ADD 1](#)).

Today's final adoption of the legislation by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament. The European Parliament voted at its plenary session of 2 April 2014.

The new regulation broadens the scope of the current law by introducing new environmental economic accounts modules: a module for environmental protection expenditure accounts, a module for environmental goods and services sector accounts and a module for physical energy flow accounts. It represents another step in increasing the available economic data related to the environment, and will be used, among others, to evaluate progress towards reaching the Europe 2020 objectives related to climate and the environment.

The regulation will enter into force on the twentieth day following its publication in the Official Journal of the EU.

Amendment to the EU emissions trading scheme directive

The Council adopted a regulation amending the EU emissions trading scheme directive (2003/87/EC), in view of the implementation by 2020 of an international agreement applying a single global market-based measure to international aviation emissions ([PE-CONS 18/14](#)).

The adoption of the legislation by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament. The European Parliament voted at its plenary session of 3 April 2014.

As the aviation sector has a strong international character, a global approach to addressing emissions from aviation offers the best prospects of ensuring sustainability in the long term. In line with the outcome of the 38th International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Assembly held in September 2013, there should be a single global market-based measure applying to international aviation emissions from 2020 onwards. The new regulation is intended to maintain the momentum reached within the ICAO and to facilitate progress at the upcoming 39th session in 2016.

For more details see press release [8831/14](#).

Nagoya protocol on access to genetic resources

The Council adopted a decision approving, on behalf of the Union, the Nagoya protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization to the convention on biological diversity ([6852/13](#), [6874/13](#)).

The Nagoya protocol is an international treaty adopted in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan. It further elaborates the general rules of the convention on access and monetary and non-monetary benefit-sharing in relation to the utilization of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.

To read more on the Nagoya protocol, click [here](#).

European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2013 - LIFE programme

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2013 "Has the Environment component of the LIFE programme been effective?".

"THE COUNCIL

1. WELCOMES the Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2013 on the effectiveness of the environment component of the LIFE programme;
2. UNDERLINES that LIFE has played an important role in the Union's environment policy and provided added value by supporting its implementation; in this context, also STRESSES that LIFE remains the only Union's financial instrument dedicated to this policy;
3. NOTES that the Court's audit focused on projects funded between 2005 and 2010 and was based on, amongst others, on-the-spot visits to twenty-five selected projects in five Member States among the largest beneficiaries of the LIFE programme;
4. FURTHER NOTES the Court's main recommendations that:
 - a) the Multiannual work programmes, foreseen in the new LIFE programme (2014-2020), should restrict eligible applications to limited strategic priorities and fixed for a number of years;
 - b) indicative national allocations for traditional projects should be ended while keeping a geographical balance for integrated projects;
 - c) there is a need to improve the quality and transparency of the selection process by the Commission, more specifically, to improve the project selection evaluation forms and to provide separate assessments and scores for key aspects of projects such as their innovative and demonstrative character, the dissemination of results and potential for replication;
 - d) the Commission should improve its programme management tools and introduce adequate, relevant, accepted, credible, easy and robust common output and result indicators as well as follow-up information at project level;

- e) the Commission should make better use of information collected during the monitoring phase in order to improve its assessment of the reasonableness of claimed personnel costs; and
 - f) focus on the dissemination, sustainability and replication of LIFE projects should be increased.
5. CONSIDERS that most of the Court's recommendations have been largely addressed, from a legislative perspective, in the new LIFE Programme for 2014 - 2020¹;
6. ACKNOWLEDGES the need to prioritise the available funds under the LIFE programme, but also UNDERLINES the need to provide the necessary flexibility to support the key priorities of all Member States and to take into account the wide range of environmental issues;
7. CALLS UPON the Commission to take into account the Court of Auditors' recommendations in its future management and implementation of the LIFE programme, and in particular to:
- a) improve the quality and transparency of the selection process;
 - b) provide better feedback to applicants on significant shortcomings in their project application which led to an insufficient score and on the key project aspects identified in the Court's Special report, such as dissemination, sustainability and replication, so as to contribute to the enhanced effectiveness of the overall programme; and
 - c) enhance the opportunity for the applicants of eligible projects to respond.
8. CONSIDERS important that in future audits the Court takes into account a wider choice of Member States to gain a more representative understanding of the geographical and administrative diversity of the systems and approaches, including their strengths and weaknesses, applied throughout the Union; ALSO ENCOURAGES the Court to carry out future audits before key stages in the implementation of the programme."

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1293/13 on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 614/07.

Protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission directive amending Annex II to Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration ([7240/14](#), [7240/14 ADD 1](#)).

The Commission directive is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the directive, unless the European Parliament objects.

Hong Kong Convention

The Council adopted a decision authorising member states to ratify or accede to, for the parts falling under the exclusive competence of the Union, the 2009 Hong Kong international convention for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships ([15902/13](#)).

The Council will review progress on ratification by 31 December 2018. The Hong Kong convention was adopted in 2009 under the auspices of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), as a result of the deliberations of the International Conference on the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships.

The convention covers the design, construction, operation and preparation of ships so as to facilitate safe and environmentally sound recycling without compromising ship safety and operational efficiency. It also covers the operation of ship recycling facilities in a safe and environmentally sound manner, and the establishment of an appropriate enforcement mechanism for ship recycling.

The convention needs to be ratified by a sufficient number of both large flag and recycling states in order to enter into force and start producing effects.

Monitoring of CO₂ emissions from new light commercial vehicles

The Council decided not to object a Commission delegated regulation amending annex II to Regulation (EU) No 510/2011 as regards the monitoring of CO₂ emissions from new light commercial vehicles type-approved in a multi-stage process ([6858/14](#), [6858/14 ADD 1](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

CO₂ emissions specified for the manufacturer Great Wall Motor Company Limited

The Council decided not to object a Commission delegated regulation amending delegated regulation (EU) No 114/2013 as regards the 2010 average specific CO₂ emissions specified for the manufacturer Great Wall Motor Company Limited ([7414/14](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

TRANSPORT

European GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) Agency

The Council adopted a regulation amending the regulation on the European GNSS Agency (agreement at first reading, [PE-CONS 133/13](#)) – bringing it into line with the new governance framework established under the regulation on the implementation of European satellite navigation systems (see press release [17376/13](#)).

In particular, the regulation adopted today aims to create watertight mechanisms within the agency to ensure that security accreditation of the European satellite navigation systems is carried out independently and without any conflict of interest once the agency becomes the operational manager of the European navigation programmes EGNOS and Galileo.

The new regulation also brings the old provisions into line with the principles contained in the [common approach on the decentralised agencies](#) agreed between the European Parliament, Council and Commission in 2012.

See also: [European GNSS Agency website](#)

Interoperability of the EU rail system - rolling stock

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation concerning a technical specification for interoperability relating to the "rolling stock - locomotives and passenger rolling stock" subsystem of the rail system in the EU ([6465/14](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

Railway interoperability: safety in railway tunnels

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation concerning the technical specification for interoperability relating to "safety in railway tunnels" of the EU rail system ([6525/14](#) + [6525/14 ADD 1](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

Ship inspection and survey organisations

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation laying down detailed rules for the imposition of fines and periodic penalty payments and the withdrawal of recognition of ship inspection and survey organisations pursuant to articles 6 and 7 of regulation 391/2009 ([6953/14](#)).

Regulation 391/2009 empowers the Commission to impose fines and periodic penalty payments on recognised organisations, or to withdraw their recognition, in order to ensure the enforcement of the obligations established under the regulation with a view to removing any potential threat to safety or the environment. The draft Commission regulation sets out the criteria for establishing the amount of fines and periodic penalty payments and the decision-making procedure to impose a fine and a periodic penalty payment or to withdraw the recognition of a recognised organisation.

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

ENERGY

Ecodesign requirements for ventilation units

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation laying down ecodesign requirements for ventilation units ([6920/14](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

Labelling of energy-related products on the Internet

The Council decided not to object a Commission delegated regulation amending a set of Commission delegated regulations with regard to labelling of energy-related products on the Internet ([7334/14](#), [7334/14 ADD 1](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

INTERNAL MARKET

Radio equipment - Compatibility of battery chargers

The Council adopted a directive laying down harmonised rules for placing radio equipment on the internal market ([PE-CONS 17/14](#) and [7928/14 ADD 1](#)).

All equipment which emits or receives radio waves for radio determination or communication purposes will fall within the scope of the directive. This includes devices such as cellular phones, car door openers and modems. Radio equipment used for public security and defence activities will be excluded.

The new rules aim to keep pace with the growing number and variety of radio equipment devices and ensure that they do not interfere with each other and respect essential health and safety requirements.

Under the new directive, it will be possible for the Commission to make the compatibility of battery chargers an essential requirement for types of mobile phones. Interoperability between radio equipment and accessories such as chargers should simplify the use of radio equipment and reduce unnecessary waste and costs.

For more information see press release [8840/14](#).

Electronic invoicing in public procurement

The Council approved a directive aimed at spreading the use of new technologies in public tenders ([PE-CONS 21/14](#) and [8244/14 ADD 1](#)).

The directive will contribute to improving the functioning of the internal market by reducing the obstacles to entering the market, especially for SMEs, and by solving the problem of the compatibility of different e-invoicing systems in various member states. The processes will become faster and less costly.

This new initiative is part of the on-going modernisation of the public administration sector in the member states, and particularly of the major overhaul of the EU public procurement directives¹.

For more information see press release [8881/14](#).

¹ [Official Journal of the EU L94 of 28 March 2014](#).

Reform of the audit market

The Council adopted a legislative package for the reform of the audit market in the EU.

The reform is aimed at increasing transparency and confidence in the audit market by enhancing the credibility of the audited financial statements of public-interest entities (PIEs), which are companies with a significant public interest because of the nature of their business, their size, their number of employees or their corporate status, including banks, insurance companies and listed companies.

In addition, the new rules will facilitate a wider choice of audit providers, in a market that is nowadays highly concentrated in a few big accounting firms.

The legislative package is made up of a regulation on specific requirements regarding statutory audit of public-interest entities ([PE-CONS 5/14](#) and [8241/14 ADD 1](#)) and a directive on statutory audits of annual accounts ([PE-CONS 6/14](#)).

For more information see press release [8879/14](#).

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Amended rules for the insurance industry

The Council approved amendments to EU rules for the insurance industry in respect of the powers of two EU-level supervisory authorities ([7924/14](#) + [PE-CONS 7/14](#)).

The amendments, introduced via what is known as the "Omnibus 2 Directive", include the provision of specific tasks for the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) and the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA).

In particular, they clarify the role of EIOPA in ensuring harmonised technical approaches for the calculation of technical provisions and capital requirements for insurance companies.

The new rules amend directives 2009/138/EC ("Solvency 2") on insurance and 2003/71/EC on prospectuses, following the creation of EIOPA and ESMA in 2010 as part of a new European system of financial supervision.

The amendments fall broadly into the following categories:

- definition of the appropriate scope of technical standards;
- enabling EIOPA and ESMA to settle disagreements;
- enabling the existing rules to operate in the context of the new supervisory system;
- transitional requirements and other amendments to the Solvency 2 directive.

Adoption of the directive follows an agreement reached with the European Parliament at first reading on 13 November 2013, approved by the Permanent Representatives Committee, on behalf of the Council, on 27 November.

The member states have until 1 January 2016 to transpose the directive's provisions into national law.

Securities - Prospectuses

The Council decided not to object to a regulation adopted by the Commission on technical standards for the publication of supplements to prospectuses when securities are offered for sale or admitted to trading, supplementing directive 2003/71/EC ([7589/13](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.

European Court of Auditors report on gross national income

The Council adopted conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report entitled "Getting the Gross National Income (GNI) data right: a more structured and better-focused approach would improve the effectiveness of the Commission's verification".

The Council:

- "1. TAKES NOTE of the Special Report 11/2013 "Getting the Gross National Income (GNI) data right: A more structured and better-focused approach would improve the effectiveness of the Commission's verification", which examines the effectiveness of the Commission's verification of GNI data for the years 2002 to 2007 used for own resource purposes. WELCOMES that many of the elements expressed in the report are being addressed, including the Commission further developing its verification strategy taking account of the findings of the audit, and that the Commission in the meantime has implemented a policy restricting the use of general reservations.

2. ACKNOWLEDGES that the verification of Own Resources data must be undertaken in the spirit of mutual trust and transparency and URGES the Commission to maintain these elements whilst implementing the Court of Auditors' recommendations. Special attention should be given to the reliability of the GNI data compiled within the ESA 2010 framework under the new own resources Decision.
3. RECOGNISES the limitations on resources in Member States and the Commission and therefore URGES the Commission to take a risk-based and proportionate approach to its verification strategy for European Statistics. "

BUDGETS

Timetable for adoption of the EU budget for 2015

The Council approved the timetable for this year's budgetary procedure and modalities for the functioning of the Conciliation Committee, as agreed during a trilogue between the presidency, the European Parliament and the Commission held on 2 April ([8582/14](#)).

EMPLOYMENT

Free movement of workers

The Council adopted a directive on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of their free movement within the Union ([8240/14](#)).

The directive guarantees real and effective judicial protection to Union workers and members of their families who have been subject to discrimination on the grounds of nationality, or to any unjustified restriction and obstacles to their right to free movement (for further information, see [18138/13](#)).

Mobilisation of the European globalisation adjustment fund for Italy and Spain

The Council adopted a decision mobilising a total amount of EUR 4.98 million under the European globalisation adjustment fund (EGF), providing support for workers made redundant in Italy and Spain.

An amount of EUR 3.01 million is allocated to 1146 workers dismissed in two Italian enterprises operating in the electronics manufacturing industry due to major structural changes in world trade patterns leading to a substantial increase of imports into the EU and to a loss of the EU market share in world markets. A further EUR 1.96 million is mobilised for 285 former workers of 16 companies operating in the Spanish automobile manufacturing industry following major structural changes in world trade patterns.

The EGF helps workers find new jobs and develop new skills when they have lost their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns, e.g. when a large company shuts down or a factory is moved to outside the EU. Support from the EGF consists in financing measures such as job-search assistance, career advice, tailor-made training and re-training, mentoring and promoting entrepreneurship. It also provides one-off, time-limited individual support, such as job-search allowances, mobility allowances and allowances for participating in lifelong learning and training activities.

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Adjustment of remuneration of EU civil servants*

The Council adopted two regulations regarding the adjustment of the remuneration and pensions of officials and other servants of the EU for 2011¹ and 2012² ([PE-CONS 56/14](#) + [PE-CONS 57/14](#) + [7926/14 ADD 1](#)), following a first-reading agreement reached with the European Parliament.

The two regulations implement the ruling of the European Court of Justice of 19 November 2013. They are based on an exception clause which allows the Council and the European Parliament in case of a serious and sudden deterioration in the economic and social situation within the EU to deviate from the standard adjustment method, which is aimed at ensuring a parallel evolution of the purchasing power of national officials of eight member states³ with EU civil servants.

For 2011, the salaries and pensions of EU officials have been frozen, taking into account the financial and economic crisis affecting a number of member states in autumn 2011, the high levels of unemployment, public deficit and debt. For 2012, the adjustment of remuneration and pensions has been set at 0.8%, reflecting the economic recession in the EU, the deterioration of the social situation and the continuing high levels of unemployment, public deficit and debt in the EU. If the standard adjustment method had been applied, the EU officials' salaries and pensions would have increased by 1.7% in each of these years.

¹ The Austrian delegation abstained and the UK delegation voted against.

² The Austrian, Cyprus, Greek, Hungarian, Dutch, UK and Danish delegations voted against and the Slovenian delegation abstained.

³ Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and United Kingdom.

In 2010, the salaries and pensions of EU civil servants increased by 0.1%, in line with the adjustment method. In 2013 and 2014, the remuneration and pensions of EU officials have been frozen, as agreed by the European Council in February 2013 and confirmed as part of the compromise package reached between the Council and the European Parliament on the reform of EU staff regulations.

EU's Civil Service Tribunal - Rules of procedure

The Council approved the rules of procedure of the EU's Civil Service Tribunal ([7614/14](#)).

The new rules of procedure are aligned on the recent recasting of the rules of procedure of the Court of Justice, while taking into consideration the specific nature of disputes referred to the Civil Service Tribunal. They also revisit a number of provisions in the light of the Tribunal's first years of existence in order to improve its functioning and the conduct of proceedings in the face of an increasing caseload.

Delegated acts on EU cohesion policy

The Council decided not to object the following three Commission regulations concerning the EU cohesion policy for 2014 to 2020:

1. A Commission regulation supplementing the common provisions regulation 1303/13 ([7331/14](#))
 - establishing detailed rules on criteria for determining the level of financial correction to be applied for the purposes of the performance framework;
 - laying down additional specific rules on purchasing land and on combining technical support with financial instruments;
 - laying down additional specific rules on the role, liabilities and responsibility of bodies implementing financial instruments, related selection criteria and products that may be delivered through financial instruments;
 - on the management and control of certain financial instruments, including controls to be performed by managing and audit authorities, arrangements for keeping supporting documents, elements to be evidenced by supporting documents, and management and control and audit arrangements;

- setting out the rules for the withdrawal of payments to financial instruments and consequent adjustments to applications for payment;
 - laying down the specific rules for setting up a system of capitalisation of annual instalments for interest rate subsidies and guarantee fee subsidies;
 - establishing specific rules setting out the criteria for determining management costs and fees on the basis of performance and the applicable thresholds for and rules on reimbursing capitalised management costs and fees for equity-based instruments and micro-credit;
 - laying down the method for the calculation of discounted net revenue;
 - concerning the setting of the flat rate and related methods;
 - laying down the methodology to be used for the quality review of major projects;
 - laying down requirements for the data to be recorded and stored in computerised form in the monitoring system;
 - laying down the detailed minimum requirements for the audit trail in respect of the accounting records to be maintained and supporting documents to be held by the certifying authority, managing authority, intermediate bodies and beneficiaries;
 - setting out the scope and content of audits of operations and audits of the accounts and the methodology for the selection of the sample of certain operations;
 - laying down detailed rules on the use of data collected during audits carried out by Commission officials or authorised Commission representatives;
2. A Commission regulation supplementing regulation 1301/13 on the European regional development fund (ERDF), containing detailed rules concerning the principles for the selection and management of innovative actions to be supported by the ERDF ([7585/14](#));
 3. A Commission regulation supplementing regulation 1299/13 with regard to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation programmes ([7332/14](#)).

The regulations are delegated acts pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the acts can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects them.

HEALTH**Clinical trials**

The Council adopted a regulation aimed at facilitating and speeding up the authorisation procedure for clinical trials, following the first-reading agreement reached with the European Parliament in December ([PE-CONS 2/14](#) + [8245/14 ADD 1](#)).

The regulation will enter into force 20 days following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union and apply six months after an EU portal for the submission of data on clinical trials and an EU database identifying each clinical trial have become fully functional (but not earlier than two years after publication of the regulation).

The main objective of the regulation is to make the European Union more attractive for clinical research and to reverse the decreasing number of investigations of medicines in humans conducted in the EU, while maintaining the high standards of patient safety.

For details, see [8891/14](#).

FOOD LAW**Caramel colours in malt beverages - Advantame as sweetener**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of the following two Commission regulations:

- a regulation amending annex II to regulation 1333/2008, establishing maximum use levels for caramel colours in malt beverages ([7227/14](#) + [7227/14 ADD 1](#));
- a regulation amending annex II to regulation 1333/2008 and the annex to Commission regulation 231/2012, authorising the use of Advantame as a sweetener and to assign E 969 as an E-number to that food additive ([7840/14](#) + [7840/14 ADD 1](#)).

The Commission regulations are subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt them, unless the European Parliament objects.

CULTURE**EU-Korea - Protocol on Cultural Cooperation**

The Council adopted an implementing decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union as regards the extension of the entitlement to co-productions, as provided for in article 5 of the Protocol on Cultural Cooperation to the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and its member states, of the one part, and the Republic of Korea, of the other part¹ ([8218/14](#)).

The period of entitlement for audiovisual co-productions to benefit from the respective schemes of the parties for the promotion of local and regional cultural content will be extended for a duration of three years, from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017.

Europe for Citizens

The Council adopted a regulation establishing the Europe for Citizens programme for the period 2014-2020 ([12557/13](#)), which aims to increase citizens' awareness of European history and integration, as well as to help citizens to better understand EU policies and their impact on their everyday lives.

The programme has two thematic strands: "remembrance and European citizenship" and "democratic engagement and civic participation". They are complemented by a horizontal strand, "valorisation", which is to support the analysis, dissemination and valorisation of the projects funded under the two thematic strands.

AUDIOVISUAL**Conditional access to audiovisual services**

The Council adopted a decision on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the European convention on the legal protection of services based on, or consisting of, conditional access, on the basis of Article 207(4) TFEU. ([7118/14](#)). After the adoption of the decision and its subsequent signature by a representative of the Presidency, the Council will transmit it to the European Parliament with a request for its consent.

¹ OJ L 127, 14.5.2011.

The Council of Europe convention entered into force on 1 July 2003 and is open for signature by the Union. It establishes a regulatory framework for combating illicit devices which allow unauthorised access to television services offered against payment. This framework is almost identical to that set out in Directive 98/84/EC¹, the current EU legislation in this field, covering both television and radio broadcasting services and transmission by Internet.

The signing of the convention will help to extend the application of those provisions beyond the borders of the Union, and to create a common and effective framework for the protection of services based on conditional access.

SPACE POLICY

Protection of satellites and space infrastructures

The Council adopted a decision² with a view to establishing a European surveillance and tracking service aimed at enhancing the security of space infrastructures and the safety of satellite operations by reducing collision risks and helping to monitor space debris ([PE-CONS 31/14](#)).

Space infrastructures are increasingly threatened by collision risks due to the growing population of satellites and the amount of space debris. In order to mitigate the risk of collision it is necessary to identify and monitor satellites and space debris, catalogue their positions, and track their movements when a potential risk of collision has been identified so that satellite operators can be alerted to move their satellites. This activity is known as space surveillance and tracking (SST)³.

As operational SST services at European level do not exist yet, the EU has a strong interest in building a space situational awareness capability to ensure the protection of space and ground infrastructure it owns.

The SST support framework will foster the networking of national SST assets to provide SST services. The provision of SST services will benefit all public and private operators of space-based infrastructures.

The SST support framework will be complementary to related activities carried out under Union programmes such as Horizon 2020, Copernicus and Galileo.

¹ OJ L 320, 28.11.1998,

² The adoption follows an agreement with the European Parliament at first reading. The United Kingdom delegation abstained from voting.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_type=251&lang=en&item_id=6463

RESEARCH**EU-US scientific and technological cooperation agreement**

The Council approved the extension of the current agreement for scientific and technological cooperation with the United States of America for a further period of five years ([15854/13](#)).

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**Access to copyrighted works for blind and visually impaired persons - Marrakesh treaty**

The Council approved¹ the signing, on behalf of the EU, of the Marrakesh treaty to facilitate access to published works for blind and visually impaired persons ([8147/14](#) and [8305/14 ADD 1](#)).

The Marrakesh treaty² establishes a set of international rules which ensure that there are limitations or exceptions to copyright at national level for the benefit of persons who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled and enable the cross-border exchange of accessible format copies of published works that have been made under limitations or exceptions to copyright.

In November 2012, the Council authorised the negotiations of an international agreement within the World Intellectual Property Organization on improved access to books for print-impaired persons. The negotiations were successfully concluded and the Marrakesh treaty was adopted on 27 June 2013.

Since 2011, the EU has been bound by the United Nations convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and its provisions have become an integral part of the EU legal order.

¹ The United Kingdom voted against and Poland abstained.

² http://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/text.jsp?file_id=301016

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EU- Azerbaijan agreements

The Council adopted two decisions on the conclusion of agreements between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan concerning

- the readmission of persons residing without authorisation ([15596/13](#)).
- the facilitation of the issuance of visas ([17846/13](#)).

The text of both agreements (respectively [15594/13](#) and [15554/13](#)) will be published in the Official Journal together with the decisions on their conclusion.

EU-Turkey readmission agreement

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of the agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Turkey on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation ([10697/12](#) + [10697/12 COR1](#)). The text of the agreement ([10693/12](#)) will be published in the Official Journal together with the decision on its conclusion.

Report on implementation of SIS rules concerning stolen, misappropriated or lost vehicles

The Council adopted a report on the implementation of article 102A of the convention implementing the Schengen agreement (CISA) during the year 2013 ([14247/2/13 REV 2](#)). The report will now be submitted to the European Parliament.

Article 102A of the CISA allows those services in EU member states responsible for issuing registration certificates for vehicles to have access to the Schengen information system (SIS) for the purposes of checking whether vehicles presented to them for registration have not been stolen, misappropriated or lost and that persons applying for a registration certificate are not using identity documents which have been stolen, misappropriated or lost.

CEPOL Work Programme 2014

The Council approved the European Police College's (CEPOL) 2014 work programme as contained in document [6632/14](#) and forward it to the European Parliament and the Commission for information.

Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment - Rail protocol

The Council approved the text of the draft Council Decision on the approval, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in mobile equipment on matters specific to railway rolling stock, adopted in Luxembourg on 23 February 2007, as set out in document [15113/13](#)

It also decided to transmit the draft Council decision to the European Parliament for consent.

Cooperation between Eurojust and EMCDDA

The Council approved a draft memorandum of understanding on cooperation between Eurojust and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) as set out in document [7628/14](#).

This memorandum will enable both organisations to enhance their cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking.

Global Approach to Migration and Mobility

The Council adopted conclusions on the global approach to migration and mobility ([8443/14](#)), which constitutes the overarching framework of the EU external migration and asylum policy, defining how the EU conducts its dialogue and cooperation with third countries and regions in the area of migration and mobility and reaffirming the need to ensure strong links and complementarity between the external and internal dimension in EU policies.

See also:

- Commission communication on a global approach to migration and mobility ([17254/11](#) + [17254/11 ADD 1](#)).
- Commission's first biennial report on the implementation of the global approach ([6988/14](#)).

Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment - Rail protocol

The Council approved the text of the draft Council Decision on the approval, on behalf of the EU, of the Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in mobile equipment on matters specific to railway rolling stock, adopted in Luxembourg on 23 February 2007, as set out in document [15113/13](#).

It also decided to transmit the draft Council decision to the European Parliament for consent.

CUSTOMS UNION

EU-China customs cooperation - Mutual recognition of trade partnership programmes

The Council approved the position to be adopted within the EU-China Joint Customs Cooperation Committee regarding mutual recognition of the authorised economic operator programme in the EU and the measures on classified management of enterprises program in China ([7287/14](#)).

Mutual recognition of trade partnership programmes enhances end-to-end supply chain security and facilitates trade. It is a key component of the strategic framework for EU-China customs cooperation. It consolidates the approach agreed in the World Customs Organization's framework of standards to secure and facilitate trade. It also addresses the concerns of the business community to avoid proliferation of requirements and to standardise customs security procedures.

TRADE POLICY

Anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures - Biodiesel from US - Canada

The Council terminated a partial interim review concerning the anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures on imports of biodiesel originating in the United States of America as extended to imports consigned from Canada, without amending the measures in force ([7819/14](#) and [7816/14](#)).

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council appointed Mr Bote WILPSTRA (The Netherlands) as a member of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015 ([8522/14](#)).

WRITTEN PROCEDURES**Draft amending budget No 1 for 2014**

The Council adopted on 9 April, by written procedure, its position on draft amending budget no 1 for 2014, notably approving the following modifications to this year's EU budget:

- the adjustments needed to implement the capital increase of the European investment fund to improve access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- some technical adjustments in the budgetary structure following the adoption of the legal base for Horizon 2020 in December 2013;
- some technical adjustments in the budgetary structure related to the establishment of the Shift2Rail joint undertaking in December 2013.

Draft amending budget No 1 is budget neutral.

Public access to Council documents

On 27 March 2014, the Council adopted by written procedure the reply to confirmatory application No 07/c/01/14 with the French delegation voting against, as reflected in document [6494/14](#) and the Italian delegation abstaining.

International recovery of child support

On 9 April, the Council adopted a decision amending annexes I, II and III to decision 2011/432/EU on the approval, on behalf of the European Union, of the Hague convention of 23 November 2007 on the international recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance.

The adoption of this amended decision enabled the Union to deposit its instrument of approval of the 2007 Hague child support convention during the meeting at The Hague of the Council on General Affairs and Policy of the Hague Conference from 8 to 10 April 2014.