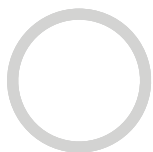


Working Towards a Better Europe

Results of the Cyprus Presidency
of the Council of the EU

1 July - 31 December 2012



14 January 2013



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Introduction

Throughout its Presidency, Cyprus has worked continuously towards safeguarding the European project, with all actions aiming towards restoring confidence in the European Union and preserving its ideals. In the midst of the ongoing crisis in the Euro area and the intensified dialogue on the Union's future, Europe, undoubtedly, had to enhance its role at international level and reinstate credibility, not only to the markets but also to its citizens.

The Presidency has been committed from day one to do its utmost in working Towards a Better Europe, **more relevant to its citizens and to the world**. The main aspiration was to take European integration even a small step forward, through promoting growth-oriented measures in combination with fiscal consolidation and stability. Additionally, it has showed commitment, in strengthening social cohesion and ensuring better quality of life for European citizens. The driving force for the necessary reforms was the underlying values and principles of the EU.

The vision of Europe as a “filoxenos topos”, a hospitable place, was also at the heart of the Presidency. A “filoxenos topos” is a space without borders and barriers, where social cohesion reigns, which will lead to a friendlier, anthropocentric society, a space where the young feel welcome and are offered the tools to shape and change the world.

Acting as an honest broker, the Presidency focused on working constructively within the Council, as well as in osmosis with the other institutions, promoting inter-institutional cooperation. The Presidency drew guidance from the conclusions of the European Council, while ensuring a smooth cooperation with the co-legislator, the European Parliament. As all Presidencies, it allowed for flexibility in adjusting its priorities according to current political and economic developments.

Working **Towards a Better Europe**, the Presidency set four priorities: (i) Europe, more efficient and sustainable, (ii) Europe, with a better performing and growth-based economy, (iii) Europe, more relevant to its citizens, with solidarity and social cohesion, (iv) Europe in the world, closer to its neighbours.

Main Results of the Cyprus Presidency

1. Europe, more efficient and sustainable

The overarching aim, under this priority, was the focus on integrated and effective policies with a main emphasis on progressing work on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and its related policies. The Presidency put momentous efforts in moving forward the negotiations on the MFF. It presented issues papers and two revised negotiating boxes introducing numbers in the negotiations and assuming warranted political choices, which resulted in bringing the file to a level of maturity that has laid the ground for the President of the European Council and the Heads of States or Governments to come close to an agreement. The Presidency progressed work on all relevant files falling under the MFF. The Cyprus Presidency also placed emphasis on actions promoting sustainable development and growth.

Promoting Efficiency, mainly through the Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020) and sectoral policies

Presentation of two revised negotiating boxes for the Multiannual Financial Framework and introducing numbers in the negotiations

The Cyprus Presidency made persistent efforts at moving the negotiations on the MFF forward, which resulted in bringing the dossier to the European Council level for the final part of the negotiations. The aim of the Presidency was to act as a catalyst towards a fair and effective EU Budget, which would deliver growth and employment, contribute to Europe's emergence from the crisis and provide the necessary means to achieve the EU2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, whilst safeguarding social cohesion and solidarity amongst member states and respecting the efforts of member states for fiscal consolidation at national level.

The Cyprus Presidency worked towards these goals as an honest broker, making the necessary political choices, in view of the divergent views in the Council. The Presidency held bilateral meetings with all member states and Croatia in July and organized an Informal Meeting of Ministers and State Secretaries for European Affairs. It produced a number of issues papers in order to facilitate the debate, which provided valuable input for the development of two revised versions of the negotiating box and the introduction of numbers in the negotiations for the first time.

The Presidency's first revised Negotiating Box was discussed at the General Affairs Council on September 24. Following the European Parliament's vote on its Interim Report on the MFF, the Presidency presented a second revised Negotiating Box that introduced numbers in the negotiations, proposing a reduction in the overall level of expenditure of €50+ bln. The Negotiating Box was discussed in the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) on October 31. The structure of the proposed budget reflected the Presidency's aim to produce a fair and as far as possible balanced proposal, assuming warranted political choices. Despite the proposed cuts, strong emphasis remained on sustainable growth and jobs, as well as on economic, social and territorial cohesion. On the revenue side, a step was made towards the introduction of new own resources by the inclusion of provisions on the possibility of introducing a Financial Transactions Tax through enhanced cooperation.

In early November, the President of the European Council took over the negotiations of the

MFF. The General Affairs Council in November discussed the draft European Council conclusions, ahead of the November European Council. Following intensive debate at the November extraordinary European Council and the presentation of revised draft conclusions, the Heads of States and Governments came close to the possibility of reaching an agreement but eventually decided to return to this issue in 2013.

Legislative proposals that fall under the MFF, for which the Presidency made considerable progress:

Partial agreement in the Council on Cohesion Policy legislative package and preliminary agreement with the European Parliament on programming for Cohesion Policy

The Presidency, recognizing Cohesion as the main development policy of the EU, aimed to achieve the best possible progress in the relevant negotiations for the new programming period. As a result, two partial general approaches were approved in the Council, resulting to a substantial part of the legislative package being partially agreed between the member states. The first one, in October 2012, concerned seven thematic blocs of the proposed Regulations for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 (provisions related to Territorial Development, European Territorial Cooperation, Management and Control Systems, Information and Communication and technical assistance, Indicators, Country-specific Recommendations and financial issues not in the MFF negotiating box). The second partial general approach was achieved in the Council in November, in two more very important thematic blocs (Financial Management and Common Strategic Framework). The two Partial General Approaches signaled the significant progress achieved in the Council, given that a substantial part of the regulatory framework is already preliminary agreed between the member states and only a few technical issues are still pending.

In parallel to the progress achieved in the Council, the Presidency initiated informal discussions with the competent Committees of the European Parliament (REGI and EMPLOI), so as to accelerate the negotiation process in view of a timely agreement of the legislative package. As a result a preliminary Interinstitutional agreement was reached in December on issues related to strategic programming both for the Common Provisions Regulation as well as for the European Social Fund Regulation. This important agreement will allow member states and regions to advance with legal certainty their preparations for the new programming period.

A progress report was also presented at COREPER in December reflecting the progress achieved during the Presidency in the Council as well as during the trilogues with EMPLOI and REGI on Fund-specific Regulations (European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund and European Territorial Cooperation).

All efforts undertaken by the Presidency, within the context of its work on the Cohesion Policy dossier, focused in pursuing one of the key priorities set by the Presidency, that of promoting a more efficient and sustainable Europe. This objective is reflected, amongst others, in the Presidency conclusions from the discussions at the Informal Meeting of Ministers for Cohesion Policy, held in Nicosia on November 6, which were focused on enhancing the effectiveness and improving the governance of the reformed Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020. In this context, an important development was achieved and reflected in the Presidency's conclusions, which were endorsed by the Council in November, that discussions should be regularly devoted to Cohesion Policy at Council level and its results linked also to the European Semester on the basis of relevant reports prepared by the Commission.

Partial agreement in the Council on Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is the new framework programme for research and innovation for the period 2014-2020. Its main priorities are excellent science, industrial leadership and societal challenges, with the major feature being simplification of the rules for participation aiming to attract more top researchers and innovative businesses.

The Cyprus Presidency achieved a partial general approach on four legislative proposals of the Horizon 2020 package. The first one concerns the compromise proposal for the Regulation on the Rules for Participation, for which the key feature of simplification is maintained. Concerning the second piece of legislation, i.e. Specific Programme of Horizon 2020, the Presidency has preserved the basic structure agreed on the main Regulation, while reflecting the desire of member states for more involvement in the governance structure of the programme as well as the introduction of concrete actions that are focused on strengthening and improving regions with relatively low performance on research and innovation.

The proposal for the amended Regulation of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) aims to account for the new status of the EIT as an integral part of Horizon 2020. Concerning the fourth legislative piece, that is, Strategic Innovation Agenda of the EIT, the Council decided the fields for which three Knowledge and Innovation Communities in 2014 will be created, while the number and topics of a second wave of creating new KICs will be decided in 2017.

Partial agreement in the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The reform of the fisheries policy was one of the Presidency priorities. A partial general approach was reached in the Council on the proposal for a Regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), replacing the existing European Fisheries Fund. This agreement provides support to the main elements of the two Regulation proposals of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform, on which the Council reached an agreement in June 2012. Furthermore, the agreement on the EMFF recognises the need for strengthening the funding to aquaculture; it also provides support for better selectivity, innovation, control and data collection.

Partial agreement in the Council on the Financial Instruments in the area of Home Affairs

The Council reached a partial general approach on all four MFF related Regulations in the Home Affairs area (Horizontal Regulation, Asylum and Migration Fund, Internal Security Fund – Borders, Internal Security Fund – Police) with the provisions that have budgetary implications pending to be dealt with again once an agreement on the overall MFF is reached. The four Regulations aim to contribute to the efficient implementation of EU Policy in the relevant areas, through appropriate programming and financing.

Partial agreement in the Council on the Creative Europe programme

The promotion of cultural diversity and the enhancement of competitiveness of the cultural, audiovisual and creative sectors are the main objectives of the *Creative Europe* Programme, which brings together the three independent programmes CULTURE, MEDIA and MEDIA MUNDUS. The Cyprus Presidency managed to reach a partial general approach in November 2012 on the provisions regarding the Guarantee Facility and aligned the overall text with the new Financial Regulation, thus only financial aspects of the Programme remain pending. The

Guarantee Facility aims at improving access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the cultural and creative sectors, contributing, thus, to economic growth, employment, innovation and social cohesion.

Partial agreement in the Council on Customs 2020

The Presidency has achieved a partial general approach in the Council on the Regulation establishing an action programme for customs in the EU for the period 2014-2020 (Customs 2020). The programme is the EU's funding facility in the Customs field that provides support for the cooperation between customs authorities and other stakeholders. The Customs 2020 programme will contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy as it is aimed at boosting the effectiveness of the member states' customs administrations' operational work and enabling the effective and uniform functioning of the EU Customs Union.

Partial agreement with the European Parliament on the Consumer Programme

The Cyprus Presidency has achieved a preliminary agreement between the Council and the European Parliament on the substance of the Regulation on a Consumer Programme 2014-2020 which constitutes the financial framework of Consumer policy. In particular, actions funded under this programme will seek to address issues linked to globalisation, digitalisation, the need to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption, population ageing, social exclusion, the issue of vulnerable consumers and the integration of consumer interests into all Union policies. Delegated acts and the budgetary provisions of the programme will be decided once an agreement on the MFF is reached.

Partial agreement with the European Parliament on the Health for Growth Programme

Following the partial general approach reached in the Council in June 2012, the Cyprus Presidency continued work both in the Council, as well as during the three trilogues with the European Parliament, where great progress was made. An agreement on the greater part of the text has been reached, with only issues remaining open being Article 7(3)(c) on co-financing of actions and the two horizontal issues of the financial envelope for the programme and delegated vs. implementing acts. The general objectives of the programme are to encourage innovation in healthcare and increase the sustainability of health systems, to improve the health of EU citizens and protect them from cross-border health threats.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the European Statistical Programme 2013-2017

The Presidency reached an agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation on the European Statistical Programme 2013-2017, thus ensuring the production of European statistics. The Regulation provides the framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics and specifies the main fields and objectives of the actions envisaged during that period. It is the only Regulation among the approximately 70 sectoral proposals related to the MFF, for which a final agreement was reached.

Progress report on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform

Intensive work was undertaken at both the Special Committee on Agriculture and working parties level, aiming to prepare the thorough policy debates held during the sessions of the Council. Based on the above, the Cyprus Presidency presented at the December Council, a report on the progress achieved during the second half of 2012 on the reform of the CAP. The report was drawn up under the responsibility of the Presidency, on the basis of the positions expressed by delegations in meetings of the Council and its preparatory bodies under the principle *"nothing is agreed until everything is agreed"* and without pre-empting their final position on CAP reform in the light of the future decision on the MFF for the period 2014-2020. The report indicates for each of the proposed draft Regulations (Direct payments, the Single CMO, Article 43(3) TFEU, Rural development and Horizontal Regulation) the main amendments tabled by the Presidency for which broad support from delegations was noted. The report also identifies the key issues which remain outstanding as of December 2012.

Bearing in mind that the new agricultural policy must be ready to be implemented from January 2014, the Cyprus Presidency concluded two agreements with the European Parliament on the two transitional Regulations covering the year 2013 ahead of the CAP reform's implementation: the first is related to the direct payments to farmers and the second concerns the regime of the single payment scheme and support to vine-growers.

Progress report on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Based on a Presidency proposal, the Council reached a decision to "move" the CEF dossier from the Budget Committee to the new established Friends of the Presidency-CEF Working Group ensuring thus horizontal coordination between sectoral working groups. Furthermore, during the Presidency a progress report on the work carried out in the Council on the proposal for a Regulation establishing the Connecting Europe Facility was presented. CEF lays down the rules for the granting of European Union financial aid in order to improve the Trans-European Transport, Energy and Telecommunications Networks, replacing the existing legal bases, while sectoral policy guidelines determining priorities and complementary measures of implementation were also proposed in each sector. Targeted investments in key infrastructures will help to create jobs and boost Europe's competitiveness at a time when Europe needs this most. The "Connecting Europe Facility" will finance projects, which fill the missing links in Europe's energy, transport and digital backbone.

Progress report on the implementation and exploitation of European satellite navigation systems

The Presidency presented a progress report on the work in the Council on the proposal for a Regulation on the implementation and exploitation of European satellite navigation systems. The proposal aims at updating the governance model of the European satellite navigation systems, in order to ensure that the EU flagship programmes, Galileo and EGNOS, are managed effectively. The Galileo programme aims to establish and operate the first independent global satellite navigation and positioning infrastructure specifically designed for civilian purposes. The EGNOS programme targets to improve the quality of open signals from existing global navigation satellite systems as well as those of the open service offered by the system established under the Galileo programme, when they become available.

Progress report on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the External Financial Instruments

Following the votes of the relevant European Parliament Committees on the draft reports for the nine external financial instruments (Common Implementing Rules, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, European Neighbourhood Instrument, Development Cooperation Instrument, Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries, Instrument for Stability, Instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights, Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, Greenland Decision) in July and September 2012, the Cyprus Presidency initiated negotiations with the European Parliament. A large number of trilogues and technical meetings were held during the Cyprus Presidency and significant progress has been achieved. The Presidency presented a progress report to COREPER in relation to the negotiations with the European Parliament on these financial instruments.

Progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Significant progress has been achieved regarding the proposed new LIFE Regulation that concerns the main financing means for projects in the sector of environment and climate change. In particular, the Council and the European Parliament held trilogues which have brought the dossier to a good level of maturity.

Progress on the Programme for Social Change and Innovation

Recognising the importance of funding provision for the development and implementation of employment and social policy, which are the main objectives of the Programme for Social Change and Innovation and which constitute basic elements for the economic growth and development, the Cyprus Presidency has undertaken negotiations with the European Parliament on the proposed Regulation and has managed in securing an agreement on one of the three axes of the Programme, namely the microfinance/social entrepreneurship axis. The proposal is intended to complement and reinforce the European Social Fund and increase coherence of EU action in the employment and social areas. It integrates three existing programmes, PROGRESS, EURES and the European Microfinance Facility, while extending their coverage to social innovation and experimentation and opening access to microfinance to social enterprises.

Substantial progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the Financial Instruments in the area of Justice

Following the partial general approach reached in the Council in June 2012, the Cyprus Presidency continued work in the Council on the two Programmes in the area of Justice, namely the Justice Programme and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC). An agreement on VAT was reached for both Programmes and the coverage of anti-drug policies in the Justice Programme was extensively discussed. Moreover, significant progress has been achieved during the two trilogues with the European Parliament. The REC' aim is to contribute to the further development of an area where equality and the rights of persons are promoted, protected and effectively implemented, whereas the Justice Programme' general objective is to contribute to the further development of a European area of justice by promoting judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters.

Progress report on the revision of the Staff Regulations

The Presidency continued the examination of the Commission's proposal for the Staff Regulations reform (proposal for a Regulation amending the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union), while also examining amendments tabled by the European Parliament Legal Affairs Committee (JURI). Important technical progress was achieved during the Presidency, which is reflected in the progress report approved by COREPER in December 2012. This report will serve as the basis for further discussion for the upcoming Irish Presidency.

Progress on the FISCALIS 2020 programme

The discussions on the programme FISCALIS 2020 were initiated and progressed by the Cyprus Presidency. Through the presentation of three compromise proposals, the divergent opinions of delegations were bridged, bringing the file close to an agreement in the Council.

Other relevant Issues:

Adoption of the Financial Regulation

The adoption of the Financial Regulation, which sets down the rules for the establishment and implementation of the EU budget, was the result of long negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament. Based on the substantial progress and agreement reached during the Danish Presidency, the Cyprus Presidency completed the work on this important legislation. This agreement will enhance the effectiveness of programming and implementation of the budget, as legislation has become simpler and more rigorous. Moreover, it introduces rules governing, inter alia, the keeping and presentation of accounts, public procurement and liability of auditors and accounting officers.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the EU Budget for 2013 and the Amending Budgets for 2012

The Presidency embarked on intensive negotiations with the European Parliament in order to reach an agreement on the EU Budget for 2013 and the amending proposals for the 2012 Budget. Despite the fact that the Conciliation Committee did not result in an acceptable joint compromise text during the 21-day Conciliation period, an agreement was reached between the Council and the European Parliament on the new proposals for 2013 Budget and amending budget no. 6 for 2012, submitted by the Commission on November 23.

The prompt agreement on the Budget for 2013 means that the Union, as from the beginning of 2013, will be able to implement programmes and actions to the benefit of EU citizens, with European added value. Moreover, with regards to 2012, the agreement for amending budget no.6 provided the Commission with an additional EUR6 billion to pay outstanding bills - the largest increase of the EU budget through an amending budget since memory.

The amending Budget no. 5 for 2012 was also agreed, which provides for a financial assistance of EUR 670 million to be given to Italy by the EU Solidarity Fund, after the country was hit by a series of earthquakes earlier this year.

Reform of the General Court – Additional Judges

The proposal to increase the number of judges of the General Court, aiming at tackling its constantly increasing workload, remained outstanding from the wide reform of the European Court of Justice proposed in March 2011. Through the Presidency's work, in close cooperation with the Court, substantial progress was made in convincing the member states of the necessity of structural reform of the General Court that will contribute to its smooth and efficient functioning. Furthermore, the Presidency, on behalf of the relevant Friends of the Presidency Group, communicated to the General Court a number of suggestions to be considered within the context of the revision of the said Court's Rules of Procedure, aimed at simplifying and shortening the procedures and, hence enhancing the Court's efficiency. However, despite the Presidency's best efforts, including the submission of two compromise proposals on these outstanding issues of the number of additional judges of the General Court and the system for their designation, these outstanding issues were not resolved.

Agreement of Council position on the inter-institutional arrangement on access by the European Parliament to classified information in the area of CFSP

Following discussions in the General Affairs Group and a constructive cooperation with the European External Action Service and the General Council Secretariat, the Presidency has concluded the examination of the draft text of the Arrangement and the related documents, and forwarded them to the European Parliament for initiating negotiations. This will allow the European Parliament and the Council to respect a joint commitment to begin the review of a previous Inter-institutional Agreement.

Progress on the proposal on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations

The Presidency initiated and progressed work on the proposal since its submission in September 2012. On the basis of the initial exchanges of views, the Presidency prepared a non-paper identifying the delegations' preliminary positions, which will form the basis for the detailed examination of the provisions of the proposal. The Presidency also took the initiative to invite the European Parliament and the Commission to a first informal meeting, during which the institutions presented their initial positions and agreed on the way forward.

Contributing to Sustainability

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Decision for accounting rules and action plans on greenhouse gases emissions resulting from activities related to Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)

The provisional agreement achieved between the Council and the European Parliament, during the Cyprus Presidency, refers to the proposed Decision establishing robust accounting rules for greenhouse gases emissions and removals in the forest and agriculture sectors, the last major sectors without common EU-wide rules. This Decision will allow the establishment of a harmonised legal framework for comprehensive rules in this sector, consistent with relevant Decisions adopted within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It will also enable future policy development towards the full inclusion of LULUCF in the Union's greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments. This will stimulate the mitigation potential of the sector, increase the visibility of measures taken and promote a more sustainable and efficient best practice.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gases (MMR)

During the Cyprus Presidency, the Council reached a provisional agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation for a monitoring and reporting mechanism. The final compromise package between the Council and the European Parliament on a first reading agreement was considered a priority by the Cyprus Presidency and the EU. Inter alia, the new Regulation will regulate the gathering and reporting of timely and accurate data on greenhouse gases emissions. It refers to the mechanism for monitoring and reporting such emissions as well as of other information at national and Union level relevant to climate change. It will replace and enhance the current mechanism for monitoring Community greenhouse gas emissions and implementing the Kyoto Protocol. On some issues it goes a step beyond Kyoto in providing greater transparency in the data and information provided and in ensuring compliance with the EU's climate change commitments.

Agreement with the European Parliament on Energy Star Regulation & signing of EU-USA Agreement

The Council reached an agreement with the European Parliament on the Energy Star Regulation, which aims to continually reduce the energy consumption of office equipment. Its purpose is to incorporate the implementation of the Energy Star Programme into the new Agreement between the United States and the EU on the coordination of energy-efficiency labelling protocols for office equipment. The Council Decision on the signing and conclusion of the Agreement between the USA and the EU was adopted by the Council on the 13th of November, 2012. The agreement is valid for 5 years.

Agreement in the Council on the Fisheries Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and Quotas for 2013

The allocation of fishing opportunities is an annual exercise incumbent to the Council to adopt the measures related to the maximum quantities of specific fish stocks that can be caught. As catch limits and fishing effort limits affect European fishermen and coastal communities,

thorough and exhaustive preparation is needed to assure optimal and sustainable agreements. Bearing also in mind that the European Commission decided to split its single proposal on TACs and Quotas in two (internal and external TACs and Quotas) the Cyprus Presidency in order to avoid costly proceedings deployed an innovative approach securing timely agreements in all TACs and Quotas for 2013. *For the full list of the TACs and Quotas agreed please turn to the annex of this report.*

Agreement in the Council on the Proposal for a Regulation for the allocation of slots at European Union airports

During the Cyprus Presidency, agreement has been reached on the proposal for a Regulation (recast of the 1993 Regulation) on common rules for the allocation of landing and take-off slots at European Union airports, which aims to optimise the use of airport capacity. The proposal forms part of the Airport legislative Package aiming to enhance fair competition and competitiveness of operators thus assuring quality of airport services.

Adoption of the Limassol Declaration on the EU Integrated Maritime Policy

One of the strategic initiatives of the Cyprus Presidency was to reenergize the EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), which is an important tool in maximizing sustainable development, blue growth and social cohesion of member states. To this end, the *Limassol Declaration on a Marine and Maritime Agenda for Growth and Jobs* was adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on EU Integrated Maritime Policy that took place in Cyprus in October. The Declaration is a milestone for the future development of the EU IMP, as it is a strong maritime pillar to the Europe 2020 Strategy that enhances effectiveness in this sector. The Marine and Maritime Agenda focuses on existing, as well as, emerging sectors where there is a great potential for new jobs and growth. Moreover, the Council adopted relevant Council conclusions on the Marine and Maritime Agenda for Growth and Jobs, which endorsed the Limassol Declaration.

Council conclusions on Rio + 20: outcome and follow-up to the United Nations Convention on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio, June 2012)

During the Cyprus Presidency, Council conclusions were adopted, referring to the outcome and follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. The conclusions constitute the official position of the Council on the assessment of the results of the Rio+20 Conference, looking at work to be done both at global and EU level. These conclusions also send a political message reaffirming the commitment of the EU and its member states to the Rio+20 follow-up process and provide guidance on a number of issues already under discussion at an international level. The conclusions establish the EU priorities and the next steps in such sectors as the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, the social dimension, waters, climate change, the international institutional framework for sustainable development, the sustainable development goals, and the means of implementation of objectives and agreements.

Council conclusions on the Preparations for the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 8th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (Doha - Qatar, 2 November - 7 December 2012)

The Council adopted conclusions in preparation for the UN Conference on Climate Change, which took place in Doha, near the end of the year. The conclusions set out the main elements of the EU positions and allowed the Cyprus Presidency and the Commission to successfully and effectively negotiate at the Conference. The EU achieved all its major objectives in Doha. The decisions taken include, a) a work plan to advance the work on a new climate agreement and enhance global pre-2020 mitigation ambition; b) an amendment setting out the rules for the second eight year commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol to start on January 1, and the revisiting of the targets of the participating countries by 2014; c) the encouragement of developed countries to keep climate finance in 2013-15 to at least the average level of their 2010-12 finance and the extension of a work programme on finance for a year, to identify pathways for scaling up climate finance to \$100 billion per year by 2020.

Council conclusions on a Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources

The Council adopted conclusions on the "Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources", which was a priority for the Cyprus Presidency. The conclusions highlight the need for better implementation of current legislation and increased integration of water policy objectives into other policy areas, such as the Common Agriculture Policy and the Cohesion Policy. The conclusions also call on the EU and its member states to ensure the sustainability of all activities that impact water, thereby contributing to securing the availability of good-quality water, which will also have positive effects on halting the degradation of ecosystems, as well as on combating desertification and adapting to climate change. The Blueprint signifies a major step in the efforts to effectively tackle current and emerging threats to the European waters and set out key actions to improve water governance. The implementation of the commitments made will constitute a significant policy element of the member states and the Commission's work on water policy in the years ahead.

Council conclusions on renewable energy

The emphasis given to the Renewable Energy Sources, so as to contribute to the objective of achieving the target of 20% of renewable energy sources in EU's energy gross final consumption, in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, is reflected in these Council conclusions adopted on 3 December 2012. Renewable energy is crucial for reaching the goal of a low carbon economy and security of supply. A longer-term perspective would have a positive influence on investments, given the long planning process and investment horizon for renewable energy sources, while ensuring economic and environmental sustainability.

Progress on the proposal for the safety of offshore oil and gas exploration and production activities

The Presidency achieved its aim to progress the proposal on the offshore safety and to start negotiations with the European Parliament. In this respect, the Cyprus Presidency, following persistent efforts, managed to obtain the necessary negotiating mandate from the Council for the first trilogue with the European Parliament. This Regulation will give new impetus for reducing the occurrence of major accidents related to offshore oil and gas activities and to limit

their consequences, as well as to improve the response mechanisms in case of an accident, an important step forward towards a more effective approach on the safety and protection of the environment from offshore activities.

Progress report on the follow-up to the European Council conclusions (February 2011) on energy

Bearing in mind the deadlines set for the completion of the Internal Energy Market (2014) and for lifting the isolation of member states from the European gas and electricity networks (2015), the debate on December 3 called on the Council to provide an updated assessment of the progress made in delivering on the orientations set by the European Council in February 2011. The debate took place on the basis of a Commission Communication "Making the internal energy market work", one of the 12 priority actions under the SMA II, and of a progress report by the Presidency on the follow-up to the European Council conclusions addressing energy efficiency, renewable energy, the internal energy market, infrastructure, external relations and nuclear.

2. Europe, with a better performing and growth-based economy

Addressing the deepest crisis the Union has ever been confronted with, the Cyprus Presidency was committed to promote growth-oriented measures that would enhance investment, competitiveness and create job opportunities in harmony with fiscal consolidation and stability. The 20th anniversary of the Single Market Act has been marked by the agreement on a number of important legislative proposals, most importantly the EU patent. The European Council conclusions of June 2012 called for a genuine Economic and Monetary Union, including taking steps towards Banking Union. The Cyprus Presidency's achievement of an agreement in the Council on the Single Supervisory Mechanism was admittedly a significant step towards this end.

Enhancing economic governance and the financial services regulatory framework

Agreement in the Council on a Single Supervisory Mechanism

On 12 September 2012, the European Commission presented a legislative package for the establishment of a Single Supervisory Mechanism for the oversight of credit institutions, to be led by the European Central Bank. The preparation of this package was a response to the invitation by the President of the European Council, to develop, in close collaboration with the Presidents of the Commission, the Eurogroup and of the ECB, a specific and time-bound road map for the achievement of a genuine Economic and Monetary Union, which would include concrete proposals on preserving the unity and integrity of the Single Market in financial services.

The Presidency prioritized very highly on its agenda these proposals and worked hard and constructively within the strict deadlines set by the European Council, i.e. for the co-legislators to agree on the legal framework set out in two Regulations by 1 January 2013. On 13 December 2012, an agreement was achieved at the Council, during a lengthy extraordinary meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council that started on 12 December 2012. Following the agreement at the Council, the first trilogue meeting with the European Parliament was held on 18 December.

This agreement is a milestone for the creation of a fully integrated financial framework, an essential element for a genuine Economic and Monetary Union. Moreover, as the Single Supervisory Mechanism is a necessary precondition for the European Stability Mechanism to contribute directly to the bank recapitalizations, it will enable the vicious circle that exists between banks and sovereigns debts to be broken.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation and Directive on Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs III)

The agreement reached during the Cyprus Presidency between the Council and the European Parliament on the Regulation and Directive related to credit rating agencies is a significant step towards ensuring the stability of financial markets. The new legislation introduces additional rules for these agencies to follow in relation to sovereign debt ratings. The agreed rules also ensure that financial institutions do not blindly rely on credit ratings for their investments (reducing overreliance), while they further eliminate conflicts of interest with more diversity and stricter independence of credit rating agencies.

Completion of discussions with the European Parliament on most substantial issues of the Two-Pack for economic governance

The Presidency has agreed, in essence, with the European Parliament on the proposal for a Regulation on the strengthening of economic and budgetary surveillance of member states experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties. Moreover, in relation to the proposal for a Regulation on monitoring and assessing draft budgetary plans of Euro Area member states, the only remaining issue to be agreed is the review clause which relates to the declaration by the Commission on growth and debt issues, requested by the European Parliament. The decisive progress achieved on the key elements of the "two-pack" was acknowledged by the European Council in December 2012. The work completed by the Presidency is very important, as the "two-pack" is a necessary additional step for the further strengthening of the economic governance framework in the euro area, as well as for the creation of a genuine Economic and Monetary Union.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the reform of the European Anti-Fraud Office

The Council reached an agreement with the European Parliament on the reform of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), which aims to improve OLAF's efficiency of investigation and enhance its capacity to tackle fraud. This achievement will contribute further to more effective anti-fraud action of the Union, while at the same time it introduces provisions that will increase the accountability of OLAF.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation on the European System of National and Regional Accounts in the European Union (ESA 2010)

The agreement reached between the Council and the Parliament on the Regulation on the European System of National and Regional Accounts in the European Union (ESA 2010) is very important, since it brings national accounts in the EU in line with new economic environment, advances in methodological research and needs of users. The Regulation provides the appropriate methodological reference for the production of high quality national accounts data required to support the implementation of major EU policies. Moreover, it is a well-anticipated element for the availability of important information necessary for the implementation of the legislative package on economic governance (the "six-pack").

Substantial progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on capital requirements (CRR/CRD IV)

The proposals aim to amend and replace the existing Capital Requirements Directive by a Regulation establishing prudential requirements that institutions need to respect and a Directive governing access to deposit-taking activities. They are aimed at transposing into EU law an international agreement approved by the G20 in November 2010. The so-called Basel III Agreement, concluded by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, strengthens bank capital requirements, introduces a mandatory capital conservation buffer and a discretionary countercyclical buffer and foresees a framework for new regulatory requirements on liquidity and leverage.

The negotiations for the Capital Requirements Directive and Regulation with the European Parliament were of utmost importance for the Presidency. A large number of trilogues took place during the Cyprus Presidency, achieving considerable progress in many areas.

Agreement in the Council on the Market Abuse Regulation

The Presidency secured an agreement in the Council on the Market Abuse Regulation. This is an important step towards stricter rules on insider dealing and market manipulation. The Council now has a mandate to initiate negotiations with the European Parliament with the objective of reaching a first reading agreement. These rules will increase market integrity and investor protection, as well as market transparency. This proposal is part of a broader "package" of measures, including a Directive on criminal sanctions for insider dealing and market manipulation, a Directive on markets in financial instruments - "MiFID"; a Regulation on markets in financial instruments and OTC - "MiFIR".

Agreement in the Council on the Market Abuse Directive

The Council reached an agreement on the proposal for a Directive on criminal sanctions for insider dealing and market manipulation ("Market Abuse Directive - MAD"). The Directive establishes minimum rules for criminal sanctions for the most serious market abuse offences, namely insider dealing and market manipulation. This would create an obligation for member states to ensure that these conducts are punishable as criminal offences.

Progress report on the Regulation and Directive on Markets in Financial Instruments (MiFIR/MiFID)

The Presidency achieved significant progress on the Regulation and Directive on Markets in Financial Instruments, bringing it close to an agreement in the Council. In its progress report, the Presidency highlights that on the majority of the proposed provisions an agreement in principle has been achieved, including issues such as investor protection and corporate governance provisions and the rules for Multilateral Trading Facilities, Regulated Markets and SME growth markets. The Presidency invested a great amount of effort for advancing work on the rules on markets in financial instruments, as they will further enhance the integration, competitiveness and efficiency of EU financial markets by responding to the challenges created by recent developments in financial markets, and dealing with the weaknesses that the financial crisis has exposed.

Progress on the Bank Recovery and Resolution proposal

During the Cyprus Presidency, significant progress was achieved in relation to the proposal establishing a framework for the recovery and resolution of credit institutions and investment firms, despite divergent views in the Council. The Presidency advanced work and reached agreement on a compromise proposal for key articles. This progress essentially brought the Council a step closer to an agreement on a file that will protect taxpayers and economies from the impact of any future bank failure and will make the banking sector more responsible, contributing to stability in the EU.

Progress on the Undertakings for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities proposal (UCITs V)

The Presidency initiated discussions on the proposal presented by the Commission in September 2012, on Undertakings for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities (UCITs V) and achieved significant progress bringing it close to an agreement within the Council. The proposal amends the existing UCITS rules, in light of the lessons learned from the financial crisis, so as to ensure investors' safety. In particular, the Presidency presented three

compromise texts and reached consensus on the majority of common principles such as remuneration, depositary eligibility criteria and depositary liability regime.

Progress on the Packaged Retail Investment Products proposal (PRIPs)

The Presidency also initiated work on the proposal on Packaged Retail Investment Products (PRIPs) and significantly progressed work on the proposed Regulation which was presented by the Commission in September 2012. The compromise text presented by the Presidency, was welcomed by a number of member states and is expected to serve as a good starting basis for further negotiations, facilitating an agreement on rules that will improve transparency in the investment market for retail investors.

Council conclusions on tax fraud and tax evasion

The importance of taking effective steps to fight tax evasion and fraud, particularly in times of budgetary constraints and of economic crisis is highlighted in the Council conclusions adopted during the Cyprus Presidency. The conclusions also welcome the European Commission's Communication on concrete ways to reinforce the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion, which was discussed in the Council's High Level Working Party on Tax issues. Moreover, the conclusions reflect which legislative proposals should be given priority and call for intensification of work on these issues.

Report to the European Council on tax issues

As mandated by the European Council in June 2012, the Cyprus Presidency prepared a report on tax issues, especially in relation to the progress achieved on growth-oriented tax measures. Thus, the European Council was given an overview on the state of play of the work of the Council regarding certain key legislative proposals, including Energy Taxation, Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base, Financial Transactions Tax, Savings Taxation Directive and the negotiating mandate for Savings Taxation Agreements with Third Countries.

Enhanced Cooperation on Financial Transaction Tax

Following the lack of unanimous support for the proposal on the imposition of an EU wide Financial Transaction Tax, the procedure for enhanced cooperation was initiated during the Cyprus Presidency. The Commission submitted a proposal for a Decision authorizing enhanced cooperation on 23 October 2012, after the formal request for enhanced cooperation by eleven member states. The Presidency progressed and facilitated work on the procedure for enhanced cooperation, resulting in an agreement by the Council on a formal request for the consent of the European Parliament on authorising the enhanced cooperation. The European Parliament granted its consent at the December Plenary Session.

Deepening of the Internal Market and other Growth enhancing actions

Single Market Act I measures:

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Unitary Patent package

The conclusion of the negotiations on Unitary Patent Package has been a top priority of the Cyprus Presidency. The agreement reached between the Council and the European Parliament marks a major and historic breakthrough for Europe's competitiveness and innovation after more than 30 years of negotiations. The package consists of three components, namely the Regulation creating unitary patent protection through enhanced cooperation, the Regulation setting out the translation arrangements for European patents benefitting from unitary effect and the Unified Patent Court agreement (UPC).

The effect of the final adoption of the unitary patent package means a unitary patent title common to the 25 EU member states participating in the enhanced cooperation, significantly less expensive and simpler. It will also contribute to an increase in patent activity, especially for Small and Medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The new unitary patent model will encourage EU businesses to increase their innovation activity and foster scientific and technological advances thus enhancing their competitiveness in the internal market. Overall, the new system ensures more efficient and legally secure patent protection for businesses in the EU.

Agreement with the European Parliament on Venture Capital Funds

The agreement reached between the Council and the European Parliament on Venture Capital Funds, during the Cyprus Presidency, is considered as an important step towards providing innovative small businesses with easier access to finance. In essence, the new rules allow venture capital funds established in any member state to invest freely throughout the EU. This will enhance competitiveness as it will facilitate cross-border investment. This single set of rules will also result to increased effectiveness and reduced costs for venture capital funds.

Agreement with the European Parliament on Social Entrepreneurship Funds

The agreement reached between the Council and the European Parliament, during the Cyprus Presidency, on the Regulation for Social Investment Funds, is of significant importance as the new Regulation promotes investment in social businesses, by removing barriers and hence enabling both investors and businesses to reap the benefits of the internal market. One of the most innovative aspects of the new Regulation is the creation of a common 'label' for social investment funds, which will allow their uninhibited operation in the whole of the EU and the European Economic Area.

Agreement with the European Parliament on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)

The agreement on the Directive on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provides for simple, fast and affordable out-of-court settlement procedures for resolving disputes between consumers and traders arising from the sales of goods and services, through the intervention of

an alternative dispute resolution entity. The framework created will set out common ADR principles and stimulate the creation of ADR in those member states where they do not exist.

The Regulation on Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) provides for a mechanism to supplement the ADR system with the setting up of a European online dispute resolution platform (an interactive website accessible electronically and free of charge in all languages of the Union).

These legislative measures constitute a significant step towards increased competition, consumer empowerment and the enhancement of consumer trust in the Single Market, especially in cases of cross border purchases, where emerging disputes will be settled easier and simpler, thus making it more trustworthy to shop outside the consumer's country of residence.

Agreement with the European Parliament on guidelines for Trans – European energy infrastructure

This Regulation is one of the priorities of the Single Market Act I and was set as the main priority of the Cyprus Presidency in the energy sector. The agreement achieved between the Council and the European Parliament, will safeguard the timely development of key energy infrastructures between member states and third countries. The new regulatory framework provides for closer regional cooperation, accelerated and transparent permit granting procedures and cross-border cost allocation rules. Furthermore, it contains provisions regarding the eligibility for the Union financial assistance through the proposed Regulation for Connecting Europe Facility. It will contribute significantly to growth, employment and sustainable development, while at the same time energy infrastructures are vital for the completion of the internal energy market by 2014, for lifting the energy isolation of all member states by 2014, for guaranteeing the security of supply, for achieving the energy and climate targets for 2020 and preparing the Union's energy system for the longer term towards 2050.

Agreement in the Council on the Public Procurement Package

The Cyprus Presidency has achieved an agreement on the Council's position on three Directives constituting the Public Procurement reform package (Classical Directive, Utilities Directive, and Concessions Directive). Public procurement is a key element and one of the market-based instruments to be used to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The proposed Directives on Public Procurement (Classical Directive) and on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors (Utilities Directive) aim to reduce the administrative burden by modernising and simplifying the existing rules and encourage the use of e-procurement, therefore improving the business environment and conditions for businesses to innovate, increase the efficiency of public spending and encourage wider use of green procurement supporting the shift towards a resource efficient and low-carbon economy. Finally, the Directive on the award of concession contracts aims to facilitate the conclusion of these contracts encouraging new investments, promoting a quicker return to sustainable economic growth and contributing to innovation and long-term structural development of infrastructures and services.

Progress on the Accounting Directive

During the Cyprus Presidency, considerable work has been undertaken on the Accounting Directive, with four trilogues having taken place between the Council and the Parliament, thus facilitating the achievement of an agreement in early 2013. The Directive aims to reduce administrative burden of SMEs through the simplification of the accounting framework, improve clarity and comparability of financial statements for undertakings with intense cross-border activity and enhance transparency on payments made to governments by the extractive industry and the loggers of primary forests. As one of the key actions of the Single Market Act I the proposal's overall aim is to contribute to the improvement of Europe's competitiveness.

Progress report on posting of workers

Acknowledging the need for improving the legal framework on the posting of workers, the Cyprus Presidency attached utmost priority in achieving substantial progress on the proposed relevant enforcement Directive. Considerable progress was achieved on various issues of the proposed Directive, which was highlighted in a Progress Report submitted to the Council meeting in December. The proposed Directive is important for the well-functioning and better performing of the internal market, as regards both businesses and workers, whilst providing for a growth-oriented economy. Its main objective is to ensure the protection of posted workers' rights, but at the same time to create a level-playing field for service providers, while avoiding the abuse of this service by letter-box companies artificially established abroad to benefit from lower levels of labour protection or social security obligations.

Progress report on professional qualifications

The recognition of professional qualifications among member states has become a fundamental building block of the single market and professional mobility is a key element for reinforcing and boosting the Union's competitiveness. In an attempt to simplify the procedures, modernise the recognition systems and extend the scope of the Professional Qualifications Directive, the Commission presented a proposal (amending Directive) in December 2011. During the Cyprus Presidency, two important elements have been discussed, namely the European Professional Card and the Transparency of regulated professions, for which significant progress has been achieved. The European Professional Card will be an electronic certificate issued by the professional's country of departure that would facilitate automatic recognition in the host country. Moreover, the procedure to regulate a profession must take place in due transparency and shall involve an evaluation of the justification of the need for Regulation against the principles of necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination.

Progress report on the electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market

A progress report was adopted by the Council on the proposal for a Regulation on electronic identification and other trusted services. This proposal aims at ensuring EU-wide mutual recognition and acceptance of electronic identification and e-authentication. It enhances the current regulatory framework for electronic signatures by making them more interoperable and usable. It also provides a legal framework for other trust services like electronic seals, time stamping, certified delivery and is one of the key initiatives in the Single Market Act.

Report on energy taxation

Energy taxation is considered a cornerstone in tackling climate change and, thus, the Presidency focused on progressing work on the proposed Directive, which is expected to direct consumers into a more efficient use of energy, as well as into choosing cleaner energy sources. During its term, the Presidency prepared four compromise legislative proposals that were intensively discussed at the Council's Working Party on Tax Questions. The Cyprus Presidency was the first one to submit compromise legislative proposals, since the presentation of the proposed Directive by the European Commission in April 2011.

The Council in December 2012, endorsed a report prepared by the Presidency, reflecting the state of play of negotiations and setting out guidance for future work on the Energy Taxation Directive. In particular, the Council invited the incoming Irish Presidency to continue work, having as a starting point the latest compromise legislative text of 12 November 2012.

Other growth-enhancing measures:

Adoption of the Regulation on Mini One Stop Shop for cross border VAT compliance

The adoption of the Council Regulation on the Mini One Stop Shop during the Presidency lays down rules on VAT, concerning special schemes for non-established taxable persons supplying telecommunications, broadcasting or electronic services to non-taxable persons. The Regulation introduces new measures that will be applied as from 1 January 2015, and will allow these businesses to declare and pay all the VAT they owe across the EU in their own member state, rather than having to do this in each member state they operate. This timely agreement will allow member states adequate time for transposition and provides incentives to business for cross-border expansion by reducing costs and administrative burden.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the approval and market surveillance of two- or three-wheel vehicles and quadricycles

Agreement has been reached between the Council and the European Parliament regarding the Regulation for the approval and market surveillance of two- or three-wheel vehicles and quadricycles, which prescribes a more simplified regulatory approach on the Type approval system, elimination of duplication of international standards, lower emissions and increased vehicle safety, so as to improve efficiency, less red tape and improve environmental standards.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the approval of agricultural and forestry vehicles

The Council and the European Parliament have agreed on the Regulation for the approval of agricultural and forestry vehicles to replace the approval systems of the member states with a Union type-approval procedure (procedure whereby an approval authority certifies that a type of vehicle or its components satisfies the relevant administrative provisions and technical requirements) based on the principle of harmonisation of technical requirements while accounting for cost-benefit considerations, with special attention given to SMEs.

Agreement with the European Parliament on customs enforcement of intellectual property rights

An agreement has been reached between the Council and the European Parliament on the new Regulation that improves the IPR enforcement at the border while reducing the administrative and economic burdens on customs and right holders. Customs authorities can be provided with high quality information for a better risk management, thus ensuring the interests of the legitimate trade. The Regulation also aims to tackle the trade in small consignments of counterfeit goods sent by post as the overwhelming majority of these goods results from internet sales.

Progress on the alignment of nine Directives to the New Legislative Framework

Considerable progress has been achieved on the Alignment of nine Directives to the New Legislative Framework, with six technical meetings and one informal trilogue with the European Parliament, to ensure the swift agreement by the next Presidency. The initiative's scope is to improve product safety and enhance credibility, reduce the complexity of the current legislation, enhance the notification of and cooperation between the conformity assessment bodies with clearer rules on requirements and to make it easier to keep non-compliant products off the market by improving market surveillance.

Progress report on Trans-European Telecommunications Networks

The Presidency presented a progress report for the work undertaken in the Council on the proposal for a Regulation on guidelines for Trans-European Telecommunications Networks and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC. The aim of the proposal is to attract private investments in order to develop the necessary infrastructure to interconnect the Internet at high speeds through EU funding in order to achieve the strategic goals of the "Digital Agenda for Europe". The Telecoms Guidelines cover the objectives and priorities for broadband networks and digital service infrastructures and identify projects of common interest.

Progress report on the reuse of Public Sector Information (PSI)

The Cyprus Presidency presented a progress report for the work undertaken in the Council on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/98/EC on re-use of public sector information. The main new elements in the amending proposal are the extension of the scope of the Directive to also cover certain cultural institutions (namely museums, libraries and archives), the obligation to allow the re-use of existing accessible documents held by public sector bodies and the charging rules for re-use.

Council conclusions on Single Market Act II

Conclusions on the Single Market Act II Communication were adopted by the Council in December, during the Cyprus Presidency. The Single Market Act II is the second set of legislative and other initiatives presented by the Commission for the enhancement and deepening of the European Single Market in order to generate more growth, employment and opportunities for citizens and businesses and is a key element of the EU response to the financial, economic and social crisis and in promoting competitiveness. More specifically, this set of twelve key SMA II actions focuses on four drivers of new growth: integration of transport

and energy networks, Citizen and business mobility, the digital economy and social entrepreneurship, cohesion and consumer confidence.

The conclusions, inter alia, encourage all parties concerned to make every possible effort to ensure the rapid examination of the proposals for the twelve key SMA II actions in order to allow their adoption by the end of the current parliamentary cycle at the latest so as to bring new impetus to the Single Market.

Council Conclusions on the “Industrial Policy Communication Update: A Stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery”

The Communication lays down a strategy aiming to strengthen industrial competitiveness to underpin growth and jobs with a specific target of boosting the weight of industry in Europe to 20% of GDP by 2020, whilst improving energy and resource efficiency. In its conclusions, the Council invites the Commission to identify and propose measures and strategies with European added value in order to boost the high innovation and productivity growth potential of EU industry and to work with the Member States to ensure these are applicable to largely different national situations. It also invites the Commission, the Member States and the Regions to apply a broad and coherent industrial policy approach for competitiveness, sustainable growth and jobs, and to better seek synergies and coherence between all relevant EU policies.

Council conclusions on actions to be taken in favour of a job-rich economic recovery and better chances for Europe’s youth

Council conclusions entitled “Towards a job-rich recovery and giving a better chance to Europe’s youth” were adopted at the October Council, calling for action in favour of a job-rich economic recovery, with an emphasis on addressing youth unemployment. Through the conclusions, member states are called to step up job creation by encouraging labour demand, exploit the job creation potential of key sectors, restore the dynamics of the labour market through structural reform and invest in education and skills. Moreover, member states and the Commission are urged to facilitate labour mobility towards a European labour market, strengthen the link between policy and EU funding, enhance EU governance of employment policies and involve the social partners more closely. The conclusions constitute a response on behalf of the Council to the Commission’s Employment Package, which contained a set of measures to boost jobs and allow for economic recovery and growth.

Council conclusions on the contribution of education and training to economic recovery, growth and jobs

Considering the fact that education and training play an important role in ensuring economic and social cohesion and constitute basic factors for economic growth, especially at times of crisis, the Council approved relevant conclusions, which aim at strengthening the role of education and training, within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The conclusions emphasise the need to ensure targeted and efficient investment, improve the quality and status of teachers, as well as develop skills in line with labour market requirements, in an attempt to provide more and better job opportunities, especially to young people, at national level. At European level, the education and training sector should be encouraged to play a more prominent role in implementing the relevant aspects of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

3. Europe, more relevant to its citizens, with solidarity and social cohesion

The promotion of the underlying values and principles of the EU and the well-being of European citizens were key priorities for the Cyprus Presidency. In achieving this, the Presidency has put significant effort towards completing the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and bringing Europe closer to its citizens, as well as enhancing social inclusion. With the current year being celebrated as the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity, the Presidency put emphasis in promoting relevant actions. An important achievement of the Presidency was also the settlement on the interinstitutional crisis that occurred in June 2012 between the European Parliament and the Council, in relation to the issue of the Schengen Governance.

Towards completing the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Reception Conditions Directive

The Council reached an agreement with the European Parliament on the Reception Conditions Directive, during the Cyprus Presidency. The objective of the recast of the Directive is to ensure adequate and comparable reception conditions throughout the EU with better and more harmonized living standards and more effective rules for fighting abuse, respect the fundamental rights having regard to developing case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights and enhance consistency with the other asylum proposals. The recast also establishes clear rules on detention, strengthens guarantees of appropriate treatment of vulnerable groups, enhances legal guarantees and self-sufficiency as well as integration by shortening the time limit for granting access to the labour market and ensures adequate material reception conditions. The Directive remains to be adopted by the Council and the European Parliament as a package with the agreed Dublin Regulation and the remaining two legislative proposals namely the Asylum Procedures Directive and the EURODAC Regulation, in order to establish the CEAS.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Dublin Regulation

During the Cyprus Presidency, the Council reached a political agreement with the European Parliament on the Dublin Regulation. Following intensive negotiations both within the Council and with the European Parliament, the Presidency managed to secure a compromise agreement on the outstanding elements of the substantial part of the Dublin Regulation, as well as on the comitology-related issues. The Dublin Regulation establishes the procedures for determining the member state responsible for examining an application for international protection. The new rules will introduce a mechanism for early warning, preparedness and crisis management. This mechanism is aimed at evaluating the practical functioning of national asylum systems, assisting member states in need and preventing asylum crises. The recast Regulation also ensures higher protection for individual asylum seekers; strengthens the obligation to ensure legal assistance and aims to reduce the time limits for take back and take charge requests. The Regulation remains to be adopted by the Council and the European Parliament as package with the agreed Reception Conditions Directive and the remaining two legislative proposals namely the Asylum Procedures Directive and the EURODAC Regulation, in order to establish the CEAS.

Agreement in the Council on the EURODAC Regulation which forms the mandate for the negotiations with the EP

During the Cyprus Presidency, the Council reached an agreement on the EURODAC Regulation. The recast Regulation for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of Dublin Regulation lays down the conditions under which member states' designated authorities and Europol may request the comparison of fingerprint data with those stored in the EURODAC central database for the purposes of the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and of other serious criminal offences (law enforcement purposes). The first trilogue with the EP took place already in December.

Substantial progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the Asylum Procedures Directive

The Council, after engaging in extensive negotiations with the European Parliament, reached an agreement with the latter on a substantial number of technical and politically sensitive issues. Procedural guarantees for persons with special procedural needs and for unaccompanied minors are the two issues that remain open for further negotiations. The recast Directive establishes common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.

Promoting Justice and Home Affairs

Adoption of the recast of the Brussels I Regulation

During the Cyprus Presidency, the recast of the Regulation on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (the so-called "Brussels I" Regulation) was formally adopted, after agreement between the Council and the European Parliament. The purpose of this Regulation is to make the circulation of judgments in civil and commercial matters easier and faster within the Union, in line with the principle of mutual recognition and the Stockholm Programme guidelines.

Adoption of the SIS II Regulations

The Council adopted two Regulations on migration from the Schengen Information System (SIS 1+) to the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II). This set of Council Regulations is composed of two similar instruments which is necessary in order to reflect the more limited participation of the United Kingdom and Ireland: the first covers the policing and judicial co-operation elements of SIS II to which those countries are bound subject to their Decision under Protocol 19 (the Schengen Protocol); the second deals with the border and immigration elements where those countries are not bound because it constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen acquis in which they do not take part. The Regulations provide for a revised legal regime for the migration from SIS 1+ to SIS II enabling the member states to use SIS II with all its functionalities from the moment of the switchover from SIS 1+ to SIS II and the possibility of co-financing (up to 75%) from the EU budget certain national activities related to the migration.

Agreement with the European Parliament on marketing and use of explosives precursors

An agreement was reached between the Council and the European Parliament on Regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors. The new rules address the problem of the misuse of certain chemicals that are explosives precursors for the illicit manufacture of explosives which can be used e.g. to carry out terrorist attacks. The aim of the new Regulation is to ensure an increased level of security in the entire EU by creating a common framework for the access to certain explosives precursors.

Agreement in the Council on protection measures in civil matters

The Council reached a general approach on the Regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters that will allow the Irish Presidency to start negotiations with the European Parliament. The objective of this Regulation is to establish a legal framework to ensure that all protection measures taken in civil matters in a member state benefit from an efficient mechanism of recognition to ensure their free circulation throughout the EU. The Regulation aims at complementing the European Protection Order, which covers protection orders in criminal matters.

Agreement in the Council on freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime in the EU

A general approach was reached in the Council on the Directive on the freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime in the EU, which aims to make it easier for national authorities to confiscate and recover the profits that criminals make from cross border and organised crime. The Directive lays down minimum rules for member states with respect to freezing and confiscation of criminal assets through direct confiscation, value confiscation, extended confiscation, non-conviction based confiscation (in limited circumstances), and third-party confiscation. The adoption of the proposal will facilitate mutual trust and effective cross-border cooperation.

Agreement in the Council on the Seasonal Workers Directive

The Presidency managed to secure an agreement in the Council on the Seasonal Workers Directive after long and difficult discussions among Member States, and to obtain a mandate to initiate negotiations with the European Parliament. The aim of the Directive is to set out fair and transparent rules for entry and residence while, at the same time, providing for incentives and safeguards to prevent a temporary stay from becoming permanent. It proposes a fast-track procedure for the admission of third-country seasonal workers, based on a common definition and common criteria.

Agreement in the Council on the EUROSUR Regulation

An agreement was reached in the Council on the EUROSUR Regulation receiving mandate to initiate negotiations with the European Parliament. The aim of the EUROSUR System is to reinforce the control of the Schengen external borders. In particular, EUROSUR will establish a mechanism for member states' authorities carrying out border surveillance activities to share operational information and to cooperate with each other and with the Agency in order to reduce the number of irregular immigrants entering the EU undetected, and to increase internal security by preventing cross-border crimes, such as trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of drugs.

Adoption of the new EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020)

The Council adopted the new EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020), which provides the overarching political framework and priorities for EU drugs policy identified by member states and EU Institutions. The framework, aim and objectives of this Strategy will serve as a basis for two consecutive four-year EU Drugs Action plans. The Strategy is based on the fundamental principles of EU law and upholds the founding values of the Union. It aims to protect and improve the wellbeing of society and of the individual, to protect public health, to offer a high level of security for the general public and to take a balanced, integrated and evidence-based approach to the drugs phenomenon

Political Guidelines on the Regulation creating a European Account Preservation Order to facilitate cross-border debt recovery in civil and commercial matters

The Council adopted political guidelines on this Regulation. This Regulation is particularly important in times of economic crisis because it can boost economic growth by facilitating cross-border debt recovery and, by extension, cross-border commerce. The proposal puts in place an efficient and carefully crafted mechanism which will be of great benefit to creditors throughout the EU, while also safeguarding the rights of the debtors.

Political Guidelines on the Regulations on jurisdiction, applicable law and the recognition and enforcement of Decisions (i) in matters of matrimonial property regimes and (ii) regarding the property consequences of registered partnerships

The Council adopted political guidelines on these two proposed Regulations. Their adoption by the Council paves the way for substantial progress to be achieved on both Regulations which aim to facilitate the solution of property disputes between former spouses and registered partners in transnational cases in the EU.

Council conclusions on the EU Strategy on Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings

During the Cyprus Presidency, the Council adopted revised conclusions on the new EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012-2016), which invite member states to step up their efforts to effectively combat trafficking in human beings and to protect its victims by strengthening internal and external cooperation and by taking into account the five priorities identified in the EU Strategy.

Council conclusions on the protection of soft targets from terrorist activities

The Council adopted conclusions on the protection of soft targets from terrorist attacks. The aim of these conclusions is to underline the importance of protection of soft targets and encourage cooperation in this area.

Progress report on the Data Protection Package

The Council took stock of the progress achieved under the Cyprus Presidency on the Data Protection package, on the basis of three questions set out in a progress report prepared by the Presidency: delegated and implementing acts, the administrative burdens and the need for flexibility for the public sector. This will provide a basis for further work in the Council. The Data

Protection package aims at building a stronger and more coherent data protection framework in the EU, backed by strong enforcement that will allow the digital economy to develop across the internal market, put individuals in control of their own data and reinforce legal and practical certainty for economic operators and public authorities.

Improving the quality of life of EU citizens

Adoption of the European Year of Citizens (2013)

Decision on the European Year of Citizens 2013 was formally adopted, after an agreement between the Council and the European Parliament. The general objective of the European Year of Citizens 2013 is to raise awareness and knowledge on the rights and responsibilities attached to Union Citizenship, in order to enable citizens to make full use of their right to move and reside freely within the territory of the MS. In this context, the European Year shall also promote the enjoyment by Union citizens of other rights attached to Union citizenship.

Agreement with the European Parliament on food intended for infants and young children and on food for special medical purposes (PARNUTS)

The Regulation provides for a new framework establishing general provisions only for a limited number of categories of food that are considered essential for certain vulnerable groups of the population. More specifically, the Regulation seeks to clarify the legal framework relating to those foods, by avoiding the overlap between the specific legislation applicable to such foods and the legislation applicable to normal food. Furthermore, it provides for a unified application across all member states, contributing, thus, to the interests of both consumers and producers and to preventing distortions in the internal market. Following the general approach agreed in the Council, on 7 June 2012, the Cyprus Presidency, considering this file to be of great importance, placed great emphasis on the negotiations with the European Parliament. After a series of intensive discussions during the Cyprus Presidency an agreement was sealed between the Council and the European Parliament.

Agreement in the Council on minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from electromagnetic fields

Ensuring health and safety at work was considered by the Cyprus Presidency as a significant safeguard not only for productivity, but for the workforce protection and well-being. The Council reached a general approach on a Directive on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from electromagnetic fields. The new Directive is to replace a Directive of 2004, which never entered into force, due to implementation problems, especially as regards the operation of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The agreed text reviews exposure limitations on the basis of new scientific evidence and provides for derogations, in particular for medical applications using MRI, but also for specific industry sectors or activities, upon authorisation by the member state and as long as it can be duly justified.

Agreement in the Council on the “Breakfast Directives”

The Council agreed a general approach on the Regulation that aims to align the existing

Commission implementing powers in five product specific vertical Directives (known as the “Breakfast Directives”) to the differentiation between delegated and implementing powers of the Commission, introduced by Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and to confer additional delegated powers on the Commission.

Agreement in the Council on the serious cross border threats to health

Serious cross borders threats to health are considered a crucial issue and were high on the agenda of the Cyprus Presidency. A general approach has been reached in the Council Working Party on Public Health on the relevant Decision, the purpose of which is to strengthen the Union’s capacities and structures for effectively responding to those threats. More specifically, the objective of the Decision is to strengthen the epidemiological surveillance in the EU and the early warning and response system, allow the joint procurement of medical countermeasures by several member states, while give a legal basis to the functioning of the health security committee. The agreement will be endorsed by COREPER during the Irish Presidency.

Agreement in the Council on recording equipment in road transport (tachographs)

The Council endorsed a Political Agreement on the proposed Regulation on recording equipment in road transport for professional road transport drivers, their driving time and rest periods. It aims to enhance road safety through the improvement of the technical capabilities of the digital tachograph and the trustworthiness of the workshops, introducing a minimum degree of harmonisation of sanctions, of training of control officers and simplifying rules on the use of tachograph.

Agreement in the Council on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers

The Council reached a general approach on the proposal for a Regulation on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers and repealing Directive 2009/40/EC. Its key objective is to lay down updated harmonised rules on the roadworthiness testing of motor vehicles and their trailers with a view to enhancing road safety and environmental protection. The proposal aims at contributing to reach the target of a reduction of road fatalities by half until 2020 as laid down in the Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020. It will also contribute to the reduction of emissions in road transport linked to poor maintenance of vehicles.

Agreement in the Council on (i) flag State responsibilities to the improvement of working and living conditions for seafarers and on (ii) port State responsibilities to the improvement of working and living conditions for seafarers

The Council reached a general approach on the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC - 2006) Enforcement Package which consists of two legislative proposals laying down the responsibilities of flag states, on the one hand, and port states, on the other. The MLC, adopted by the International Labour Organization in 2006, will enter into force as binding international law on 20 August 2013. The MLC Enforcement Package constitutes a major step forward in promoting improved working and living conditions for seafarers.

Council Declaration on the European Year for active ageing and solidarity between generations (2012)

The aim of the European Year 2012 was to highlight older people's contribution to society and economy, improve conditions for older people to lead independent lives and strengthen solidarity between generations, laying, thus, better grounds for social cohesion. The Council Declaration reviews the results and achievements of the Year, outlines the challenges ahead and highlights a number of key messages. Its annex contains guiding principles, jointly agreed by the Social Protection Committee and the Employment Committee, for further action in the fields of employment, participation in society and independent living.

Reviving the discussion on the Directive on supplementary pensions rights of mobile workers

The Cyprus Presidency has revived the discussion in the Council on the amended proposal for a Directive on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights. The Presidency resumed work on this proposal, which had been interrupted for some years, and the discussions were mainly focused on the issue of the legal basis.

Council conclusions on combating violence against women and the provision of support services to victims of domestic violence

A step forward towards combating violence against women was the adoption of relevant Council conclusions, which call for more determined action in providing support services to victims. They highlight the significance of coordinated action to prevent and eliminate violence and they stress the importance of ensuring training for professionals, the responsibility and the role of men in all measures taken in combating these actions, and the improvement of data collection, as well as registration and handling of complaints. The Council recommends considering the possibility of establishing a dedicated European helpline for victims of violence against women and of designating 2015 the European Year on zero tolerance for violence against women. The conclusions are aimed at monitoring and contributing to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, which is an international agenda for the empowerment of women, established within the United Nations framework in 1995.

Council conclusions on preventing and tackling child poverty and social exclusion and promoting children's well-being

The fight against poverty, and particularly child poverty, as well as the promotion of child well-being are among the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy and comprise an important element of the social dimension of the Cyprus Presidency. The conclusions adopted by the Council call for member states to maintain the existing political momentum for addressing child poverty and social exclusion in the context of the current economic crisis and emphasise the need to develop a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing child poverty in a holistic manner, using adequate investment, developing data, involving stakeholders and mainstreaming child poverty and child well-being across relevant policy areas. The Commission is called upon to adopt a Recommendation on child poverty, as soon as possible, and develop synergies between social inclusion and other policy areas.

Council conclusions on the participation and social inclusion of young people with emphasis on those with a migrant background

Participation and social inclusion of all young people, as well as successful inclusion of those with a migrant background is essential for the prosperity, social cohesion and mutual understanding among the society, while contributing to both economic growth and richness of European culture. The Council, acknowledging the importance of the issue, adopted relevant conclusions, which propose several actions to address the matter, such as engaging all young people in the development, implementation and evaluation of all policies which affect them, promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding, providing equal access to education, including non-informal and informal learning, as well as engaging actively the local and regional authorities in the implementation of social inclusion policies.

Council Resolution on the overview of the structured dialogue with young people on youth participation in democratic life in Europe

The Resolution marked the completion of the second cycle of the structured dialogue, whose aim is to act as a forum for joint reflection on priorities, implementation and monitoring of European cooperation in the youth field. The resolution includes a number of proposals both in terms of content and structure of the structured dialogue with young people. This Resolution, adopted by the Council, incorporates key messages from the Joint Recommendations that derived from the Youth Conferences in Warsaw, Sorø and Nicosia, and sets priorities for the next 18-month cycle.

2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)

The EU Youth Report 2012 summarises the results of the first work cycle of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2012) and proposes priorities for the next three years. It presents new statistics on how the situation of young people in the European Union has been affected by the financial crisis. The Report recommends that the Commission and the member states must put greater focus on developing cross-sectoral cooperation, in particular with a view to examining how the approaches and methods of youth policy and youth work can be made use of in other relevant sectors. The Report highlights that youth employment will remain high on the EU agenda.

Council conclusions on organ donation and transplantation

Given the great number of people having benefited from successful organ donation and transplantation and the fact that such action constitutes an act of solidarity, Cyprus Presidency considered the issue of organ donation and transplantation as a priority and, for that matter, it pursued the adoption of relevant conclusions by the Council. The conclusions were drafted on the basis of the mid-term review of the Commission's action plan on the issue for the years 2009-2015 and focus on the three main challenges addressed by the action plan; that is, increasing organ availability; enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of transplant systems; and improving quality and safety. The Conclusions were adopted by the Council in December 2012.

Council conclusions on literacy

The Council adopted conclusions on literacy, which is considered as an important tool in strengthening social cohesion and combating unemployment. The conclusions call upon member states and the Commission to use all relevant actions of the current Lifelong Learning Programme and the future EU programme on education and training, as well as the resources of the European Social Fund, to support and disseminate innovative approaches to improving literacy attainment across the EU, in order to achieve the target set in the Europe 2020 Strategy, namely fewer than 15% of low performers in reading, maths and science by 2020.

Council Recommendation for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

In light of the current high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people, the exploitation of new learning opportunities and the full utilization of skills and competences acquired outside the formal education system could play an important role in enhancing employability and mobility, as well as providing more incentives for lifelong learning, especially for weaker socio-economic groups and the groups with few qualifications. The Commission proposed in early September 2012 a Recommendation for the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning. The Presidency set this proposal as one of its priorities and, as a result, the Council adopted a Recommendation within a short period of time. The Recommendation invites member states to introduce mechanisms to validate these types of learning by 2018, in accordance with national conditions and characteristics and defines the principles and the elements that should be taken into account for an effective validation process.

Council conclusions on cultural governance

The Cyprus Presidency considered culture as a major factor for the enhancement of social cohesion and solidarity, through mutual understanding and respect of the culture of every society. Within this framework, considerable work has been done for the endorsement of cultural governance and the adoption of relevant Council conclusions, which will constitute a tool in the hands of governments to deliver cultural policies and implement integrated policies, so as to place culture at the heart of the public policy agenda. The conclusions recommend that, to this end, new methodologies in cultural research should be adopted, while synergies among member states should be promoted and integrated policies at national, regional and European level should be developed.

Council conclusions on strengthening the evidence base for sport policy-making

During the Cyprus Presidency, the Council adopted conclusions on strengthening the evidence based sport policy-making, aiming at acknowledging the economic dimension of the sport sector. The conclusions demonstrate the economic importance of sport, as well as its contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, as a motivating force for growth and employment. Moreover, the contribution of sport to ensure social cohesion, skills development and well-being is also illustrated.

Council conclusions on better internet for children

In response to the relevant European Commission Communication, published in May 2012, the Council adopted conclusions on a European Strategy for better internet for children, which will replace the Safer Internet Programme as from 2013. The strategy proposes a series of actions

to be carried by the Commission, the member states, as well as the sector of information and communication technologies, in order to stimulate the quality of the online content for children and young people, to step up the awareness and empowerment of children and their parents and teachers, to create a safe online environment for children and, of course, to fight the online child sexual abuse. The Council conclusions focused primarily on the first two pillars of the strategy, i.e. the stimulating quality online content and stepping up awareness and empowerment of children, parents and teachers.

Council conclusions on healthy ageing across the lifecycle

Recognising the fact that good health among working age people contributes to higher productivity and other benefits, both for the citizens, individually, as well as the society as a whole, and constitutes an element for individuals and society for a step closer to the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the Cyprus Presidency paid particular attention on healthy ageing across the lifecycle. The adopted conclusions call for efforts to make the issue of healthy ageing across the lifecycle one of the priorities for the coming years and adopt an approach that shifts the focus towards health promotion, disease prevention and early diagnosis and promote strategies for combating risk factors. It is acknowledged that innovative approaches in health promotion and disease prevention could help elderly people remain independent longer and improve their quality of life.

Progress in the Council on Network and Information Security (ENISA)

The European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA) is the EU's response to cyber security issues of the European Union. The Cyprus Presidency presented the considerable progress achieved on the examination of the proposal for a Regulation concerning ENISA as well as on the state of play in the negotiations with the European Parliament. The proposal aims at strengthening and modernizing ENISA with a new expanded mandate for the security of cyberspace.

Promotion in the Council on cyber policy issues

An agreement was reached in the Council for the establishment of a Friends of Presidency (FoP) Group on Cyber issues. The Group has been created to ensure horizontal coordination of cyber policy issues in the Council and examine any relevant horizontal issues, without prejudice to the existing mandate of other Working Parties.

4. Europe in the world, closer to its neighbours

In the context of this priority, the Presidency granted its full support to the efforts of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service, especially in supporting the democratic transformation of its southern partners. In this framework, the Second EU – League of Arab States Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting held in Cairo, on 13 November, was an important landmark in the further promotion and strengthening of EU relations with the Arab World.

The objective of the Cyprus Presidency was to facilitate work towards stability, development and humanitarian assistance security and Union's trade policy with international key partners, as well as other issues of common concern, such as migration, mobility and security.

Enlargement was one of the top priorities of the Cyprus Presidency. As such, no effort was spared in advancing the EU enlargement process and actively promoting the enlargement agenda on the basis of the "own merits" approach and strict conditionality. In this framework, a round of visits to candidate countries and potential candidates by the Cyprus Presidency at a political level, took place.

Enlarging horizons and strengthening external relations

Opening of nine chapters in the accession negotiations with Iceland, while provisionally closing one

The Cyprus Presidency succeeded in the opening of nine negotiation chapters and the provisional closing of one. During the Accession Conference with Iceland in December, the opening of the three chapters, namely Chapter (ch.) 9 (Financial Services), Ch.18 (Statistics) and Ch. 29 (Customs Union) was reaffirmed while the opening of six additional chapters - Ch.1 (Free Movement of Goods, Ch.16 (Taxation), Ch. 17 (Economic and Monetary Policy), Ch.22 (Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments), Ch.27 (Environment) and Ch.30 (External Relations) - was achieved. The Presidency also moved forward with the provisional closing of Ch.8 (Competition Policy).

Opening and provisionally closing the first chapter in the accession negotiations with Montenegro

The Cyprus Presidency succeeded in the opening and provisional closing of the first chapter in the accession negotiations with Montenegro, namely Ch. 25 (Science and Research). Substantial progress was also recorded on Ch. 23 (Judicial Apparatus and Fundamental Rights) and Ch. 24 (Justice, Freedom and Security), with Montenegro requested to prepare and adopt the relevant action plans.

Turkey's European perspective

The process of accession negotiations with Turkey was maintained and the positive agenda was taken forward by the European Commission, despite Turkey's freezing of its relations with the Presidency of the Council of the EU during the second half of 2012.

Council conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process

The Council adopted conclusions in December on EU enlargement and the Stabilisation and Association process which represent a real step forward in the EU perspective of all candidate countries and potential candidates since they set the relevant framework for the years ahead. The Council reaffirmed its strong commitment to the enlargement process, reiterating its strongly-held view that this continues to be the key policy for reinforcing peace, democracy and stability in the European area. The Council also firmly re-stated its commitment to the further advancement of the enlargement process on the basis of agreed principles and conclusions.

Agreements in the Council on the signature of the Agreements between the EU and Cape Verde, Ukraine & Armenia on facilitating the issue of short-stay visas

During the Cyprus Presidency of the Visa Working Party, three Visa Facilitation Agreements (VFA) have been signed between the EU and third countries, namely: (a) the EU-Ukraine VFA, (b) the EU-Cape Verde VFA and (c) the EU-Armenia VFA. These Agreements increase people-to-people contacts between the citizens of EU Member-States and those of the third countries involved and are particularly important for those third countries, reducing cost of issuing visa and simplifying procedures.

Agreement in the Council for the launching of the assessment of the benchmarks set out under the second phase of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation with the Republic of Moldova

The Council, recalling that an Action Plan on Visa Liberalization was presented to the authorities of the Republic of Moldova in January 2011 and that two reports on its implementation were presented by the Commission services on September 2011 and in February 2012, welcomed the Commission's third report of June 22, 2012. Building on these reports, the Council shared the analysis that the Republic of Moldova had fulfilled all the benchmarks under the first phase of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation and decided to launch the assessment of the benchmarks set out under the second phase.

Signature of the Protocol on a Framework Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Armenia on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Armenia in Union programmes

This Protocol contains a Framework Agreement on the general principles for the participation of Armenia in Union Programmes. It contains standard stipulations that are intended to be applied to all European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries with which such protocols are to be concluded. The specific terms and conditions, in particular the financial contribution and reporting and evaluation procedures regarding the participation of Armenia in each particular programme, should be determined in a Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and the competent authorities of Armenia.

Agreement in the Council on the establishment of a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) with India

The High Level Working Group on Migration and Asylum managed to secure agreement for the establishment of a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) with India. This is the

first CAMM Agreement signed between the EU and a third country and, notably, one that is an important strategic partner of the EU.

Launch of a dialogue on migration, mobility and security between the EU and Jordan

The High Level Working Group on Migration and Asylum sealed a Decision on the launch of a dialogue on migration, mobility and security with Jordan, gradually to lead towards the establishment of a Mobility Partnership.

Agreement in the Council on the signature, of the Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreement with the State of Israel

During the Cyprus Presidency, a Council Decision on the signature, on behalf of the European Union, and provisional application of the Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreement between the European Union and its member states, of the one part, and the State of Israel, of the other part, was adopted. The Agreement aims at gradually removing all market access restrictions between EU countries and Israel in order to enhance trade and tourism flows between the EU and Israel thus bringing wider economic benefits to the EU economy.

Council Decisions on the position to be taken by the EU on provisions for the Coordination of Social Security Systems with Albania, Montenegro, San Marino and Turkey

Within the framework of promoting and creating better cooperation with the neighbouring countries of the Union, particularly when it comes to employment benefits and rights, Council Decisions were adopted on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the Stabilisation and/or Association Council/the Cooperation Committee, established by each of the respective agreements between the European Communities and Albania, Montenegro, San Marino and Turkey, with regard to the adoption of the provisions on the coordination of social security systems. The aim of these Council Decisions is to grant certain pension benefits and family allowances to workers, who are nationals of one of these four associated countries. EU nationals legally employed in those countries will also benefit from reciprocal rights.

Council conclusions on "EU's External Aviation Policy - Addressing Future Challenges"

Council conclusions on the Communication from the Commission on "EU's External Aviation Policy - Addressing Future Challenges" have been adopted emphasizing the need for a reinforced and renewed EU external policy and concerted action for the transformation of the international aviation scene. The conclusions provide a catalogue of the views and actions that the EU will take in its efforts to advocate the principle of fair and open competition in the international aviation arena, including aspects such as transparency, the use of model clauses and also greenhouse gas emissions from aviation.

Progress on development cooperation issues

The Cyprus Presidency made substantial progress on the International Development Cooperation objectives, including several new dossiers in the field. Specifically, during the six months, Council conclusions were adopted on: Engagement with Civil Society in Development Cooperation; Social Protection in EU External and Development Cooperation; 2012 Annual

Report on the EU Development and External Assistance Policies and their Implementation in 2011; and, the 2012 EU Accountability Report on Financing for Development. Moreover, conclusions were agreed on EU Support for Sustainable Change in Transition Societies, while progress was also achieved on key issues concerning the relevant financial instruments in the area of external action, notably the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The Council also agreed on the follow-up to the Rio+20 Summit and the African peace facility, and endorsed the EU-Caribbean Partnership Strategy.

Progress on humanitarian aid and food aid issues

The Cyprus Presidency promoted humanitarian food assistance policy at both EU and international level, with the active engagement and full participation of UN Agencies and NGOs. Particular prominence was given to Food Security and Nutrition, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), as well as Resilience, all of which had been substantively debated during relevant working group meetings, as well as during informal meetings, workshops and seminars. The Presidency also signed the renewed Food Assistance Convention on behalf of the EU at the end of October 2012.

Council conclusions on EU relations with the Principality of Andorra, the Principality of Monaco and the Republic of San Marino (microstates)

Enhancing and strengthening relations with the Principality of Andorra, the Principality of Monaco and the Republic of San Marino was of utmost importance for the Cyprus Presidency. This is why the Presidency initiated the adoption of relevant Council conclusions, which are an important step towards enhancing the potential of these three countries to minimize the obstacles and access the EU's internal market, as well as to further promote growth, employment and investment. The closer integration of Andorra, Monaco and San Marino is in both the EU's and those countries best interest.

Council conclusions on EU Relations with EFTA countries

EU relations with the four members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), namely Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland are assessed every two years. In this respect, the Cyprus Presidency proposed Council conclusions which were adopted, assessing these relations, focusing on the importance of further strengthening and enhancing these relations. The conclusions adopted have an important political dimension, especially due to the need for further structuring relations between EFTA countries and the EU.

Enhancing external trade

Agreement in the Council on the opening of negotiations for an EU - Japan Free Trade Agreement

The Council reached a political agreement on the negotiating mandate for an EU–Japan Free Trade Agreement in November 2012, fulfilling the mandate from the European Council to move forward with Japan. A potential Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Japan could be of enormous importance to the EU's economy, and a big stimulus of growth, with the European

Commission estimating that it could lead to an increase of the EU's GDP by around €43 billion per year.

Conclusion of the negotiations for an EU - Singapore Free Trade Agreement

In December 2012, negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the European Union and Singapore were finalised. The agreement has been preliminary supported by the Council, at the level of Trade Policy Committee, in anticipation of detailed documentation on the various issues contained in the agreement. The timely conclusion of the negotiations sends a strong signal of the EU's continued engagement with the Asian-Pacific region and also confirms that the path chosen in the EU's approach to negotiations with the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) partners is the right one.

Agreement in the Council to launch negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Morocco

During the Cyprus Presidency, the Trade Policy Committee of the Council gave the green light for launching negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with Morocco. The DCFTA will aim at progressively integrating the economy of Morocco into the EU single market, in line with EU's commitment to further enhancing trade and investment relations with the Southern Mediterranean partners engaged in political and economic reforms. The Decision to launch negotiations with Morocco was welcomed during the Council meeting in November, where the EU's Trade Ministers also reviewed the progress achieved with Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia.

Council Decision on the Conclusion of the trade agreement with Colombia-Peru and the association agreement with Central America and agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulations implementing the bilateral safeguard clause of the trade agreement with Colombia-Peru and the association agreement with Central America

The Cyprus Presidency has successfully reached an agreement with the European Parliament regarding the Safeguard Regulations for the Agreements with Peru-Colombia and Central America. The Safeguard Regulations provide a safety net for the EU industries in case of injurious surge of imports from the countries concerned. The Regulations also incorporate a Stabilisation Mechanism explicitly for bananas. Following the adoption of the Safeguard Regulations, the European Parliament has given its consent to the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Peru and Colombia and the Association Agreement with Central America. The agreements are expected to boost trade ties between the EU and the countries concerned and also promote sustainable development and regional integration.

Council Decision for the conclusion of the agreement for the exports of wood from the Russian Federation and agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation for the allocation of tariff-rate quotas applying exports of wood from the Russian Federation

The Council decided in December 2012 on the conclusion of the Agreement with the Russian Federation relating to tariff-rate quotas applying to exports of wood from the Russian Federation to the EU. The agreement, which was negotiated in the context of Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization, will enhance the supply of wood from Russia to the EU, will cut export duties from current levels and grant the EU relatively large quotas for lower-duty Russian

exports. In parallel, under the Cyprus Presidency a Regulation on the allocation of the abovementioned tariff-rate quotas was adopted, in order to ensure the effective application of the provisions provided for in the Agreement.

Council Decision for the conclusion of the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products with Israel

The Council decided in November 2012 on the conclusion of the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products between the EU and Israel. The Decision came after the European Parliament gave its consent to the agreement, following nearly two years of intensive negotiations. The agreement will remove technical barriers to trade and facilitate market access for a wide range of generic products for both EU and Israeli producers.

Agreement in the Council on the EPA Market Access Regulation

In October 2012, following a proposal made by the Cyprus Presidency, the Council unanimously adopted its position on the proposal amending the Market Access Regulation, which governs the trade conditions for certain developing countries that have negotiated Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU. The Council's position is in line with the Commission's proposal, aiming to the prompt conclusion of the EPA negotiations and the ratification of the EPAs signed with the EU.

Agreement in the Council on Omnibus I

The Cyprus Presidency worked intensively so as to reach a political agreement within the Council on the so-called "Omnibus I" Regulation proposal, which updates the procedures for decision-making concerning a broad range of trade Regulations, such as the trade defence instruments. The compromise proposal submitted by the Presidency for Omnibus I was adopted by the Council and, following that, the trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament were initiated in December 2012, with the aim of reaching an overall agreement.

The overall results of the Cyprus Presidency

General Affairs

Presentation of two revised negotiating boxes for the Multiannual Financial Framework and introducing numbers in the negotiations

Opening of 9 negotiation chapters with Iceland, while provisionally closing one

Opening and provisionally closing the first chapter in the accession negotiations with Montenegro

Council conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process

Agreement in the Council on the Commission Recommendation to the Council to authorise the Commission to open negotiations for a framework agreement with Kosovo¹ concerning its participation in Union Programmes

Progress report on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the External Financial Instruments (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation)

Partial general approach on nine thematic blocs on Cohesion Policy legislative package

Preliminary agreement with the European Parliament on strategic programming bloc for Cohesion Policy (2014-2020)

Progress report on the proposal for a Regulation amending the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union

Adoption of a Regulation introducing, on the occasion of the accession of Croatia to the EU, special temporary measures for the recruitment of Union officials and temporary staff

Council conclusions on the Report from the Commission to the Council on the exception clause (Article 10 of Annex XI to the Staff Regulations)

Adoption of the Limassol Declaration on the EU Integrated Maritime Policy

Council conclusions on the Marine and Maritime Agenda for Growth and Jobs

Agreement in the Council on the draft Arrangement between the European Parliament, the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

concerning access by the European Parliament to classified information held by the Council and the European External Action Service in the area of the common foreign and security policy as a basis for negotiations with the European Parliament

Presidency Report on the Implementation of the European Council Conclusions - state of play

Presidency Synthesis Report on the lessons learned from the 2012 European Semester

Council conclusions on cooperation and verification mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania

Adoption of the Council Decision issuing Directives to the Commission for the negotiation of the review of the Convention on Nuclear Safety

Council conclusions "Towards the secure supply of radioisotopes for medical use in the European Union"

Progress at technical level at the most contentious issues and preparation of revised draft of the Basic Safety Standards Directive

Foreign Affairs

External Relations

Progress report on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the External Financial Instruments (Common Implementing Rules, European Neighbourhood Instrument, Development Cooperation Instrument, Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries, Instrument for Stability, Instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights, Greenland Decision)

Council decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations for a framework agreement with Kosovo² concerning its participation in Union programmes and adopted negotiating directives

Authorisation by the Council to the Commission to open negotiations for the adaptation of agreements signed or concluded by the EU with third countries or international organisations in view of the forthcoming accession of Croatia to the EU

Adoption of substantial sanctions against the Syrian regime and agreement on measures to strengthen the enforcement of the EU arms embargo in response to the escalating violence

Adoption of additional restrictive measures against Iran in the financial, trade, energy and transport sectors, as well as additional designations, notably of entities active in the oil and gas industry in response to its violation of its international obligations and continuous refusal to fully co-operate with the IAEA

Agreement on immediate suspension of the measures applied under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement against Zimbabwe

Amendment of the restrictive measures in view of the situation in Somalia, following changes decided in the UN Security Council

Prolongation of existing restrictive measures against Belarus in response to the lack of improvement in respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles

Comprehensive Council conclusions on the Middle East outlining clear EU policy regarding continued focus on two state solution and underlining the urgency of renewed, structured and substantial peace efforts in 2013

Council conclusions on EU's readiness to provide further assistance to Libya, in particular in the areas of security and border management

Council conclusions reaffirming the EU's engagement with Ukraine, in the context of the Eastern Partnership, towards political association and economic integration

²This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Council conclusions reiterating strong EU support for the full and unconditional implementation of the African Union roadmap for resolving the post-secession conflicts between Sudan and South Sudan

Authorisation of the signature of an additional protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which sets out a framework for the participation of Jordan in EU programmes

Council Decision to release certain frozen funds or economic resources where they are required to satisfy a judicial or administrative decision rendered in the EU to facilitate the return of misappropriated funds to the Egyptian State

Progress in implementing the European Union Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy

Adoption of Decision on the signing of the Protocol on a Framework Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Armenia on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Armenia in Union programmes

Council conclusions establishing a human rights dialogue between the EU and South Africa to be held on an annual basis and cover relevant human rights, democracy and rule of law issues.

Council conclusions on EU relations with the Principality of Andorra, the Principality of Monaco and the Republic of San Marino

Council conclusions on EU Relations with EFTA countries

Council conclusions on the future Swiss Financial Contribution for the benefit of Croatia

Conclusions of the 38th meeting of the European Economic Area Council

Adoption of the Crisis Management Concept for a CSDP operation to provide military training and advice to the Malian Armed Forces and a revised crisis management concept for the EU Training Mission in Somalia, and of the implementation plan for the EU advisory and assistance mission for security reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUSEC RD Congo).

Approval by the Council of the Council of the Decision to conduct a military training mission to provide in the South of Mali military training and advice to the Malian Armed Forces, operating under the control of legitimate civilian authorities.

Approval by the Council of an administrative arrangement between the European Defence Agency and the organisation for joint armament cooperation (OCCAR) establishing their cooperation. Authorisation of the signature and conclusion of an agreement between OCCAR and the EU on the protection of classified information

Signing of the EU –Moldova Framework Agreement for the participation of Moldova in EU crisis management operations

Authorisation by the Council of the opening of negotiations for EU – Georgia and EU – Republic of Korea Agreements, establishing a framework for their participation in EU crisis management operations

Decision by the Council to establish a warehouse for EU civilian crisis management missions, aiming to ensure rapid deployment of equipments for existing and future civilian crisis management missions

Adoption of 6 Decisions related to EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

- in support of a free zone of nuclear weapons in the Middle East,
- in support of ballistic missile non proliferation in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation
- in support of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, on the Union support for the activities of the preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear – Test – Ban Treaty
- in support of the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010 -2014 and
- relating to the 2013 Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction)

Adoption of Council Decision in support of the activities to reduce the risk of illicit trade in, and excessive accumulation of Small Arms in the region covered by the OSCE

Trade

Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Japan

Conclusion of the negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Singapore

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Trade Agreement between the EU and its Member States and Colombia and Peru

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement establishing an Association between the EU and its Member States and Central America

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation relating to the administration of tariff-rate quotas applying to exports of wood from the Russian Federation to the EU and the Protocol between the EU and the Government of the Russian Federation on technical modalities pursuant to that Agreement

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the EU and the Government of the Russian Federation on trade in parts and components of motor vehicles between the EU and the Russian Federation

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the EU and the government of the Russian Federation regarding the preservation of commitments on trade in services contained in the current EU-Russia partnership and Co-operation Agreement

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Russian Federation regarding the introduction or increase by the Russian Federation of export duties on raw materials

Council Decision on the conclusion of a Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States and the State of Israel, on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (CAA)

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the EU and Australia amending the Agreement on mutual recognition in relation to conformity assessment, certificates and markings between the European Community and Australia

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the EU and New Zealand amending the Agreement on mutual recognition in relation to conformity assessment between the European Community and New Zealand

Council Decision establishing the European Union position on the accession of the Republic of Tajikistan to the World Trade Organization

Council Decision establishing the European Union position on the accession of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the World Trade Organization

Council Decision on the signing of the Agreement between the EU and the United States of America pursuant to Article XXIV.6 and Article XXVIII of GATT 1994 relating to the modification of concessions in the schedules of Bulgaria and Romania in the course of their accession to the European Union

Council Decision on the signing of the Agreement between the EU and the People's Republic of China pursuant to Article XXIV.6 and Article XXVIII of GATT 1994 relating to the modification of concessions in the schedules of Bulgaria and Romania in the course of their accession to the European Union

Council Decision on the conclusion of Agreements in form of exchanges of letters on the modification of concessions with respect to processed poultry meat between the European Union and the Federal Republic of Brazil, and between the European Union and the Kingdom of Thailand pursuant to Article XXVIII of GATT 1994

Council Decision authorising the Commission to open and conduct negotiations according to Article XXVIII GATT 1994 with Panama, concerning Panama's intention to modify certain concessions in its WTO schedule

Council Decision on the position to be taken by the EU within the Joint Committee set up by Article 11 of the Agreement between the EU and Georgia, on protection of geographical indications of agricultural products and foodstuffs, as regards the adoption of the rules of procedure of the Joint Committee

Council Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the protection of geographical indications of agricultural products and foodstuffs (*EP has given its consent*)

Agreement in the Council in support of Commission's Recommendation to launch negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Morocco

Agreement in the Council on a final compromise with Algeria, regarding the Algerian request for tariff dismantling revision

Agreement in the Council for its position on the Proposal for a Regulation amending certain Regulations relating to the common commercial policy as regards the procedures for the adoption of certain measures (Omnibus I)

Agreement in the Council on the Proposal for a Regulation amending Annex I to Council Regulation (EC) No 1528/2007 (EPA Market Access Regulation) as regards the exclusion of a number of countries from the list of regions or states which have concluded negotiations (*Adoption of the position of the Council at first reading*)

Agreement in the Council (at Working Party level) on the Proposal for a Regulation repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 552/97 temporarily withdrawing access to generalized tariff preferences from Myanmar/Burma

Agreement with the European Parliament on a Regulation introducing emergency autonomous trade preferences for Pakistan, aiming to support Pakistan's recovery from devastating floods that affected extensive regions of Pakistan in July-August 2010

Agreement with the European Parliament on a Regulation on the allocation of tariff-rate quotas applying to exports of wood from the Russian Federation to the European Union

Agreement with the European Parliament on a Regulation concerning the implementation of the Agreements concluded by the EU following negotiations in the framework of Article XXVIII of GATT 1994, amending and supplementing Annex I to Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 on the tariff and statistical nomenclature and on the Common Customs Tariff

Agreement with the European Parliament on a Regulation implementing the bilateral safeguard clause and the stabilisation mechanism for bananas of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru

Agreement with the European Parliament on a Regulation implementing the bilateral safeguard clause and the stabilisation mechanism for bananas of the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Union and its Member States and Central America

Agreement with the European Parliament on a Regulation amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1225/2009 on protection against dumped imports from countries not members of the European Community

Substantial progress on the negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada

Report on the European Renewable Energy Industry, the relevant markets and trade barriers

Development

Council conclusions on "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations"

Council conclusions on social protection in European Union development cooperation

Council conclusions on financing for development: Annual progress report on EU Development Accountability on Financing for Development

Council conclusions on the annual report 2012 on the European Union's development and external assistance policies and their implementation in 2011.

Council conclusions on EU's Support for Sustainable Change in Transition Societies

Council conclusions on the Outcome and follow-up to the UNCSD 2012 (Rio+20) Summit

Council conclusions on the African Peace Facility: Endorsement of African Union requests

Council conclusions endorsing the joint Caribbean-EU partnership strategy

Signing and conclusion of the Food Assistance Convention

Economic and Financial Affairs

General approach on the legislative package for a Single Supervisory Mechanism

Completion of discussions with the European Parliament on most substantial issues of the Two-Pack for economic governance

Agreement with the European Parliament on the EU Budget for 2013

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Amending Budgets No 5/2012 and No 6/2012

Adoption of the Financial Regulation

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation and Directive on Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs III)

General approach on the Market Abuse Regulation (MAR)

Progress report on the Regulation and Directive on markets in financial instruments (MiFIR/MiFID)

Substantial progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the Capital requirements (CRR/CRD IV)

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Reform of the European Anti-Fraud Office

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation on the European Statistical Programme 2013-2017

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation on the European System of National and Regional Accounts in the European Union (ESA 2010)

Council conclusions on EU Statistics

Adoption of the Council Regulation amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 282/2011 as regards the special schemes for non-established taxable persons supplying telecommunications services, broadcasting services or electronic services to non-taxable persons (Mini One Stop Shop)

Report on Energy Taxation Directive, reflecting the state of play of negotiations and setting out proposals for future work

Facilitation of work for enhanced cooperation on the Financial Transaction Tax

Report to the European Council on tax issues

Report by Finance ministers on tax issues in the framework of the Euro Plus Pact

Report to the Council for the work carried out under the Code of Conduct Group (Business taxation) during Cyprus Presidency

Council conclusions of the Code of Conduct (Business taxation) Group

Council conclusions on tax fraud and tax evasion

Council conclusions on the EU Joint Transfer Pricing Forum

Adoption of the Council Implementing Decision authorising Hungary to introduce a special measure derogating from Article 193 of Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax

Adoption of the Council Implementing Decision amending Implementing Decision 2010/99/EU authorising the Republic of Lithuania to extend the application of a measure derogating from Article 193 of Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax

Adoption of the Council Implementing Decisions authorizing Germany and Austria respectively to continue to apply a measure derogating from Articles 168 and 168a of Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax

Adoption of the Council Implementing Decision amending Decision 2009/790/EC authorising the Republic of Poland to apply a measure derogating from Article 287 of Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax

Adoption of the Council Implementing Decision authorising Bulgaria and Romania to apply measures derogating from Article 5 of Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax

Presidency conclusions on the Reform of state aid control

Justice and Home Affairs

Justice

Adoption of the recast of the Regulation on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgements in civil and commercial matters (Brussels I Regulation)

Adoption of the Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (first reading agreement was reached during the Danish Presidency)

General approach on the Directive on criminal sanctions for insider dealing and market manipulation (MAD)

General approach on the Regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters

General approach on the Directive on the freezing and confiscation of the proceeds from crime in the European Union

Council conclusions on a request to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to carry on its work set out in its 2013 work programme, based on the 2008-2012 Multiannual Framework for the Agency (MAF), until the new MAF (2013-2017) is adopted

Political guidelines on the Regulation creating a European Account Preservation Order to facilitate cross-border debt recovery in civil and commercial matters

Political guidelines on the Regulation on jurisdiction, applicable law and the recognition and enforcement of decisions in matters of matrimonial property regimes

Political guidelines on the Regulation on jurisdiction, applicable law and the recognition and enforcement of decisions regarding the property consequences of registered partnerships

Final report on the fifth round of mutual evaluations, dedicated to financial crime and financial investigations

Substantial progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the Financial Instruments in the area of Justice (Justice Programme and Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme)

Progress report on the Data Protection Legislative Package (Regulation & Directive)

Progress report on the Directive on the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings and on the right to communicate upon arrest

Home Affairs

Adoption of the European Year of Citizens (2013)

Adoption of the new EU Drugs Strategy (2013 – 2020)

Adoption of the Council Regulations on Migration from the Schengen Information System (SIS 1+) to the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II)

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Decision amending Decision No 574/2007/EC with a view to increasing the co-financing rate of the External Borders Fund for certain member states experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability (SOLID general programme 2007-2013)

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Decision amending Decision No 573/2007/EC, Decision No 575/2007/EC and Council Decision 2007/435/EC with a view to increasing the co-financing rate of the European Refugee Fund, the European Return Fund and the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals as regards certain provisions relating to financial management for certain member states experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability (SOLID general programme 2007-2013)

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Schengen Borders Code – technical amendments

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Directive laying down the standards for the reception of asylum seekers (Reception Conditions Directive)

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the member state responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the member states by a third-country national or a stateless person (Dublin Regulation)

Substantial progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection status (Recast) (Asylum Procedures Directive)

Agreement in the Council and mandate to initiate negotiations with the European Parliament on the Eurodac Regulation

Agreement in the Council and mandate to initiate negotiations with the European Parliament on the EUROSUR Regulation

Agreement in the Council and mandate to initiate negotiations with the European Parliament on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment (Seasonal Workers Directive)

Partial general approach on all 4 MFF Regulations in the Home Affairs area (Horizontal Regulation, Asylum and Migration Fund, Internal Security Fund – Borders, Internal Security Fund – Police)

Adoption by the Council of a Council Directive amending Directive 93/109/EC as regards certain detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for citizens of the Union residing in a member state of which they are not nationals

Council Decision concerning the request of Ireland to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen acquis relating to the establishment of the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice.

Council Decision on the signature of the Agreement between the EU and Cape Verde on facilitating the issue of short-stay visas to the citizens of the Cape Verde and of the European Union

Council Decision on the signature of the Agreement between the EU and Ukraine on facilitating the issue of short-stay visas to the citizens of Ukraine and of the European Union

Council Decision on the signature of the Agreement between the EU and Armenia on facilitating the issue of short-stay visas to the citizens of Armenia and of the European Union

Council Decision for the launching of the assessment of the benchmarks set out under the second phase of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation with the Republic of Moldova

Council Decision for the establishment of a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) with India

Council Decision on the launch of a dialogue on migration, mobility and security with Jordan

Council Decision amending Decision 2009/935/JHA as regards the list of third States and organisations with which Europol shall conclude agreements

Launch of a reinforced dialogue and several targeted common cooperation projects with China in the areas of migration and mobility

Council conclusions on the protection of soft targets from terrorist attacks

Council conclusions on aviation security against terrorist threats

Council conclusions on the new EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012 – 2016)

Council conclusions on the new CBRNE Agenda

Endorsement of a Strategy for the future of customs law enforcement cooperation

Council Resolution on the creation of an informal network of law enforcement authorities and expertise competent in the field of cultural goods for the purpose of preventing and combating crime against cultural goods by strengthening coordination at national level between law enforcement authorities and cultural authorities and private organisations (EU CULTNET)

Adoption of the new Work Programme and Roadmap of cooperation for the following 2-year period in the area of migration with the USA and Russia respectively

Preparation and approval of an EU Handbook of Best Police Practices on Overcoming Attrition in Domestic Violence

Preparation and approval of an updated version of the Information Management Strategy (IMS III)

Presidency report on the obstacles related to effective information exchange

Endorsement of the updated Implementation Plan of the revised EU Radicalisation and Recruitment Action Plan

Report on analysis of the results of the “Operation Victory”, an initiative of the Cyprus Customs, which targeted counterfeited goods with several important seizures.

Significant progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the Schengen Governance Legislative Package (Schengen Evaluation System and Schengen Borders Code)

Initiative for the creation of a Common “Handbook for the detection of travel document abuse”

Agriculture and Fisheries

Agriculture

Adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 as regards the application of direct payments to farmers in respect of the year 2013

Adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the regime of the single payment scheme and support to vine-growers.

Adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

Adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union

Adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down specific measures in favour of agriculture in the smaller Aegean islands.

Adoption of the European Parliament and Council Decision amending Council Decision 2008/971/EC to include forest reproductive material of the 'qualified' category and to update the name of the authorities responsible for the approval and control of the production.

Adoption of the European Parliament and Council Decision amending Council Decision 2003/17/EC by extending its period of application and by updating the names of a third country and of the authorities responsible for the approval and control of the production.

Council conclusions to follow up on the adoption of a standard setting maximum residue levels (MRLs) on ractopamine by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 35th session (*adopted by Council on 22/23 October 2012*)

Progress report on the CAP reform

Fisheries

Partial general approach on the European maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Adoption of the Regulation on the 12 miles access regime, regarding the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy

First Reading Agreement concerning the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms

Adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain measures in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks

Adoption of Council Regulation on Autonomous Tariff Quotas on trade related measures to guarantee the supply of certain fishery products to Union processors from 2013 to 2015

Adoption of Council Regulation on Guide Prices 2013 on fixing the guide prices and the Union producer prices for certain fishery products pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 104/2000

Adoption of Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1342/2008 establishing a long-term plan for cod stocks and the fisheries exploiting those stocks

Council Regulations on TACs and Quotas establishing fishing opportunities on:

(i) Adoption of Anchovy Bay of Biscay TAC 2013

(ii) Adoption of Baltic Sea TAC 2013

(iii) Adoption of Deep Sea TACs 2013-2014

(iv) Adoption of 2nd amendment to the TQR amending Regulation (EC) No 754/2009 as regards exclusion of certain groups of vessels from the fishing effort regime laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1342/2008 and amending Regulations (EU) No 43/2012 and (EU) No 44/2012 as regards certain fishing opportunities

(v) Political Agreement on Internal TACs 2013 available to EU vessels for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks not subject to international negotiations or agreements

(vi) Political Agreement on External TACs 2013 available in EU waters and, to EU vessels, in certain non-EU waters for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks subject to international negotiations or agreements

(vii) Adoption of Black Sea TAC 2013

Fisheries Partnership agreements (FPAs) for the EU and 1) Kiribati, 2) Mauritius, 3) Mauritania, 4) Madagascar, 5) Greenland, 6) Ivory Coast and mandate for the preparation of the 1st round negotiations for Morocco.

Adoption of EU position for the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) Annual Meetings – Bilateral Agreements/Consultations – Other External Meetings

- FAO-COFI (Committee on Fisheries)
- NAFO (North Atlantic Fisheries Organization)
- EU/Russian Federation (Rockall haddock)
- OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)
- Coastal States Consultations on Red Fish
- Coastal States Consultations on Atlanto-scandian Herring
- Coastal States Consultations on Blue Whiting
- Coastal States Consultations on Mackerel
- CCAMLR (Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources)

- UNGA (United Nations General Assembly – Sustainable Fisheries Resolution)
- NEAFC (North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission)
- ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna)
- EU/Norway Consultations
- WCPFC (Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission)
- CCSBT (Commission for the Conservation of Southern Blue Fin Tuna)
- SEAFO (South – East Atlantic Fisheries Organization)
- CMS (Convention on Migratory Species) Meeting of the signatories of the MoU on sharks)

Competitiveness

Internal Market

Adoption of the Unitary Patent package

Agreement with the European Parliament on Venture Capital Funds

Agreement with the European Parliament on Social Entrepreneurship Funds

Agreement with the European Parliament on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Agreement with the European Parliament on Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)

Agreement with the European Parliament on the approval of agricultural and forestry vehicles

Agreement with the European Parliament on the approval and market surveillance of two-or three-wheel vehicles and quadricycles

Agreement with the European Parliament on Customs Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation on the Marketing and use of explosives precursors

Adoption of a Council Regulation suspending the autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on certain agricultural, fishery and industrial products

Adoption of a Council Regulation opening and providing for the management of autonomous tariff quotas of the Union for certain agricultural and industrial products

Partial agreement with the European Parliament on the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

General approach on the Proposal for a Directive on Public Procurement

General approach on the Proposal for a Directive on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors

General approach on the Proposal for a Directive on the award of concession contracts

Partial general approach on Customs 2020

Council Resolution on the Communication on “A European Consumer Agenda – Boosting Confidence and Growth”

Council Decision on the signing of an Agreement between the European Union and the Swiss Confederation concerning cooperation on the application of their competition laws

Council Decision on the position to be taken by the European Union within the relevant Committees of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe regarding the adaptation to technical progress of relevant Regulations

Council Decision on the position to be taken by the European Union within the Administrative Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe concerning the draft Regulation on enhanced Child Restraint Systems

Council Resolution endorsing the EU Customs Action Plan to combat IPR infringements for the years 2013 to 2017

Council Mandate to the Commission for the negotiation of a Draft Text of an International Instrument/Treaty on Limitations and Exceptions for Visually Impaired Persons/Persons with Print Disabilities

Council conclusions on Single Market Act II

Council conclusions on the strategy of the evolution of Customs Union

Progress on the alignment of 9 Directives to the New Legislative Framework

Progress on the Accounting Directive

Progress report on professional qualifications

Presidency and Council Secretariat report on Impact Assessment

Renewal of the mandate of the OECD Working Party on Shipbuilding (WP6) and of the Expert Group on the sector Understanding on Export Credits for Ships (IEG)

Coordination of EU position in view of meetings in international fora such as the WCO, WHO, ASEM and bilateral meetings between EU and third countries

Industry

Council conclusions on the “Industrial Policy Communication Update: A Stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery”

Council conclusions on Key Enabling Technologies and the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials

Research

Partial general approach on the Regulation laying down the Rules for the Participation and dissemination in Horizon 2020

Partial general approach on the Decision establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon 2020

Partial general approach on the Regulation establishing the European Institute of Innovation and Technology

Partial general approach on the Decision on the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology

Council conclusions on a reinforced European Research Area partnership for excellence and growth

Progress Report on the Council Regulation on the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2014-2018) complementing Horizon 2020

Space

Progress in the Council on establishing appropriate relations between the EU and the European Space Agency (ESA)

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Transport

Agreement with the European Parliament on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a single European railway area (recast)

First Reading Agreement on the proposal for Directive amending Directive 2008/106/EC on the minimum level of training of seafarers

First Reading Agreement on the proposal for Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1406/2002 establishing a European Maritime Safety Agency

Political agreement in the Council on recording equipment in road transport (tachographs)

General approach in the Council on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers

General approach on flag State responsibilities to the improvement of working and living conditions for seafarers

General approach on port State responsibilities to the improvement of working and living conditions for seafarers

General approach on the Proposal for a Regulation for the allocation of slots at European Union airports

Council Decision on the signing, on behalf of the Union, and provisional application of the Agreement between the European Union and EUROCONTROL

Council Decision on the signature, of the Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreement with the State of Israel

Adoption of EU Common Position for the 4th session of the UNECE Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law and the 66th session of the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport

Adoption of EU position for Preparation of the 11th meeting of the OTIF General Assembly (Geneva, 19-20 September 2012)

Adoption of a common position for the IMO Diplomatic Conference on the safety of fishing vessels, Cape Town, South Africa, 9-11 October 2012 (14064/12)

Council conclusions on "EU's External Aviation Policy - Addressing Future Challenges"

Council conclusions on the EU position of the ICAO 197th session, Montreal, 29 October – 16 November 2012

Presidency conclusions on the Implementation of the Single European Sky and the establishment of Functional Airspace Blocks

Presidency conclusions on the integration of the Digital Agenda for Europe and the EU Transport Policy “Intelligent Communications Transport”

Progress report on Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Progress report on the implementation and exploitation of European satellite navigation systems and the EU flagship programmes, Galileo and EGNOS

Increasing Youth Awareness on Road Safety- 4th European Road Safety Day

Telecommunications

Progress report on the guidelines for Trans-European Telecommunications Networks

Progress report on the reuse of Public Sector Information (PSI)

Progress report on the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA)

Progress report on the electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market

Agreement in the Council for the establishment of a Friends of Presidency (FoP) Group on Cyber issues

Council Decision establishing the European Union position for the review of the International Telecommunications Regulations to be taken at the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT)

Energy

Agreement on the Regulation on guidelines for Trans – European energy infrastructure

Agreement with the European Parliament on Energy Star Regulation

Signing of the Agreement between EU and USA on Energy Star

Council conclusions on Renewable Energy

Progress on the proposal for the safety of offshore oil and gas exploration and production activities

Progress report on the follow-up to the European Council conclusions (February 2011) on energy

Council Decision on establishing the European Union position within the 10th Ministerial Council of the Energy Community (Budva, Montenegro, 18 October 2012)

Council Decision on the 7th Meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council (PPC) on Energy

Joint Declaration between EU Member States and countries in the Southeastern Mediterranean calling for their cooperation to be strengthened on safety and environmental protection from offshore oil and gas activities, while also recognising the important role that the Southeastern Mediterranean region can play in enhancing the energy supply of the EU (Ministerial Meeting between the EU and Countries in the South-Eastern Mediterranean Region in the context of energy cooperation, 13 December 2012, Pafos, Cyprus)

Council Decision on establishing the European Union position on a Decision of the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community concerning the implementation of Article 9 of Directive 2009/73/EC by the Republic of Moldova

Preparation of the EU position for the Council of IRENA

Preparation of the EU position during the Energy Charter Conference, 26 November 2012 in Warsaw

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs

Employment and Social Policy

General approach on the Directive on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from electromagnetic fields

Council Declaration on the European Year for active ageing and solidarity between generations (2012)

Council Decisions on the position to be taken by the EU within the respective association bodies established between the EU and Albania, Montenegro, San Marino and Turkey as regards the coordination of social security systems

Council conclusions on actions to be taken in favour of a job-rich economic recovery and better chances for Europe's youth

Council conclusions on actions to be taken in order to prevent and tackle child poverty and social exclusion and promote children's well-being

Council conclusions on combating violence against women and the provision of support services to victims of domestic violence

Progress report on the Directive on posting of workers

Progress report on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

Progress report on the equal treatment Directive

Advancing the negotiations on the EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation and achieving agreement with the European Parliament on the microfinance/social entrepreneurship axis

Progress on the Directive aimed at improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights with a view to enhancing worker mobility

Health and Consumer Affairs

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation on food intended for infants and young children and on food for special medical purposes

Partial agreement with the European Parliament on the Health for Growth Programme

General approach on aligning the existing implementing powers enshrined in the five product specific vertical Directives (so called "Breakfast Directives")

General approach on the decision aimed at strengthening EU capacities and structures for effectively responding to serious cross-border threats to health

Council conclusions on organ donation and transplantation

Council conclusions on healthy ageing across the lifecycle

Adoption of EU position on the WHO Framework convention on tobacco control (FCTC) and representation of the Union at the 5th session of the Conference of the Parties, in Japan

Environment

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gases (MMR)

Agreement on the Decision for accounting rules and action plans on greenhouse gases emissions resulting from activities related to Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)

Council conclusions on a Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources

Council conclusions on Rio + 20: outcome and follow-up to the United Nations Convention on Sustainable Development 2012 Summit (Rio, June 2012)

Council conclusions on the Preparations for the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 8th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (Doha - Qatar, 2 November - 7 December 2012)

Progress on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the proposed Regulation of the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) for the period 2014-2020

Progress on the proposal for a Regulation on ship recycling

Progress on the proposal for a amending Directive on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy (priority substances)

Education, youth, culture and sport

Education

Council conclusions on the contribution of education and training to economic recovery, growth and jobs

Council conclusions on literacy

Council Recommendation for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

Youth

Council resolution on the overview of the structured dialogue with young people on youth participation in democratic life in Europe

Council conclusions on the participation and social inclusion of young people with emphasis on those with a migrant background

Adoption of the 2012 Joint Report on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field

Culture and Audiovisual

Partial general approach on the proposal for a Regulation establishing the “Creative Europe” programme

Council conclusions on cultural governance

Council conclusions on a European strategy for a better internet for children

Progress report on the proposal for a decision establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020-2033

Sport

Council conclusions on strengthening the evidence base for sport policy-making

Council conclusions on promoting health-enhancing physical activities (HEPA)

Presidency conclusions on establishing a strategy to combat the manipulation of sports results

Designation of the three EU representatives on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Foundation Board (2013-2015)

Approval by the Council of the EU contribution to the revision of the World Anti-Doping Code and submitted to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) with a view to the 4th World Conference on Doping in Sport, in November 2013

