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Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Energy issues

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President

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P R E S S

CONTENTS¹

ITEMS DEBATED

Conclusions on the future of energy systems in the Energy Union	4
External energy relations	5
Any other business	6
– Communication on the draft integrated national and climate plans.....	6
– Work programme of the incoming Presidency	6

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ENERGY

– EU position to be taken in the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC)	7
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

– Anti-personnel mine ban convention review conference.....	8
---	---

JUSTICE

– Regulation Brussels IIa on the jurisdiction, recognition and enforcement of decisions in matrimonial matters and matters of parental responsibility	9
---	---

TRADE

– Trade agreements between the EU and Vietnam.....	9
--	---

EU POSITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

– Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Eastern and Southern Africa States.....	9
---	---

AGRICULTURE

– Pesticides: maximum residue levels for various substances.....	10
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¹ • Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
 • Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
 • Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

FISHERIES

–	EU-Republic of the Gambia: Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement	10
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ITEMS DEBATED**Conclusions on the future of energy systems in the Energy Union**

The Council adopted [conclusions](#) on the future of energy systems in the Energy Union. The conclusions identify priorities and principles for future policy-making aimed at ensuring the energy transition towards an affordable, safe, competitive, secure and sustainable energy system.

[Council outlines principles and priorities for the future of energy systems in the Energy Union \(press release\)](#)

Three fields of work to ensure the energy transition are particularly highlighted. Firstly, the conclusions identify energy infrastructure priorities aimed at promoting the development of reliable and cost-effective energy networks. Secondly, the importance of developing and deploying innovative technologies is underlined, and thirdly, the conclusions point out the importance of sector coupling and sector integration.

The conclusions also stress the importance of citizens and businesses being at the core of the energy transition process in order to ensure the social acceptance of the transition and of the policies and measures designed to achieve it. They recognise the need for public and private investments to facilitate the energy transition, as well as the need to implement the energy efficiency first principle.

With a view to the next legislative term, the conclusions call on the Commission to take into account the principles highlighted in the text when presenting new legislative proposals. They also call on the Commission to carry out an analysis of sector coupling and sector integration technologies, and to reflect the efforts required to reach the EU's energy and climate targets in the context of any future revision of the EU state aid rules.

The conclusions were prepared by the Presidency on the basis of discussion among energy ministers during the informal meeting in Bucharest on 2 April 2019. They were discussed extensively during several meetings of the Energy Working Party and in the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 12 June 2019.

External energy relations

The Council was informed about recent developments in the field of external energy relations. In its presentation, the Commission particularly highlighted its activities in the area of energy cooperation with several major partners of the EU in the energy field.

Energy ministers then held an exchange of views on the topic, which was guided by a note prepared by the Presidency ([10265/19](#)). It provides background information on a number of key files in the energy field, namely Africa, the US, China and the Eastern Mediterranean.

To guide the debate, the Presidency proposed four questions to ministers:

- How can the EU use its instruments to ensure that European energy companies can help unlock the potential of Africa’s energy markets, particularly for renewable energy and natural gas?
- How can the EU and its Member States best focus their efforts to ensure complementarity between the EU-US Energy Council and new engagement formats such as the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) and the Partnership for Transatlantic Energy Cooperation (P-TEC), as well as other emerging initiatives by the USA and the EU Member States?
- How should the EU best engage with China on connectivity in the context of China’s Belt and Road Initiative and the EU’s Euro-Asia Connectivity Strategy?
- For EastMed, how can the EU and its Member States use the existing energy dialogues, engagement channels and instruments such as energy diplomacy to promote the environment in the region that would lead to de-risking developments?

During the discussion, ministers underlined the importance of ensuring that the EU's internal and external policies are coherent, especially regarding the EU's climate objectives and security of energy supply. The call for global leadership by the EU in areas such as energy efficiency and renewable energy was raised by several delegations. Ministers highlighted the important energy partnerships with the US, China, the Eastern Mediterranean region and Africa.

Any other business

– ***Communication on the draft integrated national and climate plans***

The Commission presented its communication on the draft integrated national energy and climate plans, which was published on 18 June ([10251/19](#) + [ADD1](#) + [ADD2](#)).

Ministers had an opportunity to give their initial reactions to the communication.

[National Energy and Climate Plans \(European Commission\)](#)

– ***Work programme of the incoming Presidency***

The incoming Finnish Presidency presented its work programme and priorities ([10252/19](#)).

The Finnish delegation highlighted the Presidency's intention to promote a dialogue on the national energy and climate plans and to provide opportunities for discussions about the energy sector's contribution to the green transition. It will also highlight the role of innovative technologies promoting climate neutrality. Regarding legislative proposals, the Finnish Presidency intends to continue working on the regulation on tyres labelling. Two formal Energy Council meetings are planned under the Finnish Presidency, on 24 September and on 4 December 2019 in Brussels.

[Finnish Presidency website](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**ENERGY****EU position to be taken in the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC)**

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC) with regard to the extension of the Terms of Reference for the IPEEC for the period from 24 May to 31 December 2019 ([10240/19](#), [9718/19](#)). The position of the EU will be to approve the extension of the Terms of Reference for the IPEEC until 31 December 2019, to agree with the International Energy Agency Governing Board decision to continue hosting the IPEEC Secretariat at the IEA until 31 December 2019, and to endorse the administrative transfer of the IPEEC to a new energy efficiency hub.

In June 2008, members of the G8, China, India and South Korea and the Commission decided to establish an International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC), which provides a forum for discussion, consultation and exchange of information on actions that yield high energy-efficiency gains. The IPEEC Terms of Reference were signed on 24 May 2009 for a period of ten years. The IPEEC Members are considering the possibility of combining the current activities of IPEEC and the energy-efficiency activities of the International Energy Agency (IEA) into an energy-efficiency hub in order to achieve synergies in that area. In order to allow for the necessary time to set up the energy-efficiency hub and avoid an abrupt termination of the IPEEC's activities, a short-term extension of the Terms of Reference until 31 December has been proposed. The Council has to adopt a decision on the EU's position on the matter, as the final decision on the extension has to be adopted by consensus of the IPEEC Members.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS**Anti-personnel mine ban convention review conference**

The Council adopted conclusions on an EU position strengthening the ban on anti-personnel mines, ahead of the Fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention from 25 to 29 November 2019 in Oslo.

In its conclusions, the Council states that the EU stands united in its support for the universal ban on anti-personnel mines. The EU appeals to all actors to refrain from the production, stockpiling, trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines and strongly condemns their use anywhere, at any time, and by any actor, whether states or non-state actors.

Twenty years after its entry into force, the Council considers that the Convention has become a success story of disarmament diplomacy and an example of what the EU stands for: a rules-based international order, rooted in respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Council also acknowledges that the objectives of the Convention have not yet been achieved in full. Anti-personnel mine contamination continues to cause harm, instil fear, deny access, impede socio-economic development and stop refugees and internally displaced people from returning home. The burden placed by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war on individuals, families, communities, regions and states remains high and unacceptable.

The Council welcomes the upcoming Fourth Review Conference of the Convention, to be held in Oslo from 25 to 29 November 2019, as an opportunity to review progress, reaffirm commitments and generate a push for further universalisation and strengthened implementation of the Convention. The Council considers that the Review Conference should encourage an open and constructive dialogue between States Parties and involve all relevant stakeholders to discuss current and future challenges and accelerate progress towards achieving the shared goal of an anti-personnel-mine-free world by 2025. The Council welcomes the proposal by the Norwegian Presidency to work towards three consensus outcome documents: a Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention, an Action Plan on future implementation and universalisation (Oslo Action Plan), and a Political Declaration (Oslo Declaration).

The EU's objectives for the outcome of the review conference are annexed to the Council conclusions.

JUSTICE

Regulation Brussels IIa on the jurisdiction, recognition and enforcement of decisions in matrimonial matters and matters of parental responsibility

The EU makes it easier and quicker for decisions on divorce, legal separation and marriage annulment, as well as on parental responsibility issues and international child abduction to be applied across borders.

The Council today adopted a revision of the so-called Brussels IIa regulation, which sets out rules on the jurisdiction, recognition and enforcement of decisions in matrimonial matters and matters of parental responsibility, as well as on intra-EU child abduction.

For more information, read the [press release](#).

TRADE

Trade agreements between the EU and Vietnam

The Council adopted decisions on the signing of two agreements between the EU and Vietnam: a free trade agreement (FTA) and an investment protection agreement (IPA).

Both agreements will be signed on 30 June 2019, in Hanoi (Vietnam).

For more information, read the [press release](#).

EU POSITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Eastern and Southern Africa States

The Council adopted the EU position to be taken in ESA-EU EPA Committee regarding amendments of certain provisions of Protocol 1 concerning the definition of the concept of ‘originating products’ and methods of administrative cooperation.

AGRICULTURE

Pesticides: maximum residue levels for various substances

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending annexes II and III to regulation 396/2005 as regards maximum residue levels for chlormequat in cultivated fungi ([9615/19](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#)).

Regulation 396/2005 establishes the maximum quantities of pesticide residues permitted in products of animal or vegetable origin intended for human or animal consumption. These maximum residue levels (MRLs) include, on the one hand, MRLs which are specific to particular foodstuffs intended for human or animal consumption and, on the other, a general limit that applies where no specific MRL has been set. MRL applications are communicated to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which issues a scientific opinion on each proposed new MRL. On the basis of the EFSA's opinion, the Commission proposes a regulation, such as the one cited above, to establish a new MRL or to amend or remove an existing MRL and that will modify the annexes of regulation 396/2005 accordingly.

FISHERIES

EU-Republic of the Gambia: Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement

The Council adopted a decision on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, and provisional application of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of The Gambia and the Implementation Protocol thereto ([8970/19](#)).

The Council also agreed in principle on the decision on the conclusion of that agreement ([8974/19](#)), and decided to send it, together with the text of the Agreement and the Implementation Protocol ([8984/19](#) and [9949/19](#)), to the European Parliament for its consent, after the signing of the Agreement and the Implementation Protocol by the parties.

Furthermore, the Council adopted the regulation on the allocation of fishing opportunities under the Protocol ([8975/19](#)).