



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



8426/07 (Presse 81)

PRESS RELEASE

2797th Council meeting

Agriculture and Fisheries

Brussels, 7 May 2007

President **Mr Horst SEEHOFER**
Federal Minister of Food, Agriculture and Consumer
Protection of Germany

P R E S S

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8426/07 (Presse 81)

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Main results of the Council

*The Council reached a long-awaited political agreement on a Regulation on the **protection of chickens kept for meat production**.*

Without discussion, the Council adopted Regulations opening tariff quotas for imports of sugar into Bulgaria and Romania, a derogation for certain oenological practices in wines originating from Argentina, conservation measures for highly migratory fish species and a multi-annual plan for the sustainable exploitation of sole in the Western Channel.

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS.....	5
ITEMS DEBATED	
EEL	7
TUNA.....	8
CROSS-COMPLIANCE	9
CEREALS	11
– Organisation of the market.....	11
– European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)	11
SUGAR	12
CHICKENS	13
ANIMAL WELFARE - <i>Council conclusions</i>	15
BETTER REGULATION IN THE PLANT VARIETIES AND SEEDS SECTORS - <i>Council conclusions</i>	17
OTHER BUSINESS	18
– World Trade Organisation (WTO)-Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations.....	18
– Avian influenza	18
– Veterinary and phytosanitary negotiations between the EC and Russia	18
– Negotiation of the Economic Partnership Agreements with the ACP countries.....	18

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.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED*AGRICULTURE*

- Raw cane sugar 19
- Derogation for wines imported from Argentina 19

FISHERIES

- Conservation measures for highly migratory species 19
- Sole in the Western Channel - Multi-annual plan * 20

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

- EU interinstitutional agreement on Community agencies 20
- EU solidarity fund – Floods in Greece and Hungary 21

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

- General Programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows" 21

CUSTOMS UNION

- Aluminium - Reduction of import duty 22

TRANSPORT

- Siberian overflights 23

CULTURE

- European Capital of Culture 23

DECISION TAKEN BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

- EU-US air transport agreement 24

APPOINTMENTS

- Committee of the Regions 24

TRANSPARENCY

- Public access to documents 25

PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Ms Sabine LARUELLE

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

Bulgaria:

Mr Nihat KABIL

Minister for Agriculture and Forestry

Czech Republic:

Mr Ivo HLAVÁČ

First Deputy Minister for Agriculture

Denmark:

Mr Hans Christian SCHMIDT

Ms Lene ESPERSEN

Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

Minister for Justice

Germany:

Mr Horst SEEHOFER

Mr Gert LINDEMANN

Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection

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

Estonia:

Mr Helir-Valdor SEEDER

Mr Jaanus TAMKIVI

Minister of Agriculture

Minister of the Environment

Greece:

Mr Evangelos BASIAKOS

Minister for Rural Development and Food

Spain:

Mr Josep PUXEU ROCAMORA

Mr Juan Carlos MARTÍN FRAGUEIRO

Ms Servanda GARCÍA FERNANDEZ

Secretary General of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Secretary General of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Minister for Rural Affairs and Fisheries of the Autonomous Community of Asturias

France:

Mr Dominique BUSSEREAU

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

Ireland:

Ms Mary COUGHLAN

Minister for Agriculture and Food

Italy:

Mr Paolo DE CASTRO

Minister for Agricultural and Forestry Policy

Cyprus:

Mr Panicos POUROS

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment

Latvia:

Mr Mārtiņš ROZE

Minister for Agriculture

Lithuania:

Ms Kazimira Danutė PRUNSKIENĖ

Minister for Agriculture

Luxembourg:

Mr Fernand BODEN

Ms Octavie MODERT

Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, Minister for Small and Medium-sized Businesses, the Liberal Professions and the Self-Employed, Tourism and Housing
State Secretary for Relations with Parliament, State Secretary for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, State Secretary for Culture, Higher Education and Research

Hungary:

Mr József GRÁF

Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

Malta:

Mr George PULLICINO

Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Netherlands:

Ms Gerritje VERBURG

Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Austria:

Mr Josef PRÖLL

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Poland:

Mr Andrzej LEPPER

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

Mr Sebastian FILIPEK-KAŻMIERCZAK

Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Portugal:

Mr Jaime SILVA

Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries

Mr Rui NOBRE GONÇALVES

State Secretary for Rural Development and Forestry

Romania:

Mr Decebal Traian REMEŞ

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

Slovenia:

Mr Iztok JARC

Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food

Ms Branka TOME

State Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food

Slovakia:

Mr Vladimír PALŠA

State Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture

Finland:

Ms Sirkka-Liisa ANTILA

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry

Sweden:

Mr Eskil ERLANDSSON

Minister for Agriculture

United Kingdom:

Mr Ben BRADSHAW

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Local Environment, Marine and Animal Welfare

Commission:

Mr Joe BORG

Member

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Member

Ms Mariann FISCHER BOEL

Member

ITEMS DEBATED**EEL**

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to find a solution to the outstanding issues regarding the proposal for a Regulation establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel (*13139/05*), with a view to reaching political agreement in June.

TUNA

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to find a solution to the outstanding issues regarding the proposal for a Regulation establishing a recovery plan for bluefin tuna (6890/07) as recommended by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), with a view to voting on the proposal in June.

CROSS-COMPLIANCE

The Council held a policy debate on the Commission Report on the application of the system of cross-compliance (7991/07), on the basis of a Presidency questionnaire (8915/1/07 REV 1) focusing on the key issues identified since the presentation of the Report by the Commission in Council on 16 April 2007, in particular the **timetable** proposed, how to deal with **minor** cases of non-compliance, as well as with **risk analysis**; examination of implementation of requirements concerning **good agricultural and environmental condition** on the one hand and **control rate obligations** on the other hand and finally what should be done at the time of the **health check**.

Question 1

Do Member States agree that :

- a) the legislative measures to be proposed by the Commission should enter into force as soon as possible and should be applied, where possible, already in 2007 ?
- b) the proposed rules on minor cases of non-compliance should include the possibility to close the file without further follow-up if immediate remedial action has been taken?
- c) there is a need to discuss the implementation of Annex IV of Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 (Good agricultural and environmental condition)?
- d) participation in farm advisory systems and/or quality certification schemes should be taken into account in the context of risk analysis provided there is sufficient evidence that the population of farmers concerned presents a reduced risk?

Question 2

Do Member States agree that the health check should examine the scope of cross-compliance in the light of experience gained?

Question 3

Do Member States agree that obligations resulting from the EC Directives and Regulations set out in Annex III of Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003, should be examined with a view to harmonising the control rates and/or to modifications being made in order to facilitate a more streamlined control system?

The Council noted the support of a large majority of delegations for:

- the entry into force of legislative measures as **soon** as possible and their application, where possible, already in 2007;
- the possibility in minor cases of non-compliance to **close** the file without further follow-up if **immediate corrective action** has been taken;
- a discussion on **Good agricultural and environmental condition** provided that it takes on board the **specific characteristics** of each Member State;
- taking participation in **farm advisory systems** and/or **certification schemes** into account in **risk analysis** provided there is sufficient evidence that the population of farmers concerned presents a reduced risk;
- sharing experience at the time of the **health check** in order to examine the **scope** of cross compliance;
- **harmonising control rates**, possibly according to EU agreed indicators.

The Commission welcomed the suggestions made by some Member States for improvement and indicated that it would study these further. The Commission carefully drew the attention of Member States of the risk of overloading the exercise, thus compromising the achievement of the goals set out in the Report in the timeframe foreseen (2007/2008) .

The Council invited its preparatory bodies to continue the examination of the proposal, with a view to agreeing on Council conclusions in June.

CEREALS

– Organisation of the market

The Council took note of the state of play of discussions on the future of maize intervention (16922/06) and invited the Special Committee on Agriculture to complete its work so that a decision could be taken on the proposal as soon as the European Parliament's opinion was received.

– European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)

The Council invited the Special Committee on Agriculture to continue the examination of the proposal¹ (5433/07) and to report to the Council, in connection with the proposal on maize intervention.

This measure was intended to alleviate in 2007 and 2008 the additional costs for such operations incurred by Member States with very high internal interest rates. (Hungary, which also has the main concentration of maize bulk storage, is one of them.)

¹ The proposal supplements the proposal on maize intervention, introducing a temporary amendment of the conditions applied by the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) for financing the cost of the funds mobilised by Member States for public storage operations.

SUGAR

The Council took note of the *presentation* by Commissioner Fischer Boel of two proposals on sugar and held a first *exchange of views* on this matter.

The package consist in a revision of the current sugar restructuring scheme established by the 2006 sugar reform in order to improve the restructuring process and the competitiveness of the sector.

The Council, having heard the Commission's presentation of the two legislative proposals and the preliminary reactions given by delegations, invited the Special Committee on Agriculture to conduct a thorough examination of all issues under the Portuguese Presidency.

The main elements of the proposals are:

- only 10% (instead of "at least 10%" in the current regulation) of the total aid for sugar quota renunciation should be paid to sugar beet growers and machinery contractors; in exchange, when quota is renounced the growers could get an extra aid which would be paid retroactively to avoid penalising growers and enterprises that took part in the first two years;
- the possibility for sugar beet growers to take the initiative for renouncing quotas themselves (with a limit of 10% of the company's quota);
- the introduction of a "threshold system" for withdrawals, replacing the current system to cut the amount of sugar produced under quota;
- if there is still insufficient quota renunciation, the quota cut at the end of the restructuring period would be adjusted according to the volume of quota renounced under the restructuring scheme.

As the proposals are based on Articles 36 and 37 of the Treaty, the European Parliament will be consulted.

CHICKENS

The Council reached political agreement by qualified majority on a Directive on the protection of chickens kept for meat production, as set out in Annex to document 9150/07 amended during the meeting on the basis of a compromise drawn up by the Presidency, which the Commission could endorse.

The Austrian delegation indicated it would vote against. The Directive will be adopted as an "A"-item by the Council at a forthcoming meeting.

Most of the substance of the amendments adopted by the European Parliament and accepted by the Commission has been inserted into the Directive.

The three changes made during the meeting to the above-mentioned document are the following: The stocking density should read respectively 33 and 39 kg/m², with a possibility of "bonus" of 3 kg/m² (Article 3(2) and (4) and (5) respectively).

Currently, the welfare of chickens for meat production was only covered by the general requirements of Directive 98/58/EC. Certain type of chicken farming such as organic and free range are excluded from the scope of the Directive together with holdings rearing less than 500 birds.

The Directive will introduce the following provisions:

- General requirements for all holdings - maximum **33kg/m²** (**Annex I**):
 - Requirements for drinkers, litter, noise, light cleaning and record keeping.
 - Monitoring and reporting of post mortem inspection, with a special care for lesions correlated to poor welfare.
- Possible derogation for a maximum of **39 kg/m²** **under additional provisions (Annex II)**:

Communication to the competent authority, documentation kept available, controlled ventilation and/or heating system, controlled concentration in **ammonia**, 20 parts per million (ppm) and **carbon dioxide** 3000 ppm respectively, monitoring and reporting of daily mortality rate recorded at the slaughterhouse.

- "reward system"= possibility to grant a bonus of **3 kg/m²** if **high welfare management** is achieved (Annex V) :
 - Mortality below a given rate (around 3%) on 7 consecutive flocks
 - No welfare deficiencies observed during the past 2 years
 - Monitoring carried out using good management practice guides (Article 8);
- Good Practices Guides to be developed at national/European level;
- Training of farmers dealing with chickens kept for meat production;

ANIMAL WELFARE - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council

1. TAKES NOTE of the outcome of the Conference "Animal Welfare – Improving by Labelling?" (Brussels, 28 March 2007), organised by the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Commission and the German Presidency. The Conference, which enabled broad discussions to take place with representatives of all stakeholder groups, concluded that labelling could under certain conditions contribute to improving animal welfare.
2. RECOGNISES that animal welfare is of concern to many European citizens. Its role in the choice made by consumers when buying products of animal origin calls for initiatives at European level in order to contribute to the smooth functioning of the Internal Market.
3. RECOGNISES that consumers could appreciate information on the animal welfare conditions under which products of animal origin are obtained, thereby enabling them to favour higher animal welfare standards through their purchasing decisions.
4. CONSIDERS that an EU-wide information campaign to explain the EU animal welfare standards to EU consumers and third countries might be appropriate, including the explanation of labelling schemes.
5. UNDERLINES that labelling could be one important element in the provision of information to consumers and could allow producers to capitalise on high animal welfare standards. Labelling should be simple, easy to recognise, comprehensible and credible and should not mislead consumers.
6. CONSIDERS that the possibility of introducing a label to recognise compliance with EU and/or recognised equivalent animal welfare standards, including the possibility of voluntary animal welfare labelling, should be evaluated. Such labelling should not lead to the deterioration of the functioning of existing labelling schemes requiring inter alia animal welfare standards above statutory requirements.

7. CONSIDERS that a European framework for animal welfare labelling would have to be based on sound scientific criteria and avoid any unnecessary administrative burden on producers and national authorities. The use of independent audit and certification schemes might be considered.
8. CONSIDERS that account should be taken of the recommendations made by the European Economic and Social Committee in its exploratory opinion on "Animal Welfare – Labelling", adopted on 15 March 2007.

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO :

1. take into account the abovementioned factors with a view to assessing further the issue of animal welfare labelling in all its aspects ;
2. submit a report to the Council on animal welfare labelling in order to allow an in-depth debate on this subject."

BETTER REGULATION IN THE PLANT VARIETIES AND SEEDS SECTORS - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council,

- Having acknowledged that the Common Directives for seeds and propagation material have led to a sound market of high quality products in Europe,
- Considering the technical progress achieved in the seed sector,
- Wishing to ensure free movement and high quality of seeds and propagation material, to reduce administrative burdens at all levels, and to delegate responsibility to producers of seed and propagating material in order to improve the competitiveness of the European seed sector.

Invites the Commission

- to carry out an evaluation of the current system, followed by an assessment of the impact of possible changes in the current legal framework,
- to present in due course an appropriate proposal that leads to fundamental simplification of legislation on seeds and propagating material,
- to give to the Council regular feedback on progress."

OTHER BUSINESS

– World Trade Organisation (WTO)-Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations

The Council received an update from Commissioner Fischer-Boel on the latest state of play in the negotiations on agricultural issues at the WTO.

The Commission repeated that any new offer on agriculture from the EU beyond that made in October 2005 was dependent on clear moves from our principal negotiating partners.

The Presidency concluded that regular and comprehensive updating of the Council on WTO negotiations was vital and reiterated its support for the Commission in the framework of the mandate defined by the Council in its conclusions of 18 October 2005 (13378/05) and 12 June 2006 (9947/06).

A ministerial session is tabled for 17 and 18 May.

– Avian influenza

The Council took note of information on avian influenza provided by Commissioner Markos Kyprianou. Unless there were any new developments, the Council agreed to withdraw this item from the agenda for its forthcoming meeting.

– Veterinary and phytosanitary negotiations between the EC and Russia

The Council took note of the information provided by the Commission on the latest developments in the negotiations in the veterinary and phytosanitary fields between the EC and the Russian Federation, in particular with regard to the lifting of the embargo on certain Polish commodities.

– Negotiation of the Economic Partnership Agreements with the ACP countries

The Council took note of Spain's concerns about the exclusion of bananas from the short list¹ of sensitive products mentioned in draft Council conclusions concerning market access for products originating in ACP countries (9290/07).

The Spanish delegation, supported by France and Cyprus, outlined the importance of bananas production in certain regions of the EU.

¹ Rice and sugar.
8426/07 (Presse 81)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

AGRICULTURE

Raw cane sugar

The Council adopted¹ a Regulation opening tariff quotas for imports of sugar into Bulgaria and Romania for the marketing years 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, as well as for the remainder of 2006/2007, in order to avoid disruption of the supply of raw cane sugar for full time refiners in Bulgaria and Romania (7250/07).

Such opening was made necessary following the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the European Community.

Derogation for wines imported from Argentina

The Council adopted a Regulation authorising the presence of malic acid in wine imported from Argentina into the Community in the context of overall negotiations concerning, in particular, the mutual recognition of respective oenological practices in an agreement between the Community and Mercosur (of which Argentina is a member) respectively (7995/1/07).

Malic acid may be added to wine originating in Argentina to correct acidity, according to an oenological practice approved by the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV), but such adding is not allowed in wines produced in the European Union.

FISHERIES

Conservation measures for highly migratory species

The Council adopted a Regulation laying down measures for the conservation of stocks of highly migratory species with a view to updating and incorporating new international rules into EU law (9635/06).

¹ The UK delegation abstained from voting.

The Regulation is aimed at establishing technical conservation measures, applicable to EU fishing vessels, regarding the capture and landing of stocks of tunas, marlins, swordfish and other highly migratory species, and to the capture of by-catches.

The Regulation will update and incorporate into EU law measures adopted by regional fisheries organisations to which the Community is a contracting party. These measures include authorised sizes and weights of fish, restrictions on fishing within certain areas and time periods, with certain gears, and number and capacity of vessels.

Sole in the Western Channel - Multi-annual plan *

The Council adopted a Regulation establishing a multi-annual plan for the sustainable exploitation of the stock of sole in the Western Channel (*7751/07 + 7749/1/07 ADD1*).

The Regulation sets up a method for the establishment of the annual total allowable catches (TACs) and a system whereby fishing efforts on sole stocks are restricted to levels at which the TACs are unlikely to be exceeded.

It also fixes an objective of 0,27 of fishing mortality rate on appropriate age-groups of sole, in accordance with the advice provided by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, with a view to bringing the Western Channel sole stock within safe biological limits.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

EU interinstitutional agreement on Community agencies

The Council confirmed an agreement with the European Parliament and the Commission on statements regarding the budgetary management of Community agencies (*8636/07*).

Under the agreement, the Commission will provide annually with the preliminary draft budget for the EU's general budget, an overview covering all Community agencies. In particular, regarding Frontex (the agency for the management of operational cooperation at the EU's external borders), the budgetary authority commits itself to act as quickly as possible in exploring possibilities to ensure funding for urgent cases requiring the intervention of a rapid border intervention team.

EU solidarity fund – Floods in Greece and Hungary

The Council adopted a Decision with a view to allocating EUR 9 million and EUR 15 million from the EU solidarity fund for financial assistance to Greece and Hungary respectively, which were affected by severe floods in March and April 2006 (7997/07).

To this end, the Council also established a draft amending budget in order to cover the necessary payment appropriations from the 2007 EU's general budget, and requested the Presidency to forward the budget documents to the European Parliament (8632/07).

The interinstitutional agreement of May 2006 allows for mobilisation of the solidarity fund through a flexibility mechanism, within an annual ceiling of EUR 1 billion.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

General Programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows"

- European Refugee Fund (2007-2013)

The Council adopted a Decision establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows" (PE-CONS 3690/06).

The general objective of the Fund is to support and encourage the efforts made by the Member States in receiving, and in bearing the consequences of receiving, refugees and displaced persons, taking account of Community legislation on those matters, by co-financing the actions provided for in this Decision.

- External borders Fund (2007-2013)

The Council adopted a Decision establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows" (PE-CONS 3691/07).

The general objective of the Fund is to contribute to:

- (a) efficient organisation of control, covering both checks and surveillance tasks relating to the external borders;

- (b) efficient management by the Member States of the flows of persons at the external borders in order to ensure, on the one hand, a high level of protection at the external borders and, on the other, the smooth crossing of the external borders in conformity with the Schengen acquis and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity;
- (c) uniform application by border guards of the provisions of Community law on the crossing of external borders, in particular Regulation (EC) No 562/2006;
- (d) improvement of the management of activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries as regards the flows of third-country nationals into the territory of the Member States and the cooperation between Member States in this regard.

- European Return Fund (2007-2013)

The Council adopted a Decision establishing the European Return Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General Programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows" (*PE-CONS 3692/07*).

The general objective of the Fund is to support the efforts made by the Member States to improve the management of return in all its dimensions through the use of the concept of integrated management and by providing for joint actions to be implemented by Member States or national actions that pursue Community objectives under the principle of solidarity, taking account of Community legislation in this field and in full compliance with fundamental rights.

CUSTOMS UNION

Aluminium - Reduction of import duty

The Council adopted a Regulation lowering the tariff on imports into the EU of non-alloyed raw aluminium from the current level of 6% down to 3% (*7672/07*).

The reduction of the customs duty is aimed at improving the competitiveness of EU companies and in particular of SMEs using semi-finished and finished aluminium products, whilst also taking into account the interests of European aluminium producers.

The partial suspension of the tariff will come into force three days following its publication in the EU Official Journal, in the coming days.

It will be reviewed in three years' time in order to take into account possible future changes in the aluminium market situation.

TRANSPORT

Siberian overflights

The Council adopted a Decision on the signing and provisional application of an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters on agreed principles of the modernisation of the existing system of utilisation of the Trans-Siberian routes with Russia and on the setting up of an Equalisation Mechanism by the Member States.

The Equalisation Mechanism is aimed at avoiding possible distortion of competition on Trans-Siberian routes between the Community air carriers during the transitional period, until the end of December 2013.

The agreement is planned to be signed during the German Presidency. It will apply provisionally from 1 September 2007. However, some provisions will be applied provisionally already from the date of signature, in particular the provision that the newly operated overflight frequencies granted by the Russian side will be free of payments from that date.

In March 2006 the TTE Council adopted a Decision mandating the Commission to negotiate with Russia in order to resolve the specific issue of Siberian overflight payments. The Commission reached the agreement in the margins of the EU-Russia summit, held in Helsinki in November 2006. The text of the Decision was politically agreed at the TTE Council in March 2007.

CULTURE

European Capital of Culture

The Decision which establishes a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019¹ provides for a selection panel and a monitoring and advisory panel, which should include seven members nominated by the European institutions, two of whom by the Council.

¹ Decision n° 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 (OJ L 304, 3.11.2006, p. 1).

The Council now adopted a Decision dealing with the practical and procedural arrangements for the nomination of the members of these panels by the Council (7739/07).

DECISION TAKEN BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

EU-US air transport agreement

The Council adopted by written procedure on 26 April a Decision on the signature and provisional application of the air transport agreement with the United States of America, which will replace the existing bilateral agreements concluded by Member States (8044/3/07).

The first stage agreement was signed on 30 April in the margins of the EU-US Summit. It represents a historic step towards liberalising transatlantic air traffic. The agreement will bring real benefits for consumers and airline companies on both sides of the Atlantic. The negotiations to conclude a second stage agreement in order to achieve further liberalisation will start no later than 60 days after 30 March 2008, the date of the provisional application of the agreement.

The negotiations for an air transport agreement started in June 2003 on the basis of a mandate agreed at the TTE Council of 5 June 2003 and in total eleven rounds of negotiation took place. The text of the agreement, initialled on 2 March 2007, was politically approved by the TTE Council on 22 March 2007 (*see press release 7272/07, p. 10*).

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council adopted a Decision appointing:

- as member:
 - Mr Aleksandrs LIELMEŽS, in place of Mr Uldis AUGULIS for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2010;

- as alternate members:

- Ms Ligita GINTERE, Chairman of Jaunpils Local Municipality, in place of Mr Aleksandrs LIELMEŽS;
- Mr Jānis NEIMANIS, Chairman of Grobiņa Town Municipality, in place of Mr Gunārs LAICĀNS for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2010;
- Ms Elisabeth VITOUCH, Gemeinderätin der Stadt Wien, is hereby appointed an alternate member of the Committee of the Regions in place of Mr Andreas SCHIEDER for the remainder of his term of office, which runs until 25 January 2010;
- Mr Carlos Martín MALLÉN, Director General de Asuntos Europeos y Acción Exterior de la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón, is hereby appointed an alternate member of the Committee of the Regions in place of Mr Mateo Sierra BARDAJÍ for the remainder of his term of office, which runs until 25 January 2010.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

The Council adopted:

- the reply to confirmatory application 07/c/01/07 made by Mr Ben HAYES, the Swedish delegation voting against (7970/07);
- the reply to confirmatory application 08/c/01/07, the Swedish delegation voting against (7973/07 + 7973/1/07 REV 1 (*de, fr*));
- the reply to confirmatory application 09/c/01/07, the Danish, Finnish and Swedish delegations voting against (8265/07).