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Europaudvalget (2. samling)
(Alm. del - bilag 281)
rådsmødereferater
(Offentligt)

PØU, Alm. del - bilag 19 (Løbenr. 3870)
ERU, Alm. del - bilag 106 (Løbenr. 3914)

Medlemmerne af Folketingets Europaudvalg
og deres stedfortrædere

Bilag	Journalnummer	Kontor	
1	400.C.2-0	EU-sekr.	31. januar 2002

Til underretning for Folketingets Europaudvalg vedlægges Finansministeriets redegørelse for rådsmøde (økonomi- og finansministre) den 22. januar 2002.



Referat af mødet i Rådet (økonomi- og finansministre) den 22. januar 2002

Dagsordenspunkt: Det spanske formandskabs arbejdsprogram

Det spanske formandskabs arbejdsprogram blev hilst velkommen af medlemslandene.

Den danske finansminister lagde - på linje med ministrene fra en række andre medlemslande - blandt andet vægt på behovet for at styrke den økonomiske reformproces i Europa, herunder liberaliseringen af energimarkederne, gennemførelsen af den finansielle handlingsplan og særligt skabelsen af et integreret marked for værdipapirer, økonomiske reformer, der får flere i arbejde, samt vigtigheden af at færdiggøre skatte pakken inden udgangen af 2002. Finansministerens indlæg er vedlagt som bilag.

Dagsordenspunkt: Implementering af stabilitets- og vækstpagten: Opdaterede stabilitets- og konvergensprogrammer for Sverige, Holland, Belgien, Finland, Østrig og Luxembourg

ECOFIN vedtog udtalelser om stabilitetsprogrammerne for Holland, Belgien, Finland, Østrig og Luxembourg og om konvergensprogrammet for Sverige.

Dagsordenspunkt: Rapport vedrørende forskning og udvikling

Formanden for Den Økonomisk-Politisk Komité (EPC) præsenterede rapporten vedrørende forskning og udvikling, som ventes fremlagt for Det Europæiske Råd i Barcelona. Medlemslandene støttede blandt andet, at økonomiske reformer er afgørende for at fremme forskning, udvikling og innovation.

Dagsordenspunkt: Kommissionens rapport over status for overgangen til eurosedler og euromønter

Kommissionen afgav en orientering om eurolandenes overgang til eurosedler og -mønter, der forløber som planlagt. Kommissionen ventes at forelægge en rapport om overgangen til euroen for Det Europæiske Råd i Barcelona.

Endvidere vedtog eurogruppen et kommuniké om overgangen til eurosedler og -mønter, der er vedlagt som bilag.

Dagsordenspunkt: EU's egne indtægter

ECOFIN drøftede status for processen vedrørende ratifikation af Rådets beslutning om egne indtægter, der ventes afsluttet snarest i alle medlemslande.

Dagsordenspunkt: Mandat til EU's Økonomiske og Finansielle Udvalg for at undersøge mulighederne for en Euro-Middelhavs-bank for udvikling

ECOFIN vedtog i opfølgning på konklusionerne fra Det Europæiske Råd i Laeken at lade Den Økonomiske og Finansielle Komité (EFC) i samarbejde med Kommissionen og EIB overveje mulighederne for en Euro-Middelhavs-bank nærmere med henblik på fornyede drøftelser i ECOFIN.

Dagsordenspunkt: Rådskonklusioner vedrørende makrofinansiell assistance til Rumænien

ECOFIN vedtog vedlagte rådskonklusioner vedrørende makrofinansiell assistance til Rumænien.

Dagsordenspunkt: Eventuelt: Beskatning af private renteindtægter i andre lande: Status for forhandlingerne med tredjelandene

Kommissionen gav en kort status for forhandlingerne med de centrale tredjelande og EU-landenes tilknyttede områder vedrørende beskatningen af private renteindtægter.

Diverse:

Den økonomiske situation i Argentina

ECOFIN vedtog vedlagte erklæring vedrørende den økonomiske situation i Argentina.



22. januar 2002

Finansministerens talegrundlag til brug for den åbne debat om det spanske formandskabs ECOFIN-arbejdsprogram på ECOFIN-mødet den 22. januar 2002

0. Tak til det belgiske formandskab og velkommen til det spanske formandskab. Danmark støtter det spanske formandskabs prioriteter og ønsker formandskabet held og lykke. Tillykke med indførelsen af euroen. Det er en historisk begivenhed af betydning for os alle, hvad enten vi er med eller ej.
1. Jeg vil gerne benytte lejligheden til at understrege, at det økonomisk-politiske samarbejde er vigtigt for alle 15 medlemslande. For Danmark er dette meget tydeligt, da vi fører fastkurspolitik over for euroen.

Økonomiske reformer

- Vi lægger stor vægt på økonomiske reformer, der styrker konkurrencen og effektiviteten. Som formandskabet har nævnt, forstærkes behovet for reformer af den internationale vækstafmatning. Vi hilser det derfor velkomment, at det spanske formandskab har sat økonomiske reformer højt på den politiske dagsorden og ser meget frem til forårstopmødet i Barcelona, der bør *styrke reformprocessen i Europa*.
- Når det gælder reformer af netværksindustriene, håber jeg, at der på forårstopmødet i Barcelona kan sættes skub i *liberaliseringen af energimarkederne i Europa*. El- og gas-markederne skal liberaliseres, så der sikres fuld markedsadgang for alle typer kunder effektivt - og ikke mindst med lige konkurrencevilkår. Den danske regering vil selv liberalisere det danske el- og gasmarked og forberede privatiseringer på området.
- Der bør ske parallelle fremskridt med gennemførelsen af *det indre marked for energi og samarbejdet om energibeskatning*. Miljømål skal nås på den økonomisk mest effektive måde.

Det indre marked for finansielle tjenester

- Vi støtter formandskabets indsats for at holde et højt tempo i gennemførelsen af *den finansielle handlingsplan* med vægt på skabelsen af *et integreret marked for værdipapirer*. På forårstopmødet i Barcelona bør der udstikkes de retningslinjer, der vil genskabe tilliden til, at vi når de aftalte tidsfrister. Som andre har nævnt, er det afgørende, at Lamfalussy-problematikken er afklaret i god tid inden Barcelona. Så held og lykke med mødet i eftermiddag i Parlamentet.

Flere i arbejde – det skal kunne betale sig at arbejde

- Velstanden i fremtidens Europa afhænger af vores vilje til at lave økonomiske reformer, der får *flere i arbejde*.
- *Det skal kunne betale sig at arbejde* og yde en ekstra indsats. Den nye danske regering er fast besluttet på at *stoppe stigningen i skatterne* og vil tilrettelægge en økonomisk politik, der skal skabe det fornødne råderum til at lette skatten på arbejde.

Skattesamarbejdet

0. Den danske regering lægger stor vægt på, at medlemslandene som aftalt får vedtaget den samlede *skattepakke* senest ved udgangen af 2002. Det er derfor vigtigt, at vi under det spanske formandskab når de fremskridt, som vi er forpligtet til ifølge tidsplanen.

1. Det vil gøre en vanskelig opgave lidt lettere for det danske formandskab
2. Vi ønsker det spanske formandskab al mulig held og lykke og tilsiger dansk støtte til samarbejdet.

Communiqué

The Eurogroup

The European Central Bank

The Commission

The changeover to euro notes and coins

21 January 2002

Almost ten years after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, euro notes and coins have smoothly made their way into the daily lives of 300 million people. The operation, conducted on an unprecedented scale and warmly welcomed by the public, has gone remarkably well.

The general public was provided very rapidly with euro banknotes and coins:

By the end of 2001 more than 70% of banknotes and coins expected to be in circulation by the end of February 2002 had been distributed to banks.

Frontloading through the sale of mini-kits distributed over 4 billion coins to the public in the final two weeks of 2001.

On 1 January 2002 about 80% of ATMs were converted to euro, and by 4 January virtually all cash machines dispensed only euro. Withdrawals were remarkably high during the first ten days and people were also eager to exchange old national currency for euro at banks.

Therefore, by the end of the first week of January, almost everyone in the euro area had euro notes and coins in their pockets.

The proportion of cash payments in euro averaged around 20% at the end of 2 January. By the end of the first week about three quarters of cash payments were in euro, and this figure was well over 90% by the end of the second week. A steep increase in euro payments, coupled with exceptional measures taken by most shops, ensured that queues did not lengthen unduly. Thanks to the efforts of all those involved, there were only isolated cases of shortages of certain denominations of notes and coins, and these did not interfere with normal trading. Since cash is now circulating freely in euro, priority can now be given to the secure withdrawal of old national notes and coins and to maximum vigilance by consumers and the competent bodies with respect to price developments.

Ministers of the Eurogroup, the European Central Bank and the European Commission are highly satisfied with the success of the operation, made possible by the careful and thorough preparations made by all economic actors, the European institutions, and the national authorities, including the national central banks of the Eurosystem. They thank all who contributed to this success, in particular the financial institutions, post offices, the cash-operated industry, cash transport companies and sales outlets for their efforts. They stress that this outstanding success would not have been possible without the active and enthusiastic participation of the general public.

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While the cash changeover has represented the concluding act of the move to a single currency, many of the benefits of the euro materialised even before the introduction of notes and coins. The smooth changeover will reinforce these positive effects.

Thanks to the convergence process during the 1990s, and continued efforts in accordance with the Stability and Growth Pact, the euro area can now count on sound economic fundamentals. There are no major imbalances in either the public or the private sector, and the ECB has successfully established its credibility in maintaining price stability. Economic stability encourages investment and consumption, providing a favourable climate for growth and employment.

The euro is contributing to greater efficiency of the European economy, notably by acting as a catalyst for the integration of financial markets, and by stimulating reforms in product, services and labour markets. The euro has removed the most important remaining barrier in the EU single market: the co-existence of multiple national currencies. The cash changeover, by intensifying cross-country price comparisons, will increase price transparency, encourage more intense competition and promote the more efficient allocation of resources, to the benefit of all consumers.

Over the last four years the euro area and EU economies have been hit by several serious external shocks (the terrorist attacks on 11 September in the US being a recent example). It is currently affected by the synchronised slowdown of the world economy. However, the euro has eliminated exchange rate tensions between participating Member States, which often in the past had aggravated the consequences of negative external events. At the same time, economic policy co-ordination at euro area level has kept economic policies geared towards economic growth and stability. Thanks to the appropriate policy response and good fundamentals, growth and employment should strengthen in the coming months.

The euro is also demonstrating its value for third countries. The Eurozone offers valuable investment and financing opportunities to foreign borrowers and investors. Monetary integration in Europe will also contribute to stability in the international monetary system.

Macro-Financial Assistance to Romania

Draft Conclusions for the ECOFIN Council

The Council welcomes Romania's recent progress in macroeconomic stabilisation and the agreement reached late last year with the International Monetary Fund on a comprehensive economic programme, supported by a new stand-by credit. In this context, the Council takes note of the Commission's intention to make available to Romania EU 100 million, pursuant to Council decision 99/732/EC of 8 November 1999, in two sub-tranches, subject to the satisfactory implementation of the stand-by arrangement and adequate progress in the country's structural adjustment process.

Ministers of Finance and Economy

of the Member States of the EU

STATEMENT ON ARGENTINA

22 January 2002

The EU fully supports the ongoing co-operation between the Argentinean government and the International Monetary Fund, directed towards designing a sustainable, consistent and credible economic programme. The immediate challenge faced by the new government is to lay the basis for sound economic growth with low inflation, while easing social tensions.

The economic programme under negotiation needs to be strong, viable and credible, both to the domestic and the international community. It should also be sustainable over the medium term to support a lasting recovery of the Argentinean economy and should pay due attention to the growing social problems. In addition to restoring sound macroeconomic policies and addressing the main structural deficiencies, the programme should promote a legal and regulatory framework conducive to a resumption of domestic and foreign investment.

The key areas of focus should be the monetary and fiscal policy framework, the banking system and the exchange rate regime.

It is very important for the programme to adhere to the principles of a market-based economy and to avoid discriminating against foreign direct investors and creditors.

Over the recent period the burden of the resolution of Argentina's debt problems has largely been provided by domestic private creditors including overseas bank subsidiaries and branches. A deep and fair international debt restructuring should be based on an appropriate involvement of the private sector to secure sustainability of Argentina's debt service, which is an utmost priority.

Attention should also be paid to the social consequences of the current crisis. We encourage the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, in close co-operation with the IMF, to examine with the Argentinean government measures aimed at alleviating the social impact of the current crisis.

A properly functioning financial system will play a key role in overcoming the economic crisis. The financial sector in Argentina should not bear an unreasonable amount of the costs of the devaluation as a result of administrative rulings. In this context, the Argentinean government should take into account the negative consequences of any possible bankruptcy bill, which could have serious impact on the banking system.

We stand ready to offer technical co-operation to the Argentinean government for the design and implementation of monetary, exchange rate and financial policies.

We are confident that a strong and credible strategy can be defined and it is essential that it is implemented promptly so as to overcome the current difficulties. This will have a positive impact not only on Argentina's economic prospects but also for the long-term economic prospects of the whole Latin American region.