



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from: Presidency

to: COREPER / Council

Subject: *European Council (15 and 16 December 2005)*
– Draft conclusions

1. The meeting of the European Council was preceded by an expose by the President of the European Parliament, Mr Josep Borrell, followed by an exchange of views.
2. The European Council notes the report from the President of the Commission on work underway on a number of key priorities designed to ensure that the EU responds successfully to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation; and from the SG/HR on CFSP and Europe's place in the world. The European Council agrees to return to these issues under the Austrian Presidency.
3. The European Council recalls the importance of the common European values of solidarity, social justice and sustainability as the basis for the development of the Union's policies. This constitutes the framework in which the guidelines set out in these conclusions should be taken forward.

4. Recalling the EU's support for an effective multilateral system based on the rule of law, and a United Nations better equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, the European Council underlines its commitment to early and full implementation of the reforms and commitments agreed at the 2005 UN World Summit.
5. The European Council notes the joint UK-Austrian interim report on national debates on the future of Europe underway in all Member States, further to the Declaration by the Heads of State or Government at the June 2005 European Council on this issue. The European Council will return to the issue in the first half of 2006 under the Austrian Presidency on the basis of preparatory work in the General Affairs Council.

I. FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

[PM]

II. AFRICA

6. The European Council adopts the EU strategy "The EU and Africa: Towards a Strategic Partnership" as called for by the June 2005 European Council (attached at Annex X); it stresses the importance of enhanced EU-Africa political dialogue and agrees to review progress on the implementation of the Strategy regularly, starting in June 2006.

III. GLOBAL APPROACH TO MIGRATION

[In the light of Member States' comments on our original paragraphs, and ahead of the Commission Communication due on 30 November, the Presidency will circulate separately a discussion paper for Ministers at the JHA Council, for examination in Coreper. The Presidency will update this section of the European Council conclusions and draft the "priority actions" paper in the light of this Ministerial debate, and will circulate the relevant documents on 2 December].

IV. COUNTER-TERRORISM

7. The European Council welcomes the agreement of the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy (attached at Annex X) which sets out a framework for work to prevent people turning to terrorism, to protect citizens and infrastructure, to pursue and investigate terrorists, and to improve the response to the consequences of attacks. The European Council notes that the EU Counter-Terrorism Action Plan, the instrument for tracking implementation, is being revised to ensure full coherence with the new Strategy.
8. The European Council also welcomed the progress made on priority dossiers as set out in the Counter-Terrorism Co-ordinator's six monthly report. The European Council will monitor progress on implementing the Counter-Terrorism Strategy at its meeting in June 2006.

V. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

9. The European Council [notes] [looks forward] to the presentation of the Commission's Communication "xxx", proposing a renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy for the next 5 years. This ambitious and comprehensive strategy, including indicators and an efficient monitoring procedure, should integrate the internal and external dimensions. It should be based on a positive long-term vision, bringing together the Community's sustainable development priorities and objectives in a clear, coherent strategy that can be communicated simply and effectively to citizens and will be adopted at the June 2006 European Council.

VI. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

10. The European Council welcomes the progress made during 2005 in developing a medium and long-term EU strategy and re-invigorating the international negotiations on climate change. In this context, the Council stresses the importance of:
 - work under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

- implementation of the Gleneagles Plan of Action with its strong emphasis on technology transfer and managing the impacts of climate change.
- taking forward the dialogue and technological co-operation agreed with India, China and Russia, including at future summits, while working to develop partnerships with all major energy-consuming countries.

11. The European Council stresses the importance of an integrated approach to climate change, energy and competitiveness objectives, and notes that strategies to invest in cleaner and more sustainable energy both in the EU and more widely can support a range of policy objectives, including energy security, competitiveness, employment, air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, the European Council welcomes the launch of the second phase of the European Climate Change Programme and the Commission's intention to develop an Action Plan on energy efficiency.

[This text will be updated following the Environment Council on 2 December and the 11th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Montreal 28 November - 9 December.]

VII. GROWTH AND JOBS

12. The European Council welcomes the Member States' National Reform Programmes and the Commission's Community Lisbon Programme. It stresses the importance of National Reform Programmes to strengthen the overall governance of the Lisbon Strategy and invites Member States and the Council to monitor and evaluate their implementation and to take stock of progress in reform, including in the context of the multilateral surveillance exercise. It recalls the importance of taking all necessary action to implement the Lisbon Strategy and deliver the jobs and growth agenda agreed at the Spring European Council and looks forward to the Commission's January progress report. The European Council underlines the importance of innovation, research and human capital for achieving higher employment and sustainable growth across the European Union.

13. Taking due account of the principle of subsidiarity, and recalling the provisions of the IIA the European Council stresses that an improved regulatory framework in the European Union, at Community and Member States level, is key to delivering growth and jobs. Emphasis should be placed on implementing commitments already made by all institutions.

14. The European Council reaffirms the importance of reducing unnecessary burdens for business and citizens, while respecting the *acquis communautaire*. In this respect it welcomes the Commission's new programme for simplifying EU legislation ¹, and calls on the Council to give high priority to progressing simplification proposals through the legislative system. It welcomes the Commission's screening initiative, notes the outcome and invites the Commission to continue to monitor pending proposals in terms of their impacts, including economic, social and environmental, with a view to modification, replacement or withdrawal, where these would be appropriate.

15. The European Council welcomes the Commission's revised impact assessment system ², including the commitment to prepare balanced integrated impact assessments for all major legislative proposals and policy defining documents in its work programme. It calls on the Council to make full use of Commission impact assessments as a tool to inform political decision making. It reaffirms the importance of transparency in policy making and timely and effective stakeholder consultation and looks forward to the comprehensive independent evaluation of the Commission's impact assessment system to be launched early in 2006.

¹ Doc. 13976/05 COMPET 232 (COM (2005) 535 final)

² add weblink

16. The European Council welcomes the Commission Communication on an EU common methodology for assessing administrative costs imposed by legislation ¹, and invites the Commission to start measuring administrative burdens, on a consistent basis and in line with transparent criteria, as part of integrated impact assessments launched as of January 2006. In this context it notes with interest the important contribution this methodology could play in identifying legislation in need of simplification and invites the Commission to explore options for establishing measurable targets in specific sectors for reducing administrative burdens. The European Council recognises the importance for Member States to provide, on request and in a proportionate manner, the information needed to assess administrative costs imposed by EU legislation.

[PM Services]

VIII. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

[PM]

¹ Doc. 13629/05 ECOFIN 322 COMPET 221 (COM (2005) 518 final)