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6. kontor, MIJ

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## Referat af rådsmødet (ECOFIN) den 13. november 2007

### **Dagsordenspunkt: Lissabon-strategien: Den nye treårige cyklus**

Rådet drøftede fokus for den næste 3 års cyklus for Lissabon-strategien og vedtog rådskonklusioner herom (*jf. vedlagte bilag*). Der var i Rådet enighed om, at der ikke er behov for en grundlæggende ændring af de Integrerede Retningslinjer og at de fire prioriterede områder vedr. beskæftigelse, investering i viden og innovation, realisering af erhvervslivets potentiale samt energi og klimaforandringer fortsat vurderes at være relevante. I den kommende 3 års cyklus bør der imidlertid være større fokus på implementering og gennemførelse af reformtiltag.

### **Dagsordenspunkt: Globalisering: De økonomiske konsekvenser af migration**

Rådet havde – på baggrund af en ”issues note” fra Det Økonomisk-Politiske Udvalg (EPC) – en udveksling af synspunkter om de økonomiske konsekvenser af immigration. EPC-noten berører bl.a. immigrationens effekter på beskæftigelsen, produktiviteten, de offentlige finanser, mobiliteten på arbejdsmarkedet samt muligheden for at afhjælpe flaskehalse. Rådet fremhævede bl.a., at migration ikke kan afløse behovet for strukturelle reformer i medlemslandene. Migration kan på kortere sigt hjælpe til at skabe mere balancerede konjunkturforløb, men kan generelt ikke forventes at bidrage betydeligt til finansieringen af befolkningernes aldring. Virkningerne af migration kan endvidere være forskellige mellem lande.

### **Dagsordenspunkt: Statistik**

Rådet drøftede Statusrapporten for 2007 om informationskravene i ØMU'en og vedtog rådskonklusioner herom (*jf. vedlagte bilag*). Endvidere drøftedes arbejdet med reduktion af de statistiske byrderammer, EU's statistiske styring samt håndteringen af større statistiske revisioner.

### **Dagsordenspunkt: Kommissionens direktivforslag om forlængelse af ordninger om nedsat moms for nye medlemslande**

Rådet havde en kort udveksling af synspunkter vedr. Kommissionens forslag om forlængelse af nogle af de nye medlemslandes undtagelser fra momsdirektivets generelle regler om nedsatte momssatser. Rådet ventes at vende tilbage til sagen på rådsmødet den 4. december 2007.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Momspakken**

Rådet havde en udveksling af synspunkter om de resterende udeståender i forhold til en aftale om en samlet momspakke. Rådet nåede på rådsmødet den 5. juni 2007 til enighed om momspakken, dog med undtagelse af spørgsmålet om forbrugslandsbeskatning af fjernleverede tele-, elektroniske og broadcastydelser B2C.

Rådet ventes at vende tilbage til drøftelsen af momspakken på rådsmødet den 4. december 2007 mhp. enighed om den samlede momspakke.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Bilbeskatning**

Rådet drøftede Kommissionens direktivforslag om personbilsbeskatning, herunder mulighederne for CO<sub>2</sub>-differentiering af de løbende bilafgifter. På baggrund af medlemslandenes tilkendegivelser i forhold til EU-regulering på dette område, ventes formandskabet i samarbejde med Kommissionen at evaluere den videre proces i forhold til Rådets behandling af direktivforslaget.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Galileo - finansieringsaspekter**

Rådet havde en udveksling af synspunkter vedr. Kommissionens forslag til finansiering af Galileo-projektet. Rådet enedes om at drøfte finansieringsspørgsmålet forud for – og i forbindelse med – de forestående drøftelser med Europa-Parlamentet om EU's budget for 2008 mhp. på en samlet aftale.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Revisionsrettens årsberetning for 2006**

Revisionsretten præsenterede Rådet for sin årsberetning for finansåret 2006. Rådet noterede sig fremskridtene i forhold til tidligere årsberetninger, men noterede samtidig, at der fortsat er behov for yderligere arbejde mhp. at opnå en bedre administration af EU's midler.

Rådet ventes på rådsmødet den 4. marts 2008, at drøfte en henstilling til Europa-Parlamentet om meddelelse af decharge til Kommissionen for gennemførelsen af budgettet for 2006.

**Diverse:**

I marginen af mødet havde ministrene det årlige møde med økonomi- og finansministrene fra de fire EFTA-lande (Island, Liechtenstein, Norge og Schweiz). På mødet drøftedes de økonomiske aspekter af klima- og energipolitik.

Under frokosten drøftede ministrene perspektiverne i et fremtidigt nedsat moms-system i EU.

## Bilag:

### Rådskonklusioner vedr. Lissabon-strategien:

"The Council welcomes the presentation of the Communication by the Commission on "The European Interest: Succeeding in the age of globalisation", and agrees with the Commission that the EU and its Member States need to work together to take full advantage of globalisation and successfully address the challenges of ageing populations and environmental developments.

Comprehensive implementation of reforms at national and Community level, including making full use of the present favourable economic conditions, remains key to the long-term economic success of the European economy. A key instrument for the EU to reach its common ambitions in this regard is the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs and the Integrated Guidelines.

The renewed Lisbon Strategy is starting to deliver and the Integrated Guidelines have been fulfilling their role, also accompanied by a strong business cycle. They provide a coherent basis for necessary reforms in order to modernise the European economies by improving the ability to adapt to rapid changes. The Council therefore agrees with the Commission that the Integrated Guidelines do not need a fundamental overhaul, as stability is an important element for the effectiveness of the Lisbon Strategy and of the Integrated Guidelines. Therefore, the main focus of this new cycle should be on implementation and delivery of reform, acknowledging that more reforms are needed.

The four priority areas of reform identified by the European Council in Spring 2006 continue to provide the right frame for the Strategy at both EU and national level: employment; knowledge and innovation; business potential; and energy and climate change. In all four priority areas, there is the need for greater focus in implementation, for example on measures related to ageing populations and securing long-term fiscal sustainability, labour markets and employment, measures to boost labour participation and raise labour productivity, the quality of public finances, energy and climate change, the internal market, the regulatory environment and SMEs, as well as competition, research and innovation. The challenges and opportunities of globalisation should be fully taken into account in the external dimension of the Strategy.

The Council also emphasizes that the Community Lisbon Programme is central to the partnership approach embodied in the re-launched Lisbon strategy. The Council in this regard considers that there remains room for strengthening the rationale and focus of action at Community level to improve the coherence of reforms and maximise positive spill-over effects. Reviewing the Community Lisbon Programme is an area where an update of the Strategy can add real value. It also underlines the importance of having economically sound and transparent

assessments of progress with structural reforms which ensure consistency across policy areas and Member States.

In terms of ownership, the Council underlines the importance of engaging different levels of government in the Strategy as appropriate, and of further developing the exchange of best practices among Member States. Ownership of the Community Lisbon Programme by the Council and Parliament could be enhanced. In addition, the communication of successes should be intensified.

The Council:

- welcomes the transmission of the second implementation reports of the National Reform Programmes presented by Member States in the autumn of 2007;
- looks forward to considering the results of the next round of multilateral surveillance by the Economic Policy Committee;
- looks forward to the Commission's Strategic Report, including its assessment of progress made at national level and on the Community Lisbon Programme, and to further proposals to support the capacity of the EU to shape the globalisation agenda based on an outward-facing approach that promotes competitive markets, openness and fairness, and harnesses to best effect the different internal and external dimensions of the Lisbon Strategy;
- encourages the Committee to continue its work on developing a clear and transparent methodology at EU level to assess Lisbon reforms, and together with the Commission improve the economic underpinnings of approaches used to track and evaluate the impact of structural reforms;
- notes that the revision of the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) in 2008 will be an important opportunity for Member States to review their own priorities and set down their key challenges for the period 2008-2011; and
- re-iterates the need for consistency between the Lisbon Strategy, sound and sustainable fiscal policies and a macroeconomic environment conducive to non-inflationary growth, as well as with all EU instruments that promote the Lisbon agenda goals."

### **Rådskonklusioner vedr. statistik:**

"Following the priorities set-up in the ECOFIN Council on 8 November 2005 on statistical governance, on 7 November 2006 on the Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU and on the public communication of major statistical revisions, and on 28 November 2006 on the reduction of the administrative burden related to statistics, the ECOFIN Council reviewed progress made in these areas.

#### 2007 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements

The Council ENDORSES the 2007 EFC Status Report on Information Requirements in the EMU. In particular, the Council:

- WELCOMES the progress achieved with the Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs), following the recommendations of the 2006 EFC Status Report;
- RECOGNISES that, in general, the timeliness targets, as fixed by the Communication of the Commission of 27 November 2002, have been reached for the majority of PEEIs, ENCOURAGES ongoing efforts to promote best practices and data sharing; REITERATES the need to strengthen the accuracy and reliability of the indicators; and CALLS UPON Member States, Eurostat and the ECB to strengthen the PEEIs and the underlying basic statistics by developing and implementing all the necessary technical and legal instruments;
- CALLS UPON the European Statistical System to step up efforts to also ensure the regular availability and high quality of the statistics for structural analysis, and
- INVITES Eurostat and the ECB to provide an updated Status Report on the fulfilment of EMU statistical requirements in 2008; and to review the scope, timeliness and quality of the PEEIs in the light of the results achieved, the constraints encountered and the evolving users' needs for economic and monetary policy purposes.

#### Reduction of statistical burden

The Council NOTES that, following the adoption of the Commission's Communication of 14 November 2006 and the ECOFIN Council conclusions on 28 November 2006, available measurements have not indicated a significant reduction in the overall statistical burden since 2006; and EMPHASISES that the right balance has to be found between minimising the response burden and providing sufficiently high quality statistics for Community policies. The Council in particular:

- EMPHASISES the desirability of respondents to report only once by combining reporting for different purposes and make the best use of the data that is already available by integrating existing statistics, including administrative data, to the extent possible;

- WELCOMES the ongoing simplification efforts in a number of priority areas as well as the new legislation and processes that are being planned with the objective to improve priority-setting, and in particular WELCOMES the examination by the Commission (Eurostat), the Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) and the Committee for Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics (CMFB) regarding the simplification of Intrastat; AGREES with the objective to reduce the coverage ratio in the short term while preparing a move to an alternative method in the long term, such as the single flow method, which requires further study;
- WELCOMES the forthcoming Community Statistical Programme (2008 – 2012), which introduces clear requirements for priority-setting; and
- INVITES the Commission to step up its efforts to enhance the measurement of the statistical response burden with a view to develop agreed criteria to assess progress objectively and to make a further assessment of the change in overall burden by October 2008; and LOOKS FORWARD to the results of the cost-benefit analyses in 2008 in the key areas outlined.

#### Statistical Governance

The Council reviewed the progress made with the efforts to enhance independence, integrity and accountability of Eurostat and the European Statistical System in the light of the conclusion of the Ecofin Council on 8 November 2005. In particular, the Council:

- WELCOMES the agreement reached with the European Parliament and the Commission on the establishment of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) and the European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC), and LOOKS FORWARD to their swift establishment;
- WELCOMES the initiative to modernise the current legal framework governing the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics; and TAKES NOTE that the Commission forwarded to the Council, in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 251 of the Treaty (co-decision), a proposal for a Regulation on European Statistics; and
- RECOGNISES the major efforts required by National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat in the peer review exercise, as well as the high commitment of the partners involved, LOOKS FORWARD to the report to the European Parliament and the Council on progress with the compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice in 2008; and UNDERLINES the importance that all Member States provide the necessary input to Eurostat according to the agreed timetable.

#### Communication of Major Statistical Revisions

The Council STRESSES that major revisions of macro-economic and social statistics in Member States can have substantive implications for European economic policies and for the credibility of the European Statistical System as a whole; and that a proper communication of the impacts of major revisions within the EU is crucial. Therefore, the Council WELCOMES the guidelines on the public communication of major statistical revisions in the European Union as set up by the CMFB, in response to the conclusions of the Ecofin Council of 7 November 2006; and INVITES Member States to follow these guidelines. "