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## Information and Notices

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## I

*(Information)***COUNCIL****COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS****of 17 December 2003****on CAP information policy**

(2004/C 34/01)

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 provides a sound legal framework for CAP information work.
- (2) The experience of the past three years has been largely positive in terms of the quality of the measures financed or co-financed, and future evaluation of the impact of the measures will make it possible to see how useful the policy has been.
- (3) Experience indicates that there is no reason at this stage to modify the two facets of the information policy, namely the measures proposed by third parties for cofinancing by the EAGGF and the measures taken on the Commission's initiative, which receive 100 % EAGGF financing.
- (4) The funds available have not been fully utilised and the administrative complexity and limited scope of the measures have been cited as the main reasons for this underutilisation of budget appropriations.
- (5) Efforts to strike a better balance between the various types of beneficiary organisation should be continued.
- (6) Dialogue between the Commission and the Member States on information policy should be stepped up.
- (7) The Commission is shortly to make an appraisal to identify any measures that should be taken to improve the cost/effectiveness of the system.

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AGREED THAT:

- Member States would make suggestions, particularly regarding administrative simplification, with a view to making more effective use of available funds,
  - the Commission should be invited to propose that Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 be adapted in order to improve the effectiveness of measures to develop CAP information policy and, in particular, to make provision for technical assistance, at the request and on behalf of the Commission, for the administration of subsidies financed from its budget,
  - the measures financed by the Commission should lead to a better targeting of aid and greater overall cost/effectiveness of information policy.
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**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS****of 17 December 2003****on risk management in agriculture**

(2004/C 34/02)

Whereas:

The CAP reform decided in Luxembourg in June 2003 will provide a modified system of farm income support to farmers, decoupled from production, that should ensure a stable basic income to farmers. However, the overall strategy of improved market orientation of the agricultural sector, together with the next steps towards liberalisation of agricultural trade, may increase exposure to price risks.

Furthermore, agricultural production is particularly vulnerable to natural risks, related either to climate or to animal health, that can jeopardise the economic sustainability of agricultural holdings.

As a consequence of economic development and the growing concern about environmental and food safety issues, agricultural activity in the EU faces additional uncertainties which go beyond traditional natural risks.

The Commission provided a first analysis of risk management tools for EU agriculture in January 2001, which was discussed under the Swedish Presidency by the competent Council bodies.

The Presidency conclusions on agricultural insurance as a risk management tool in arable and livestock farming, based on a memorandum submitted by the Spanish Presidency on 18 March 2002, and the International Conference on 'Agricultural insurance and income guarantees', held in Madrid on 13 and 14 May 2002, focused on the potential role of agricultural insurance.

A Greek Presidency memorandum on natural risks and insurance in the agricultural sector was submitted to the Council on 7 May 2003 and a seminar was held in Thessaloniki on 6 June 2003 to examine possible responses to natural disasters in the agricultural sector.

In its statement in the Council minutes of 29 September 2003, when the CAP reform regulations were adopted, the Commission announced that it would examine specific measures to address risks, crises and national disasters in agriculture and present a report, accompanied by appropriate proposals, to the Council before the end of 2004.

The Council accordingly invites the Commission:

- (1) to continue to lead the debate on risk management tools in agriculture. In order to facilitate the exchange of information and views between Member States, the Commission report scheduled for the end of 2004 should provide an updated inventory of the different risk management tools available in Member States, covering the current EU-15 and the accession countries;
- (2) to examine the advantages and disadvantages of different risk management options in the context of Common Market Organisations and the new generation of rural development programmes. Notwithstanding the agricultural sector's own responsibility, possible new instruments to replace, if appropriate, current measures should be taken into account and examined on the understanding that distortions of competition must be avoided, WTO rules must be observed and the financing of any new measures must be in keeping with the financial commitments already in place;
- (3) to assess the opportunities provided by the Community guidelines for State aids in the agricultural sector for the development of national risk management systems in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity and the common market and, if necessary, to suggest adaptations.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS****of 17 December 2003****Strategy for a European action plan for organic food and farming**

(2004/C 34/03)

In May 2001 a conference entitled 'Organic Food and Farming — Towards Partnership and Action in Europe', organised by the Danish Ministry of Agriculture, was held in Denmark. That conference followed on from one held in Austria in 1999 and was aimed at introducing an action plan for further development of organic farming in Europe. The matter was placed on the agenda for the Agriculture Council meeting on 19 June 2001.

The European Commission prepared a paper containing an analysis of the possibility of a European action plan for organic food and farming (15619/02 of 20 December 2002).

At meetings held in Brussels in 2003, Member States unanimously welcomed the Commission's initiative and called for work to be set in hand on drawing up the action plan.

At its meeting in Salzburg in November 2003, the European Conference on Rural Development stressed the key aim of strengthening the competitiveness of the farming sector through diversification, innovation and value added products, taking into account the diversity of agricultural potential in different rural areas.

Whereas:

there is a need to standardise the wide variety of definitions of 'organic farming' used by bodies such as the European Union, the United Nations (FAO and Codex Alimentarius), individual countries and international organisations (the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)). This makes it necessary to try and agree on a single definition;

there is a need to make organic farming one of the key components of the European food supply chain, along with typical products and high-quality products, as a forward-looking factor for sustainability of the entire farming and agri-foodstuffs sector. Organic farming therefore needs to be supported by a suitable integrated European research and innovation system;

organic farming has been seen to play a vital role in protecting biodiversity and conserving non-renewable resources used in agriculture, as well as for the implementation of rural development policy and for food safety and quality, thereby acting as a driving force for the entire European farming and agri-foodstuffs sector;

the new CAP has a crucial part to play in ensuring that it is actually possible to maintain and develop the sector's production base, for which purpose it is essential that the action plan also evaluates the impact of the different instruments for implementation of the reform on organic farming and thus gives additional guidance to Member States on their choices regarding these instruments;

organic farming has been shown to serve an important purpose in environmental policies, particularly in reducing harmful emissions into the atmosphere, in combating desertification and in protecting and conserving water resources and natural habitats;

in the light of the decisions taken by the Union concerning GMO production, marketing and labelling and of the guidelines for coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming, the question of compatibility between GMO production and organic production needs to be considered, in particular regarding avoidance of adventitious presence of GMO;

the expansion of organic farming should be placed on a permanent basis by an increase in demand for organic products. Therefore initiatives to improve the marketing conditions and to ensure better consumer information play a key role.

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION THEREFORE:

- calls on the Commission to update the objectives set in the preparatory paper, so as to tailor measures under the European action plan to the strategic role to be played by organic farming under the Union's environmental policies and to background developments as a result of CAP reform;
- calls on the Commission, in the light of the decisions taken by the Union concerning GMO production, marketing and labelling and of the guidelines for coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming, to include among the action plan's strategic objectives the protection and enhancement of organic products by means of appropriate measures for organic production, *inter alia* control of adventitious presence of GMO;

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- calls on the Commission to promote, not least internationally, moves to arrive at a definition of 'organic farming' and of 'organic product'. The Commission should accordingly evaluate the costs and benefits of using the European logo for all organic products irrespective of their origin without excluding the use of other logos, and introduce effective campaigns, targeting all European consumers, to promote consumption and trade with third countries of such products and improve their free movement;
  - calls on the Commission to include among the action plan's strategic objectives the evaluation of possibilities for Member States to encourage voluntary initiatives to establish rural areas for the advancement of value-added production, such as that of organic, typical and traditional products, in a drive for local development of quality products. In the aim of thus increasing the competitiveness of the farming sector as well as the organisation between the various operators of the organic production chain, the diversity of agricultural potential in different rural areas shall be taken into account;
  - calls on the Commission to further examine the need of setting up, at European level:
    - (a) an independent Committee to provide scientific and technical advice, guide research and innovation in organic farming and promote synergy in the framework of a network between centres of excellence in individual Member States;
    - (b) an economic observatory to evaluate the evolution of the supply and demand of organic produce;
  - calls on the Commission to continue work on adapting basic inspection rules, with the aim of further bringing the entire organic supply chain within the inspection system following a risk-based approach, of enhancing product traceability and of streamlining bureaucratic procedures. In doing so due regard shall also be given to imports of organic products from third countries;
  - calls on the Commission, lastly, to inform the Council on the progress of the European action plan by the end of February 2004, with a view to final submission of the plan by the end of May 2004.
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## COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates <sup>(1)</sup>

6 February 2004

(2004/C 34/04)

1 euro =

| Currency | Exchange rate    | Currency | Exchange rate |                    |           |
|----------|------------------|----------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|
| USD      | US dollar        | 1,2529   | LVL           | Latvian lats       | 0,6674    |
| JPY      | Japanese yen     | 133,54   | MTL           | Maltese lira       | 0,4288    |
| DKK      | Danish krone     | 7,4505   | PLN           | Polish zloty       | 4,8623    |
| GBP      | Pound sterling   | 0,68315  | ROL           | Romanian leu       | 40 903    |
| SEK      | Swedish krona    | 9,1175   | SIT           | Slovenian tolar    | 237,32    |
| CHF      | Swiss franc      | 1,5694   | SKK           | Slovak koruna      | 40,7      |
| ISK      | Iceland króna    | 86,25    | TRL           | Turkish lira       | 1 691 400 |
| NOK      | Norwegian krone  | 8,7355   | AUD           | Australian dollar  | 1,6458    |
| BGN      | Bulgarian lev    | 1,9556   | CAD           | Canadian dollar    | 1,6765    |
| CYP      | Cyprus pound     | 0,58624  | HKD           | Hong Kong dollar   | 9,741     |
| CZK      | Czech koruna     | 33,207   | NZD           | New Zealand dollar | 1,828     |
| EEK      | Estonian kroon   | 15,6466  | SGD           | Singapore dollar   | 2,1236    |
| HUF      | Hungarian forint | 268,45   | KRW           | South Korean won   | 1 463,45  |
| LTL      | Lithuanian litas | 3,4534   | ZAR           | South African rand | 8,855     |

<sup>(1)</sup> Source: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.

**COMMISSION OPINION****of 5 February 2004****concerning the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste resulting from modifications to Site-1 of Belgoprocess plc in Belgium, in accordance with Article 37 of the Euratom Treaty**

(2004/C 34/05)

**(Only the Dutch text is authentic)**

On 30 July 2003 the European Commission received from the Belgian Government, in accordance with Article 37 of the Euratom Treaty, General Data relating to the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste resulting from modifications to Site-1 of Belgoprocess plc.

On the basis of these data and additional information provided by the Belgian Government on 7 November 2003, and following consultation with the group of experts, the Commission has drawn up the following opinion:

- (a) The planned modifications relate to the construction of a new intermediate storage facility for solid low-active waste that is already present on-site. The operation of the new storage facility will entail gaseous effluents only, for which specific discharge limits are envisaged. These discharge limits do not significantly add to the existing regulatory discharge limits.
- (b) The distance between the new storage facility and the nearest neighbour Member State, in this case The Netherlands, is 11 km.
- (c) During normal operation, discharges of gaseous effluent from the new storage facility will not cause an exposure of the population in other Member States that is significant from the point of view of health.
- (d) Secondary liquid and solid radioactive waste resulting from the operation of the new storage facility will be treated, conditioned and stored on-site.
- (e) In the event of unplanned discharges of radioactive waste, which may follow an accident of the type and magnitude considered in the general data for the new storage facility, the doses likely to be received by the population in other Member States would not be significant from the point of view of health.

In conclusion, the Commission is of the opinion that the implementation of the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste in whatever form resulting from modifications to Site-1 of Belgoprocess plc in Belgium, both in normal operation and in the event of an accident of the type and magnitude considered in the general data, is not liable to result in the radioactive contamination, significant from the point of view of health, of the water, soil or airspace of another Member State.

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## Authorisation for State aid pursuant to Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty

### Cases where the Commission raises no objections

(2004/C 34/06)

(Text with EEA relevance)

**Date of adoption of the decision:** 19.12.2003

**Member State:** Italy (Tuscany Region)

**Aid No:** N 207/03

**Title:** Rehabilitation of polluted industrial sites

**Objective:** The scheme is intended to promote the rehabilitation of polluted industrial sites by means of financing interventions made by firms (private undertakings) to repair damage to the quality of the soil or of surface water or groundwater

**Legal basis:** Deliberazione regionale n. 185 del 3 marzo 2003

**Budget:** The total budget of the scheme will presumably be of EUR 12,5 million

**Aid intensity or amount:** 50 % gross of the eligible costs

**Duration:** The scheme will start after the Commission's approval decision and its duration will be of 10 years

**Other information:** Annual report. Background information: N 421/01 Italy — Region Toscana — Objective 2 aid for environmental protection and energy

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

**Date of adoption of the decision:** 10.12.2003

**Member State:** United Kingdom (North West)

**Aid No:** N 340/03

**Title:** Aid in favour of Ineos Chlor Ltd

**Objective:** Realisation of a large investment project under the Multisectoral Framework on regional aid for a fundamental change in the production process of Ineos chlorine plant

**Legal basis:** Section 7 of the Industrial Development Act 1982

**Budget:** GBP 39,81 (EUR 57,3) million

**Aid intensity or amount:** 12,44 % net

**Duration:** Project will be completed 4 years from start date

**Other information:** Commitment by UK to comply with the obligations of point 6 of the Multisectoral Framework on regional aid for large investment projects

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

**Date of adoption of the decision:** 10.12.2003

**Member State:** France (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur)

**Aid No:** N 345/03

**Title:** Investment aid for ST Microelectronics

**Objective:** Grants for the extension of a plant producing microelectronic components at the Rousset site and for investment in the development of new technologies there

**Legal basis:** Régime de la Prime à l'Aménagement du Territoire (PAT industrie) du décret relatif à la PAT n° 2001-312 du 11 avril 2001, autorisée par la Décision de la Commission du 28 juin 2000 (N 782/99); Carte française des aides à finalité régionale approuvée par la Décision de la Commission du 1 mars 2000 (N 45/2000); Code Général des Collectivités Territoriales

**Budget:** EUR 120,2 million; eligible costs: EUR 582 million

**Aid intensity or amount:** 12,6 % net grant equivalent

**Duration:** The investment project covers the period 2003-2004; aid is staggered over the period 2003-2009

**Other information:** In cooperation with the recipient firm, France is required to send to the Commission an annual report on project implementation. Payment of the last aid tranche (10 % of the total aid) is subject to approval by the Commission

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

**Date of adoption of the decision:** 16.12.2003

**Member State:** Germany

**Aid No:** N 365/03

**Title:** Programme for sustainability in practice

**Objective:** Research and development

**Legal basis:** Verwaltungsvorschriften zu § 44 Bundeshaushaltsordnung

**Budget:** EUR 6 million (2004); EUR 30 million (2005); EUR 135 million (2006 and 2007); EUR 115 million (2008)

**Aid intensity or amount:** Up to 100 % for fundamental research; up to 50 % for industrial research and up to 25 % for pre-competitive development as basis rates plus bonuses of point 5.10 of the R & D guidelines if applicable

**Duration:** Five years

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

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**Date of adoption of the decision:** 11.11.2003

**Member State:** Italy (Provincia autonoma di Trento)

**Aid No:** N 397/03

**Title:** Aid measures in favour of cableway installations and ski runs for 2003 and following years. Autonomous Province of Trento

**Objective:** Cableway installations

**Legal basis:** Deliberazione della giunta provinciale n. 1527 del 27 giugno 2003, concernente provvidenze per gli impianti a fune e le piste da sci — anno 2003 e seguenti

**Budget:** EUR 5 000 000

**Aid intensity or amount:** The aid intensity in the year 2003 is 35 % for small firms and 27 % for medium-sized firms, decreasing by 5 % per year for aid projects approved in the following four years. As of 2007 the scheme will grant aid intensities of 15 % for small firms and 7,5 % for medium-sized firms. The aid intensity is constant at 40 % for installations for purely local use or meeting general transport needs

**Duration:** 10 years

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

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**Date of adoption of the decision:** 16.12.2003

**Member State:** Germany

**Aid No:** N 456/03

**Title:** R & D in medical technology — prolongation (Bavaria)

**Objective:** R & D (support of projects for the development of outstanding technologies in the medical field)

**Legal basis:** Haushaltsgesetz des Freistaates Bayern, Programmbeschreibung

**Budget:** Overall budget of EUR 20 million for the period 2004-2008, EUR 4 million p.a.

**Aid intensity or amount:** 50 % industrial research, 25 % pre-competitive development (basic intensities)

**Duration:** Limited until 31 December 2008

**Other information:** Germany has to submit an annual report on the implementation of the scheme including the assessment of an incentive effect of the aid granted to large companies

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

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**Date of adoption of the decision:** 11.11.2003

**Member State:** France

**Aid No:** N 463/03

**Title:** Entertainment tax

**Objective:** Production, distribution and operation of shows, etc.

**Legal basis:** Projet de loi de finances rectificative pour 2003

**Budget:** EUR 13 904 834

**Aid intensity or amount:** Always less than 50 %

**Duration:** To the end of 2008

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

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**Date of adoption of the decision:** 16.12.2003

**Member State:** Ireland

**Aid No:** N 475/03

**Title:** Public service obligation in respect of new electricity generation capacity for security of supply

**Objective:** To ensure the security of electricity supplies in Ireland

**Duration:** 8-10 years

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

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**Information communicated by Member States regarding State aid granted under Commission Regulation (EC) No 70/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to State aid to small and medium-sized enterprises**

(2004/C 34/07)

(Text with EEA relevance)

**Aid No:** XS 1/03

**Member State:** United Kingdom

**Region:** Wales

**Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid:** SCT (United Kingdom) Limited

**Legal basis:** Welsh Development Agency Act 1975 and Structural Funds Regulations

**Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company:** Total expenditure of GBP 646 255 comprising ERDF and Welsh Development Agency funding until October 2006

**Maximum aid intensity:**

Capital investment: maximum of 50 % of total eligible costs

New jobs created as a result of initial investment: maximum of 17,56 % of eligible costs

In combination, the total aid linked to initial investments does not exceed maximum of 50 % of the higher level of eligible costs (i.e. new jobs — eligible costs)

Consultancy costs: maximum of 50 % of eligible costs

**Date of implementation:** 16 December 2002

**Duration of scheme or individual aid award:** 16 December 2002 to 31 October 2006

**Objective of aid:** The aid will allow the recipient, an SME based in an Article 87(3)(a) area of Wales, to provide the following services targeted exclusively at SMEs within Article 87(3)(a) assisted areas in Wales where a market failure exists in relation to affordable ICT solutions:

— consultancy service to establish the ICT needs of SMEs,

— specialist assistance with the implementation of systems for the provisions of hardware and software,

— ongoing hosting of maintenance of services, with 24/7 help desk facility and upgrades as appropriate.

The recipient will provide such services to end users in accordance with the State aid rules.

The assistance to SCT is to be provided in order to cover the initial investment costs which will be incurred by the recipient in respect of the project, together with assistance in relation to the costs associated with employment created as a result of the initial investment, and consultancy costs incurred by the recipient relating to the project.

It is anticipated that the project will allow for the provision of ICT-related services to at least 29 SMEs. The recipient will be required to demonstrate jobs created and safeguarded as a result of the project, together with significant turnover increases in respect of SMEs supported by the project

**Economic sector(s) concerned:** Information Communication, Technology

**Name and address of the granting authority:**

Patrick Sullivan  
Welsh Development Agency  
Plas Glyndwr  
Kingsway  
Cardiff  
United Kingdom

Helen Usher  
Welsh European Funding Office  
Cwm Cynon Business Park  
Mountain Ash  
CF45 4ER  
United Kingdom

**Information communicated by Member States regarding State aid granted under Commission Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to training aid**

(2004/C 34/08)

(Text with EEA relevance)

**Aid No:** XT 41/02

**Member State:** Italy

**Region:** Piemonte

**Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid:** Directive on continuing training — Law No 236/93 — Company, sectoral and regional training schemes agreed by labour and management — 2002

**Legal basis:** Deliberazione della Giunta regionale del Piemonte n. 76-5853 del 15.4.2002

**Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company:** EUR 12 584 655,43 (ITL 24 367 290 770)

**Maximum aid intensity:** The maximum aid intensities are those laid down in Article 4(2) to (6) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001.

The aid, quantified on the assumption that the course will be carried out properly and in full, is granted in the form of reimbursements of eligible expenditure actually incurred and backed by documentary evidence in respect of training programmes, in relation to the activity actually carried out and within the maximum intensity ceilings given below:

|                                 |                   |                  |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Large enterprises               | Specific training | General training |
| Non-assisted areas              | 25                | 50               |
| Article 87(3)(c) assisted areas | 30                | 55               |
| SMEs                            | Specific training | General training |
| Non-assisted areas              | 35                | 70               |
| Article 87(3)(c) assisted areas | 40                | 75               |

The above intensities are increased by 10 percentage points if the training is given to disadvantaged workers, as defined in Article 2(g) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001

**Date of implementation:** 12 June 2002

**Duration of scheme or individual aid award:** Until December 2003

**Objective of aid:** The aid scheme covers general and specific training. Complies with Article 2(e) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001

**Economic sector(s) concerned:** All sectors; all services

**Name and address of the granting authority:**

Regione Piemonte  
 Direzione regionale alla formazione professionale — lavoro  
 Settore attività formativa  
 Via Magenta n. 12  
 I-10128 Torino

**Other information:** The total public contribution that may be allocated to a single firm for training programmes under this Directive may not in any event exceed EUR 1 million (ITL 1 936 270 000)

**Authorisation for State aid pursuant to Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty****Cases where the Commission raises no objections**

(2004/C 34/09)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Date of adoption of the decision:</b> | 13.1.2004   |
| <b>Member State:</b>                     | Spain (Galicia)   |
| <b>Aid No:</b>                           | N 413/02  |
| <b>Title:</b>                            | Aid for rural development   |
| <b>Objective:</b>                        | Implementation of rural development programmes similar to the Leader+ programme without Community funding   |
| <b>Legal basis:</b>                      | Resolución por la que se convocan ayudas a los programas de desarrollo rural de Galicia 2000-2006 y del programa AGADER con fondos de la Comunidad Autónoma |
| <b>Budget:</b>                           | EUR 51 447 407  |
| <b>Aid intensity or amount:</b>          | Varies according to the aid   |
| <b>Duration:</b>                         | Up to 2006  |

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids)

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**Non-opposition to a notified concentration****(Case COMP/M.3341 — Koch/Invista)**

(2004/C 34/10)

**(Text with EEA relevance)**

On 21 January 2004, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the common market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4064/89. The full text of the decision is only available in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- as a paper version through the sales offices of the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (see list on the last page),
- in electronic form in the 'CEN' version of the CELEX database, under document No 304M3341. CELEX is the computerised documentation system of European Community law.

For more information concerning subscriptions please contact:

EUR-OP,  
Information, Marketing and Public Relations,  
2, rue Mercier,  
L-2985 Luxembourg.  
Tel. (352) 29 29 427 18, fax (352) 29 29 427 09.

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**Prior notification of a concentration****(Case COMP/M.3314 — Air Liquide/Messer Targets)**

(2004/C 34/11)

**(Text with EEA relevance)**

1. On 30 January 2004 the Commission received a notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4064/89 <sup>(1)</sup>, as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 1310/97 <sup>(2)</sup>, by which the undertaking L'Air Liquide SA (France, 'Air Liquide') acquires within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Regulation sole control of the activities of the Messer Group ('Messer Group') in Germany, United Kingdom and US ('Messer Targets') by way of purchase of assets and transfer of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:

- Air Liquide: industrial gases and related business, engineering, welding and cutting equipment and consumables, diving equipment, and services related to those products,
- Messer Targets: industrial gases and related businesses as well as services related to those products,
- Messer Group: industrial gases and related businesses as well as services related to those products,

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified concentration could fall within the scope of Regulation (EEC) No 4064/89. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent by fax (No (32-2) 296 43 01 or 296 72 44) or by post, under reference COMP/M.3314 — Air Liquide/Messer Targets, to:

European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Competition,  
Merger Registry,  
J-70,  
B-1049 Brussels.

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 395, 30.12.1989, p. 1; corrigendum: OJ L 257, 21.9.1990, p. 13.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 180, 9.7.1997, p. 1; corrigendum: OJ L 40, 13.2.1998, p. 17.

**Non-opposition to a notified concentration****(Case COMP/M.2768 — Generali/Banca Intesa/JV)**

(2004/C 34/12)

**(Text with EEA relevance)**

On 15 December 2003 the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the common market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4064/89. The full text of the decision is only available in Italian and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- as a paper version through the sales offices of the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (see list on the last page),
- in electronic form in the 'CIT' version of the CELEX database, under document No 303M2768. CELEX is the computerised documentation system of European Community law.

For more information concerning subscriptions please contact:

EUR-OP,  
Information, Marketing and Public Relations,  
2, rue Mercier,  
L-2985 Luxembourg.  
Tel. (352) 29 29 427 18, fax (352) 29 29 427 09.

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## II

(Preparatory Acts pursuant to Title VI of the Treaty on European Union)

**Initiative of Ireland with a view to adopting a Council Act amending Europol's staff regulations**

(2004/C 34/13)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Convention on the establishment of a European Police Office ('Europol Convention')<sup>(1)</sup>, and in particular Article 30(3) thereof,

Having regard to the initiative of Ireland,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the Management Board of Europol,

Whereas:

- (1) It is desirable to amend the Staff Regulations applicable to Europol employees, as laid down in the Council Act of 3 December 1998<sup>(2)</sup> ('Staff Regulations') in particular in order to improve the travel policy.
- (2) It is for the Council, acting unanimously, to lay down the detailed arrangements applicable to Europol employees, and subsequent amendments,

HAS ADOPTED THIS ACT:

*Article 1*

The Staff Regulations are hereby amended as follows:

1. In Article 56, the following paragraph shall be added:

'8. Europol may, after consulting the Staff Committee, take out an additional sickness insurance which shall be compulsory for all officials. The full contribution required to meet this additional insurance cover shall be charged to the official.;

2. Article 9 of Appendix 5 to the Staff Regulations shall be replaced by the following:

*'Article 9*

1. An official travelling on official business (referred to as a "mission") and holding an appropriate authorisation shall be entitled to the reimbursement of mission expenses.
2. The authorisation shall state the probable duration of the mission, on the basis of which shall be calculated any advance which the official may draw against the subsistence allowance and travel and accommodation costs.
3. Any contribution, whether in kind or financial, received from a third party in connection with a mission shall be declared to Europol by the official concerned. Such contributions shall be deducted from the reimbursement to which the official would otherwise be entitled.
4. Acting on a proposal of the Director, the Management Board shall lay down detailed rules on mission expenses and the reimbursement thereof.;
3. Articles 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of Appendix 5 shall be deleted;
4. Articles 15 and 16 of Appendix 5 shall be renumbered to Articles 10 and 11.

*Article 2*

This Act shall enter into force on the first day after its adoption.

*Article 3*

This Act shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, ...

*For the Council*  
*The President*

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 2. Convention as last amended by the Protocol of 27 November 2003 (OJ C 2, 6.1.2004, p. 3).

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 26, 30.1.1999, p. 23. Act as last amended by Act of 19 December 2002 (OJ C 24, 31.1.2003, p. 1).



**Initiative of Ireland with a view to adopting a Council Decision adjusting the basic salaries and allowances applicable to Europol staff**

(2004/C 34/14)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Council Act of 3 December 1998 laying down the Staff Regulations applicable to Europol employees <sup>(1)</sup>, (hereinafter referred to as 'Staff Regulations'), and in particular Article 44 thereof,

Having regard to the initiative of Ireland,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament <sup>(2)</sup>,

Having regard to the review of remuneration of officials of Europol by the Management Board of Europol,

Whereas:

(1) In the aforementioned review the Management Board took account of the changes in the cost of living in the Netherlands, as well as of the changes in salaries in the public service in the Member States.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 26, 30.1.1999, p. 23. Act as last amended by Act of 19 December 2002 (OJ C 24, 31.1.2003, p. 1).

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ ...

(2) The Council Decision of 5 June 2003 <sup>(3)</sup> adjusting the remuneration of officials as from 1 July 2002 was unable to take correct account of the trend in the net remuneration of French civil servants and a correction of the trend in the changes in the cost of living in the Netherlands.

(3) The said review justifies an increase of 0,9 % of remuneration for the period between 1 July 2001 and 1 July 2002.

(4) It is for the Council, acting unanimously, to adjust the basic salaries and allowances of officials of Europol, on the basis of the review,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

The Staff Regulations are hereby amended as follows:

With effect from 1 July 2002:

(a) in Article 45 the table of basic monthly salaries shall be replaced by the following:

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 152, 26.6.2003, p. 7.

|    | 1         | 2        | 3        | 4        | 5        | 6        | 7         | 8         | 9         | 10        | 11        |
|----|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1  | 14 208,61 |          |          |          |          |          |           |           |           |           |           |
| 2  | 12 758,73 |          |          |          |          |          |           |           |           |           |           |
| 3  | 8 757,14  | 8 983,32 | 9 209,51 | 9 453,08 | 9 696,66 | 9 951,81 | 10 205,82 | 10 473,77 | 10 743,45 | 11 027,62 | 11 308,88 |
| 4  | 7 626,24  | 7 829,23 | 8 029,31 | 8 240,99 | 8 452,68 | 8 675,95 | 8 896,32  | 9 131,21  | 9 366,07  | 9 612,56  | 9 859,04  |
| 5  | 6 283,69  | 6 448,96 | 6 611,34 | 6 785,33 | 6 959,32 | 7 144,90 | 7 327,58  | 7 521,86  | 7 713,25  | 7 916,22  | 8 119,21  |
| 6  | 5 384,79  | 5 526,85 | 5 668,95 | 5 819,74 | 5 967,60 | 6 124,20 | 6 280,79  | 6 446,07  | 6 611,34  | 6 785,33  | 6 959,32  |
| 7  | 4 488,76  | 4 607,65 | 4 723,63 | 4 848,32 | 4 973,01 | 5 103,50 | 5 233,99  | 5 373,18  | 5 509,46  | 5 654,45  | 5 799,43  |
| 8  | 3 816,02  | 3 917,52 | 4 016,10 | 4 123,39 | 4 227,77 | 4 337,98 | 4 448,17  | 4 567,06  | 4 683,04  | 4 807,73  | 4 929,51  |
| 9  | 3 363,67  | 3 453,56 | 3 543,46 | 3 636,23 | 3 729,03 | 3 827,62 | 3 926,21  | 4 030,60  | 4 132,12  | 4 242,29  | 4 349,58  |
| 10 | 2 917,11  | 2 995,42 | 3 070,80 | 3 151,98 | 3 230,29 | 3 317,27 | 3 404,26  | 3 494,16  | 3 581,14  | 3 676,85  | 3 769,63  |
| 11 | 2 827,24  | 2 902,62 | 2 975,10 | 3 053,40 | 3 131,69 | 3 215,78 | 3 296,97  | 3 383,97  | 3 470,96  | 3 563,76  | 3 653,63  |
| 12 | 2 244,39  | 2 305,27 | 2 363,25 | 2 424,16 | 2 485,06 | 2 551,75 | 2 618,45  | 2 688,04  | 2 754,72  | 2 827,24  | 2 899,72  |
| 13 | 1 928,30  | 1 980,50 | 2 029,80 | 2 084,91 | 2 137,10 | 2 195,08 | 2 250,18  | 2 311,06  | 2 369,08  | 2 432,87  | 2 493,75  |

- (b) in Article 59(3), the amount 'EUR 948,37' shall be replaced by 'EUR 956,91';
- (c) in Article 59(3), the amount 'EUR 1 896,74' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 1 913,81';
- (d) in Article 60(1), the amount 'EUR 252,90' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 255,18';
- (e) in Article 2(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 264,39' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 266,77';
- (f) in Article 3(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 11 495,40' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 11 598,86';
- (g) in Article 3(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 2 586,47' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 2 609,75';
- (h) in Article 3(2) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 15 518,79' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 15 658,46';
- (i) in Article 4(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 1 149,54' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 1 159,89';
- (j) in Article 4(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 862,17' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 869,93';
- (k) in Article 4(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 574,76' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 579,93';
- (l) in Article 4(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 459,81' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 463,95';
- (m) in Article 5(3) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 1 622,23' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 1 636,83';
- (n) in Article 5(3) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 2 162,98' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 2 182,45';
- (o) in Article 5(3) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 2 703,72' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 2 728,05'.

*Article 2*

This Decision shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

*Article 3*

This Decision shall take effect on the day following its adoption.

Done at Brussels, ...

*For the Council*

*The President*

**Initiative of Ireland with a view to adopting a Council Decision adjusting the basic salaries and allowances applicable to Europol Staff**

(2004/C 34/15)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Council Act of 3 December 1998 laying down the Staff Regulations applicable to Europol employees <sup>(1)</sup>, (hereinafter referred to as 'Staff Regulations'), and in particular Article 44 thereof,

Having regard to the initiative of Ireland,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament <sup>(2)</sup>,

Having regard to the review of remuneration of officials of Europol by the Management Board of Europol,

Whereas:

(1) In the aforementioned review the Management Board took account of the changes in the cost of living in the

Netherlands, as well as of the changes in salaries in the public service in the Member States.

(2) The said review justifies an increase of 3,1 % of remuneration for the period between 1 July 2002 and 1 July 2003.

(3) It is for the Council, acting unanimously, to adjust the basic salaries and allowances of officials of Europol, on the basis of the review,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

The Staff Regulations are hereby amended as follows:

1. With effect from 1 July 2003:

(a) in Article 45 the table of basic monthly salaries shall be replaced by the following:

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 26, 30.1.1999, p. 23. Act as last amended by Act of 19 December 2002 (OJ C 24, 31.1.2003, p. 1).

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ ...

|    | 1         | 2        | 3        | 4        | 5        | 6         | 7         | 8         | 9         | 10        | 11        |
|----|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1  | 14 649,08 |          |          |          |          |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 2  | 13 154,25 |          |          |          |          |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 3  | 9 028,61  | 9 261,80 | 9 495,00 | 9 746,13 | 9 997,26 | 10 260,32 | 10 522,20 | 10 798,46 | 11 076,50 | 11 369,48 | 11 659,46 |
| 4  | 7 862,65  | 8 071,94 | 8 278,22 | 8 496,46 | 8 714,71 | 8 944,90  | 9 172,11  | 9 414,28  | 9 656,42  | 9 910,55  | 10 164,67 |
| 5  | 6 478,48  | 6 648,88 | 6 816,29 | 6 995,68 | 7 175,06 | 7 366,39  | 7 554,73  | 7 755,04  | 7 952,36  | 8 161,62  | 8 370,91  |
| 6  | 5 551,72  | 5 698,18 | 5 844,69 | 6 000,15 | 6 152,60 | 6 314,05  | 6 475,49  | 6 645,90  | 6 816,29  | 6 995,68  | 7 175,06  |
| 7  | 4 627,91  | 4 750,49 | 4 870,06 | 4 998,62 | 5 127,17 | 5 261,71  | 5 396,24  | 5 539,75  | 5 680,25  | 5 829,74  | 5 979,21  |
| 8  | 3 934,32  | 4 038,96 | 4 140,60 | 4 251,22 | 4 358,83 | 4 472,46  | 4 586,06  | 4 708,64  | 4 828,21  | 4 956,77  | 5 082,32  |
| 9  | 3 467,94  | 3 560,62 | 3 653,31 | 3 748,95 | 3 844,63 | 3 946,28  | 4 047,92  | 4 155,55  | 4 260,22  | 4 373,80  | 4 484,42  |
| 10 | 3 007,54  | 3 088,28 | 3 165,99 | 3 249,69 | 3 330,43 | 3 420,11  | 3 509,79  | 3 602,48  | 3 692,16  | 3 790,83  | 3 886,49  |
| 11 | 2 914,88  | 2 992,60 | 3 067,33 | 3 148,06 | 3 228,77 | 3 315,47  | 3 399,18  | 3 488,87  | 3 578,56  | 3 674,24  | 3 766,89  |
| 12 | 2 313,97  | 2 376,73 | 2 436,51 | 2 499,31 | 2 562,10 | 2 630,85  | 2 699,62  | 2 771,37  | 2 840,12  | 2 914,88  | 2 989,61  |
| 13 | 1 988,08  | 2 041,90 | 2 092,72 | 2 149,54 | 2 203,35 | 2 263,13  | 2 319,94  | 2 382,70  | 2 442,52  | 2 508,29  | 2 571,06  |

(b) in Article 59(3), the amount 'EUR 956,91' shall be replaced by 'EUR 986,57';

(c) in Article 59(3), the amount 'EUR 1 913,81' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 1 973,14';

(d) in Article 60(1), the amount 'EUR 255,18' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 263,09';

(e) in Article 2(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 266,77' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 275,04';

(f) in Article 3(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 11 598,86' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 11 958,42';

(g) in Article 3(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 2 609,75' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 2 690,65';

(h) in Article 3(2) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 15 658,46' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 16 143,87';

(i) in Article 4(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 1 159,89' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 1 195,85';

(j) in Article 4(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 869,93' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 896,90';

(k) in Article 4(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 579,93' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 597,91';

(l) in Article 4(1) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 463,95' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 478,33';

(m) in Article 5(3) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 1 636,83' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 1 687,57';

(n) in Article 5(3) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 2 182,45' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 2 250,11';

(o) in Article 5(3) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 2 728,05' shall be replaced by: 'EUR 2 812,62'.

2. With effect from the date on which this Decision takes effect:

— in Article 7(3) of Appendix 5, the amount 'EUR 0,24' shall be replaced by 'EUR 0,25'.

#### Article 2

This Decision shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

#### Article 3

This Decision shall take effect on the day following its adoption.

Done at Brussels, ...

For the Council

The President

**Initiative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands with a view to adopting on tackling vehicle crime with cross-border implications**

(2004/C 34/16)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 30(1)(a) and Article 34(2)(c) thereof,

Having regard to the initiative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the Council Resolution of 27 May 1999 on combating international crime with fuller cover of the routes used <sup>(1)</sup>,

Whereas:

- (1) An estimated 1,2 million motor vehicles are stolen each year in the Member States of the European Union.
- (2) These thefts involve considerable damage amounting to at least EUR 15 billion per year.
- (3) A large proportion of these vehicles, estimated at 30 to 40 %, are stolen by organised crime and then converted and exported to other States within and outside the European Union.
- (4) Besides causing material damage, this is also seriously damaging to citizens' sense of justice and feeling of security. Vehicle crime may be accompanied by serious forms of violence.
- (5) Consequently, attainment of the objective in Article 29 of the Treaty, to provide citizens with a high level of safety within an area of freedom, security and justice, is hampered.
- (6) Vehicle crime may also be linked internationally to other forms of crime, such as trafficking in drugs, firearms and human beings.
- (7) Tackling vehicle crime is a matter for the competence of the Member States in the police and judicial sphere.
- (8) However, a common approach involving — wherever practicable and necessary — mutual assistance between the Member States and law enforcement authorities of the European Union is desirable in order to address the cross-border aspects of this form of crime.

(9) Cooperation between police forces, customs and vehicle registration authorities is of particular importance, as is the provision of information to the relevant parties.

(10) Cooperation with Europol is equally important as Europol can provide analyses and reports on the matter.

(11) CEPOL offers police forces in the Member States, via the European Police Learning Net (EPLN), a library function in the field of vehicle crime for consulting information and expertise. Via its discussion function, EPLN also provides the possibility of exchanging knowledge and experience.

(12) The fight against vehicle crime will be intensified by an increase in the number of Member States acceding to the Treaty concerning a European Vehicle and Driving Licence Information System (Eucaris) of 29 June 2000.

(13) A number of specific measures will need to be taken if vehicle crime with an international dimension is to be combated effectively,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

**Definition**

For the purposes of this Decision, 'vehicle' means any motor vehicle with a cylinder capacity exceeding 50 cc and trailers and caravans with an unladen weight exceeding 750 kg.

*Article 2*

**Objective**

1. The objective of this Decision is to arrive at a common approach and cooperation within the European Union with the aim of preventing and combating cross-border vehicle crime.

2. Particular attention shall be given to the relationship between vehicle theft and the illegal car trade and other forms of crime, such as trafficking in drugs, firearms and human beings.

*Article 3*

**Cooperation between national competent authorities**

Member States shall take the necessary steps to enhance mutual cooperation between national competent authorities (police, customs and vehicle registration authorities) in order to combat cross-border vehicle crime, inter alia by means of cooperation agreements.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 162, 9.6.1999, p. 1.

Specific attention shall be given to controlling exports of goods, taking into account respective competences.

#### Article 4

### Cooperation between competent authorities and the private sector

1. Member States shall take the necessary steps to organise periodic consultations between law enforcement agencies and vehicle registration authorities and the private sector (such as holders of private registers of missing vehicles, insurers and the car trade) with a view to coordination of information and mutual alignment of activities in this area, preferably via a permanent consultation platform.

2. Member States shall take the necessary steps with regard to the procedures to be followed for repatriating vehicles released by law enforcement agencies following their seizure.

#### Article 5

### Vehicle crime contact points

1. Within three months from the date when this Decision takes effect, Member States shall designate, within their law enforcement agencies, a contact point for tackling vehicle crime.

2. Member States shall authorise the contact points to exchange experience, expertise as well as general and technical information concerning vehicle crime on the basis of existing legislation.

3. Information concerning the designated national contact points, including subsequent changes, shall be notified to the General Secretariat of the Council for publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

#### Article 6

### Issuing alerts for stolen vehicles and blank registration certificates

1. Whenever a vehicle is reported stolen, Member States' law enforcement agencies shall immediately enter a stolen vehicle alert in the Schengen Information System (SIS) and — where possible — in Interpol's ASF/Stolen Motor Vehicle System.

2. An alert in the search register shall be immediately withdrawn by the Member State which issued it as soon as the reason for issuing an alert on the vehicle ceases to exist or its owner withdraws the theft report.

3. Whenever blank registration certificates are reported stolen, Member States' law enforcement agencies shall immediately enter an alert thereon in the SIS.

#### Article 7

### Registration

1. Law enforcement agencies and vehicle registration authorities shall take the necessary steps to prevent abuse and theft of vehicle registration documents.

2. When (re-)registering a vehicle, national vehicle registration authorities shall, in cooperation with the law enforcement agencies, consult the vehicle register of the country of original registration as well as the stolen vehicle search registers referred to in Article 6.

3. In order to prevent stolen vehicles being (re-)registered, arrangements shall be made at national level for consultation or linkage of the registration systems referred to in Article 6(1) and also for checking the identity of the vehicles.

#### Article 8

### Preventing abuse of vehicle registration certificates

1. In order to prevent abuse of vehicle registration certificates, law enforcement agencies shall — where possible — recover a vehicle owner's or vehicle holder's registration certificate if the vehicle has been seriously damaged in an accident (total loss).

2. A registration certificate shall also be recovered where, during a check by the law enforcement agency, it is suspected that there has been an infringement concerning the vehicle's identity markings.

3. Registration certificates shall be returned only following examination and positive verification of the vehicle's identity.

#### Article 9

### Europol

Law enforcement agencies shall keep Europol informed on vehicle crime perpetrators (perpetrator groups), within the scope of the latter's mandate and tasks.

#### Article 10

### Promotion of expertise and training

Member States shall take the necessary steps to ensure that national police and customs training institutes promote in their curricula specialist training in the field of vehicle crime prevention and detection.

*Article 11***Meeting of contact points and annual report to the Council**

Vehicle crime contact points shall hold a meeting at least once a year under the auspices of the Member State holding the Presidency of the Council. Europol shall be invited to participate in that meeting. The Presidency shall report to the Council on the progress of practical police cooperation.

*Article 12***Arrangements with third countries**

1. Partnership or cooperation agreements to be concluded between the European Union and third countries shall as far as possible include a provision concerning vehicle crime, and more particularly concerning the verification of vehicles upon registration in a third country where the vehicles originate in one of the Member States.

2. At the request of the third country for verification of vehicles, the Member State in question shall consult the

National Schengen Information System as well as the vehicle registration authority of that Member State.

*Article 13***Evaluation**

Implementation of this Decision shall be evaluated after three years from the date on which it takes effect.

*Article 14***Entry into effect**

This Decision shall take effect on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, ...

*For the Council*

*The President*

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