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Referat fra EU finans- og økonomiministermøde (ECOFIN) den  
14. marts 2006

**Dagsordenspunkt: "Key Issues" papiret vedr. de overordnede  
økonomisk-politiske retningslinier (BEPG) og de  
nationale reformprogrammer**

Rådet nåede til enighed om et revideret Key Issues papir. Papiret følger op på Kommissionens årlige fremskridtsrapport om Lissabonstrategien. Det primære budskab er, at implementering af reformtiltagene angivet i de nationale reformprogrammer er hovedprioriteten for medlemslandene i 2006.

En række lande udtrykte skepsis overfor indførelsen af nye udgiftsmålsætninger. De 25 medlemslande har forskellige udfordringer og behov, og der skal således være plads til at prioritere forskelligt.

Key Issues papiret vil blive sendt som grundlag for Det Europæiske Råds (DER) møde den 23.-24. marts 2006.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Den Europæiske Investeringsbanks (EIB) bidrag til  
vækst og beskæftigelsesinitiativer**

Rådet godkendte en rapport om EIB's forslag til en styrkelse af bankens bidrag til vækst og beskæftigelse i EU. I rapporten fokuseres på nye investeringer inden for især forskning og udvikling, innovation, små og mellemstore virksomheder, infrastruktur, energisikkerhed og vedvarende energi.

Der var enighed om at hilse EIB's forslag velkommen under hensyn til den fællesbesluttede ramme vedrørende EIB's kapitalforøgelse (dvs. ingen stigning før 2010). EIB blev opfordret til at implementere de finansielle instrumenter og øge kvaliteten af sine operationer på basis af egne ressourcer. Samtidig blev medlemsstaterne opfordret til at undersøge de specifikke dele af initiativet, som bliver medfinansieret gennem EU-budgettet. Udmøntningen af initiativet er under forbehold for de finansielle perspektiver 2007-2013 og den interinstitutionelle aftale.

Rapporten vil blive viderebragt til DER den 23.-24. marts 2006.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Bedre regulering – måling og reduktion af  
administrative byrder i EU**

Rådet havde en drøftelse af fremdriften i EU's arbejde med bedre regulering og noterede sig Kommissionens fremskridtsrapport samt et formandskabspapir om

initiativer til reduktion af administrative omkostninger ved fællesskabsprogrammer og om erfaringer hermed på nationalt niveau.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Fælles rapport mellem Rådet og Kommissionen om social beskyttelse og social inklusion**

Rådet hilste den fælles rapport mellem Rådet og Kommissionen om social beskyttelse og social inklusion velkommen. Rapporten blev godkendt på rådsmødet (beskæftigelse og sociale anliggender) den 10. marts 2006. Den vil blive sendt til Det Europæiske Råds møde den 23.-24. marts 2006.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Vurdering af opdaterede konvergens- og stabilitetsprogrammer for Portugal, Irland, Storbritannien, Litauen, Polen, Tyskland, Nederlandene, Frankrig, Grækenland, Cypern, Malta og Spanien og Italien**

Rådet vedtog på basis af redegørelser fra Kommissionen og formanden for Den Økonomiske og Finansielle Komité (EFC) udtalelser vedrørende de opdaterede stabilitetsprogrammer for Tyskland, Grækenland, Spanien, Frankrig, Italien, Irland, Nederlandene og Portugal og de opdaterede konvergensprogrammer for Cypern, Litauen, Malta, Polen og Storbritannien.

Der har nu været behandlet stabilitets- og konvergensprogrammer for alle 25 EU-lande. De to første runder fandt sted på rådsmøderne hhv. den 24. januar og den 14. februar 2006 (det er første årgang af programmer efter reformen af Stabilitets- og Vækstpagten). Der var enighed om, at erfaringerne med det nye koncept er positive.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Proceduren for uforholdsmæssigt store underskud vedr. Italien**

Rådet havde en drøftelse af Kommissionens vurdering af proceduren for uforholdsmæssigt store underskud for Italien. Der var generelt opbakning til en vurdering af, at Italiens tiltag i opfølgning på henstillingen af 28. juli 2005 synes at sikre tilstrækkelige fremskridt i 2006 hen imod en endelig korrektion af underskuddet i 2007, men at korrektionen kritisk afhænger af gennemførelsen af 2006-budgettet og af specificering og implementering af væsentlige nye tiltag i 2007.

Rådet bekræftede sine intentioner om fortsat i fællesskab med Kommissionen tæt at følge den budgetmæssige udvikling i Italien med henblik på at sikre, at der også fremover iværksættes tilstrækkelige tiltag.

**Dagsordenspunkt: Proceduren for uforholdsmæssigt store underskud vedr. Tyskland**

Der blev på rådsmødet opnået enighed om en beslutning under Traktatens artikel 104.9, der retter pålæg til Tyskland om at korrigere det uforholdsmæssigt store

underskud senest i 2007 og at gennemføre strukturelle budgetforbedringer på mindst en procent af BNP samlet i 2006-2007 for at nå dette mål.

Pålægget indebærer endvidere, at Tyskland skal fremlægge en rapport den 14. juli 2006, der angiver tiltagene rettet mod efterlevelse af beslutningen om pålæg. Kommissionen vurderer fremskridtene mod korrektionen af det uforholdsmæssigt store underskud. Tyskland skal endvidere løbende fremlægge yderligere rapporter 1. oktober 2006, 1. april 2007, 1. oktober 2007 og 1. april 2008 vedrørende fremskridtene mod efterlevelse af beslutningen om pålæg.

Endelig skal Tyskland ifølge pålægget gennemføre de nødvendige tiltag for at sikre fastholdelse af budgetkonsolideringen i retning af den mellemfristede målsætning om strukturel budgetbalance gennem strukturelle budgetforbedringer på mindst 0,5 pct. af BNP årligt efter korrektionen af det uforholdsmæssigt store underskud.

#### **Dagsordenspunkt: Revisionsrettens årsberetning for 2004**

Rådet drøftede sin henstilling til Europa-Parlamentet om meddelelse af decharge til Kommissionen for gennemførelsen af budgettet for 2004. Henstillingen er udarbejdet med udgangspunkt i Revisionsrettens årsberetning for 2004.

Nogle lande – herunder Danmark – påpegede, at det er kritisabelt, at Revisionsretten endnu ikke har kunnet afgive en positiv revisionserklæring og efterlyste større åbenhed i forhold til forvaltningen af EU's budget, herunder en afdækning af arten og omfanget af forbeholdene for budgetgennemførelsen. Også nødvendigheden af en større national forankring blev fremhævet.

#### **Dagsordenspunkt: Rådets prioriteter for EU's budget for 2007**

Rådet godkendte uden drøftelse rådskonklusioner om Rådets prioriteter for EU's budget for 2007, *jf. vedlagte bilag*.

#### **Diverse**

På grundlag af et papir udarbejdet af tænketanken BRUEGEL havde ministrene en morgenmadsdrøftelse af Lissabon-strategien. Ministrene drøftede bl.a. strategiens resultater efter relanceringen sidste år.

Formandskabet orienterede under frokosten kort om status for fornyelsen af EIB's eksterne lånemandat i perioden 2007-2013, som omfatter rammen af udlån til lande uden for EU (3. lande). Derudover havde ministrene en drøftelse af energirelaterede emner på baggrund af Kommissionens grønbog "*En europæisk energistrategi: Bæredygtighed, konkurrenceevne og forsyningsikkerhed*" offentliggjort den 8. marts 2006 (SEK(2006) 317).

## Bilag

### Rådskonklusioner om prioriteterne for EU's budget for 2007

“The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council underlines the fact that the budgetary procedure for 2007 will be marked by two important elements, on the one hand the new Financial Perspective for 2007-2013 to be agreed, and on the other hand the forthcoming accession of two countries to the EU to be confirmed. This should clearly be reflected in the Preliminary Draft Budget (PDB) for 2007.
2. The Council reaffirms the importance of maintaining a framework of overall budget discipline. It reiterates its wish that the EU budget for 2007 should provide sufficient resources to implement the various policies of the EU effectively and efficiently. It emphasises that it should apply the same degree of budgetary constraint as exercised by the Member States of the EU for their own national budgets.
3. The Council is convinced of the importance of good collaboration between the two arms of the Budgetary Authority and the Commission, and looks forward to establishing a good spirit of cooperation for the 2007 budget procedure.
4. The Council confirms that the forthcoming Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) on budgetary discipline and improvement of budgetary procedure covering the period 2007-2013 will constitute the basis for establishing the budget for 2007. It recalls its constant willingness to apply the IIA to the full. It lays great emphasis on compliance with the Financial Perspective, which requires that Community expenditure remains within the annual limits to be set therein.
5. For the purpose of sound financial management and to deal with unforeseen circumstances it is important that sufficient margins must be maintained under all the ceilings of the various Headings, with the exception of Heading 1b, especially in the first year of the new financial period.
6. The Council emphasises that the appropriations for 2007 should reflect real and welldefined needs and be compatible with the ceilings set in the Financial Perspective. Absorption capacity and past implementation should also be taken into account when establishing appropriations. It considers that all appropriations need to be reviewed in detail for each policy sector and in this context it reaffirms the importance of reallocation in order to allow the Budgetary Authority to make the necessary financial adaptations to meet present and future needs. For this purpose it points to the necessity of having high quality Activity Statements and financial information on spending proposals in good time.

7. The Council considers it important that the implementation of the EU budget is improved in 2007 so that the significant under-implementation of funds that occurred in the first years of the Financial Perspective 2000-2006 should be avoided. Therefore the Council stresses the importance of the adoption of implementing rules and guidelines where applicable by the Commission on the basis of the adopted regulations in due time in 2006 in order to enable implementation to start in an efficient way by 1 January 2007. In this context, the Council underlines the need for explicit and simple rules.
8. The Council stresses once again the importance of keeping a tight grip on payment appropriations. The level of payment appropriations entered into the budget should be sufficient but not overestimated, taking into account past implementation and the genuine requirements for 2007.
9. The efforts made by the Commission and the Member States to deliver better forecasts should continue. The Council considers that the Member States should present structural funds estimates that are as accurate as possible, while assessing the actual need for appropriations to be put into the Preliminary Draft Budget is the responsibility of the Commission.
- 10.

The Council looks forward to continued improvement of the “Activity Based Budgeting” in 2007 assisted by the introduction of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely objectives, appropriate performance indicators and full evaluation procedures into all Community programmes with implications for the EU budget, as specified in the Financial Regulation.

The Council calls on the Commission to take full account of Council delegations' comments following detailed examinations of various activity statements in the two previous years. It intends to continue an enhanced examination of a set of Activity Statements during the 2007 budget procedure and places particular emphasis on Activity Statements covering legal bases and financial envelopes that are being renewed and/or adopted.

The Council is also committed to improving the impact of the “Activity Based Budgeting” information during the discussion on the annual budget, in particular in terms of the justification for Community actions and explanations for the proposed variations of appropriations.

The Council calls on the Commission to improve the implementation of the ABB approach to its administrative expenditure so as to reflect the real administrative costs related to each policy area.

10. In order to facilitate the transition between the Financial Perspective 2000-2006 and the one for 2007-2013, the Council invites the Commission to present the appropriate information which allows the comparison between the

implementation of the 2005 budget, the 2006 budget and the 2007 PDB, at the start of the budget procedure for 2007.

11. As regards certain specific issues of the budget, the Council identifies the following elements as important in preparing the 2007 budget:

- The Council invites the Commission to continue its efforts together with Member States towards establishing an accurate level of payment appropriations for structural funds. Furthermore, the Council recalls the importance of simplification of procedures aimed at facilitating implementation.
- The Commission is invited, as in previous years, to present realistic forecasts regarding CAP expenditure in its Preliminary Draft Budget. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the payment appropriations for expenditure related to rural development are accurate.
- In relation to external actions the Council believes that sufficient margins within the ceiling are crucial in order to be able to respond to unforeseen actions and crises and emphasises the current principle that the institutions will ensure as far as possible that sufficient margins are left available. It considers that account should be taken of its priorities and recalls, in this connection, the importance that it has always attached to CFSP funding.
- The Council considers it important that institutional effectiveness is an increasingly important factor when allocating administrative resources. Savings and rationalisation benefits due to yearly growth in productivity and economies of scale should also be taken into account when setting the level of administrative spending. The objective should be to achieve a substantial efficiency gain mainly by further development of interinstitutional cooperation and targeted measures. It should also be achieved by redeployment and reorganisation of administrative structures of EU institutions. This would give a signal of improved efficiency to the EU citizens.

It invites the Institutions to present during the budget procedure for 2007 their plans for assessing and realising gains on administrative costs for the period 2007-2013 including all administrative expenditure.

It recalls the importance that the institutions should ensure that the recruitment process in the context of the enlargement is carried forward without delay.

- The Council underlines the need to ensure that pilot projects and preparatory actions are feasible and consistent with the EU's new priority actions and to examine their practical application. In this context it considers it appropriate that the Commission takes the relevant initiatives

in the annual budget process to develop the various pilot projects and preparatory actions within the financial limits set in the IIA, in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner.

12. The Council underlines the great importance that it attaches to these guidelines in the forthcoming budgetary procedure and expects them to be fully taken into account already in the Preliminary Draft Budget for 2007. These guidelines will be forwarded to the European Parliament and the Commission.”