

Medlemmerne af Folketingets Europaudvalg
og deres stedfortrædere

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1	400.C.2-0	EUK	1. november 2004

Til underretning for Folketingets Europaudvalg vedlægges Finansministeriets redegørelse for rådsmøde (økonomi- og finansministre) den 21. oktober 2004.

Referat fra Rådsmødet (ECOFIN) den 21. oktober 2004

Dagsordenspunkt: Stabilitets- og vækstpagten: Proceduren for uforholdsmæssigt store underskud. Opfølgning på henstilling til Nederlandene jf. Traktatens artikel 104(7)

Rådet vurderede på grundlag af en orientering fra Kommissionen, at den nederlandske regering i overensstemmelse med henstillingen af 2. juni 2004 har iværksat de anbefalede tiltag inden for tidsfristen den 2. oktober 2004 med henblik på sikre, at budgetunderskuddet i 2005 bliver mindre end 3 pct. af BNP.

Dagsordenspunkt: Stabilitets- og Vækstpagten: Proceduren for uforholdsmæssigt store underskud. EU-landenes notifikationer vedr. offentlige budgetsaldi og offentlig gæld.

Kommissionen redegjorde for medlemslandenes offentlig gælds- og budgetsituation. I flere af medlemslandene havde de offentlige finanser udviklet sig mindre gunstigt end forudset i stabilitets- og konvergensprogrammerne trods en mere gunstig konjunkturudvikling end forudset.

Kommissionen redegjorde desuden for problemerne vedrørende de betydelige ændringer i opgørelsen af de græske offentlige finanser, og Rådet vedtog på baggrund heraf konklusioner (vedlagt). Kommissionen forventer et underskud på 5,3 pct. af BNP i år. Kommissionen og Eurostat er i færd med at udrede årsagerne til den mangelfulde statistik som blandt andet skyldes en generel undervurdering af militærudgifter. Kommissionen forventer at fremlægge en rapport herom inden ECOFIN den 16. november.

Kommissionen understregede behovet for at sikre integritet og uafhængighed i den nationale statistik. Som led i dette arbejde forventer Kommissionen inden udgangen af 2004 at offentliggøre en meddelelse om et kommende forslag til forbedring af statistikken.

Dagsordenspunkt: Reform initiativ for bedre regulering

- Metode til måling af administrative byrder

Rådet vedtog konklusioner (vedlagt) om metode til måling af administrative byrder.

Rådskonklusionerne hilser et oplæg fra Den Økonomisk-Politiske Komité (EPC) om en fælles metode til måling af administrative byrder og gennemførelse af pilotprojekter velkommen. Der er tale om en del af et bredere initiativ, som tager sigte på at reducere de administrative byrder, der pålægges erhvervslivet i forbindelse med national- og EU-lovgivning. Endvidere blev kommissionen og medlemslandene opfordret til at overveje udvikling af kvantitative mål for reduktion af de administrative byrder.

Dagsordenspunkt: Beskyttelse af Fællesskabets finansielle interesser og bekæmpelse af svig

Kommissionen præsenterede sin årsrapport for beskyttelse af Fællesskabets finansielle interesser og bekæmpelse af svig samt sin handlingsplan for 2004-2005 om svigbekæmpelse. Kommissionen fremhævede ligeledes behovet for vedtagelse af forordningen om gensidig administrativ bistand. Rådet blev desuden orienteret om samarbejdsaftalen med Schweiz om bekæmpelse af svig.

Rådet tog præsentationen til efterretning.

Dagsordenspunkt: De finansielle perspektiver for 2007-2013

Kommissionen præsenterede uden efterfølgende drøftelse sit forslag vedrørende rådsafgørelse om egne indtægter. Sagen ventes at blive behandlet på ECOFIN-mødet i november. Rådet drøftede herefter en række af Kommissionens fleksibilitetsforslag. Der var bred enighed om behovet for budgetdisciplin, og at de nuværende fleksibilitetsinstrumenter var tilfredsstillende. Rådet drøftede desuden forslag til en vækstfond. Der var en bred afvisning af at give mulighed for at anvende uforbrugte midler til strukturfonde på andre EU-initiativer.

A-punkter

Rådet vedtog uden drøftelse rådskonklusioner (vedlagt) om opfølgning på handlingsplanen for risikokapital.

Diverse

Formandskabet redegjorde under frokosten for status vedr. de finansielle perspektiver 2007-2013.

Endvidere gjorde Præsidenten for Verdensbanken James Wolfensohn status i forhold til opfyldelsen af "Millennium Development Goals" herunder EU's Barcelonamålsætning for 2006.

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Rådskonklusioner vedrørende græsk budgetstatistik

“The Council conducted a thorough discussion on the revisions of Greek fiscal data. It recalled the concerns expressed by Ministers during their informal meeting on 10/11 September. The Ecofin Council took note of the Commission’s information note on the fiscal notification data of Greece.

The Council welcomed the Commission’s initiative for and looked forward to a detailed report on Greece’s deficit and debt data back to 1997 to be presented after examination by the EFC as soon as possible. The Council acknowledged the willingness and efforts of the Greek authorities to work with the Commission to clarify issues and urged them to supply all necessary data to finalise the report before the next meeting of the Ecofin Council. On this basis, it will be possible for the Council and the Commission as well as the Greek government to draw the necessary consequences each in its domain, to improve the quality of budgetary data as a matter of priority in order to avoid future problems. Revisions of budgetary data, similar to those that have now been detected in the case of Greece, must not occur again in the Community.”

Rådskonklusioner vedrørende metode til måling af administrative byrder

“The Council supports the development of a common European methodology to measure the administrative burden of EU legislation and regulation, as one of the elements for use in microeconomic assessment of specific new initiatives or for simplification of existing legislation and in order to improve the evaluation of policy decisions and results. Ministers agreed that a common European methodology should be based, inter alia, on the recommendations by the EPC and that the method could be similar, but not necessarily identical, to the Standard Cost Model (SCM), depending on the results of future pilot projects.

The Council (Ecofin) welcomes the intention of the Commission to present shortly a communication on this issue. It invites the Commission to continue the development of a common methodology, among others by setting up pilot projects to determine the technical characteristics of the methodology and its application both in ex ante and ex post cases. The pilot phase and the successful application of a method in the EU will require active collaboration by the Member States. Ministers agreed to assist the Commission by providing, on request, the necessary information to carry out assessments. The Council invites the Commission to present and implement a common European methodology for the measurement of Administrative Burdens as soon as possible in 2005, after completion of the pilot phase. It also invites the Commission and the member states to consider developing quantitative objectives for the reduction of the administrative burden on business in selected areas at a later stage.

The Council (Ecofin) will return to the topic of regulation, in particular the issue of competitiveness testing, later in the year. The Council considers it important that the 2005 Spring European Council should return to this topic in the context of the Lisbon Mid-Term Review.”

Rådskonklusioner vedrørende opfølgning af handlingsplan for risikokapital

"The Council welcomes the report of the FSC and emphasises the vital role of risk capital markets for providing equity financing to high-growth small and medium-sized companies, and thus for job creation and the development of a vibrant entrepreneurial culture in the EU. Efficient risk capital markets are a key contribution to a competitive, innovative, dynamic EU economy in accordance with the Lisbon strategy.

The Council recognises that further work is needed, by the Commission and Member States as appropriate, to address the complex and multidisciplinary nature of risk capital markets. Their interaction with a diverse array of policies (regarding e.g. R&D and innovation, encouragement of entrepreneurship, fostering an SME-friendly environment, social and regional policy, competition issues, taxation, employment, Community financial instruments) should be properly taken into account.

In particular, the Council:

- welcomes the Commission's plans of continuing to closely follow developments in the European risk capital market, identifying discrepancies and carrying out further analysis of aspects of the market where inefficiencies remain; this should cover the whole financial chain, from seed investment to exit mechanisms. Opportunities for exit are greatly enhanced if there are wellfunctioning and liquid European-wide capital markets. In this respect, the full implementation of the FSAP and its continuation in the future are crucial.
- encourages enhanced co-operation between all services and institutions concerned at Community/National/Regional levels; therefore, recommends that further efforts are made, inter alia by means of a consistent approach at Member States level, to address existing failures and barriers to the development of risk capital markets, on both the supply and demand sides, including by the sharing of best practices.
- finds that the impact of European legislation on risk capital markets should be properly taken into account when improving and simplifying the regulatory framework. Noting differences between various Directives currently in force as to the restrictions posed on investments by institutional investors, the Council invites the Commission to evaluate the effects of the current rules for investing in private equity/venture capital in the Life Assurance Directive and to take into account the possibilities for investing in venture capital in the review of the UCITS Directive, which is foreseen in the Directive for 2005.
- welcomes the intention of the Commission to review state-aid policy for risk capital.
- finds that the new EU framework of capital adequacy rules implementing the Basel II accord should appropriately take into account the EU lower risk-profile specificity of risk-capital investments via sufficiently diversified portfolios and stresses that it shall give special consideration to this factor in the legislative process leading to the new Capital Adequacy Framework."