



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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INFORMATION NOTE

from: the General Secretariat of the Council
to: the Competitiveness Council on 3 and 4 December 2009
Item 14: Any other business

subject: Latest developments in the Opel/GM dossier
– Information from the Belgian delegation

Delegations will find attached an Information Note from the Belgian delegation on the latest developments in the Opel/GM dossier with a view to the meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 3 and 4 December 2009.

Latest developments in the Opel/GM dossier

Since the last meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 29 September 2009, the GM/Opel dossier has been very eventful. Surprisingly, yet not totally unexpectedly, GM announced in early November it would not sell Opel to Magna as it had agreed earlier. Instead, GM opted for keeping Opel under its own control.

During the informal meeting of 23 November 2009 that was convened by Commissioner Verheugen, Opel/Vauxhall CEO Nick Reilly explained the motives behind this decision to the representatives of the Member States concerned. The way GM is handling the case does not make it easy for Member States to coordinate their responses. But we need to be clear on this: releasing partial information on keeping certain factories open while letting the fate of other plants undecided cannot get in the way of coordination amongst Member States.

The Belgian government wishes to underline once more that State aid can only be granted in accordance with European rules and that it cannot be made conditional on political motives such as geographical location. In this respect, the Belgian government wants to urge the Commission to assess the Opel-dossier in its entirety. This means that aid to Opel from different Member States can only be assessed by the Commission once all details of the restructuring plan are available. Put differently, the Commission's consent to the granting of aid by any Member State should be conditional on prior agreement by the Commission to the full restructuring plan.

We call on the Commission to convene Member States once more once the full details of the restructuring plan are available.
