



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2014) 2087 final

- English language version of the French text which is authentic -

Brussels, 11 June 2014

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2087th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 28 May 2014

(morning)

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PV(2014) 2087 final

- English language version of the French text which is authentic -

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Single sitting: Wednesday 28 May 2014 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.37 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair. The discussion of item 12 (in part) was chaired by Ms REDING.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Baroness ASHTON	High Representative/ Vice-President	Items 11 (in part) and 12
Ms REDING	Vice-President	
Mr ALMUNIA	Vice-President	
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Ms KROES	Vice-President	
Mr TAJANI	Vice-President	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Mr REHN	Vice-President	Items 1 to 11
Mr POTOČNIK	Member	
Mr PIEBALGS	Member	Items 1 to 11
Mr BARNIER	Member	Items 11 (in part) and 12 (in part)
Mr ŠEMETA	Member	
Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN	Member	
Mr LEWANDOWSKI	Member	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Ms DAMANAKI	Member	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Ms GEORGIEVA	Member	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	Items 11 (in part) and 12 (in part)
Mr HAHN	Member	Items 1 to 11
Ms HEDEGAARD	Member	
Mr FÜLE	Member	
Mr ANDOR	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr CIOLOŞ	Member	
Mr BORG	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	

Absent:

Ms VASSILIOU

Member

Mr DE GUCHT

Member

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission:

Mr ASIMAKIS	Chef de cabinet to Ms VASSILIOU	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr VANHEUKELEN	Chef de cabinet to Mr DE GUCHT	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr HOFFMEISTER	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr DE GUCHT	Items 11 (in part) and 12

The following also sat in:

Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr PAULGER	Director-General, DG Communication	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr DOENS	Head of the Commission Spokesperson Service	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Commission Spokeswoman	
Mr THEBAULT	Head of the Bureau of European Policy Advisers	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr MORRISON	Chef de cabinet to Baroness ASHTON	Item 12
Ms CHRISTOPHIDOU	Chef de cabinet to Ms DAMANAKI	Items 11 (in part) and 12
Mr HAGER	Chef de cabinet to Mr OETTINGER	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Ms UDWIN	A member of Mr HAHN's staff	Item 12
Mr RISTORI	Director-General, DG Energy	Items 1 to 12 (in part)

Secretary: Ms DAY, Secretary-General, assisted by Mr AYET PUIGARNAU, Director in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2014) 2087/FINAL; SEC(2014) 325/2)

The Commission took note of that day's agenda and of the tentative agendas for forthcoming meetings.

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET

(RCC(2014) 2087)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 26 May.

3. MINUTES OF 2086TH MEETING (21 MAY)

(PV(2014) 2086 AND /2)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2086th meeting.

4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

4.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2014) 326 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 19 and 23 May.

4.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2014) 327 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 19 and 23 May.

4.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2014) 328 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 19 and 23 May, as archived in e-Greffe.

4.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2014) 329 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 26 and 28 May and of the finalisation written procedure initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 19 May.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2014) 330/3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2014) 84/2)

5.1. DG ENERGY – INTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR AN AD 15/16 DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

(PERS(2014) 86)

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr OETTINGER, the Commission decided to authorise the publication, under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy

(28 May 2014)

notice in PERS(2014) 86 for the post of Deputy Director-General in DG Energy responsible for coordinating Directorates A, B and C.

This decision would take effect immediately.

5.2. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL (GRADE AD14/15) AND EXTERNAL (GRADE AD14 – EU-28) PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR A DIRECTOR (PERS(2014) 85)

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to authorise the internal and interinstitutional (grade AD14/15) and external (grade AD14 – EU-28) publication, under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice in PERS(2014) 85 for the post of Director of the ‘Protocol Service’ Directorate in the Secretariat-General.

This decision would take effect immediately.

5.3. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – INTERIM UPDATE IN 2014 OF THE WEIGHTINGS APPLICABLE TO THE REMUNERATION AND PENSIONS OF OFFICIALS AND OTHER SERVANTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (SEC(2014) 341; SEC(2014) 342/2)

The Commission took note of the documents distributed as SEC(2014) 341 and SEC(2014) 342/2.

6. COMMISSION DECISION CONCERNING A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 8(2) OF COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) 139/2004 ON THE CONTROL OF CONCENTRATIONS BETWEEN UNDERTAKINGS AND ARTICLE 57 OF THE EEA AGREEMENT (CASE COMP/M.6992 – HUTCHISON 3G UK HOLDINGS LIMITED – HUTCHISON 3G IRELAND HOLDINGS LIMITED / TELEFÓNICA IRELAND LIMITED)
(C(2014) 3561 TO /6)

The Commission:

- took note of the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Concentrations of 21 May in C(2014) 3561/3;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 23 May in C(2014) 3561/4;
- adopted, in the authentic language (English), the decision in C(2014) 3561/6, declaring the notified operation compatible with the common market and with operation of the Agreement on the European Economic Area, subject to full compliance with the commitments made by the companies concerned;
- decided to notify the companies concerned of the decision in C(2014) 3561/6, together with the final report of the Hearing Officer and the opinion of the Advisory Committee;
- decided that the key parts of the decision, together with the Advisory Committee's opinion and the Hearing Officer's report, would be published in the official languages of the Union in the Official Journal of the European Union (with business secrets and other confidential information removed);
- decided to publish the decision on the internet (with business secrets and other confidential information removed).

7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION ON THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE 'ONE OF US' (COM(2014) 355 TO /3)

The Commission decided:

- to approve the communication set out in COM(2014) 355/3;
- to notify the organisers of the citizens' initiative under Article 10(2) of Regulation (EU) 211/2011;
- to send the communication to the European Parliament and the Council, and, for information, to the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments.

The Commission's other discussions on this item are recorded in the special minutes.

8. DRAFT AMENDING BUDGET No 3 TO THE GENERAL BUDGET 2014 – GENERAL STATEMENT OF REVENUE – STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE BY SECTION (SECTION III – COMMISSION; SECTION VII – COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS; SECTION IX – EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR) (COM(2014) 329 TO /3)

**9. PROPOSAL FOR A DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE MOBILISATION OF THE CONTINGENCY MARGIN IN 2014
(COM(2014) 328)**

The Commission decided:

- to adopt draft amending budget No 3 to the general budget 2014, as set out in COM(2014) 329/3;
- to adopt the proposal for a Decision on the mobilisation of the contingency margin in 2014, as set out in COM(2014) 328;
- to send draft amending budget No 3 to the general budget 2014 and the proposal for a Decision on the mobilisation of the contingency margin in 2014 to the European Parliament and the Council, and, for information, to the national parliaments.

**10. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ON EUROPEAN ENERGY SECURITY STRATEGY
(COM(2014) 330 TO /3; SWD(2014) 330 TO /3)**

Subject to a final general clean-up of the text, the Commission approved the communication in COM(2014) 330/3 for transmission to the European Parliament and the Council, and, for information, to the national parliaments, together with the staff working document distributed as SWD(2014) 330/3, the contents of which were noted.

The Commission's other discussions on this item are recorded in the special minutes.

11. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

11.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

- i) Amendment of Annex XV to the draft Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part (Council Decision) – 2014/0087 (NLE)
(SI(2014) 225)**

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 225.

- ii) Money laundering package – Information accompanying transfers of funds (Regulation) – KLEVA KEKUŠ and KIRKHOPE report – 2013/0024 (COD) / Prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing (Directive) – KARIŇŠ and SARGENTINI report – 2013/0025 (COD)
(SI(2014) 227)**

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 227.

- iii) Position to be taken by the European Union within the Association Council set up by the Association Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Central America, of the other part, as regards the adoption of decisions in the Association Council on the Rules of Procedure of the Association Council and those of the Association Committee, on the Rules of Procedure governing Dispute Settlement under Title X and the Code**

of Conduct for members of panels and mediators, on the List of Panellists and on the List of Trade and Sustainable Development Experts (Council Decision) – 2014/0130 (NLE)

(SI(2014) 232)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 232.

11.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iv) Programming of Council business

(SI(2014) 230)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2014) 230 on the Council meetings between 29 May and 11 June.

v) Results of the informal dinner of Heads of State or Government (Brussels, 27 May)

Before reporting on the first exchange of views between the Heads of State or Government on certain aspects of the institutional transition following the European elections, the PRESIDENT welcomed the Members of the Commission who, that day, were again participating in meetings following their electoral leave. He warmly congratulated them on the excellent results that they had all achieved in the European elections. They would have to decide very quickly whether to take their seat in Parliament or continue their duties until the end of the current Commission's term of office. In this context, he also referred to the re-election a few days previously of Ms Dalia GRYBAUSKAITE, a former Member of the Commission, as President of the Republic of Lithuania.

The PRESIDENT then reported to the College on the informal dinner of the Heads of State or Government that he had attended the previous evening in Brussels, the purpose of which had been to draw initial conclusions from the European elections and hold a preliminary exchange of views on the

institutional transition, in particular on the nomination of the future candidate for the presidency of the Commission.

The Union's leaders had first noted the difficulty of drawing a single, general conclusion from the outcome of the European elections, given the very great variety of national situations. They had then highlighted the worrying results recorded in certain Member States, with in some cases a substantial breakthrough by populist, anti-European, even xenophobic movements, which was putting the Union to the test. For his part, the PRESIDENT was convinced that the large majority at the elections in favour of the European project would produce a solid and viable majority in Parliament, which would enable the Union to make progress in the years ahead.

The next step in the transition process in the European institutions was the nomination by the European Council of a candidate for the presidency of the Commission. On this point, he referred to the previous evening's discussion, stressing that it had focused more on political priorities and principles than on individuals.

The political priorities identified by the Heads of State or Government, which coincided with those of the current Commission, included first and foremost growth, competitiveness and employment. The other priorities were (i) the development of economic and monetary union, (ii) a firm policy on climate change, (iii) the creation of an energy union, (iv) the consolidation of the area of freedom, justice and security, (v) the fight against illegal immigration, crime and fraud, and, lastly, (vi) the enhancement of the Union's external action. In this context, he noted the great emphasis placed by the European leaders on respect for subsidiarity and proportionality.

Finally, with regard to the candidates for the presidency of the Commission, the President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy, had been tasked with starting consultations at once with Parliament in order to enable a decision to be taken at the European Council on 26 and 27 June concerning the future president designate.

During the very open discussion, the Commission raised the following questions:

- the advisability of not drawing hasty and overly general conclusions from the European elections; on the contrary, the need for more in-depth analysis to put into perspective the results, trends and challenges for the Union and for every Member State;
- the large overall majority supporting the major traditional pro-European parties; emphasis on the good results achieved by the governing parties in some Member States that had been most severely affected by the crisis and had had to take fiscal and economic consolidation measures that were sometimes difficult; likewise, reference to the fact that, in general, the governing parties had held up relatively well, with the exception of a few, which had lost a considerable share of the vote to the ‘anti-system’, anti-European and nationalist movements in certain Member States or had been punished for having applied a strategy of copycat policies in relation to such movements; the invitation to contribute by all means to greater ownership and a better defence of European policies at national level; the importance of factoring in the public’s assessment of national policy when it came to voting patterns;
- the significance, however, of the low turnout; questions about the causes, in particular in the ‘new’ Member States of Central and Eastern Europe, and about the message from the public, somewhere between dissatisfaction and indifference; the need to question the nature and quality of the relationship between the public and the Union;
- the deep concern about the very worrying combination of an increasingly populist general climate, growing rejection of elites, in which the Union was included, and greater influence of extremist, anti-European parties whose message was sometimes echoed by the governments in power themselves; the recommendation by some, addressed to the European political players, to confront and provide a direct response to these

movements rather than seeking to ostracise or bypass them simply by escalating the political rhetoric;

- the case for stressing the complexity and diversity of the factors that could explain the results of the European elections from one Member State to another; beyond specific national circumstances, the insistence on the common denominators among the wishes and demands expressed by European citizens, namely the need to curb unemployment and the fall in incomes due to the crisis, to restore the Union's competitiveness but also to combat red tape, illegal immigration and fraud, and, in general, the desire for a 'different Europe';
- the need for the European institutions to embrace this desire for change, to listen to the citizens more carefully and understand them better, and above all to focus on the tangible results of their work in the areas of greatest concern to the public; the need for the Commission to explain its activities better, particularly its efforts to counter the effects of the economic crisis and support renewed growth, and to pursue its mission resolutely and tirelessly until the very end of its term of office; the suggestion that the Commission respond faster and more vigorously to the misinformation peddled by different groups who pinned the blame for all evils on the European Union, by putting forward arguments that were less factual but struck a chord with ordinary people;
- on the institutional level, the need for the main pro-European parties in the European Parliament to unite to ensure political stability so that the reforms needed at European level could go ahead; a call for everything possible to be done, on the basis of the results of the European elections, to build a strong, core majority around shared ideas and a common project, which would confer legitimacy on the leaders of the European institutions; the need for consistency between the European Council and Parliament on this point, to protect the credibility of the institutions as a whole and regain people's trust;

- the more personalised nature of the recent European electoral campaign, Parliament's support for the designation of leading candidates and its implications for the appointment of the future leaders of the European institutions and particularly the President of the European Commission; related to this, the provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union on the element of automaticity in this appointment; the desire to avoid any interinstitutional tensions on this point, which would be very damaging for the Union as a whole;
- on the issue of communication, the challenges of learning the lessons from the European elections, particularly by providing information, by trying to dispel ignorance about Europe and the institutions, by highlighting the practical benefits of the Union for its citizens, through awareness-raising activities geared to young people in particular and using the communication media of their generation, and ensuring better coverage in the mainstream media; similarly, the need to pay more attention to what was happening in the Member States, for example in terms of important dates in the national political calendar, social debates or public perceptions, to gain a better understanding of the public mood and improve communication.

The PRESIDENT thanked the Members of the Commission for their valuable comments and analysis of the political situation following the European elections. He began by drawing a number of operational conclusions from the debate. Firstly, it would be useful to have a rigorous, in-depth analysis of the ballot, which he asked the Commission's Secretariat-General to produce, with the help of DG Communication, the Commission's representations in the Member States and the Bureau of European Political Advisers, while drawing also on external sources. The result of this work should be presented to the College in the form of a full report which would provide a basis for a serious political analysis of the many factors at play in the European elections. Secondly, he suggested that the Commission Members hold an in-depth policy debate on the questions surrounding migration and free movement,

which were apparently at the heart of many European voters' concerns. He asked Ms REDING, Ms MALMSTRÖM and Mr ANDOR to prepare contributions for such a debate, which he suggested could be held on 18 June. Thirdly, and finally, he asked the Commission Members to draw up a review of the deregulation measures that had been taken in the policy areas for which they were responsible, under the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT). This would also feature on the agenda of the Commission meeting of 18 June.

The PRESIDENT then returned to some of the more political points made during the discussion. On the subject of anti-elitism, he noted a new tendency in the European political landscape, with the emergence of small, single-issue parties which exploited the public's disenchantment with the main ruling parties in certain Member States. He also spoke of the public's growing interest in political discourse with a popular, or in some cases populist, flavour, something which was apparent in the pro-European camp too. He reiterated the point that the ruling parties that had tried to emulate the language of the extremist and anti-European movements in an attempt to rally their supporters had generally lost out.

He referred to the need to remind national leaders that they were also European leaders, and to urge them to take ownership of European policies and the European debate, to educate their electorate and thus do their bit to help make the Union more accessible and transparent.

Finally, as regards the forthcoming appointments to head various EU institutions, he hoped that the moderates on the European political scene would work together. The next Commission needed stability and its President needed authority to act in what remained a difficult situation.

The PRESIDENT concluded by urging Commission Members to continue to work with the same constancy and dedication until the end of their term of office.

The Commission took note of this information.

11.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

- vi) Action taken on legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February I and II part-sessions**
(SP(2014) 446 and /2)

The Commission approved for transmission to Parliament documents SP(2014) 446 and /2 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February I and II part-session.

- vii) Action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February II part-session**
(SP(2014) 447 and /2)

The Commission approved for transmission to Parliament documents SP(2014) 447 and /2 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February II part-session.

11.4. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN AND NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

- viii) Participation of Members of the Committee of the Regions in international conferences**
(SR(2014) 15)

- Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (Pyeongchang, 6 to 17 October 2014)
- Twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Lima, 1 to

12 December 2014)

The Commission agreed to the request to the PRESIDENT from Mr Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, President of the Committee of the Regions, concerning the attendance of two Members of that Committee at the above-mentioned meetings as observers in the EU delegation, with a reminder about the procedure to be followed.

ix) Participation by Members of the European Economic and Social Committee in international conferences

(SC(2014) 22)

- Twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Lima, 1 to 12 December 2014)

The Commission agreed to the request to the PRESIDENT from Mr Henri Malosse, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, concerning the attendance of three Members of that Committee at the above-mentioned meeting as observers in the EU delegation, with a reminder about the procedure to be followed.

12. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

12.1. SITUATION IN UKRAINE AND SECURITY OF ENERGY SUPPLIES

The PRESIDENT mentioned that the Heads of State or Government had discussed the situation in Ukraine following the 25 May presidential elections at their informal dinner the previous evening. He made particular reference to the statement adopted by the European Council on that occasion, which underlined the Union's strong support for the new Ukrainian leadership and the economic and political stabilisation of the country.

The PRESIDENT noted that the presidential elections had run smoothly, were characterised by high turnout and had produced a convincing result, for which he had congratulated the new President-elect, Mr Petro Poroshenko, and the Prime Minister, Mr Arseniy Yatsenyuk, personally. He testified to the cautious optimism expressed by the Heads of State or Government who, despite the situation in the eastern part of the country remaining very worrying, had focussed their discussions above all on specific measures taken or to be taken by the Union in order to help stabilise the country economically and politically. He himself had pointed to several such initiatives already under way, including the proposal to launch the second stage of the action plan on visa liberalisation. He had also referred to the Commission's work both on a proposal concerning the practical consequences of Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimea, which he hoped would be approved by the Council as soon as possible, and on possible additional restrictive measures against Russia.

In terms of relations with Russia, the Heads of State or Government had highlighted the need to continue to pay close attention to developments on the ground in the east of Ukraine, particularly with regard to changes in the energy situation. In this respect he stressed the importance of the negotiations being conducted with Ukraine and Russia on behalf of the Union by Mr OETTINGER with a view to ending those countries' dispute over Ukraine's backlog of payments and Russian gas prices.

The PRESIDENT took the opportunity to mention the Communication on a European Energy Security Strategy, presented under his and Mr OETTINGER's authority and adopted, subject to final general linguistic revision, by the Commission that day (see item 10 of these minutes) ahead of the European Council of 26 and 27 June. He listed the main components of the strategy: completion of the internal energy market, diversification of external sources of energy supply, modernisation of energy infrastructure and attainment of the Union's objectives in the broader context of its climate and energy policy. While pointing out that these approaches were aimed at facilitating the Union's transition towards greater energy security in the medium term and addressing present threats to energy supply, particularly the supply of Russian gas, he confirmed that this issue and the Union's climate and energy policy framework up to 2030 would be among the priority topics

discussed by the European Council in June.

Mr OETTINGER reported on the latest talks with the Ukrainian and Russian energy ministers which he was conducting on the Union's behalf. He pointed out that, following the meeting on 25 May, it seemed a compromise might be found on the basis of a proposal he had put forward. He then explained the content of the proposal: as a first step, Ukraine would settle half of its back payments to Russia, after which the two parties would negotiate a market price for future deliveries of Russian gas, at the same time guaranteeing that Russia would maintain supply from June onwards. Following agreement on the price, Ukraine would then settle any outstanding back payments. While confirming that contacts were being maintained with other relevant international players, he expressed the hope that this compromise would be confirmed in the following days, thereby ending the current uncertainty and restoring stability for the benefit of all.

Mr OETTINGER said that the Communication approved by the Commission under item 10 of these minutes set out the Commission's analysis and proposed a short-, medium- and long-term energy security strategy for the Union. He explained that the measures proposed were less about petroleum (for which there was a better guarantee of security of supply and relative price stability, owing to a considerable diversity in sources of supply and significant volumes of stocks) than about reducing the Union's dependence on Russian gas. He mentioned measures such as financing the extension and interconnection of gas infrastructure within the Union, optimising gas storage facilities, prospecting for non-conventional energy sources and enhancing energy efficiency. In conclusion, he alluded to the initiative for an energy union recently put forward by the Polish Prime Minister, Mr Donald Tusk, many of the ideas expressed therein had been taken up. The proposal concerning a Union-wide aggregator was currently being examined to determine its feasibility in the light of the rules governing the internal market, competition and international trade.

Baroness ASHTON expressed her confidence in the new Ukrainian President, Mr Petro Poroshenko, and praised his active engagement in the defence of

democratic values. She regretted the loss of life as a result of the events over the last few days in Ukraine, in particular the violent confrontations between government security forces and separatist groups at Donetsk Airport. She noted the Ukrainian President's strong commitment to put an end to the destabilising activities being conducted in the eastern part of the country. For this reason he was asking that Russia close its border with Ukraine.

In relation to European assistance to Ukraine, Baroness ASHTON expressed her full support for the work of the Support Group established within the Commission under the authority of Mr FÜLE and led by Mr Peter BALAS, particularly the measures formulated over the last few days to ensure a continued high-level political presence in Ukraine to emphasise more clearly that the Union stood resolutely shoulder to shoulder with the Ukrainians during this crucial period for their country.

Mr FÜLE remarked on the historic nature of the previous Sunday's vote in Ukraine, in which a president had been elected in the first round, for the second time in the country's history, with 54% of the votes. He paid tribute in particular to the courage of the voters who had turned out in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, against a background of hostility, and the absolute determination of the Ukrainian authorities to hold free and democratic elections. He felt that the election of a new and lawfully elected president would lead to a new phase in relations between Ukraine and the EU. He went on to discuss a number of political issues that the Ukrainian authorities would have to address in the coming weeks, in particular the visit of Mr Petro Poroshenko to Brussels in connection with the preparations for the signing of the remaining chapters of the Association Agreement.

From the EU's point of view, Mr FÜLE insisted on the importance of continuing to support the new powers in their desire to complete the necessary reforms and safeguard the country's integrity. In this connection he mentioned a flare-up of violence, notably in the Donetsk region, and the interception of heavy arms originating in Russia. He thanked in particular Ms MALMSTRÖM, for the progress made in moving on to the second stage of the visa liberalisation process, and Mr OETTINGER for his role in resolving the disagreement on gas supplies. Finally,

Mr FÜLE praised the firm stance adopted in the declaration by the EU Heads of State or Government of 27 May and welcomed the effective work of the Support Group within the Commission. He concluded by stressing the need to continue to monitor closely the situation on the ground.

The PRESIDENT closed the discussion on this point by thanking the speakers for their presentations.

The Commission took note of this information.

12.2. SITUATION IN LIBYA

Baroness ASHTON reported on the latest developments in the Libyan crisis, which was plunging the country into political instability, insecurity and confusion following the recent coup, the challenge to the appointment of Mr Ahmed Maiteeq as Prime Minister, and the demand by the general leading the military operation that the Libyan Parliament be dissolved. She set out the measures deployed by the EU and the US to send envoys to the country, and the efforts to coordinate the action of the EU, the UN and the Arab League, in particular, in an attempt to bring calm to the situation.

The Commission took note of this information.

12.3. FLOODS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

(INFO(2014) 40)

Ms GEORGIEVA reported to the full Commission on the consequences of the catastrophic flooding in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as large parts of Croatia, since 13 May, affecting some three million people and causing major damage, including to essential infrastructure. The Union had responded to appeals from Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and had mobilised the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, enabling the deployment by the Member States of emergency teams and rescue workers to reinforce the EU's permanent structures in the region. A total of EUR 65 million had been granted to Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, EUR 3 million of which to meet immediate humanitarian needs and EUR 62 million

under the Instrument for pre-accession assistance. Ms GEORGIEVA thanked Mr FÜLE and Mr HAHN for their prompt and effective cooperation. She concluded with a warning about the need to prepare for other natural disasters on this scale in the years to come, mainly as a result of climate change.

A brief discussion was held, in the course of which the following points were raised: (i) the expertise and practical solidarity of the EU in civil emergencies, (ii) the need to ensure continuity, in the medium to long term, of the proposed financial support via the various EU financing instruments, and (iii) the importance of showing the same level of solidarity to Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, which were equally badly affected, and ongoing preparations of an overall response by the Union drawing on all available instruments in order to avoid the risk of fragmentation in the financial measures deployed.

The Commission took note of this information and of the note in INFO(2014) 40, circulated under the authority of Ms GEORGIEVA.

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The Commission's other discussions on certain agenda items are recorded in the special minutes.

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The meeting closed at 13.05.