



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2017) 2219 final

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

Brussels, 19 July 2017

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2219th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill building)

on Tuesday 4 July 2017

(afternoon)

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Single sitting: Tuesday 4 July 2017 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 12.48 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair. Items 7.3 (in part), 7.4 and 7.5 were chaired by Mr TIMMERMANS.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President	Items 1 to 7.3 (in part)
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President	
Ms MOGHERINI	High Representative / Vice-President	
Mr ANSIP	Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Vice-President	Items 7.2 to 7.5
Mr KATAINEN	Vice-President	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	Items 1 to 7.3 (in part)
Mr HAHN	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	Items 1 to 7.3 (in part)
Ms THYSSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	Items 1 to 7.3 (in part)
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	Items 1 to 7.2
Ms BULC	Member	
Ms BIENKOWSKA	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms CREȚU	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	

Mr MOEDAS

Member

Sir Julian KING

Member

The following also sat in:

Mr SELMAYR	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr PESONEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr SCHINAS	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms METTLER	Head of the European Political Strategy Centre	
Mr BALTAZAR	Chief adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Ms ARKI	PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 7.3 (in part)
Ms BALTA	A member of Mr TIMMERMANS's staff	
Ms PANZETTI	Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI	Items 1 to 7.1
Mr WYNANDS	Chef de cabinet to Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Items 1 to 7.1
Mr ROMAkkANIEMI	Chef de cabinet to Mr KATAINEN	Items 1 to 7.2
Ms SCHMITT	Chef de cabinet to Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Items 1 to 7.1
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service	
Mr DEMARTY	Director-General, DG Trade	Item 7.2

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2017) 2219/FINAL; SEC(2017) 317/FINAL)

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(2017) 2219)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 3 July.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2212TH MEETING (16 MAY), THE 2217TH MEETING (21 JUNE) AND THE 2218TH MEETING (28 JUNE) OF THE COMMISSION

(PV(2017) 2217)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2217th meeting and held over approval of the minutes of its 2212th and 2218th meetings for the following week.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2017) 87)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 30 June (RCC(2017) 87).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. HORIZONTAL MATTERS

- i) Negotiations on an agreement with the United Kingdom setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal from the European Union pursuant to Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union – Position Paper on Essential Principles on Nuclear Materials and Safeguard Equipment (revised document)**

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2017) 348, and authorised the ‘Article 50 Task Force’ to send to the 27 Member States the revised version of the ‘Essential Principles’ in question.

- ii) International negotiations – Paragraph 40 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making, concerning the negotiation of international agreements**
(SPI(2017) 24)

The Commission approved the approach set out in SPI(2017) 24.

4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

- iii) Trilogues**

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Financial rules applicable to the general budget of the European Union and amending Regulation (EC) 2012/2002, Regulations (EU) 1296/2013, (EU) 1301/2013, (EU) 1303/2013, (EU) 1304/2013, (EU) No 1305/2013, (EU) 1306/2013, (EU) 1307/2013, (EU) 1308/2013, (EU) 1309/2013, (EU) 1316/2013, (EU) 223/2014, (EU) 283/2014, (EU) 652/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Decision 541/2014/EU of

the European Parliament and of the Council (Regulation) – GRÄSSLE / ASHWORTH report – 2016/0282 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 337.

- Amendment of Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work (Directive) – ULVSKOG report – 2016/0130 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 346.

- Amendment of Directive 2003/87/EC to enhance cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investments (Directive) – GIRLING report – 2015/0148 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 347.

iv) European Parliament dossier – July part-session

(point 3.2 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – first reading

- European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) and establishment of the EFSD Guarantee and the EFSD Guarantee Fund (Regulation) – FRUNZULICĂ / GARDIAZABAL RUBIAL / KUKAN report – 2016/0281 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2017) 461 and took note of the compromise text annexed thereto.

v) Council dossier

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Contracts for the online and other distance sales of goods (Directive) – ARIMONT report – 2015/0288 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 338.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

vi) Programming of Council business

(SI(2017) 351)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2017) 351 on the Council meetings between 6 and 19 July.

vii) Non-legislative matter

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- 40th session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations – Declaration of competence and voting rights (Rome, 3 – 8 July)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 350.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

viii) Non-legislative matters

(point 5.1 of the IRG record)

- Requests from the European Parliament concerning an oversight role (observer status) on European Union Trust Funds, the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRT) and the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) – Horizontal approach

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2017) 420/3.

- European Parliament Committee of Inquiry into ‘Money Laundering, Tax Avoidance and Tax Evasion’ (PANA) – Preparation of the hearing of Ms JOUROVÁ, Member of the Commission, on 3 July – Replies to written questions

The Commission took note of SP(2017) 446.

- Major interpellation – EU Army – O-000044/2017

The Commission took note of SP(2017) 471.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2017) 318 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 26 and 30 June.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2017) 319 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 26 and 30 June.

5.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2017) 320 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 26 and 30 June as archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2017) 321)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 3 and 7 July.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

IMPLEMENTATION OF 2017 GENERAL BUDGET AT 15 JUNE

(INFO(2017) 60)

The Commission took note of the information in INFO(2017) 60.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1. ACTION PLAN TO REDUCE PRESSURE ALONG THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE AND SUPPORT ITALY BY INCREASING EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY

(SEC(2017) 339)

Mr TIMMERMANS and Mr AVRAMOPOULOS presented the draft Action Plan, the aim of which was threefold: to support Italy, reduce migratory pressure along the Central Mediterranean route and increase

European solidarity towards Italy, which had been particularly affected by a large influx of migrants.

Mr TIMMERMANS said that there was an urgent need to step up efforts and adopt concrete measures to relieve the migratory pressure on Italy. He stressed that the number of migrants arriving in Italy via the Central Mediterranean route had increased significantly, making the situation in the country untenable; it was therefore imperative for the Commission to show its full support. He focused in particular on humanitarian concerns – rescue at sea – and on the potential political repercussions of this issue, not only in Italy, but also in the other Member States.

The measures presented in the Action Plan should provide a starting point for discussions at the informal meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, being held in Tallinn on Thursday 6 July, and were in response to a letter sent to the Commission and the Council by the Italian Home Affairs Minister Marco Minniti on 30 June. He took note of the efforts deployed and results achieved by the Italian authorities, particularly in Libya, but stated that this progress needed to be consolidated in view of the current emergency situation.

Mr TIMMERMANS felt that the draft Action Plan struck the right balance between measures designed to strengthen solidarity, on the one hand, and responsibility, on the other, in line with the course of action recommended by the Commission since the refugee crisis began.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS reported on his important meeting with the Italian, French and German Home Affairs Ministers, which was held in Paris on 2 July. The participants were willing to support Italy by developing European solutions; these would be presented at the informal meeting of Home Affairs Ministers in Tallinn that week.

He confirmed that, at that meeting, he intended to table for political agreement by the Member States a series of immediate measures included in the Action Plan which should be taken, or implemented more effectively, by the Italian authorities, the European institutions and the other Member States.

However, he noted that Italy had also put forward two measures that had been contested by a number of governments. The first measure was to relocate within the EU illegally staying economic migrants, something which the current legal framework made no provision for. The second was to bring migrants ashore in other Member States, an option that would be examined by the European Border and Coast Guard but would undoubtedly provoke very difficult political discussions. He therefore recommended that the Member States step up and accelerate their efforts within the framework of the current relocation programme. He added that, with EU support, Italy should speed up its asylum and return procedures, while developing its detention and reception capabilities.

He also referred to the even more significant proposal to focus efforts on preventing arrivals in Italy and on returning illegally staying migrants. In order to achieve this aim, he proposed (i) involving all North African countries – Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria – in the search and rescue efforts, (ii) improving cooperation with the Sahel countries to secure Libya's southern border and fight smugglers, and (iii) taking a firmer line with third countries of origin – Bangladesh, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia and Nigeria – in relation to readmission.

In the current circumstances, Mr AVRAMOPOULOS felt that it was now more urgent than ever to contain the influx of migrants in order to prevent them from boarding makeshift boats and drowning in the Mediterranean, but also to prevent a repeat of the situation faced in 2016, when a number of Schengen-area countries closed their borders.

Ms MOGHERINI referred to those aspects of the Action Plan that related to the EU's foreign and security policy. She stressed that the training programmes currently provided for Libyan coastguards had enabled several thousand migrants to be rescued in Libyan waters. The strategic review and extension of Operation Sophia could make these activities even more successful.

She also referred to the ongoing cooperation programmes with the International Organisation for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. She made particular mention of the programme of assisted voluntary returns, especially from Libya, which had recently proved effective but was not progressing as quickly as hoped due to the extremely difficult working conditions in Libya.

Ms MOGHERINI then discussed border checks at Libya's land and sea borders, noting that the EU Trust Fund was due to approve the allocation of new resources by the end of July. She highlighted the close link between the management of migratory flows in Libya and the work carried out as part of the EU-G5 Sahel partnership in the area of security and development. She pointed out that stepping up border controls in southern Libya could push the flow of migrants towards the Sahel region.

In the course of the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- the importance of sending a message of solidarity to Italy and of providing the country with all possible support, bearing in mind that significant resources had already been made available and had produced tangible results;

- the need for the Member States to make a greater contribution to the solidarity effort and to participate in the EU Trust Fund, as well as the refugee relocation programme;
- the suggestion that the Commission increase its communication efforts to clarify the objectives of the EU’s migration policy, focusing particularly on the difference between refugees and economic migrants;
- the advisability of improving coordination between local bodies in Italy and in Libya to enhance the effectiveness of the aid efforts.

Following this discussion, the PRESIDENT took note of the Commissioners’ agreement to make the following amendments to the English-language version of the document distributed as SEC(2017) 339:

- **the title of the communication would now read as follows:**

‘Action plan on measures to support Italy, reduce pressure along the Central Mediterranean route and increase solidarity’;

- **on page 1, the title of Section I would now read as follows:**

‘I. Measures to reduce migratory pressure along the Central Mediterranean Route and increase solidarity’;

- **on page 3, Section II, the third indent of the bullet point ‘Italy should step up the full implementation of the Minniti law, including:’, would now read as follows:**

‘Detention capacity to be substantially increased to reach urgently at least 3,000 places. In line with the Commission's Recommendation on the implementation of the Return Directive, prolong the current maximum duration of detention by making full use of the period allowed under EU legislation.’

Subject to the introduction of the above amendments and a final revision of the text, the Commission approved the communication set out in SEC(2017) 339.

7.2. STATUS OF TRADE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND JAPAN WITH A VIEW TO CONCLUDING AN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The PRESIDENT invited Ms MALMSTRÖM and Mr HOGAN to report on the results of their recent visit to Tokyo, where they had taken part in ministerial talks as part of the ongoing negotiation of the economic partnership agreement between the Union and Japan, looking ahead in particular to the forthcoming EU-Japan summit on 6 July, which should lead to a political agreement in principle.

Ms MALMSTRÖM explained that, at this final stage of the negotiation, the main stumbling blocks related primarily to Japan's commitments in agricultural areas of major interest to the Union – namely dairy products, beef and pork – and how they might be balanced by the duration of the transition period towards the removal of EU customs duties on cars and automotive equipment.

Following last weekend's talks, a general compromise had been reached on the main components of the agreement relating to market access, for example for car imports and public procurement. Good results had also been achieved for geographical indications of origin – particularly for cheeses such as feta, which enjoyed better protection than under any other free trade agreement – and the removal of certain non-tariff trade barriers.

It had been somewhat difficult to achieve a satisfactory outcome for both parties, since Japan had very specific interests while the Union held ambitions in a range of sectors. Farming products, a highly sensitive issue for Japan,

were a fundamental offensive interest for the Union. Overall, although the negotiated package represented a compromise that was by its very nature imperfect, it was in many respects an excellent agreement which the Commission would have little trouble defending.

The text of the agreement would have to be finalised in the coming months, and a conclusion still needed to be reached on the settlement of investment disputes. In any event, she hoped that the ratification process could be completed before the European elections in June 2019. She did not underestimate how difficult this would be, but stressed that it was in both parties' interests.

She then set out the next steps in the process, which would consist of drafting a document setting out the components of the political agreement and sending it to the Member States and Parliament, before the EU-Japan Summit on 6 July. Once the political agreement in principle had been officially announced by the leaders of the two sides at the Summit, the document in question – accompanied by certain chapters of the agreement that were already finalised – would be made public.

Ms MALMSTRÖM stressed that the future agreement included the same guarantees as the CETA agreement with Canada and that particular care should be taken to explain it clearly in the Commission's communications efforts.

In conclusion, she praised the excellent work accomplished by the Union's chief negotiator, Mr Mauro PETRICCIONE, his entire team and the Commission's departments that were involved.

Mr HOGAN pointed out that both the Union and Japan saw their economic partnership agreement as a win-win deal that deepened their relationship and offered a true basis for cooperation. From the point of view of the farming

industry, it was the most comprehensive agreement ever negotiated, as Japan had never before made so many concessions in this area with any trade partner.

He welcomed the tangible opportunities the agreement would open up for EU farmers on a vast, mature and complex market, especially in wine and spirits, cheese, chocolate, biscuits and other high-value food products. He also highlighted the far easier access they would have to the Japanese market for beef and pork, dairy products and certain processed farming products.

He was pleased to note the substantial progress made towards removing certain non-tariff trade barriers, for example in the wine sector where 20 production methods used in the EU would be recognised in the next two years, and with the protection of 200 of the Union's most symbolic geographical indications of origin. Lastly, he stressed that the agreement would fully respect all EU standards, in terms of protection of geographical indications of origin, food standards, health and plant health rules, and environmental protection.

In conclusion, Mr HOGAN confirmed that the economic partnership agreement with Japan was an excellent example of 'harnessing globalisation' referred to in the White Paper on the future of Europe, since the Union had managed to design its provisions in such a way as to ensure that the agreement was in keeping with EU agricultural policy based on the production of high-quality products and the export of high-value goods and that, in this sense, it could even serve as a template.

The PRESIDENT thanked Ms MALMSTRÖM and Mr HOGAN for their presentation and congratulated them for the excellent outcome obtained thanks to their hard work and that of the Commission's departments, to which he also extended the thanks of the College.

The Commission took note of this information.

7.3. AWARD OF THE ARBITRAL TRIBUNAL ON THE MARITIME AND LAND BOUNDARY BETWEEN SLOVENIA AND CROATIA

Mr TIMMERMANS referred to the final award rendered on 29 June by the Arbitral Tribunal in the case concerning the maritime and land boundary between Slovenia and Croatia.

On 30 June 2016, the Tribunal had rendered a unanimous partial award holding that Slovenia, by engaging in *ex parte* contacts with one of the appointed arbitrators, had acted in violation of the relevant provisions of the arbitration agreement. The partial award emphasised, however, that this violation was not of such a nature as to entitle Croatia to terminate the arbitration agreement or to call into question the Tribunal's ability to render an award independently and impartially. In this context, it should also be noted that the arbitrator involved had been removed and replaced by a professor of law with an international reputation.

Mr TIMMERMANS said that although the Commission was not a party to the arbitration agreement, it had played a facilitating role in the process which led to the creation of an arbitration panel between Slovenia and Croatia. The Commission had unequivocally supported this arbitration process which should provide legal certainty in the interests of both parties and ensure the effective implementation of EU law.

Lastly, the Commission had clearly expressed the hope that both parties would respect the decision taken by the Arbitral Tribunal, thereby putting a definitive end to the border dispute between them.

Although the award of the Arbitral Tribunal would not be directly binding on the Union as it was not a party to the agreement or the arbitral procedure, Mr TIMMERMANS said it was likely that, in future, the European Court of

Justice would be asked for a preliminary ruling on the award's effects on EU law.

Regardless of the substance of the award, the principle of international law that the decisions of an arbitral tribunal must be complied with and implemented was all the more important because it continued to be relevant in the context of territorial claims and border disputes, which, in the Western Balkans, could be settled by arbitral tribunals in future.

In the course of the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following key points:

- it had been agreed in the accession negotiations with Croatia that the border dispute between Slovenia and Croatia would be settled within the framework of an arbitration agreement, and the two countries had therefore undertaken to recognise the decision of the Tribunal once it had been rendered, whatever its substance;
- in that context, it was important that the award of the arbitral tribunal was complied with and implemented by both parties with a view to putting a definitive end to the dispute and to providing the requisite legal certainty for the effective implementation of international and EU law;
- the usefulness of the award, which helped to clarify the geographical responsibilities of the Member States regarding the implementation of EU law, in particular in the Common Fisheries Policy and environmental fields;
- for some, the anachronistic nature of territorial claims more than twenty years old in a context in which both parties were now members of the Union and implemented all the freedom of movement rules; the paradox that territorial claims made in wartime would represent if they were to

continue to exist within the European Union, a fundamental aim of which was to secure peace among the Member States;

- the importance of allowing both parties to agree on the details of the follow-up to the Tribunal’s award, as they had expressed their intention to do at the meeting scheduled for 12 July between the prime ministers of both countries, and in accordance with the undertaking not to adopt unilateral measures;
- in line with the same logic, the advisability of the Commission supporting bilateral discussions between the two parties without commenting on the substance of the award and promoting a process which would allow mutually acceptable solutions to be identified;
- a question was raised about the nature of the relationship between international law and European law.

Further to a request from the PRESIDENT, the Director-General of the Legal Service explained that the arbitral award was the result of a valid international agreement entered into by Croatia and Slovenia and supported by the Union. The Commission had witnessed this agreement in the context of the accession negotiations with Croatia and had played a facilitating role in the appointment of arbitrators of the Arbitral Tribunal. In particular, the Accession Treaty of Croatia referred explicitly to the use of an arbitration procedure to settle the border dispute.

On a more general note, while the border between the two countries was a bilateral issue, it nonetheless had a direct effect on EU law, and therefore the Union had jurisdiction in respect of this matter. Pursuant to Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union, the Commission oversees the implementation of EU law under the control of the Court of Justice of the European Union. Lastly, EU case-law left no room for doubt as to the obligation of the Union

and the Member States to implement public international law, which it would be bound to demonstrate in this case.

In conclusion, the Union could be requested to clarify the effects of the award on EU law in the event of infringement proceedings or a referral to the Court of Justice for a preliminary ruling concerning the implementation of the award in EU law.

Mr TIMMERMANS wound up by noting that the Commission had consistently advocated the peaceful settlement of border disputes between Member States. In the case in point, and since a decision had been taken, the Commission took note of the final award and expected the two parties to implement it.

In the same vein, the Commission welcomed the fact that both Prime Ministers of Croatia and Slovenia would meet on 12 July and had agreed that no unilateral action would be taken prior to that date. He noted the Commission's hope that the two Prime Ministers would reach a rapid agreement on the best way of implementing the award.

The Commission was ready to facilitate this process. Once it had been launched, the College would return to this issue to examine the progress made and the way in which the institution might contribute to the full and fair implementation of the award.

The Commission took note of the conclusions of this initial exchange of views.

7.4. COMMISSION DECISION ON THE ADMISSIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'STOP TTIP' (C(2017) 4725)

Mr TIMMERMANS presented the draft decision submitted for approval by

the Commission on registration of the European citizens' initiative entitled 'Stop TTIP', which called on the Commission 'to recommend to the Council to repeal the negotiating mandate for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and not to conclude the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)'. He pointed out that registration of the initiative on 10 July would mark the beginning of a 12-month process of collecting signatures.

In accordance with the conditions for admissibility provided for in Regulation (EU) 211/2011 on the Citizens' Initiative, the proposed action must, in order to be registered, manifestly fall within the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

He recalled that the previous Commission had rejected the registration of this citizens' initiative by its Decision of 10 September 2014. The General Court of the European Union, in its judgment of 10 May 2017 in case T-754/14, had annulled that Decision. In order to comply with the Court's judgment, it was therefore necessary to adopt a new Decision on the request for registration.

For this purpose and as the Commission had already decided in respect of other citizens' initiatives, Mr TIMMERMANS proposed to consider the 'Stop TTIP' initiative as partially admissible and to register it, specifying that the signatures would be collected for admissible legal acts, namely proposals that were in line with the competences set out in the Treaties. In this case, he noted that these related to proposals or recommendations from the Commission for legal acts other than a decision of the Council not to sign the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada, of the one part, and the European Union and its Member States, of the other part (CETA), since this had been signed on 30 October 2016.

He highlighted the fact that the Commission was called upon that day to decide only on the legal admissibility of the proposal and not, at this stage, to analyse its substance. If, in the space of a year, one million signatures from citizens from at least seven Member States were collected, the Commission would have three months to decide whether or not to consent to the requests, duly justifying its decision.

The Commission confirmed that the admissibility criteria under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) 211/2011 were fulfilled for the proposed citizens' initiative entitled 'Stop TTIP'. The Commission therefore decided to register the initiative subject to the conditions set out above, in accordance with document C(2017) 4725, and authorised Mr TIMMERMANS to sign the Decision on its behalf, to notify the organisers of the initiative thereof in the authentic language (English), and to publish it, after removing personal data, for information in the Official Journal of the European Union.

7.5. THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE TALKS HELD UNDER UN AUSPICES FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM

Mr TIMMERMANS briefly informed the Members of the Commission of the results of the talks held in Crans-Montana from 28 to 30 June as part of the conference convened under the auspices of the United Nations aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. This conference brought together the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akinci, with representatives of the three guarantor powers – Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom – and the European Union, as an observer.

He pointed out that after a difficult start, the talks had succeeded in clarifying the principles on which an agreement could be established, thanks to the involvement of the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres.

Mr TIMMERMANS noted, however, that there were still significant differences to be resolved and many technical details to be agreed on before an overall settlement could be reached. Nevertheless, he considered that the conditions were in place to allow the talks to continue and noted, in this context, the very constructive attitude of Greece and Turkey in the negotiations.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The meeting closed at 14.51