



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

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Brussels, 25 March 2015

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2120th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 18 March 2015

(morning)

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Single sitting: Wednesday 18 March 2015 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.52 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair. Item 12 was chaired in part by Mr TIMMERMANS.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President	
Ms MOGHERINI	High Representative / Vice-President	
Ms GEORGIEVA	Vice-President	
Mr ANSIP	Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Vice-President	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	Items 7 (in part) to 12
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	
Ms THYSSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Lord HILL	Member	
Ms BULC	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms CREȚU	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	
Mr MOEDAS	Member	

Absent:

Mr KATAINEN

Vice-President

Mr HAHN

Member

Ms BIENKOWSKA

Member

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

Ms HARDEMAN	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr KATAINEN
Mr KARNITSCHNIG	Chef de cabinet to Mr HAHN
Mr HUSAK	Chef de cabinet to Ms BIENKOWSKA

The following also sat in:

Mr SELMAYR	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr HETSCH	Deputy Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr PAULGER	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr SCHINAS	Head of the Spokesperson Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms METTLER	Head of the European Political Strategy Centre	
Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr THOLONIAT	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	Items 1 to 10
Mr KASEL	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	Items 8 to 10
Ms ROUCH	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	Items 11 and 12
Ms HOLZNER	A member of Mr OETTINGER's staff	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Ms CHAZE	A member of Mr ANDRIUKAITIS's staff	Items 1 to 7 (in part)

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2015) 2120/FINAL; SEC(2015) 137/2)

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(2015) 2120)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 16 March.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 2117TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (25 FEBRUARY) AND THE MINUTES OF THE 2118TH AND 2119TH MEETING (4 AND 10 MARCH)
(PV(2015) 2117; PV(2015) 2117, 2ND PART; PV(2015) 2118)**

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2117th and 2118th meeting, and decided to hold over for one week approval of the minutes of its 2119th meeting.

4. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

STATE AID AND OTHER COMPETITION RULES

(SEC(2015) 145 TO /3; RCC(2015) 26)

The Commission's decision on this item is recorded in the special minutes.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2015) 138 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 9 and 13 March.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2015) 139 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 9 and 13 March.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2015) 140 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 9 and 13 March, as archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2015) 141)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 16 and 20 March.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2015) 142)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2015) 30)

6.1. DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY – LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE AD14 POST OF DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL (ECDC)

(PERS(2014) 138 TO /4)

The Commission, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr ANDRIUKAITIS and Mr KATAINEN, decided:

- to approve the list of two candidates in alphabetical order laid before it at point 1 of PERS(2015) 30 for the post of Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and to consider this list as the Commission proposal;
- to ask Mr ANDRIUKAITIS, the Commission Member responsible, to communicate this decision to the Management Board of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6.2. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE AD14 POST OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SHIFT2RAIL JOINT UNDERTAKING

(PERS(2014) 125 TO /5)

The Commission, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Ms BULC and Mr KATAINEN and Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, decided:

- not to propose a list of candidates under Council Regulation (EU) 642/2014 on the establishment of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking;
- to inform the Governing Board of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking that a new vacancy notice for the post of executive director would be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and in the press;
- to instruct Ms BULC, the Member of the Commission responsible, to communicate these decisions to the Governing Board of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6.3. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER LEAVING OFFICE

(C(2015) 1328)

The Commission adopted the Decision set out in C(2015) 1328.

The Commission:

- decided that the activity planned by the former Commissioner, Mr Janez POTOČNIK, as President of the Rural Investment Support for Europe Foundation (RISE Foundation), was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

(TFEU) providing Mr POTOČNIK refrained from lobbying the Commission and/or its departments for eighteen months after leaving the Commission should the RISE Foundation decide to become involved in specific projects linked to the environment and ask for financial support from the European Union, and, more generally, in favour of the RISE Foundation and/or the interests of the bodies it supports;

- decided that the activity planned by Mr POTOČNIK as Ambassador for the Global Alliance on Health and Pollution was compatible with Article 245(2) TFEU;
- instructed the Secretary-General to inform Mr POTOČNIK of this decision and to draw his attention to the conditions related to the first of his planned activities.

6.4. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER LEAVING OFFICE
(C(2015) 1422)

The Commission adopted the Decision set out in C(2015) 1422.

The Commission decided that the gainful activity planned by the former Vice-President of the Commission, Mr Siim KALLAS, as Visiting Professor for European Transport Policy at the Tallinn University of Technology, was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provided that Mr KALLAS fulfilled his obligations under Articles 245(2) and 339 TFEU and section 1.7 of the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, and more precisely, that he acted with discretion at all times and protected collective responsibility and confidentiality in respect of matters covered by the Commission during his two terms of office.

The Commission instructed the Secretary-General to inform Mr KALLAS of this decision and the above conditions.

6.5. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER LEAVING OFFICE

(C(2015) 1610)

The Commission adopted the Decision set out in C(2015) 1610.

The Commission:

- decided that the activity planned by the former Commissioner, Mr Karel DE GUCHT, as Professor of European Law at the *Vrije Universiteit Brussel*, was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) providing Mr DE GUCHT protected collective responsibility and confidentiality in respect of matters covered by the Commission during his term of office;
- decided that the activity planned by Mr DE GUCHT as a member of the Management Board of Belgacom was compatible with Article 245(2) TFEU, provided that Mr DE GUCHT refrained from lobbying the Commission and/or its departments for eighteen months after leaving the Commission on behalf of Belgacom, and that he protected collective responsibility and confidentiality in respect of matters covered by the Commission during his two terms of office;
- decided that the activities planned by Mr DE GUCHT as President of the Institute of European Studies at the *Vrije Universiteit Brussel* and a member of the Management Board of *Merit Capital NV* were compatible with Article 254 TFEU;
- instructed the Secretary General to inform Mr DE GUCHT of this decision and to draw his attention to the conditions related to some of his

planned activities.

**6.6. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER
LEAVING OFFICE
(C(2015) 1611)**

The Commission adopted the Decision set out in C(2015) 1611.

The Commission:

- decided that the activity planned by former Commissioner Ms Androulla VASSILIOU as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Cyprus Research and Educational Foundation was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), provided that Ms VASSILIOU refrained from lobbying the Commission and/or its departments for 18 months after leaving office, should the Cyprus Institute and/or the Cyprus Research and Educational Foundation decide to apply for financial support from the European Union;
- decided that the activity planned by Ms VASSILIOU as a representative of the Republic of Cyprus on the High Council of the European University Institute was compatible with Article 245(2) TFEU;
- instructed the Secretary-General to inform Ms VASSILIOU of its decision and to draw her attention to the conditions relating to the first of her planned activities.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1. PREPARATION OF DECISIONS RELATING TO OFFICIALS IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSTS

The PRESIDENT wished to inform the College of his intentions regarding the decisions to be taken in June concerning officials in senior management posts.

In so far as the current Commission had already embarked on numerous changes affecting the entire institution and its teams since the start of its term, his first reaction was that he was not in favour of additional changes being made for the sake of it. He went on to explain that he considered it preferable in some cases to prioritise the stability of high-performing teams rather than a strict and automatic application of mobility rules. For this reason, he wanted to make only changes that were necessary, based mainly on the 'people first' principle and on the need for interaction and empathy between the Commissioner and Director-General concerned. Finally, even though the President of the Commission was responsible for decisions relating to senior management, he intended to use his prerogatives in total harmony with the Vice-Presidents and Members of the Commission.

The PRESIDENT outlined the three-step procedure that he intended to follow.

First, he invited each Member of the Commission to submit to him, before the end of April, the names of three people they would like to see appointed as Director-General for the Directorates-General under their responsibility, taking into account the need for an extremely close relationship between them. He stated that this list could include the current Director-General, whatever their length of service in the post, and added that he would like there

to be at least one woman on each list, in line with his shared goal with Ms GEORGIEVA for the percentage of women in management roles at the Commission to reach 40 % by the end of the current term.

Secondly, in May the PRESIDENT would consult the Vice-Presidents on the lists submitted and would ask for their opinion, in the spirit of the new Commission's working methods.

Thirdly, he stated his intention of attempting, on the basis of the final list that he would draw up at the end of this consultation and as far as possible, to satisfy each Member of the Commission and to make proposals for decisions by the end of June so that the new Directors-General would be appointed before the summer. His choice would take into account geographical and male/female balances and personal preferences, so as to form competent teams that would work harmoniously together.

The PRESIDENT concluded by thanking the Members of the Commission in advance for their understanding and commitment in supplying him with the lists of names mentioned. He assured them of his wish to do everything in his power to ensure that the institution worked as a closely-knit and dynamic team driven by a commitment to excellence.

The Commission took note of this information.

7.2. LATEST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

The Commission discussed in detail the economic situation in Greece and its development in the past few weeks.

8. **COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON TAX TRANSPARENCY TO FIGHT TAX EVASION AND AVOIDANCE
(COM(2015) 136 AND /2; RCC(2015) 25/2)**

9. **PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DIRECTIVE AMENDING DIRECTIVE 2011/16/EU AS REGARDS MANDATORY AUTOMATIC EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION IN THE FIELD OF TAXATION
(COM(2015) 135 AND /2; SWD(2015) 60 AND /2; RCC(2015) 25/2)**

10. **PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DIRECTIVE REPEALING COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2003/48/EC
(COM(2015) 129; RCC(2015) 25/2)**

Mr MOSCOVICI presented the initiatives tabled for adoption by the College that day, on which agreement had already been reached during the preparatory work on the dossier. These important proposals marked a significant stage in the implementation of the PRESIDENT's political guidelines and in the Commission's commitment to enhance tax transparency and tackle opaque and abusive tax practices, which had no place in the internal market. The proposals also responded to public expectations in Europe.

This package of measures was intended to ensure greater transparency in a field which had been totally opaque until now by making the exchange of information on tax rulings between the Member States mandatory and automatic; this obligation would apply to all tax rulings issued in the last ten years. His view was that this would rectify the unfair competition resulting in certain cases from the use of these

instruments.

Mr MOSCOVICI stressed that this initiative had to be understood as supplementing the investigations and requests for information by Commission departments to Member States concerning these tax practices.

He intended to present in June an action plan setting out the areas where action was needed to ensure that companies' profits were taxed in the country where they actually carried on their activities. This initiative would complete the step taken that day to guarantee corporate taxation that respected tax competition but that was also fairer and more efficient, and to ensure that this tax competition was not harmful. In this context, he would call on the Commission to consider the future of the draft Directive on a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) and to examine whether it wished to go further by proceeding with public disclosure of tax rulings.

Mr MOSCOVICI ended his presentation by welcoming the spirit of cooperation and the constructive approach that had been a feature of the preparatory work for the College on this set of tax transparency measures, and he hoped that the Commission would approach the next stage in the same spirit, spurred on by the PRESIDENT's wish to go further in this field.

At the end of this presentation, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2015) 136/2 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Council Directive set out in COM(2015) 135/2, for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments, together with

the staff working document distributed as SWD(2015) 60/2, the contents of which were noted;

- adopted the proposal for a Council Directive set out in COM(2015) 129, for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and to the national parliaments.

11. OTHER BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

EURONEWS

(INFO(2015) 24/2)

Mr OETTINGER informed the Members of the Commission of a number of pieces of information that he felt should be brought to their attention concerning the television channel Euronews, which were set out in the information note that he had circulated in agreement with Mr ANSIP.

Mr OETTINGER noted first the task given to Euronews when it was set up in 1993 by a group of European public broadcasters, i.e. to provide an international news service for a pan-European audience. He went on to point out that the broadcasters in question, including France Télévisions and RAI in particular, were the joint shareholders in Euronews.

From the outset, the Commission for its part had been providing financial support for the channel's programmes and language services, which had developed over the years to number thirteen broadcast languages today: eight European languages as well as Arabic, Farsi, Russian, Turkish and Ukrainian.

In 2015, the Commission's contribution would be the channel's primary source of revenue, amounting to 36 % and EUR 26 million, followed by advertising income equivalent to EUR 20.3 million. These figures should be seen in the context of the

contributions by the shareholders, which had declined steadily since 2008, and which this year would be only EUR 2.5 million, i.e. 3.45 % of income.

Euronews was therefore in a delicate financial situation, against the background of the digital transition, a situation reflected in a significant shortfall in resources, due in particular to the approximately EUR 10 million in arrears owed by NTU, the Ukrainian public broadcasting company.

To remedy this, the managers of Euronews had started to look for new investors, and a new shareholder had finally been found, an Egyptian businessman who was to acquire 53 % of the share capital following a capital injection by the company Euronews and who wished to invest between EUR 30 and 40 million over the next six years.

In this context, Mr OETTINGER highlighted the importance to the Commission of maintaining both the impartiality and editorial independence of Euronews and the European perspective of the news that it provided. That was why the Commission had opened a strategic dialogue with the channel in order to define a common vision of its future, in particular through a more developed digital presence and more effective language coverage, but also through governance arrangements allowing Euronews to continue to fulfil its task in complete independence. A technical and operational dialogue with the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CNECT) was also in progress and further meetings would take place over the coming weeks. Euronews would present a document summarising these discussions in June.

He then mentioned the issues raised by the broadcasting of Russian-language news services and the participation of a new Ukrainian shareholder to replace NTU. He indicated the name of the new Ukrainian partner, Mr Dmytro Firtash.

He ended by stressing the intrinsic value of Euronews' capacity to reach out to audiences in Europe and beyond.

During the ensuing discussion, the Commission focused mainly on: the need to ensure that Euronews retained its pan-European dimension in the context of the digital transition and the approach that would ultimately be adopted to resolve the channel's current funding problems; the prime importance of safeguarding the channel's editorial independence and support for the measures proposed to achieve that goal; the role of Euronews' services as a source of objective news outside Europe and a reminder of the high audience figures in certain neighbouring countries in particular; questions too, however, about the number of viewers in Europe, which was particularly low in certain Member States, and the conclusions to be drawn from this.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr OETTINGER for this information. He was convinced that there was a place for Euronews as a pan-European channel and stressed the need to take into account its popularity outside the Union. He therefore called for everything to be done in the coming weeks and months to guarantee the editorial independence and quality of programmes on all the channel's services.

The Commission took note of this information and of the note distributed under the authority of Mr ANSIP and Mr OETTINGER as INFO(2015) 24/2.

12. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2015) 24)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 13 March (RCC(2015) 24).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

12.1. EARLY WARNING

- i) Amendment of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) 966/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (Regulation) – GRÄSSLE report – 2014/0180 (COD)**

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 94 and /2.

12.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

- ii) Council dossiers**

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Directive 98/70/EC relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels and amendment of Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (Directive) – TORVALDS report – 2012/0288 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 85/2.

- European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol) and repeal of Decisions 2009/371/JHA and 2005/681/JHA (Regulation) – DÍAZ DE MERA GARCÍA report – 2013/0091 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 86.

- Establishment of a European Union agency for law enforcement training (Cepol), repeal and replacement of Council Decision 2005/681/JHA (Regulation) – GÁL report – 2014/0217 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 87.

12.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL**iii) Programming of Council business**

(SI(2015) 99)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2015) 99 on the Council meetings between 19 March and 1 April.

iv) Preparation of Spring European Council (Brussels, 19 and 20 March)

The PRESIDENT opened the discussion on the preparation of the European Council to be held in Brussels on 19 and 20 March by outlining the main items that would be on the agenda.

In this context he spoke about the economic situation in Greece, reviewing the events of the last few weeks and taking stock of the negotiations and technical discussions under way with the Greek authorities. He stressed in particular the difficult deadlines that were coming up very soon for the Greek Government to abide by its obligations. At a one-to-one meeting in Brussels on 13 March he had reminded the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsípras, that the Commission was willing to help Greece, provided that it met its commitments. Nevertheless, the PRESIDENT was worried at how long it was taking to resolve the Greek crisis and he intended to issue a general wake-up call, on the one hand to avoid Greece leaving the euro area, which no one wanted, and on the other to ensure that the country embarked on the reforms that it desperately needed to secure its future.

He asked Mr TIMMERMANS to chair the rest of the discussion in his absence, as he would shortly be meeting the French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, for bilateral talks before a working lunch with the whole College of Commissioners.

Taking over the chair, Mr TIMMERMANS began with the subject of the Commission's proposal on Energy Union. He was pleased to note that the framework that had been presented had received widespread approval from the Member States, as stated in the draft conclusions, the main points of which he outlined. He took the opportunity to thank Mr ŠEFČOVIČ and Mr ARIAS CAÑETE for their excellent work.

He noted that the economic situation in Europe would be discussed in connection with the European Semester. The talks would also focus on the general approach to be followed in relation to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). Since a broad consensus on this issue was emerging in the European Council, he called on the Members of the Commission to remain in close contact with Members of the European Parliament so that the EFSI could be fully operational towards the middle of the year.

He noted that the negotiations on the future trade and investment agreement with the United States (TTIP) would also be mentioned and announced that the PRESIDENT intended to appeal to the Heads of State or Government to stand side-by-side with the Commission in defending the merits of this agreement vis-à-vis their national public opinion.

Turning to external relations, Mr TIMMERMANS referred chiefly to the conflict in Ukraine and the tensions with Russia, two issues which would also be discussed by the Heads of State or Government. He asked Ms MOGHERINI to report on the general situation and also on the progress of the discussions on Libya.

With regard to Ukraine and Russia, Ms MOGHERINI explained that the situation had not changed significantly with respect to the detailed information on this matter she had given the Commission the previous week. Discussions were under way on the possible renewal of sanctions against Russia. She reiterated that sanctions would continue to be necessary until

Ukraine's borders were fully controlled by the national authorities and the Minsk agreements were implemented by Russia. At present, what was most important was to keep Europe united on this matter. The European Council would be announcing when it intended, if necessary, to take the actual decision on whether or not to extend the sanctions.

Turning to Libya, she reported on the results of the Foreign Affairs Council meeting the previous Monday. Those present had stated their willingness to explore all avenues for stepping up EU aid to Libya, except for the option of a measure coming under the Common Security and Defence Policy, once the local warring militias had agreed on the principle of a government of national unity and on the means of restoring security in the country. A request had been addressed to her personally to submit, as quickly as possible, proposals in this connection, of which she would inform the European Council, so that specific measures could be adopted by the Foreign Ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council in April. On a general note, she stressed the need for coordination on the issue of Libya between the EU and the UN and the governments of the Arab countries.

During the discussion which followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- the deep concern caused by the economic situation in Greece; the need for the Greek government to adopt a clearer, more coherent and responsible approach in order to address the urgent situation of its imminent payment deadlines and be able to plan ahead on the basis of the necessary reforms;
- the announcement that this Friday an agreement would be signed in Ukraine between Ukraine and the Horizon 2020 Research Programme, a significant political gesture for both Ukraine and the Union;
- as regards Libya, the difficulty that the instability of the country posed for

the Union and the fact that there was no Libyan interlocutor to address the urgent and sensitive issue of migration; the need for European solidarity with the Member States most affected by the flow of refugees from Libya or in transit through Libya; the need for a political dialogue with all the Arab Spring countries in order to seek comprehensive solutions; at the same time, the urgent need for specific measures to decisively tackle trafficking and smuggling.

The Commission took note of this information.

v) Non-legislative dossiers

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- European patent with unitary effect – Level of annual fees

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 92.

- EU-Chile Association Council

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2015) 93.

- EU Sahel Strategy – Regional Action Plan

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2015) 97.

12.4. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

vi) Results of Parliament's March I part-session

(SP(2015) 143; SP(2015) 144)

The Commission took note of the information in SP(2015) 143 and SP(2015) 144 on the proceedings of the part-session of Parliament held in Strasbourg from 9 to 12 March.

vii) Action to be taken on Parliament's legislative resolutions and other resolutions of a legal nature

(SP(2015) 164)

The Commission decided to empower the Commission Members responsible for the sectors in question, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr TIMMERMANS and, if necessary, with the other Members concerned, to adopt the amended proposals for transmission to Parliament and the Council, as set out in SP(2015) 164, drawn up following the March I part-session of Parliament, the contents of which were noted.

viii) External financing instruments and the European Development Fund – Guidelines on applying the Strategic Dialogue with the European Parliament

(point 5.9 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2015) 104.

12.5. RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS, THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

ix) Action taken on opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – 4th two-month period 2014 (September and October)

(point 6.3.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the replies to the opinions adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee during the fourth two-month period of 2014, contained in the document distributed as SC(2015) 9, for transmission to that Committee.

**x) Follow-up to Committee of the Regions opinions – Sixty-first report
– October 2014 plenary session**
(point 6.4.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the replies to the opinions adopted by the Committee of the Regions during the October 2014 plenary session, contained in the document distributed as SR(2015) 4/3, for transmission to that Committee.

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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 11.46.