



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

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Brussels, 5 October 2000

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

DRAFT MINUTES

of the 1494th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill Building)

on Wednesday 4 October 2000

(morning)

PV(2000)1494

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Single sitting: Wednesday 4 October (morning)

The sitting opened at 0930 hours with Mr Prodi, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr PRODI	President
Mr KINNOCK	Vice-President
Ms de PALACIO	Vice-President
Mr MONTI	
Mr FISCHLER	
Mr LIIKANEN	
Mr BOLKESTEIN	
Mr BUSQUIN	
Mr SOLBES	
Mr VERHEUGEN	
Mr PATTEN	
Mr LAMY	
Mr BYRNE	
Mr BARNIER	
Ms REDING	
Ms SCHREYER	
Mr VITORINO	
Ms DIAMANTOPOULOU	

Absent:

Mr NIELSON
Ms WALLSTRÖM

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission

Mr NEMITZ	A member of Mr Nielson's staff
Ms BENGTTSSON	A member of Ms Wallström's staff

The following also sat in

Mr DEWOST	Director-General of the Legal Service
Mr PETITE	Chef de cabinet to the President
Mr FAULL	Commission Spokesman
Mr VÉRON	Spokesman
Mr KREUZHUBER	Spokesman
Mr EECKHOUT	Director SG.E
Mr CALLEJA	Chef de cabinet to Ms de Palacio
Mr FONSECA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr Vitorino
Ms WEYAND	A member of Mr Lamy's staff
Ms BARDENHEWER	A member of Mr Byrne's staff
Mr CHANTERIE	A member of Ms Reding's staff

Secretary: Mr O'SULLIVAN, Secretary-General, assisted by Mr BISARRE, Director in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2000)1494/3; SEC(2000)1605/2)

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

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET

(SEC(2000)1494)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 2 October.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 1493rd MEETING (27 September)

(PV(2000)1493; PV(2000)1493, Part II)

The Commission approved the minutes and special minutes of its 1493rd meeting.

4. PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS GROUP

(SP(2000)3549)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Parliamentary Affairs Group held on Friday 29 September.

It paid particular attention to the following:

- **Interinstitutional relations** (point 1 of the record)

CODECISION PROCEDURE, ARTICLE 251

- . Animal nutrition: official inspections, 98/0301 (COD)

The Commission decided to support the compromise reached between the co-legislators, as set out in SP(2000)3512, with an eye to formal adoption as an 'A' item at the conciliation committee meeting planned for 11 October on the rail infrastructure package.

- . Rail infrastructure package, 98/0265-0266-0267 (COD)

With a view to the conciliation committee meeting planned for 11 October, the Commission decided to adopt the line set out in SP(2000)3513/2.

INFORMING PARLIAMENT ABOUT THE COMMISSION'S WEEKLY MEETING

- . Commission communication on decisions taken at its 1494th meeting
(4 October - plenary session)

The Commission decided that this communication would be made by Mr BUSQUIN on the completion of the European research area (guidelines 2002-06) or, failing that, by Mr PATTEN on the amended proposals on aid to Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and on the European Agency for Reconstruction (items 9 and 12 of the present agenda respectively).

- . Commission communication on decisions taken at its 1495th meeting
(11 October - no plenary session)

At this stage, and if an open Conference of Presidents should be held, the Commission decided that this communication would be made by

Mr VITORINO on the Charter of Fundamental Rights or, failing that, by
Mr LIIKANEN on implementation of the "e-Europe" action plan.

- **Political preparations for October part-session**

(point 2 of the record)

The Commission, in accordance with the rules in force, authorised the
Commission Members responsible, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and
Ms de PALACIO and any other Members concerned, to take a position on
Parliament's amendments to its proposals.

It paid particular attention to the following:

1ST READING AND SIMPLE CONSULTATION

- . EVANS report, Mobility within the Community for students, persons
undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers,
COM(1999)708 - 00/0021 (COD)

The decisions on this report are set out under item 10 of the present minutes.

- . CASHMAN report, Proposal for a Council Decision establishing a
Community action programme to combat discrimination,
COM(1999)567 - 1999/0251 (CNS)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2000)3501/2, involving the
rejection of certain amendments.

- . MANN report, Proposal for a Council Directive establishing a general
framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation,
COM(1999)565 - 1999/0225 (CNS)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2000)3508/2, involving the
rejection of certain amendments.

DELEGATION OF POWERS

The Commission, acting under Article 13 of its Rules of Procedure, empowered Ms DIAMANTOPOULOU, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and the Member responsible for relations with Parliament and any other Members concerned, to adopt and transmit to the Council, once Parliament had given its view, its amended proposals, on the basis of the line set out in SP(2000)3501/2 and SP(2000)3508/2, for the following matters:

- . CASHMAN report, Proposal for a Council Decision establishing a Community action programme to combat discrimination, COM(1999)567 - 1999/0251 (CNS)
- . MANN report, Proposal for a Council Directive establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, COM(1999)565 - 1999/0225 (CNS)
- **Action taken on Parliament's opinions and resolutions**
(point 5 of the record)

The Commission decided to adopt and transmit to Parliament the replies to own-initiative resolutions adopted by Parliament to which the Commission had undertaken to reply (SP(2000)3451).

- **Miscellaneous** (item 8 of the record)

ROTA FOR COMMISSION MEMBERS ON THURSDAY AFTERNOONS IN 2000

The Commission adopted the new rota set out in Annex IV of the record.

**5. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW: STATE AID
AND INFRINGEMENTS**

(SEC(2000)1620)

5.1. NOTIFIED AID

N 324/99

IRELAND

Western Investment Fund - Corrigendum

(SEC(2000)580 and /2)

Decision: Further to its decision to raise no objection taken on 11 April (PV(2000)1474, item 11, page 13), to approve the corrected text of the decision, following a clerical error, as set out in SEC(2000)580/2.

N 476/99

AUSTRIA

**Economic promotion in Lower Austria under the Objective 2
programme for 2000-06**

(SEC(2000)1592)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1592.

N 577/99

NETHERLANDS

**One-time subsidy for the construction of intermodal terminal
infrastructure for ECT and RSC Rotterdam**

(SEC(2000)1599 to /3)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1599/3.

N 655/99 and N 656/99 UNITED KINGDOM

Property for Business - Partnership Development

(SEC(2000)1590)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1590.

N 714/99 GERMANY

Aid for Ganzliner Beschichtungspulver GmbH

(SEC(2000)1589 and /2)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding that the measure did not constitute aid, as set out in SEC(2000)1589/2.

N 768/99 GERMANY

Support for innovative networks (InnoNet)

(SEC(2000)1596 and /2)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1596/2.

N 950/99 SPAIN

Individual aid for Aero Transport Internacional, SA

(SEC(2000)1579)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1579.

N 16/2000 GERMANY

Aid for FilmTec GmbH - Corrigendum

(SEC(2000)1172/3)

Decision: Further to its decision to raise no objection taken on 12 July (PV(2000)1487, item 6.1.1, page 18), to approve the corrected text of the decision, following a clerical error, as set out in SEC(2000)1172/3.

N 172/2000 IRELAND

Seed and venture capital scheme

(SEC(2000)1584)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding that the scheme did not constitute aid, as set out in SEC(2000)1584.

N 236/A/2000 ITALY

Employment aid scheme: Measures to regularise the underground economy

(SEC(2000)1594 to /4)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1594/4.

N 531/2000 FINLAND

Shipbuilding - operating aid linked to contracts

(SEC(2000)1591 and /2)

Decision: to raise no objection, considering the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty since it was in conformity with Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1540/98 of 29 June 1998, as set out in SEC(2000)1591/2.

N 540/2000 FRANCE

Reform of the system for operating motorway concessions

(SEC(2000)1598 and /2)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1598/2.

N 541/2000

GREECE

Aid for Olympic Airways

(SEC(2000)1595 and /2)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1595/2.

5.2. AID NOT NOTIFIED

NN 15/2000

UNITED KINGDOM

Civil aircraft research and technology demonstration programme

(CARAD)

(SEC(2000)1588)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1588.

NN 62/2000

FRANCE

Temporary aid scheme for businesses affected by bad weather and oil slicks

(SEC(2000)1586)

Decision: to raise no objection, holding the aid to be compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1586.

NN 70/2000

ITALY

Tax measures for banks and banking foundations

(SEC(2000)1597)

Decision: to open proceedings under Article 88(2) of the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1597.

NN 76/2000 (ex N 165/2000) ITALY

Measures to assist stockfarming and promote the quality and hygiene standards of milk products

(SEC(2000)1582)

Decision: to recommend reviewing the aid provided for in Article 5.3 of Provincial Law No 10/99 and to raise no objection, holding that part of the measures did not constitute aid and that the remainder were compatible with the EC Treaty, as set out in SEC(2000)1582.

5.3. 'C' AID

C 31/99 (ex N 704/98) PORTUGAL

Aid for the pig sector

(SEC(2000)1447 and /2)

Decision: to terminate the Article 88(2) proceedings by adopting a negative final decision, with recovery, as set out in SEC(2000)1447/2.

C 40/99 (ex NN 178/97) BELGIUM

Aid for Verlipack, Wallonia

(SEC(2000)1400 and /2)

Decision: to terminate the Article 88(2) proceedings by revoking the Commission's decision of 16 September 1998 and by adopting a negative final decision with recovery, as set out in SEC(2000)1400/2.

C 45/99 (ex NN 43/99) FRANCE

Investment aid for Myriad - ECSC steel

(SEC(2000)1583)

Decision: to terminate the proceedings under Article 6(5) of Decision 2496/96/ECSC, noting that the aid had been reimbursed and that the situation was in order, in accordance with the decision set out in SEC(2000)1583.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2000)1606 to /5; SEC(2000)1607)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted by written procedure between 25 and 29 September.

6.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2000)1608)

At the request of Mr NIELSON, the Commission decided that the draft agreement between the Republic of Albania and the European Commission on the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid would be the subject of an accelerated written procedure.

6.3. DELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2000)1609 to /5; SEC(2000)1610 to /4)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation procedure between 25 and 29 September.

6.4. GENERAL DELEGATION OF POWERS IN THE FIELD OF AGREEMENTS ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION IN RELATION TO CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT, CERTIFICATES AND MARKINGS CONCLUDED BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES *(SEC(2000)1617)*

The Commission adopted the delegation of powers decision set out at point IV of SEC(2000)1617.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2000)1611/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

DG ESTAT - Extension of leave on personal grounds for an A2 official

On a proposal from Mr KINNOCK, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr SOLBES, the Commission decided to extend the leave on personal grounds under Article 40 of the Staff Regulations of Ms BARREIROS, A2 official in Eurostat, for a further six months (from 1 October 2000 to 30 April 2001).

8. MAKING A REALITY OF THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA:
GUIDELINES FOR EU RESEARCH ACTIVITIES (2002-06)
(COM(2000)612 to /3; SEC(2000)1621)

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2000)612/5 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

It noted that further preparatory work for the forthcoming proposals would be carried out in close cooperation with all the Commission Members and departments concerned.

9. BANANA IMPORT REGIME
(COM(2000)621 to /3; SEC(2000)1631)

The Commission adopted the communication in SEC(2000)621/2 for transmission to the Council and, for information, to Parliament.

10. PARLIAMENT (continued from item 4)

***EVANS REPORT, MOBILITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY FOR STUDENTS,
PERSONS UNDERGOING TRAINING, YOUNG VOLUNTEERS, TEACHERS
AND TRAINERS***

(COM(1999)708 - 00/0021 (COD); SP(2000)3507 to /3)

Ms REDING referred to certain of Parliament's amendments (numbers 46 to 51) to the draft Parliament and Council Recommendation on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers. The amendments would confer on the Commission the task of closely monitoring and systematically assessing the implementation of the national action plans for mobility.

She reminded the meeting that at its meeting of 26 July the Commission had decided, in the light of the conclusions of the work of the *Peer Group* on the optimum allocation of human resources in accordance with the institution's political priorities, that in future any new tasks would be taken on by the Commission only on condition that the budgetary authority grants the necessary resources.

Since the Council and Parliament set much store by the introduction of these mobility programmes, she proposed accepting amendments 46 to 51 "in principle" on the understanding that the Commission could make no commitment on their actual implementation until the budgetary authority had provided the necessary resources.

Following a brief exchange of views, the Commission decided to word its position on these amendments in a firm and detailed way, i.e.:

- to reject the proposals for amendment;

- to explain that this was a general position, which applied not only to this proposal for a recommendation but also to other proposals, some of which Parliament was dealing with at the same meeting.

The Commission stated that this position would be presented in detail to the press.

Subject to this amendment of the position to take on amendments 46 to 51, the Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2000)3507 to /3.

11. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (continued from item 7)

Mr KINNOCK reported on the exchange of views held over lunch at the Council meeting (Economic and Financial Affairs) on 29 September on the budgetary cost of the Commission's administrative reform.

The Council had sought assurances on the timetable for the presentation of the proposals for regulations and on their impact budgetary before committing itself to the principle of an extension for two years of the current system for the annual adjustment of remunerations and pensions, and on the content of the letter of amendment to the preliminary draft budget for 2001.

On the basis of assurances given by Mr KINNOCK, particularly as regards keeping within the ceiling of heading 5 of the financial perspective, the Council Presidency would send the Commission President a letter formalising its support for the planned reform.

Mr KINNOCK noted that this favourable reception at ministerial level had not been reflected in the Council's Budgetary Committee, which had granted only 280 new posts out of the 400 requested in the preliminary draft budget for 2001 and had taken a negative position on the early retirement plan.

The Commission concluded that it needed to review the budgetary decisions taken over recent years, highlighting the discriminatory treatment by the budgetary authority of requests for Commission staff compared with the requests from the other institutions.

**12. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION ON THE COMMON ORGANISATION
OF THE MARKETS IN THE SUGAR SECTOR
(COM(2000)604 to /5; SEC(2000)1600 and /2)**

Mr FISCHLER presented a proposal for revising the common organisation of the sugar market. This adaptation was presented on an interim basis, for a period covering two marketing years (2001/02 and 2002/03), pending a more fundamental revision which would require in-depth studies on its impact on the sugar sector itself, alternative crops, support for the industry, employment, consumers, the overseas countries and territories and the least-developed countries.

The revision proposed for the immediate future covered:

- the freezing of institutional prices over the whole period; the option of a reduction in prices had been ruled out as it would have to be accompanied by at least partial compensation for producers, which would have budgetary consequences incompatible with the ceiling for heading 1 of the financial perspective;
- the abolition of the obligation on producers to maintain minimum stocks;
- the coverage from production levies of the entire refunds granted to production for the chemical industry (integral self-financing).

The Commission held a wide-ranging debate on:

- the duration of the interim period (two or three years) to enable certain regions - particularly the outermost regions - to adapt in the best conditions with a view to reform of the system;
- the advisability of giving a clear signal as from the interim stage by means of a slight reduction in institutional prices;
- the precise definition of the object of the studies to be carried out with a view to the revision in greater depth of the common organisation of the sugar market.

The Commission decided:

- to amend the explanatory memorandum of the proposal by including not only the least-developed countries (LDCs) but all the developing countries in the impact study to be carried out for the future reform (item 2, 2nd paragraph, page 3 of the explanatory memorandum) and by emphasising the temporary nature of the Commission proposal (item 3, 1st paragraph, page 5 of the explanatory memorandum);
- to maintain the duration of two years for the interim system;
- to ask Mr FISCHLER, in consultation with all the Members concerned (Ms SCHREYER, Ms DIAMANTOPOULOU, Mr MONTI, Mr LAMY, Mr NIELSON, Mr BARNIER and Mr LIIKANEN) to launch the necessary impact studies with a view to the reform of the common organisation of the sugar market.

Subject to these amendments, and to the legal revision of the regulations, the Commission approved the proposal in COM(2000)604/5 for transmission to the Council, Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee.

**13. AMENDED PROPOSALS FOR COUNCIL REGULATIONS ON
ASSISTANCE FOR ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, CROATIA,
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA AND THE FORMER
YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, AND ON THE EUROPEAN
AGENCY FOR RECONSTRUCTION
(COM(2000)628 to /3)**

Mr PATTEN referred to the proposal for amendments to the Council Regulation on the European Agency for Reconstruction, and in particular the definition of the Agency's role and mandate.

He suggested not introducing, at this stage, in the text of the Regulation itself, the possibility of extending the Agency's activities to the entire geographical area covered by the CARDS Regulation (assistance for Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

Nevertheless, in order to take account of the conclusions of the Feira European Council (19 and 20 June), he proposed the following additional recital in the proposal for a Regulation on the Agency:

"The European Council, meeting in Feira on 19 and 20 June 2000, stressed that the European Agency for Reconstruction, in its capacity as the authority responsible for implementation of the future CARDS programme, must be in a position to make use of its full potential in order to achieve the objectives set at Cologne".

Mr PATTEN also referred to the proposal for the amendment of the CARDS Regulation and agreed to amend Article 8 of the proposal, as suggested by the Legal Service, in order not to mention the Anti-Fraud Office specifically as being entitled, alongside the Court of Auditors, to carry out checks on the spot; the Anti-Fraud Office was already covered in the same article by the reference to "bodies authorised by the Commission".

Subject to these amendments, the Commission approved the communication and the proposals for regulations in COM(2000)628/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The Commission noted the outstanding efficiency of the European Agency for Reconstruction in the implementation of Community aid.

14. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

14.1. VISIT BY Mr LAMY TO ARGENTINA, URUGUAY AND CHILE

Mr LAMY reported on his recent visit to Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, during which he had held talks on trade relations - multilateral (relaunch of the WTO negotiations), regional (negotiations with Mercosur) and bilateral (with Chile).

On the relaunching of the WTO multilateral negotiations, Uruguay and Argentina, which were member countries of the Cairns group, showed little eagerness and even tended to make the agricultural chapter a prerequisite, while Chile was close to the position of the European Union.

Mr LAMY stated that both sets of trade negotiations in progress, between the Community and Mercosur on the one hand, and between the Community and Chile on the other, were making progress, each at their own pace - rapid for Chile, slower for Mercosur.

He reported on the bilateral dispute between the EU and Chile on swordfish catches in Chilean international waters, which Chile had banned in the interests of safeguarding fishery resources and the precautionary principle. He proposed exploring all the possibilities for settling this dispute, so as to avoid resorting to the WTO dispute settlement system.

More generally, he repeated the recommendation he had already made after his visit to Brazil that the Union should strive for a stronger and more visible presence in Latin America.

The Commission decided to organise a debate on this subject and on the need to develop a coordinated approach towards these countries, involving a number of policies (including telecommunications).

14.2. SERBIA

AFTER THE ELECTIONS: PREPARATIONS FOR A NEWLY DEMOCRATIC SERBIA (SEC(2000)1643)

Mr PATTEN presented an information note on the various political scenarios that might take shape after the elections in Serbia, and the alternative instruments, adapted to the circumstances, that the Union could use in its political and financial assistance to Serbia.

The Commission took note of SEC(2000)1643 and also noted that this item might be brought up at the Council meeting (General Affairs) on 9 October.

Mr PATTEN informed the meeting of his intention to have proposals adopted by written procedure for Council Regulations seeking to terminate the embargoes on flights and oil deliveries between the Community and certain territories of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

This procedure needed to be handled urgently so that the Commission proposals would be available when the Council was ready to adopt them.

15. OTHER BUSINESS

15.1. INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON INSTITUTIONAL REFORM - RESPECT FOR DEMOCRATIC VALUES (SEC(2000)1627 to /3)

Mr BARNIER referred to Article 7 of the Union Treaty, which enabled the European Council to determine the existence of a serious and persistent breach of the fundamental principles on which the Union was based, and presented a proposal for the amendment of this Article seeking to introduce an arrangement for a political dialogue and providing for preventive measures to supplement the *ex post* sanctions instrument.

He reminded the meeting that the Intergovernmental Conference had received several proposals on this subject (Belgium, Austria, Portuguese Presidency) and that the Commission should make use of its right of initiative.

The Commission approved the draft amendment to Article 7 of the Treaty in SEC(2000)1627/3, which would be submitted to the Intergovernmental Conference.

15.2. THE EUROPEAN UNION'S OIL SUPPLIES (COM(2000)631 to /3)

Ms de PALACIO presented a communication on the European Union's oil supplies, which, after an analysis of the current situation and the medium- and long-term prospects, reviewed the various possible actions, and proposed some elements of a genuine strategy for this sector.

After a debate which highlighted the need:

- to add, in the analysis and the proposals for action, considerations relating to the impact of oil price rises on the developing countries, and therefore

on the need to amend the Union's development aid and external relations policies;

- to maintain the idea of seeking a Community mechanism enabling VAT revenue to be stabilised in the event of major fluctuations in oil prices, in order to reduce the inflationary multiplier effect of this *ad valorem* tax;
- to take into account the social impact of the price rises, particularly on the reduction in the number of jobs created, and on people living below the poverty line;
- to widen the approach concerning the strengthening of cooperation with Russia;

the Commission decided to empower the President, in agreement with Ms de PALACIO, and in the light of the comments made during the meeting, to finalise the text of the communication in COM(2000)631/2 and /3 for transmission to the Council, Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee.

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The meeting closed at 1215 hours.