



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2004)1678 final

Strasbourg, 16 November 2004

MINUTES
of the 1678th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Breydel)
on Wednesday 10 November 2004
(morning)

These minutes were approved by the Commission at its 1679th meeting, held in Strasbourg on 16 November 2004.

They contain 15 pages.

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Single sitting: Wednesday 10 November (morning)

The sitting opened at 0915 hours with Mr Prodi, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr PRODI

President

Mr KINNOCK

Vice-President

Mr MONTI

Items 1 to 9

Mr FISCHLER

Mr BOLKESTEIN

Mr VERHEUGEN

Mr LAMY

Ms REDING

Ms SCHREYER

M_S WALLSTRÖM

Mr VITORINO

Mr DIMAS

Mr BARROT

Mr ALMUNIA

Ms HÜBNER

Mr KALLAS

Mr BORG

Ms KALNIETE

Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ

Mr POTOČNIK

Items 9 to 10

Mr FIGEL

Mr KYPRIANOU

Mr TELIČKA

Mr REHN

Mr MICHEL

Absent:

Ms de PALACIO

Vice-President

Mr NIELSON

Mr PATTEN

Mr BYRNE

Mr BALÁZS

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission

Mr CALLEJA	Chef de cabinet to Ms de Palacio
Mr MØRCH	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr Nielson
Mr ROCK	A member of Mr Patten's staff
Mr POWER	Chef de cabinet to Mr Byrne
Mr SZÜCS	Chef de cabinet to Mr BALÁZS

The following also sat in

Mr PETITE	Director-General, Legal Service
Mr MANSERVISI	Chef de cabinet to the President
Mr DE OLIVEIRA E SOUSA	Director-General, Press and Communication
Ms LAMELA DIAZ	Chef de cabinet to Mr Almunia
Mr THOMAS	Spokesman
Mr CARVOUNIS	Press and Communication DG

Secretary: Mr O'SULLIVAN, Secretary-General, assisted by Mr KERSTING, Unit Head in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2004)1678/3; SEC(2004)1384/2)

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(2004)1678)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 8 November.

3. MINUTES OF 1677th MEETING (3 November)

(PV(2004)1677)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1677th meeting.

4. PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS GROUP

(SP(2004)2719)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Parliamentary Affairs Group held on 4 November (SP(2004)2719).

It paid particular attention to the following:

- i) Preparations for November part-session
(point 2.4 of the record)

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

It considered the following item in particular:

- CORBEY Report - Packaging and packaging waste - COM(2004)127, 04/0045 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)2717.

- ii) **Action taken on Parliament's opinions and resolutions**
(point 5 of the record)

The Commission adopted the replies to own-initiative resolutions adopted by Parliament to which the Commission had undertaken to reply (SP(2004)2716), for transmission to Parliament.

- iii) **Miscellaneous**
(point 8 of the record)

Procedure for approving the new Commission

As regards the timetable planned for the procedure for approving the Barroso Commission, the Commission took note of the following factors:

- the hearings of the new Commissioners-designate would take place on Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 November. During the hearings, Parliament would not meet in plenary;
- on Wednesday 17 November, Mr BARROSO would address Parliament in plenary;

- Parliament would vote on Thursday 18 November;
- the Council was expected to approve the new Commission on Friday 19 November;
- the new Commission would then take office on Monday 22 November at 00.00 hours.

2003 discharge

The Commission noted that Parliament was planning to maintain the timetable for the hearings of certain current (acting) Commission Members and certain Members of the new Commission in the Committee on Budgetary Control.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES AND EMPOWERMENT

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2004)1385 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 3 and 5 November.

5.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2004)1386)

The Commission took note of written procedures initiated between 3 and 5 November for the adoption of decisions with political implications.

5.3. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2004)1387 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 3 and 5 November.

5.4. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation procedure between 3 and 5 November, as archived on the "Greffé 2000" (Registry) website.

6. FIRST REPORT ON THE PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUTURE ENLARGEMENT OF THE EURO AREA (COM(2004)748 to /4; SEC(2004)1383 to /3; SEC(2004)1393)

The Commission approved the report in COM(2004)748/4 for transmission to the Council, Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Central Bank, accompanied by the Commission staff paper distributed as SEC(2004)1383/3.

7. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON THE STRATEGY FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN THIRD COUNTRIES (COM(2004)749 to /5; SEC(2004)1392)

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2004)749/4 and /5 for publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2004)1388/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2004)203)

8.1. DG ADMIN – LANGUAGE RULES - PUBLICATION UNDER
ARTICLE 29(2) - EUR-25 POSTS

On a proposal from Mr KINNOCK, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided that external publications of the vacancy notices for senior management posts in the Official Journal would henceforth be in English, French and German, as recommended in PERS(2004)203. This decision would take immediate effect and apply only until 31 December 2006.

8.2. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF DELAYS IN THE NEW
COMMISSION TAKING OFFICE

The Commission referred to its decisions taken on 13 October 2004 concerning the Directorate-General for Press and Communication (PV(2004)1674, item 12.1. and 12.6.), viz.:

- the position of Mr Reijo KEMPPINEN;
- the amendment of the organisation chart of the Directorate-General.

On a proposal from Mr KINNOCK, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided:

- to set the effective date of the decision concerning Mr Reijo KEMPPINEN at the date when the new Commission took office;

- that the powers inherent in the function of Deputy Director-General of Press and Communication would include the functions of Commission Spokesman only from the date when the new Commission took office.

9. COUNCIL MEETINGS

(SI(2004)896)

9.1. PREPARATIONS FOR EUROPEAN COUNCIL (BRUSSELS, 4 AND 5 NOVEMBER)

(SI(2004)800)

The PRESIDENT reported on the main questions addressed by the European Council in Brussels on 4 and 5 November. He commented more particularly on Mr KOK's presentation of the Report of the high-level group preparing the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy, which on the whole had been welcomed by the European Council, and the meeting with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Mr ALLAWI, and the undertaking given by the European Council to continue to support the process of reconstruction and restoration of security, democracy and the rule of law in Iraq. Mr VITORINO reported on the adoption of The Hague Programme (area of freedom, security and justice) as the successor to the Tampere Programme, providing in particular for an action plan that the Commission was invited to present at the beginning of 2005, including proposals for practical measures and a timetable for their adoption and implementation.

The Commission took note of this information and held a brief exchange of views concerning the possible repercussions of The Hague Programme on the financial perspectives 2007-2013.

**9.2. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS (BRUSSELS,
16 NOVEMBER)**

— **Rise in oil prices
(SEC(2004)1418; SEC(2004)1421)**

Mr ALMUNIA presented an information note (SEC(2004)1418) concerning Rising oil prices and the European economy: Policy options for mitigating negative economic effects. He emphasised that the technical study annexed to it had been established to a very tight schedule in response to a request from the Eurogroup on 20 October with a view to forthcoming meetings of the Eurogroup and the Council (Economic and Financial Affairs) (15 and 16 November respectively).

The Commission held a brief exchange of views on the scope of the document and took note of the timetable constraints which explained the specific nature of the procedure followed, especially as regards transmission of the study to the Economic and Financial Committee prior to presentation to the Commission.

— **Greek public deficit and debt
(SEC(2004)1420; SEC(2004)1421)**

Mr ALMUNIA presented an information note (SEC(2004)1420) incorporating a provisional interim report prepared by EUROSTAT on the revised data notified by the Greek authorities as regards Greece's public deficit and debt since 1997. He emphasised that the figures in the text were interim figures, to be read with extreme caution. He stated that a revised version of the report, which would be presented to the next Council meeting (Economic and Financial Affairs), would take account of the results of the on-the-spot checks to be carried out by EUROSTAT on Wednesday 10 November.

The Commission held a brief exchange of views on the probable scale of the gap between the successive data notified by the Greek authorities and the effects of it. It referred to the various ways in which the Commission could consider following up this matter in the near future, once EUROSTAT's final report was available, in relation both to the Member State concerned and, more generally, to the prospects for boosting the soundness of statistical systems in Europe and the Commission's role in this respect.

The Commission took note of the initiative taken by the Greek Government to correct certain data notified previously and the value of having an overview of similar cases of revised data from other Member States concerned. It agreed that the considerations above should be reflected in the report to be transmitted to the Council (Economic and Financial Affairs). It also took note of the need for a precise definition, in the context of the excessive deficit procedure, of national accounting for certain resources made available by the Structural Funds and the relevant Member State's contributions to the Community budget.

10. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

10.1. WTO REVIEW OF EC TRADE POLICY (SEC(2004)1419)

The Commission took note of the information in SEC(2004)1419.

10.2. TRADE DISPUTES

Mr LAMY commented on the current situation as regards settlement of trade disputes in the World Trade Organisation. Since there had been some

intensification of media coverage of this, particularly as consultations and other activities had resumed their usual frequency following the end of the election campaign in the United States, Mr LAMY reminded the meeting of the need to ensure that dossiers were properly managed, but did not feel that the situation gave rise to specific concern.

10.3. SITUATION IN COTE D'IVOIRE
(SEC(2004)1423)

The Commission took note of the information in SEC(2004)1423.

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The meeting closed at 1025 hours.