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SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2005)1723 final

Brussels, 30 November 2005

MINUTES
of the 1723rd meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 23 November 2005
(morning)

PV(2005)1723 final

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Single sitting: Wednesday 23 November 2005 (morning)

The sitting opened at 1025 hours with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair. Items 21 and 22 were chaired by Ms WALLSTRÖM.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	Items 1 to 20
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	Items 1 to 20
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Mr FRATTINI	Vice-President	
Ms REDING		
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		
Ms HÜBNER		Items 1 to 20
Mr BORG		
Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL'		
Mr KYPRIANOU		
Mr REHN		
Mr MICHEL		Items 1 to 9
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms KROES		
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		
Mr McCREEVY		
Mr ŠPIDLA		
Mr MANDELSON		
Mr PIEBALGS		

Absent:

Ms FISCHER BOEL

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission

Ms BENTO PAIS	A member of Ms Fischer Boel's staff
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The following also sat in

Mr PETITE	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr VALE DE ALMEIDA	Chef de cabinet to the President	Items 1 to 20
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	Items 1 to 20
Mr DE RYNCK	Spokesman	Items 10 to 17
Mr CARVOUNIS	Acting Director-General, Press and Communication	
Mr CABRAL	Adviser <i>hors classe</i> in the President's Office	Items 21 and 22
Mr THEBAULT	Chief Adviser in the President's Office	Items 1 to 9
Mr ELLIS	Member of the President's Office	Items 10 to 17
Mr LE BRET	Chef de cabinet to Mr Barrot	Items 10 to 20
Ms JORNA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr Barrot	Items 10 to 17
Mr KORTE	Chef de cabinet to Ms Hübner	Items 10 to 22
Mr PESONEN	Chef de cabinet to Mr Rehn	Items 21 and 22
Ms WEYAND	Chef de cabinet to Mr Michel	Items 9 to 22
Mr SCHWAIGER	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms Ferrero-Waldner	Item 20
Mr MOAVERO-MILANESI	Deputy Secretary-General	Items 1 to 8

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2005)1723/3; SEC(2005)1487/2)

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

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET

(SEC(2005)1723)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 21 November.

3. MINUTES OF 1722nd MEETING (15 November)

(PV(2005)1722)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1722nd meeting.

4. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

STATE AID - RECAPITULATIVE LIST

(SEC(2005)1534 and /2)

The Commission adopted the decisions in the recapitulative list (SEC(2005)1534/2).

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2005)1488 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 14 and 18 November.

5.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2005)1489)

The Commission took note of written procedures initiated between 14 and 18 November for the adoption of decisions with political implications.

5.3. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2005)1490 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 14 and 18 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 14 and 18 November, as archived on the "Greffé 2000" (Registry) website.

5.5. DELEGATION OF POWERS IN THE FIELD OF THE STANDARDISED AND SECURED SYSTEM OF REGISTRIES PURSUANT TO DIRECTIVE 2003/87/EC

(SEC(2005)1528)

The Commission decided to delegate to the Director-General responsible for the environment the adoption, on behalf of the Commission and under its responsibility, of instructions on the system of standardised and secured registries, in accordance with Directive 2003/87/EC, as set out in SEC(2005)1528.

**6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2005)1491/2)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2005)141)**

**6.1. DG ADMIN – RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS: COMPOSITION OF THE
CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS FOR THE
RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE FOR MANAGEMENT STAFF TO THE
POSTS IN GRADES A*16, A*15, A*14 OR A*13 IN THE
PUBLICATIONS OFFICE
(C(2005)4563; SEC(2005)1484)**

The Commission:

- adopted the decision in C(2005)4563;
- repealed Decision C(2003)3806.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**6.2. DG OLAF – COMMISSION DECISION ON THE REIMBURSEMENT
OF EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY MEMBERS OF THE OLAF
SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR
DUTIES
(C(2005)4564)**

The Commission adopted the decision in C(2005)4564.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**6.3. DG TRADE.E – APPOINTMENT OF AN A*14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2005)24 to /4)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Directorate E (Trade issues, Bilateral trade relations II, Market access, Export-related trade policy) in the Trade DG (PERS(2005)24 and /2).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 7 and 14 April (PERS(2005)24/3 and /4).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr MANDELSON, it then decided to appoint Mr Pierre AMILHAT to the vacant post.

This decision would take effect on a date to be determined.

**7. ACTION AGAINST THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR
THE ANNULMENT OF COUNCIL FRAMEWORK DECISION
2005/667/JHA OF 12 JULY 2005 TO STRENGTHEN THE CRIMINAL-LAW
FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW AGAINST
SHIP-SOURCE POLLUTION
(C(2005)4478 to /4; SEC(2005)1527)**

The Commission adopted the decision in C(2005)4478/4 and asked the Legal Service to execute the decision.

**8. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO PARLIAMENT AND THE
COUNCIL ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COURT'S JUDGMENT OF
13 SEPTEMBER 2005 IN CASE C-176/03 *COMMISSION v COUNCIL*
(COM(2005)583 to /4; SEC(2005)1527)**

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2005)583/4 for transmission to Parliament and the Council.

9. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

9.1. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

i) Part-session from 14 to 17 November

(SP(2005)4442 and /2)

The Commission took note of the information provided about Parliament's part-session from 14 to 17 November in SP(2005)4442 and /2.

ii) Action to be taken on Parliament's opinions

(SP(2005)4400)

The Commission approved the proposed empowerment decisions relating to action to be taken on the amendments presented by Parliament under the codecision and consultation procedures requiring a single reading (SP(2005)4400).

iii) Proposal for a Directive on services in the internal market

Mr McCREEVY reported that Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee had, the day before, adopted the GEBHARDT report on the proposal for a directive on the liberalisation of services in the internal market. He welcomed the considerable progress made by the Committee and reviewed the key elements of the political debate within it, for example on the scope of the directive, the definition of the country of origin principle and possible exemptions to this principle. Mr McCREEVY discussed the political power play within Parliament relating to this proposal. He also referred to the question of the dossier being raised in the Council bodies and, in particular, in the margins of the Competitiveness Council on 28 and 29 November.

Having noted Mr McCREEVY's contribution, the Commission held an exchange of views in the course of which it confirmed the line taken at previous meetings, to the effect that the normal interinstitutional procedure would be complied with in full. It noted that, according to the

latest information, there could be a vote in plenary session on the first reading of the proposal at the January 2006 part-session.

9.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL
(SI(2005)1082)

iv) General Affairs and External Relations (21 and 22 November)

Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ reported on the ramifications of the discussions about the Financial Perspective 2007-13 at the meeting of Foreign Ministers on 21 November. She also gave her impressions of the mood of the negotiations and confirmed that a ministerial conclave would be held on 7 December, on the basis of a composite paper which would only be made available on 5 December.

Having noted the information from Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ, the Commission held an in-depth exchange of views in which it examined the following questions in particular:

- the favourable response from the Council to the idea, proposed by the Commission, of modernising the EU budget;
- the balance of power within the Council and the tactical considerations in the negotiations, given the absence at the moment of concrete proposals from the Council Presidency and pending the compromise document which it has undertaken to present in the coming weeks;
- the need for the Commission to continue, in a constructive way, to play the part of representative of the Community interest and facilitator in this complicated situation, with a view to reaching agreement at the next European Council;
- the specific difficulties that certain Community policies would face if no financial framework were agreed in good time for 1 January 2007;
- the position that Parliament might decide to adopt if the negotiations were to fail in December.

Winding up the debate, the PRESIDENT :

- emphasised the major political risks that the lack of a financial framework would pose for the Union at this decisive point in the process of European integration;
- pointed out that the search for an agreement should embrace the principle of equitable distribution of the costs of enlargement;
- noted that the Commission believes there is an urgent need to reach an agreement on the financial perspective for the period after 2007 before the end of the present Council Presidency;
- did not underestimate the difficulties of the current situation, but committed the Commission to continuing to work for such an agreement until all possibilities have been exhausted.

Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ then informed her colleagues of the latest developments within Parliament and the Council concerning the 2006 draft budget, with a view to the triologue meeting of 23 November ahead of the conciliation to be held at the meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs/Budget Council on 24 November. She drew the Commission's attention to the difficulties that the lack of a budget in good time for 1 January 2006 would entail.

With regard to the external relations part of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 22 November, Ms FERRERO-WALDNER reported on the major breakthrough represented by the recent Agreement on Movement and Access between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority under the Middle East peace process. The European Union was preparing to play an important role at the Rafah border crossing, by sending a team of civilian observers, and the Commission, for its part, had been asked to develop the administrative capacities of the Palestinian customs authorities. The Council also emphasised the importance of sending observers to monitor the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council, which were due to take place at the end of January 2006. Finally, Ms FERRERO-WALDNER referred to the support

measures that the Commission intended to take, at the Council's request, to contribute to the preparations for the forthcoming elections in Iraq.

v) Education, Youth, Audiovisual Policy and Culture (14 and 15 November)
(SEC(2005)1500)

Elaborating on his information note, Mr FIGEL' drew Commission Members' attention to the main results of the Education, Youth and Culture part of the Council on 15 November, which had reached a partial political agreement on the three proposals on the future generation of programmes for the period 2007-13 in the fields of education (integrated programme on lifelong learning), culture (Culture 2007) and youth (Youth 2007). The Council also approved the Council and Commission's Draft Joint Report 2006 on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme and adopted the resolution on the implementation of the European Youth Pact and promotion of active citizenship. Mr FIGEL' concluded by reminding the meeting that he intended to organise a European Youth Week in Brussels next December.

Ms REDING referred briefly to the results of the Audiovisual part of the Council of 14 November, and particularly the partial political agreement reached on the proposal for a Parliament and Council Decision on the implementation of a programme of support for the European audiovisual sector (MEDIA 2007) and the exchanges of views which had taken place on the communication on digital libraries and (in the margins of the Council) on the transition to digital broadcasting in 2010.

vi) Preparations for the Environment Council (2 December)
(SEC(2005)1554)

The Commission took note of the information note distributed by Mr DIMAS with a view to the debate on the decision-making framework concerning genetically modified organisms which should take place at the Environment Council on 2 December.

- 10. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON THE THIRD PACKAGE OF LEGISLATIVE MEASURES IN FAVOUR OF MARITIME SAFETY IN THE EU
(COM(2005)585 to /4; SEC(2005)1496 and /2; SEC(2005)1524)**
- 11. PROPOSAL FOR A PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE CONCERNING RESPECTING OBLIGATIONS OF FLAG STATES
(COM(2005)586; SEC(2005)1497; COM(2005)585 to /4; SEC(2005)1524)**
- 12. PROPOSAL FOR A PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE ON COMMON RULES AND STANDARDS FOR SHIP INSPECTION AND SURVEY ORGANISATIONS AND FOR THE RELEVANT ACTIVITIES OF MARITIME ADMINISTRATIONS
(COM(2005)587 and /2; SEC(2005)1498; COM(2005)585 to /4; SEC(2005)1524)**
- 13. PROPOSAL FOR A PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE ON PORT STATE CONTROL
(COM(2005)588 and /2; SEC(2005)1499; COM(2005)585 to /4; SEC(2005)1524)**
- 14. PROPOSAL FOR A PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE AMENDING DIRECTIVE 2002/59/EC ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY VESSEL TRAFFIC MONITORING AND INFORMATION SYSTEM
(COM(2005)589 and /2; SEC(2005)1514; COM(2005)585 to /4; SEC(2005)1524)**
- 15. PROPOSAL FOR A PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE ESTABLISHING FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING INQUIRIES INTO ACCIDENTS IN THE MARITIME TRANSPORT SECTOR AND AMENDING DIRECTIVES 1999/35/EC AND 2002/59/EC
(COM(2005)590; SEC(2005)1515; COM(2005)585 to /4; SEC(2005)1524)**

- 16. PROPOSAL FOR A PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL REGULATION ON THE LIABILITY OF CARRIERS BY SEA AND INLAND WATERWAY IN THE EVENT OF ACCIDENTS**
(COM(2005)592 and /2; SEC(2005)1516; COM(2005)585 to /4; SEC(2005)1524)
- 17. PROPOSAL FOR A PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE ON THE CIVIL LIABILITY AND FINANCIAL SECURITIES OF SHIPOWNERS**
(COM(2005)593 to /4; SEC(2005)1517 and /2; COM(2005)585 to /4; SEC(2005)1524)

Mr BARROT presented the various legislative proposals which he was tabling, as well as the general communication explaining them. The main purpose of this package of proposals was to improve maritime safety while ensuring the competitiveness of the European fleet, by completing and improving the existing legal framework which had been developed in recent years in response to a number of major maritime disasters. The legislative proposals were largely intended to transpose into Community law the obligations arising from current international law, thereby giving greater binding force to the existing legal framework, for example by bringing it under the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union. Mr BARROT explained the coherent approach underlying the package of proposals, which covered the different links in the maritime transport chain, from the certification of vessels to civil liability in the event of an accident, and including flag rights, vessel inspection, port State controls, entry into territorial waters and vessel traffic monitoring, assistance in a port of refuge, technical investigations in the event of an accident, etc. The Commission had to take a realistic approach combining the objectives of maritime transport safety and the competitiveness of the European maritime sector.

The Commission held an exchange of views on the package of legislative proposals and highlighted the following points:

- the balance being struck in this package of proposals, which pursues objectives of both safety and competitiveness;
- the contribution it makes to creating a global EU maritime policy;

- the proposals' advocacy of a significantly tougher system of civil liability in the event of accidents;
- the particular attention paid to navigation in the icy waters of the Baltic Sea, which requires a large number of special preventive measures and strict compliance with the regulations.

After this debate the Commission approved the communication and the legislative proposals as set out in COM(2005)585/4, COM(2005)586, COM(2005)587/2, COM(2005)588/2, COM(2005)589/2, COM(2005)590, COM(2005)592/2 and COM(2005)593/4 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, together with the staff papers distributed as SEC(2005)1496/2, SEC(2005)1497, SEC(2005)1498, SEC(2005)1499, SEC(2005)1514, SEC(2005)1515, SEC(2005)1516 and SEC(2005)1517/2, the contents of which were noted.

The Commission joined the PRESIDENT in congratulating Mr BARROT on the very high quality of the documents prepared by his cabinet and the relevant departments of the Energy and Transport DG.

**18. FIRST ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT ON THE FOURTH ACTION PROGRAMME FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN AT THE COMMISSION
(SEC(2005)1492 to /3; SEC(2005)1522)**

Mr KALLAS briefly introduced the first annual monitoring report on the fourth action programme for equal opportunities, as set out in SEC(2005)1492/3. While recognising that the situation in the Commission is not ideal, compared with many international organisations, he pointed to areas where progress had undoubtedly been made in recent times. He asked Commission Members to ensure equality in appointments to middle management posts, as these would, in time, form the reservoir from which appointments would be made to senior management posts.

The PRESIDENT echoed this appeal and reaffirmed the commitment of the entire Commission to equality between women and men within the institution.

The Commission took note of the report in SEC(2005)1492/3 and endorsed all the recommendations presented in section 4 of the accompanying communication to the Commission.

19. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS *A NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR MULTILINGUALISM*

(COM(2005)596 to /4 and final; SEC(2005)1523)

Mr FIGEL' briefly presented the communication, which had been approved by the Commission by written procedure on Tuesday 22 November. He emphasised the innovative nature of the text, which was the first general communication on multilingualism. He reviewed the three main subject areas dealt with in the document (multilingual society, multilingual economy and multilingualism in the Commission's relations with the citizens) and noted that it contained several recommendations for specific measures to be taken at both Community and national level. Finally, he spoke of the role of language skills in promoting mobility within the Community and the efforts envisaged within the Commission and at interinstitutional level to encourage multilingualism.

The Commission took note of this information.

20. IMPLEMENTING AND PROMOTING THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

(SEC(2005)1521 to /5; SEC(2005)1525)

Introducing the communication she was tabling, Ms FERRERO-WALDNER stated that the aim was to set out a number of guidelines on the implementation of the European neighbourhood policy which now required a strong collective pledge from the Commission, at political level, as well as a priority commitment from the Directorates-General and Commission departments, at the level of implementation on the ground. Ms FERRERO-WALDNER described the current state of the neighbourhood policy and the significance of the adoption, in December 2004, of seven national action plans in progress. The short-term objectives of these plans should be attained in 2006 and 2007. With the backing of the PRESIDENT,

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER reminded the meeting of the strategic importance and priority accorded by the Commission to the neighbourhood policy, as a manifestation of the privileged relationship which the Union hopes to build with those of its neighbours that are not going to become members in the foreseeable future. She also referred to the difficulties encountered by this policy, in some cases due to the expectations of particular countries, in others due to the difficulty some of them had in accommodating themselves to the criteria and parameters of the European Union. There were also problems in some cases connected with the resources devoted to this policy, which some regarded as inadequate.

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER urged Commission Members to use every opportunity to emphasise the priority given to the neighbourhood policy and called on the Commission departments to draw the appropriate conclusions in their strategic planning and resource management. Ms FERRERO-WALDNER wound up her presentation by mentioning specific aspects of the action plans that had already been agreed.

The Commission held an exchange of views in which the following points were made:

- confirmation of the strategic priority the current Commission assigns to the European neighbourhood policy;
- the importance of an ambitious neighbourhood policy that ensures security and stability and promotes European values in the framework of the relations between the EU and its neighbours;
- the balance to be struck by the Union between incentives and compliance with certain requirements, and specifically the parallel between our gestures of solidarity – particularly financial solidarity – with our neighbours and their compliance with the fundamental principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law;
- the need to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the neighbouring countries to absorb the funds provided by the Union, and the importance of complying with the Financial Regulation and the principles of sound financial management;

- the political importance to the Union of being able to intervene rapidly in emergencies occurring on these countries' territory;
- ways of taking into account the specific characteristics and priorities of the various countries and regions covered by the European neighbourhood policy which must shape bilateral relations, but without prejudice to respect for the core principles and areas on which cooperation is also based;
- the importance of certain particularly significant areas such as those relating to freedom, justice and security, education and youth issues, transport networks and cross-border cooperation mechanisms;
- the need fully to integrate European neighbourhood policy into the Commission's communication policy.

Winding up the discussion, the PRESIDENT concluded that the neighbourhood policy was a top priority for the Commission and its departments.

The Commission approved the communication from Ms FERRERO-WALDNER as set out in SEC(2005)1521/5.

21. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

21.1. VISIT BY Ms FERRERO-WALDNER TO PAKISTAN (SEC(2005)1556)

Further to her information note (SEC(2005) 1556), Ms FERRERO-WALDNER reported on her visit to Pakistan on 18 and 19 November, intended as a demonstration of European solidarity following the earthquake that devastated the north of the country in October. During her visit, she had taken part in the international donors' conference on reconstruction, organised by the United Nations. In his opening address, President Musharraf of Pakistan had explained his country's strategy for reconstruction. In the housing sector the country needed only financial assistance from the European Union, but reconstruction in the areas of education and infrastructure would require technical assistance. At the

conference the Commission pledged a sum of €93.6 million for 2005, as part of an overall EU contribution which will now exceed €500 million.

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER concluded by saying that she had also had an opportunity to discuss with the Prime Minister of Pakistan the conclusion of the readmission agreement and the generalised system of preferences.

The Commission took note of the information from
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER and her information note.

21.2. VISIT BY Mr KYPRIANOU TO ASIA

Reporting on his recent trip to Asia (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia), Mr KYPRIANOU referred particularly to health and plant health measures and the situation as regards avian influenza in these countries. He had found that all of the countries concerned now seemed to have the political will to take measures to deal with the situation (all of them had now drawn up action plans). However, the greatest challenge for these countries, to a greater or lesser degree, was their capacity to implement these action plans, capacity which was closely tied to their economic situation and their ability to put the plans into effect without outside assistance. There were serious inadequacies in many areas (surveillance, monitoring, laboratories, infrastructure, hospitals, etc.), so cooperation and assistance on a large scale were needed. On the subject of international aid, Mr KYPRIANOU reminded the meeting that a donors' conference was to be held in China on 17 and 18 January 2006 and stressed the importance of EU Member States coordinating their efforts with the aid provided by the Commission. He had already raised this matter at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumers Council and he asked Ms FERRERO-WALDNER to do the same in the General Affairs and External Relations Council. He added that certain countries in the Balkans and the Black Sea area which had been affected by avian influenza also needed financial assistance to deal with the situation.

The Commission noted the information provided by Mr KYPRIANOU.

21.3. VISIT BY Mr DIMAS TO CHINA

Reporting on his participation in the Beijing conference on renewable energy sources, at the beginning of November, Mr DIMAS said that the Chinese authorities, which were very aware of the link between levels of water and air pollution and economic development, had decided to take measures to improve the environmental situation. Targets had therefore been set with a view to increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. China was hoping to cooperate with the European Union in these areas, for example by drawing on its expertise on ways of effectively attaining environmental targets while fully taking into account the costs involved.

The Commission took note of the information from Mr DIMAS.

**21.4. VISIT BY Mr KOVÁCS TO CHINA AND HONG KONG
(SEC(2005)1561)**

Further to his information note SEC(2005)1561, Mr KOVÁCS reported on his talks with various representatives who reaffirmed the Chinese authorities' commitment to cooperating in customs matters and, in particular, in combating counterfeiting. Their commitment to this issue could in part be explained by the fact that the Chinese themselves had been victims of counterfeiting.

The Commission took note of Mr KOVÁCS' presentation and information note.

**21.5. VISIT BY MR FIGEL' TO UKRAINE
(SEC(2005)1551)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr FIGEL' in SEC(2005)1551.

**21.6. VISIT BY MR PIEBALGS TO SAUDI ARABIA
(SEC(2005)1558)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr PIEBALGS in SEC(2005)1558.

**21.7. RESULTS OF EU-US NEGOTIATIONS ON AIR TRANSPORT
(SEC(2005)1557)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr BARROT in SEC(2005)1557.

**21.8. WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY IN TUNIS
(SEC(2005)1555)**

Elaborating on her information note, Ms REDING drew the Commission's attention to the main results of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November. She mentioned in particular the agreement which opens the way to the progressive internationalisation of Internet governance by means of the Internet Governance Forum on the one hand and the process intended to enhance cooperation between governments on the policy principles underlying this governance. Ms REDING also mentioned the human rights situation in Tunisia, which had proved to be a crucial factor during the proceedings both inside and outside the Summit.

Finally, she thanked the Information Society DG for the high quality of the work carried out with the active support of the Commission Delegation in Tunis and of the Development DG.

The Commission took note of this information and held a brief exchange of views on the general question of respect for human rights, particularly as regards access to the internet and the role of certain companies in this sector.

The Commission also took note of the information note from Ms REDING distributed as SEC(2005)1555.

22. OTHER BUSINESS

22.1. REVISED PROPOSAL FOR THE AMENDMENT OF REGULATION (EC) NO 1073/99 AND REGULATION (EURATOM) NO 1074/99 CONCERNING INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF) (SEC(2005)1536)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr KALLAS in SEC(2005)1536.

22.2. UPDATE ON ITER NEGOTIATIONS (SEC(2005)1553)

Noting the constructive atmosphere which has prevailed since the decision by the six parties to the negotiations in June concerning the choice of site for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), Mr POTOČNIK reminded the meeting of the need to take advantage of the momentum that had been created in order to conclude the negotiations as quickly as possible. He also referred to the recent request by India to accede to the ITER project and the positive assessment this had received from all the parties to the negotiations. Referring to the many advantages that India's participation would bring to the project, as well as the need to keep to the timetable for its implementation, he asked the Commission to support a favourable response to India's request for accession so that formal agreement could be obtained at the next meeting of the parties to the negotiations, to be held in South Korea on 6 December.

The Commission took note of this information and decided to adopt the line proposed by Mr POTOČNIK. It also took note of the note distributed as SEC(2005)1553.

22.3. COMMISSION'S AUTUMN 2005 FORECASTS (SEC(2005)1547)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr ALMUNIA in SEC(2005)1547.

**22.4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE AUTUMN 2005 FORECASTS FOR
BUDGETARY SURVEILLANCE
(SEC(2005)1548)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr ALMUNIA in SEC(2005)1548.

**22.5. GROWING INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION:
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES – THE EU ECONOMY: 2005
REVIEW
(SEC(2005)1549)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr ALMUNIA in SEC(2005)1549.

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The meeting closed at 1300 hours.