



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2006) 1750 final

Brussels, 28 June 2006

MINUTES

of the 1750th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Thursday 22 June 2006

(morning)

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Single sitting: Thursday 22 June 2006 (morning)

The sitting opened at 10h03 with President BARROSO in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	Items 1 to 15 (in part)
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	Items 11 to 15
Ms REDING		
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		
Ms HÜBNER		Items 1 to 15 (in part)
Mr BORG		
Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL'		
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms KROES		
Ms FISCHER BOEL		Items 1 to 12
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		Item 15 (in part)
Mr McCREEVY		Items 11 to 15
Mr ŠPIDLA		
Mr MANDELSON		
Mr PIEBALGS		Items 1 to 12 (in part)

Absent:

Mr FRATTINI

Vice-President

Mr KYPRIANOU

Mr REHN

Mr MICHEL

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission

Mr SALAZAR	A member of Mr Frattini's staff
Mr SCHINAS	Chef de cabinet to Mr Kyprianou
Mr FRUTUOSO DE MELO	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr Rehn
Ms GLATIGNY	A member of Mr Michel's staff

The following also sat in

Mr THEBAULT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the President	
Mr PETITE	Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms CORUGEDO STENEBOURG	DG Communication	
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	
Ms CARVALHO	Acting Director-General, Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA)	
Mr KLAUS	Member of the President's staff	Item 14
Ms SIPALA	Member of Ms Wallström's staff	Item 13
Mr LE BRET	Chef de cabinet to Mr Barrot	Item 14
Mr TABONE	Chef de cabinet to Mr Borg	Item 12
Mr CHRISTOFFERSEN	Chef de cabinet to Ms Fischer Boel	Items 13 to 15
Ms NAESAGER	Member of Ms Fischer Boel's staff	Items 1 to 12
Mr CHILD	Chef de cabinet to Ms Ferrero-Waldner	Items 1 to 15 (in part)
Mr GARCIA PORRAS	Member of Mr Piebalgs' staff	
Mr RUETE	Director-General, DG Energy and Transport	Item 14
Mr PONZANO	Secretariat-General	Item 13
Mr GRASSI	Secretariat-General	Items 1 to 12

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2006)1750/3 ; SEC(2006)771/2)

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(2006)1750)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Tuesday 20 June.

3. MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 1749th MEETING

(PV(2006)1749; PV(2006)1749, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1749th meeting.

4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

4.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2006)772 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 12 and 16 June.

4.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2006)773 and /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expires between 19 and 23 June and of the "finalisation" written procedures initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 20 June.

4.3. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2006) 774 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 12 and 16 June.

4.4. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation procedure between 12 and 16 June, as archived on the "Greffé 2000" (Registry) website.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2006)775/3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2006)87/4)

5.1. DG BUDG – AD14/15 DIRECTOR

(PERS(2006) 58 to /5)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director in the Expenditure Directorate in the Budget DG (PERS(2006) 58, /2 and /3).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 24 April and 4 May (PERS(2006)58/4 and /5).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. Having considered the candidates' competence, efficiency and conduct in the service, it decided, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ, to appoint Mr Silvano PRESA to the vacant post in question.

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

5.2. DG RELEX – AD14/15 HEAD OF DELEGATION
(PERS(2006)83 to /5)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1a) (i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the function of Head of the Commission's delegation in Ankara, Turkey, in the External Relations DG (PERS(2006)83, /2 and /3).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 6 and 8 June (PERS(2006)83/4 and /5).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. Having considered the candidates' competence, efficiency and conduct in the service, it decided, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms FERRERO-WALDNER, to appoint Mr Marc PIERINI to the vacant post in question. In accordance with diplomatic practice, this decision was subject to the approval of the host country.

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

5.3. DG TREN – AD14/15 DIRECTOR

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Mr BARROT and Mr PIEBALGS, the Commission decided, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, to fill the post of Director in the General Affairs

Directorate of the Energy and Transport DG by the transfer in the interest of the service of Ms Anne HOUTMAN, an AD15 official currently Director in the Internal Market and Services DG.

This decision would take effect on 1 August 2006.

5.4. DG SANCO – ADOPTION OF A LIST FOR THE RECRUITMENT IN GRADE AD14 OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMUNITY PLANT VARIETY OFFICE

(PERS(2006)62 and /2)

Having noted the procedure followed, as described in point 4 of PERS(2006)87/4, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KYPRIANOU, decided:

- to approve the list consisting of a single candidate in PERS(2006)62/2 ;
- to consider this list as the Commission's proposal within the meaning of Article 43 of Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 ;
- to instruct Mr KYPRIANOU to transmit this decision to the Council, together with a brief summary of the various stages of the procedure followed in this case.

This decision would take effect immediately.

5.5. DG DEV – CHANGE OF NAME AND AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART

(SEC(2006)810)

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the President and Mr MICHEL, the Commission decided:

- to change the name of the Development DG to DG Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States;

(22 juin 2006)

- to create a new Directorate DEV.C, to be known as ACP I – General Affairs;
- to create a new Unit DEV.A.2, to be known as Aid Effectiveness and Relations with Member States and EEA States;
- to approve the organisation chart in SEC(2006)810.

These decisions would take effect on 15 July.

5.6. *DG DEV – INTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL IN GRADE AD15/16 (PERS(2006)85 and /2)*

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr MICHEL, the Commission decided to authorise the publication under Article 29(1a) (i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations of the vacancy notice in PERS(2006)85/2 for the AD15/16 post of Deputy Director-General of the Development DG.

This decision would take effect immediately.

5.7. *DG DEV – EXTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR AN AD14 DIRECTOR (EU-10) (PERS(2006)86)*

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr MICHEL, the Commission decided to authorise the publication, under Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice in PERS(2006)86, for the post of Director in Grade AD14 in the General Affairs and Operational Support Directorate of the Development DG. This post was reserved for a national of one of the new Member States.

This decision would take effect immediately.

5.8. INITIAL COMMUNICATION UNDER ARTICLE 50 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

The Commission decided to initiate the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations with respect to a Grade AD15 official.

5.9. DG FISH – LEAVE ON PERSONAL GROUNDS FOR A DIRECTOR

Having noted the information in point 9 of PERS(2006)87/4, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr BORG, decided to approve the request for leave on personal grounds under Article 40 of the Staff Regulations, presented by Mr John FARNELL, an AD15 official currently Director in the Conservation Policy Directorate of the Fisheries and Maritime Affairs DG, for the period from 1 September to 31 October 2006.

This decision would take effect on 1 September 2006.

5.10. DG RELEX – LEAVE ON PERSONAL GROUNDS FOR A DIRECTOR

Having noted the information in point 10 of PERS(2006)87/4, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms FERRERO-WALDNER, decided to approve the request for leave on personal grounds under Article 40 of the Staff Regulations, presented by Mr Stefano SANNINO, an AD14 official currently Director in the Crisis Platform - Policy Coordination in Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Directorate of the External Relations DG, for a period of one year.

This decision would take effect on 1 July 2006.

6. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS AND THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK – THIRD REPORT ON THE PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUTURE ENLARGEMENT OF THE EURO AREA

(COM(2006)322 to/4; SEC(2006)785 and /2; SEC(2006)796)

The Commission adopted the communication in COM(2006)322/4 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Central Bank, together with the annex in the staff working paper distributed as SEC(2006)785/2, the contents of which were noted.

7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK – ACTS OF SECONDARY LEGISLATION RELATING TO THE EURO AND SLOVENIA

PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION AMENDING REGULATION (EC) No 974/98 ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EURO

PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION AMENDING REGULATION (EC) No 2866/98 ON THE CONVERSION RATES BETWEEN THE EURO AND THE CURRENCIES OF THE MEMBER STATES ADOPTING THE EURO

(COM(2006)320 and /2 ; SEC(2006)796)

In agreement with Mr ALMUNIA, the Commission decided to hold this item over for one week.

8. REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND TO THE COUNCIL ON OPERATIONS CONDUCTED UNDER THE EXTERNAL LENDING MANDATES OF THE EIB AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

(COM(2006)323 and /2; SEC(2006)790 and /2; SEC(2006)789 and /2; SEC(2006)792; SEC(2006)796)

9. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION GRANTING A COMMUNITY GUARANTEE TO THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK AGAINST LOSSES UNDER LOANS AND GUARANTEES FOR PROJECTS OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY

(COM(2006)324 and /2; SEC(2006)792; SEC(2006)796)

The Commission approved the report in COM(2006)323/2 and adopted the proposal for a Council Decision in COM(2006)324/2. It decided to transmit the report and the proposal to the European Parliament and the Council, together with the two annexes to the report in the staff working papers distributed as SEC(2006)790/2 and SEC(2006)789/2, the contents of which were noted.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

JOINT INITIATIVES BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND THE EIB GROUP ON NEW FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS 2007-2013

(SEC(2006) 809)

The Commission took note of the information note by the PRESIDENT and Mr ALMUNIA in SEC(2006)809.

11. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS –
TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN WINE SECTOR
(COM(2006)319 to /4; SEC(2006)770 and /2; SEC(2006)780; SEC(2006)753;
SEC(2006)797)**

Ms FISCHER BOEL presented the communication she was tabling. She began by thanking the Members of the Commission for the excellent cooperation between the departments in the preparation of this document. She underlined the need to ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of the European wine sector and to bring it into line with the Lisbon Strategy. She also stressed the importance of a full, balanced and clear presentation of all the options for the reform of the common market organisation (CMO) in wine and the potential implications of these options. She reminded the meeting that the aim of this communication was to present these options to the European Parliament and the Council, in particular, before the Commission adopted the legislative proposal at the end of 2006 or the beginning of 2007.

Ms FISCHER BOEL set out the principal objectives of the reform of the CMO in wine. She highlighted the need for proper instruments to respond more effectively to the problems of the wine sector, such as over-production, falling consumption and the increase in the amount of wine imported from outside the European Union. She felt that the increasingly widespread use of the support mechanism for distillation, which had been devised for exceptional circumstances, was a further argument in favour of reform. Finally, she mentioned the continuing goal of simplifying regulations.

With regard to the Community budget, Ms FISCHER BOEL said that the proposed measures would not reduce planned expenditure on the wine sector; it was a matter of using the funds for modernisation and in order to guarantee the future of the sector. She mentioned the possibility of allocating a national envelope to each Member State concerned, with due respect for the principle of subsidiarity.

The Commission noted this information. It praised the very high quality of the document and thanked Ms FISCHER BOEL and the departments under her responsibility for their excellent work.

During a brief exchange of views the Commission raised the following points:

- the need for solutions which reconciled the interests of producers and consumers, while taking into account the international trade aspects;
- the consensus in favour of reform of the CMO in wine expressed during the preliminary consultations by all of the actors concerned, but continuing differences over the practicalities of the reform;
- the open nature of the communication and the fact that its primary function was to launch the debate within the European Parliament and the Council and among all of the parties concerned. The results of this debate would be taken into account when framing the legislative proposal;
- the need to avoid any negative effects of the reform on the economy or the labour market in wine-growing regions by providing for a coherent body of social measures;
- with regard to vinification of imported must and the blending of wines produced within and outside the European Union, the need to restore transparency in production, product quality and consumer confidence, but also to take account of the EU's obligations under the WTO.

After this exchange of views, the Commission adopted the communication in COM(2006)319/4 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, together with the impact assessment and the summary in the staff working papers distributed as SEC(2006)770/2 and SEC(2006)780, respectively, the contents of which were noted.

12. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

12.1. STATE AID – DRAFT COMMISSION REGULATION ON THE APPLICATION OF ARTICLES 87 AND 88 OF THE EC TREATY TO DE MINIMIS AID IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR (SEC(2006)795 to /3; SEC(2006 811))

Mr BORG presented the draft regulation he was tabling. He explained that the draft created a special framework of rules on *de minimis* aid for the fisheries sector and, in particular, proposed raising the *de minimis* ceiling per beneficiary from 3 000 to 30 000 euros over a three-year period. He mentioned the difficulties currently facing this sector, the process of restructuring that was under way in order to ensure sustainability, and the economic arguments in favour of revising the rules. Responding to a number of questions raised during the preparatory work, he explained the differences between fisheries and agriculture. He said that the granting of this type of state aid, under the draft Regulation, would be subject to strict conditions, and aid to shipbuilding and capacity increases would be prohibited. In addition, the total volume of aid that a Member State would be able to grant would not exceed 2.5% of the value of the annual production of that sector over three years. Mr BORG stressed that this change in the *de minimis* rules was in line with the long-term objectives of the common fisheries policy and international trade rules.

The Commission held a brief exchange of views in which the following points were discussed:

- the importance of properly conveying to the European Union's trading partners the spirit of this change and the fact that it was compatible with the long-term objectives of the common fisheries policy;
- the risk that the amendment of the *de minimis* rules in the fisheries sector might have an unwanted impact on other sectors, such as agriculture;

- the magnitude of the proposed increase in the *de minimis* ceiling per beneficiary. Nevertheless, several participants regarded it as modest and proportionate, in absolute terms, and unlikely to distort competition;
- the need to lay down *de minimis* rules for the different productive sectors, according to their specific situation;
- the need for the Commission to stand firm when consulting the Member States on any requests for a further increase in the *de minimis* ceiling.

The PRESIDENT expressed his support for the draft Regulation, saying that the *de minimis* ceiling proposed remained proportionate and was not liable to distort competition. It was compatible with both the objectives of the common fisheries policy and the rules of international trade. He referred to the strict conditions for granting state aid in the fisheries sector, as set out by Mr BORG. The agriculture and fisheries sectors had their own characteristics, which justified separate frameworks. He ended by noting that the fisheries sector was currently facing a difficult restructuring and that the European Union had to support this process by adopting solidarity measures that were properly regulated.

After this exchange of views the Commission approved the draft Regulation in SEC(2006)795/3 and authorised Mr BORG to start the consultation procedure with the Advisory Committee on State Aid, as provided for in Article 8 of Council Regulation (EC) No 994/98.

12.2. STATE AID – RECAPITULATIVE LIST

(SEC(2006)835; SEC(2006)811)

The Commission adopted the decisions in the recapitulative list SEC(2006)835.

13. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

13.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Action to be taken on Parliament's opinions

(SP(2006)2660)

For all the cases for which authorisation was required, the Commission decided to empower the Members responsible for the areas concerned, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms WALLSTRÖM and any other Commission Members concerned, to adopt the amended proposals for transmission to Parliament and the Council as set out in SP(2006)2660.

13.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

(SI(2006)592)

ii) Comitology

(SI(2006)593 to /3)

Ms WALLSTRÖM presented the final agreement on comitology reached by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission after long and complex negotiations. She welcomed this agreement, which was now being formalised by the three institutions. She praised the openness and commitment displayed by all the parties and thanked the services of the Secretariat-General, and in particular Mr Paolo PONZANO, for the excellent results obtained.

Ms WALLSTRÖM confirmed that as a result of this agreement, a substantial part of the budget appropriations allocated to the functioning of the comitology procedure had already been released, and that the balance of these appropriations would be made available to the Commission once the Council had formally approved the agreement. Parliament would postpone formal approval of the agreement until after the summer break only if this were necessary for internal parliamentary procedural reasons.

Regarding the content of the agreement, Ms WALLSTRÖM pointed out that a new “regulatory procedure with scrutiny” had been created and would be applied to all “quasi-legislative” measures, i.e. measures of general scope amending non-essential elements of a basic instrument adopted by co-decision. These negotiations had also made it possible to renounce the use of “sunset clauses” from now on, since the three parties had agreed on a declaration stating that the legislative power would confer implementing powers on the Commission without any time limit. In this context, she mentioned that the number of legislative acts that would have to be updated in order to incorporate the new procedure in the first priority alignment phase had been reduced from the 80 envisaged at the start of the negotiations to just 25.

Ms WALLSTRÖM also referred to the solution agreed on for the question of the “predominant position in the Council”. The Commission confirmed its 1999 declaration without any changes and added a new declaration on GMO risk assessment which was fully consistent with the results of its recent policy debate (PV(2006)1741, point 11, pages 21 to 25).

Lastly, Ms WALLSTRÖM stressed that the new agreement made the process of adopting implementing measures more democratic thanks to the increase in Parliamentary scrutiny and in transparency, owing particularly to the upgrading of the “comitology” register.

The PRESIDENT also welcomed the results achieved and thanked Ms WALLSTRÖM, her cabinet and the departments of the Secretariat-General involved. In particular, he welcomed the release of the budget appropriations allocated to comitology and considered that this agreement would make a very positive contribution to improving interinstitutional relations.

The Commission approved the communication from the PRESIDENT and Ms WALLSTRÖM in SI(2006)593/3, in particular the agreement reached at

the last trialogue meeting between the European Parliament, the Council Presidency and the Commission on 13 June 2006.

iii) Results of the European Council (Brussels, 15 and 16 June 2006)

(SI(2006)500; SEC(2006)819)

The PRESIDENT reported briefly on the European Council of 15 and 16 June and referred to the information letter he had sent to Commission members. He considered that the Commission had reason to feel very satisfied with the outcome of this Council meeting. It might have ended much less satisfactorily had it not been for the commitment by the Council Presidency, in particular Chancellor SCHÜSSEL, who was firmly supported by the Commission. The Commission made a key contribution, in particular the twin-track approach recommended in its communication of 10 May “A citizen’s agenda – Delivering results for Europe” (COM(2006)211 final) and the debate on enlargement, during which it undertook to produce a special report on absorption capacity in the autumn. It also made a vital last-minute contribution in the area of subsidiarity.

The PRESIDENT went on to say that the Commission’s contribution to the success of the European Council also brought new responsibilities. The confidence placed in it required it more than ever to promote a “Europe of results”. The important initiatives launched recently, such as the re-launched Lisbon strategy, the programme resulting from the Hampton Court meeting and now the “citizens’ agenda”, should all contribute concrete results and thus help to restore people’s trust and confidence in European construction. Restoring confidence was a prerequisite for reaching agreement on the future of the Union by the end of 2008. It was therefore essential to make citizens the main concern, as recommended in the communication of 10 May 2006, encourage working in partnership, for example with the national parliaments, and make every effort to guarantee the quality and simplicity of legislation and ensure maximum coherence between the Commission’s different policies and actions.

The PRESIDENT concluded by pointing out that the absence of a European constitution at this stage should not give rise to any kind of euro-pessimism. On the contrary, Europe needed concrete results more than ever and it was up to the Commission to take the necessary initiatives. It could not limit itself to merely observing or analysing the situation. Lastly, he once again thanked the Austrian Presidency of the Council for its cooperation and for the important role it had given the Commission throughout the first half of 2006.

The Commission held a brief exchange of views, covering the following questions:

- the highly positive overall assessment of the Austrian Presidency of the Council and the good practices that could be advocated for future presidencies;
- the decisions taken by the European Council on transparency (making Council deliberations public subject to certain conditions) and sustainable development;
- the work that still needed to be done in the field of justice, freedom and security and the interest expressed by the future Finnish presidency of the Council in making further progress in this area.

The Commission took note of this information and of the letter sent by the PRESIDENT to Commission members following the European Council of 15 and 16 June 2006 in SEC(2006)819.

13.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

iv) Results of June I and II 2006 plenary sessions

(SP(2006)2724; SP(2006)2934)

The Commission took note of the information on the progress of the plenary sessions of the European Parliament in Strasbourg from 12 to 15 June 2006

and in Brussels on 20 June 2006 contained in SP(2006) 2724 and SP(2006) 2934.

14. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – KEEP EUROPE MOVING: SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY FOR OUR CONTINENT - MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION’S 2001 TRANSPORT WHITE PAPER

(COM(2006) 314 TO /5; SEC(2006)768 AND /2; SEC(2006)799)

Mr BARROT briefly presented the communication he was tabling. He spoke of the importance of mobility for citizens, for making businesses competitive and for economic development in all the regions of Europe. He stressed in particular the need to make sustainable mobility a priority in view of the increased need for transport and the high energy consumption of this sector. He confirmed that this communication was fully in line with the 2001 White Paper on Europe’s transport policy while it added to the existing instruments in order to provide a better response to the need for a more environmentally friendly, safe and energy efficient mobility.

Mr BARROT underlined the importance and benefits of co-modality, i.e. combined-transport. The key objective in this field was to bring about a modal shift of road transport towards rail and water. He listed some of the prerequisites for achieving this: increasing investment, opening up all transport modes to competition, organising intermodal needs and making full use of new technologies.

Regarding the other challenges in the coming years, Mr BARROT mentioned the need to develop both safe mobility, particularly as regards road transport, and mobility accessible to everyone, in particular through recognition in all transport modes of passengers’ rights, notably as regards passengers with limited mobility.

He also emphasised the importance of coordinating the transport policies of the EU and the Member States, which would undoubtedly help to improve mobility worldwide by making it safer and more sustainable.

Mr BARROT concluded by thanking all the Commission members for their help in preparing the communication. He hoped for a fruitful outcome to the debate on transport policy that had been launched.

After this presentation the Commission took note of this information and noted that although the main objectives (in particular decoupling) remained unchanged since the 2001 White Paper, the need to allow for changes in various external factors such as the increase in energy prices, enlargement or certain effects of globalisation made it necessary to adapt the language used.

The Commission, subject to a final linguistic revision, approved the communication in COM(2006)314/5 and decided to transmit it to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, accompanied by the impact assessment contained in the Commission staff paper in SEC(2006)768/2, the contents of which were noted.

15. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

15.1. EUROPEAN UNION / UNITED STATES SUMMIT (VIENNA, 21 JUNE 2006)

The PRESIDENT gave an account of the EU/US Summit in Vienna the day before, at which the EU was represented by Chancellor SCHÜSSEL, the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Ms FERRERO-WALDNER, Mr MANDELSON and the PRESIDENT himself.

The PRESIDENT reported on the main results of the transatlantic summit, at which a joint declaration had been adopted whereby the two parties undertook

to further strengthen their strategic partnership by launching a series of joint actions. The aim of these actions was to enhance cooperation between the two parties in order to promote peace, human rights and democracy worldwide, address world challenges, including security, promote prosperity and intensify strategic cooperation in the fields of energy, climate change and sustainable development. He made particular reference to conducting an annual examination of energy cooperation and establishing a high-level dialogue with the US on climate change, renewable energy and sustainable development.

The PRESIDENT then reviewed other priority subjects that had been discussed at the Summit, such as international trade negotiations, facilitating bilateral investment flows, protecting intellectual property rights, cooperation in higher education and vocational training, completing the bilateral “open skies” agreement on air transport by the end of this year, imposing a visa requirement on the citizens of certain EU Member States, and the position of the US and EU on certain international policy matters such as Iran, Iraq, the Guantánamo detention centre, the western Balkans and the Middle East.

In conclusion, the PRESIDENT considered that at present, despite different approaches in certain areas, there was better mutual understanding of the concerns of the two parties. He was therefore satisfied with the state of transatlantic relations.

Mr MANDELSON shared his impressions of the meeting with the Members of the Commission, emphasising in particular the increased openness of our US partner in several policy areas and its willingness to make a greater commitment to multilateralism and the search for a consensus to resolve conflicts.

The Commission held a brief exchange of views, during which it discussed the importance of the cooperation agreement on higher education and vocational training signed during the Summit, which would facilitate transatlantic diplomas and educational programmes, and the joint actions

(22 juin 2006)

launched in the area of customs cooperation aimed at protecting intellectual property rights and combating industrial counterfeiting and piracy in non-Member States.

The Commission took note of this information.

15.2. JOINT MEETING WITH THE COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN UNION (ADDIS ABABA, 2 OR 3 OCTOBER 2006)

The PRESIDENT told the Commission that he had accepted an invitation from the Commission of the African Union to take part in a joint meeting on 2 or 3 October in Addis Ababa in return for the visit from the Commission of the African Union's visit to the European Commission on 12 October 2005.

The Commission took note of this information.

**15.3. MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS OF THE G8 (MOSCOW, 14 TO 16 JUNE 2006)
(SEC(2006)839)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr FRATTINI in SEC(2006)839.

**15.4. VISIT TO ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES (19 AND 20 JUNE 2006)
(SEC(2006)852 and /2)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms FERRERO-WALDNER in SEC(2006)852/2.

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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 1137 hours.