



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2006)1769 final

Brussels, 20 December 2006

MINUTES

of 1769th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill Building)

12 December 2006

(afternoon)

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Single sitting: Tuesday 12 December 2006 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.13 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair. Item 16 was chaired by Ms WALLSTRÖM.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	Items 1 to 15
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	Items 1 to 14
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	Items 1 to 16 (in part)
Mr FRATTINI	Vice-President	
Ms REDING		Items 1 to 14 (in part)
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		Items 1 to 15
Ms HÜBNER		
Mr BORG		
Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ		Items 1 to 14
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL'		
Mr KYPRIANOU		
Mr REHN		Items 1 to 15
Mr MICHEL		Items 1 to 16 (in part)
Mr KOVÁCS		Items 1 to 15
Ms KROES		
Ms FISCHER BOEL		
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		Items 13 to 15 (in part)
Mr McCREEVY		Items 1 to 16 (in part)
Mr ŠPIDLA		
Mr MANDELSON		
Mr PIEBALGS		Items 13 to 16

Absent:

Mr BARROT

Vice-President

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission

Mr SAGREDO FERNÁNDEZ A member of Mr BARROT's staff

The following also sat in

Mr VALE DE ALMEIDA	Chef de cabinet to the President	Items 1 to 15
Mr PETITE	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr WORINGER	DG Communication	
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	Items 1 to 15
Ms CARVALHO	Acting Director-General, Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA)	Items 13 (in part) to 15
M. CABRAL	Adviser hors classe in the President's Office	Items 1 to 14.
Ms MARTINHO	Adviser in the President's Office	Items 1 to 15 (in part)
Mr ÅSTRÖM	A member of Ms WALLSTRÖM's staff	Items 15 (in part) and 16
Mr MORDUE	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr VERHEUGEN	Items 1 to 13
Mr PRONK	A member of Ms REDING's staff	Items 14 (in part) to 16
Mr PESONEN	Chef de cabinet to Mr REHN	Item 14
Mr SERVOZ	Secretariat-General	Item 13
Mr DE KOSTER	Secretariat-General	Item 13

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2006)1769/3; SEC(2006)1649/2)

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)1769)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 11 December.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 1768th MEETING
(6 DECEMBER)**

(PV(2006)1768 AND /2; PV(2006)1768, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1768th meeting.

**4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF
POWERS**

4.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2006)1650 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 4 and 8 December.

4.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2006)1651 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 11 and 15 December and of the "finalisation" written procedures initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 11 December.

4.3. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2006)1652 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 4 and 8 December.

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 4 and 8 December, as archived on the "Greffé 2000" (Registry) website.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2006)1653)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2006)174)

**5.1. DG INFSO – EXTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE
FOR AN AD14 CHIEF ADVISER (EU-10)**
(PERS(2006)172)

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms REDING, the Commission decided to authorise the publication, under Article 29§2 of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice in

PERS(2006)172 concerning a post of Chief Adviser in the Information Society and Media Directorate-General.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**5.2. DG MARKT – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2006)130 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the Knowledge-based Economy Directorate in the Internal Market and Services Directorate-General (PERS(2006)130).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on appointments of 4 and 21 September (PERS(2006)130/2 and /3).

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

This decision would take effect on 16 December 2006.

5.3. DG ENTR – INTERIM APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr VERHEUGEN, decided to grant an interim appointment under Article 7(2) of the Staff Regulations to the function of Director of Directorate ENTR.A (Coordination for Competitiveness) in the Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General to Mr Philippe JEAN, an AD14 official and Head of Unit ENTR.A.2 (International Aspects of Enterprise and Industrial Policy) for the period from 1 January 2006 to 31 October 2006.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**5.4. DG EMPL – APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 50 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS (SECOND STAGE) WITH RESPECT TO AN AD15 OFFICIAL
(PERS(2006)173)**

The Commission continued its discussions on this matter, begun on 22 November (PV(2006)1766).

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr ŠPIDLA, the Commission adopted the decision set out in PERS(2006)173 applying the second stage of the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations to Mr Sven KJELLSTRÖM, an AD15 official and currently Director of Directorate C (ESF, Monitoring of Corresponding National Policies III) in the Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Directorate-General.

This decision would take effect on 1 July 2007.

**5.5. IAS – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART
(SEC(2006)1680)**

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

- transfer Ms Agnieszka KAZMIERCZAK, currently Chief Adviser, to the function of Director of the Horizontal Questions Directorate in the Internal Audit Service;
- delete a Chief Adviser post;
- approve the organisation chart of the Internal Audit Service as set out in SEC(2006)1680.

These decisions would take effect from 1 January 2007.

5.6. OLAF – COMMISSION DECISION ON THE REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY MEMBERS OF THE OLAF SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES

(C(2006)6595)

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission adopted the decision set out in C(2006)6595.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6. COMMISSION REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND TO THE COUNCIL ON THE PARTICIPATION OF EUROPEAN UNION CITIZENS IN 2004 ELECTIONS IN THE MEMBER STATE OF RESIDENCE (COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 93/109/EC) AND ON THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS (COUNCIL DECISION 76/787/ECSC, EEC, EURATOM AS AMENDED BY DECISION 2002/772/EC) (COM(2006)790 AND /2; SEC(2006)1645; SEC(2006)1646; SEC(2006)1647 AND /2; SEC(2006)1657; SEC(2006)1675)

The Commission approved the report in COM(2006)790/2, for transmission to Parliament and to the Council, and to the national parliaments, accompanied by its Annex, the impact study and the summary of the latter, set out in staff papers distributed as SEC(2006)1645, SEC(2006)1646 and SEC(2006)1647/2, the contents of which were noted.

- 7. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE AMENDING DIRECTIVE 93/109/EC AS REGARDS CERTAIN DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT TO VOTE AND STAND AS A CANDIDATE IN ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FOR CITIZENS OF THE UNION RESIDING IN A MEMBER STATE OF WHICH THEY ARE NOT NATIONALS**
(COM(2006)791 TO /3; SEC(2006)1657; SEC(2006)1675)

The Commission adopted the proposal for a Directive set out in COM(2006)791/3, for transmission to Parliament and the Council, and to the national parliaments.

- 8. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ON A EUROPEAN PROGRAMME FOR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION**
(COM(2006)786 AND /2; SEC(2006)1643; SEC(2006)1675)

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2006)786/2 for transmission to Parliament and the Council and to the national parliaments.

- 9. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DIRECTIVE ON THE IDENTIFICATION AND DESIGNATION OF EUROPEAN CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED TO IMPROVE THEIR PROTECTION**
(COM(2006)787 AND /2; SEC(2006)1654; SEC(2006)1648; SEC(2006)1643; SEC(2006)1675)

The Commission adopted the proposal for a Directive set out in COM(2006)787/2, for transmission to Parliament, the Council and the European Central Bank, and to the national parliaments, accompanied by the impact study and summary of the

latter set out in staff papers distributed as SEC(2006)1654 and SEC(2006)1648, the contents of which were noted.

**10. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 8(2) OF COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) 139/2004 ON THE CONTROL OF CONCENTRATIONS BETWEEN UNDERTAKINGS AND ARTICLE 57 OF THE EEA AGREEMENT (CASE COMP/M.4187 – METSO/AKER KVAENER)
(C(2006)6513 TO /6)**

The Commission:

- took note of the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Concentrations of 1 December in C(2006)6513/6;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 7 December in C(2006)6513/5;
- adopted, in the authentic language (English), the decision set out in C(2006)6513/2 and /6, declaring the operation notified to be compatible with the single market and with the Agreement on the European Economic Area, provided that the undertaking concerned complied with the commitments entered into, as set out in C(2006)6513 /2;
- decided to notify the decision set out in C(2006)6513/2 and /6 to the undertaking concerned, together with the final report of the Hearing Officer and the opinion of the advisory committee;
- decided that the most important parts of the decision, together with the opinion of the Advisory Committee and the final report of the Hearing Officer, would be published in the official languages in the Official Journal (with all business secrets removed);

- decided to publish the decision (with business secrets removed) on the Internet.

11. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

SECOND MEETING OF THE PERMANENT PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL ON ENERGY BETWEEN THE EU AND RUSSIA (MOSCOW, 8 DECEMBER) (SEC(2006)1700)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr PIEBALGS in SEC(2006)1700.

12. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION ON GUIDELINES FOR THE EMPLOYMENT POLICIES OF THE MEMBER STATES (COM(2006)815 AND /2)

The Commission approved the proposal for a decision in COM(2006)815 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments.

13. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO THE SPRING 2007 EUROPEAN COUNCIL – ANNUAL REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING THE RENEWED LISBON STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND JOBS – "A YEAR OF DELIVERY" (COM(2006)816 TO /6)

The PRESIDENT presented the annual report on the implementation of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for approval in the run-up to the March European Council. He highlighted the quality and utility of discussions held by the Lisbon group of Commission Members and the Chefs de cabinet and pointed out that the documents before the Commission that day drew heavily on the results of those discussions.

The PRESIDENT accordingly focused on the main political messages transmitted by the annual report, and in particular by the preface that went with it, as with the previous report. He reminded the meeting of the main aim of the renewed Lisbon Strategy, highlighted in this report: to prepare Europe to take advantage of globalisation and face the demographic challenge. This preparation particularly concerned the implementation of far-reaching structural reforms throughout Europe to preserve the quality of life of present and future citizens and protect the environment.

The PRESIDENT then took stock of the most significant achievements since the last annual report, which had called on the Member States to step up their efforts. The assessment carried out showed that the Member States had indeed started implementing their national programmes and had really taken the priorities laid down in the new Lisbon Strategy on board. The results obtained, of which the PRESIDENT gave a few examples, had all contributed to growth and job creation. The PRESIDENT acknowledged that the current economic recovery was to some extent cyclical in origin, but the reforms already undertaken had also played a role. He felt that the economic situation gave the EU an exceptional opportunity to implement reforms that were even more ambitious than in the past and thus set the European economy on an even better and more sustainable path to growth. Progress still had to be made, often in politically sensitive areas such as competition in services and labour market reform. This was where the Commission should now focus its attention.

Regarding methodology the PRESIDENT pointed out that the framework set by the strategy meant that synergies between the Community and national levels and between the different policies could be maximised. Efforts to ensure consistent implementation of all Community and national policies should therefore be pursued.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT referred to the recommendations addressed to individual Member States, the main innovation in the report. He outlined the process for preparing the recommendations and the methodology used and stated that the Commission had promoted an approach of close cooperation with the Member

States in a spirit of partnership. He pointed out that the recommendations were offered in a constructive spirit and were important for the credibility of the entire Lisbon Strategy.

The PRESIDENT particularly thanked Mr VERHEUGEN, Mr ALMUNIA and Mr ŠPIDLA for their decisive contributions to the success of the initiative and asked them to add to his presentation.

Mr VERHEUGEN began by thanking Commission Members, their Offices and the departments that had been actively involved in preparing the report for some months, which had been a particularly heavy task. He reminded the meeting of the communication effort that all Commission Members would have to make in order to convey this year's key messages.

Mr VERHEUGEN highlighted the positive results obtained through the renewal of the Lisbon Strategy, the need to continue progressing without giving in to the temptation of complacency, the importance of the new European economic governance system now introduced for the sound implementation of the Lisbon Strategy in the medium and long term, the practical achievements scheduled for 2007, particularly as regards innovation, the protection of intellectual property and the lightening of administrative burdens, and the preparation in 2007 of proposals for the next three-year phase on the basis of solid economic analyses and objective policy evaluations, with a clear general political position.

Mr ALMUNIA highlighted the importance of the economic environment and reminded the meeting of the vital importance of using the current economic recovery to take structural reforms much further. He also mentioned the chapter on the euro area and pointed out a number of difficulties in working together to tackle certain specific problems.

Mr ŠPIDLA noted that in the last twelve months there had been positive developments on the employment front. But he felt that substantial efforts still needed making to face up to the challenges of globalisation and the ageing of the population. The concept of flexicurity was a key factor here: it provided a means of

reconciling the companies' requirements for flexibility with the workers' need for job security. Mr ŠPIDLA also announced his intention of encouraging more satisfactory implementation of the sections of the recommendations relating to employment policy.

There was a brief exchange of views during which the Commission looked in particular at the following aspects:

- the tone and balance of the recommendations and the desire to ensure equal treatment of each and every Member State;
- the need to ensure continuity and coherence in the implementation of the strategy;
- the importance of involving industry and the business world, in parallel with the commitment given by the EU and the Member States, in making a success of the strategy;
- the close link between the Lisbon Strategy and the challenges of globalisation and the external environment in general, and the possibility of making the link clearer in the annual report;
- the need to plan for joint action by the Member States in the euro area, for instance a degree of harmonisation of the budgetary rules, and in particular accounting rules;
- the importance of energy matters and climate change for the strategy;
- the contribution of the culture industry to growth and job creation;
- the content of the communication effort still to be made, in particular with an eye to the spring 2007 European Council, and the importance of the success of the Lisbon Strategy for the credibility of European integration as a whole.

Following this exchange of views, the PRESIDENT thanked Commission Members for the quality of their interventions. He was prepared to consider including a

reference to the global dimension in the preface to the annual report. He also noted that there was agreement on updating the recommendations addressed to Italy to include the following phrase at point 5: “*sustainable use of resources, where implementation and subsequent further reinforcement measures are essential*”. He reminded the meeting of the importance of reaching a perfect balance between the various recommendations and did not rule out the possibility of strengthening the tone next year. And he asked all Members to communicate widely on this matter, particularly so as to ensure full implementation of the recommendations to the Member States in 2007. He announced his intention of raising the issue with the future German Council Presidency shortly.

Subject to the amendments indicated above and a general linguistic revision of the documents, the Commission:

- approved the annual report on the implementation of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment in COM(2006)816;
- approved the annex to the report in COM(2006)816/3;
- approved the assessment of the national reform programmes in COM(2006)816/5;
- adopted the recommendation for a Council recommendation concerning the updating for 2007 of the Broad Guidelines of the Economic Policies of the Member States and the Community and the implementation of the employment policies of the Member States, in COM(2006)816/6.

It decided to transmit all these documents to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments.

14. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(SEC(2006)1644)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Friday 8 December (SEC(2006)1644).

It paid particular attention to the following:

14.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Review of the joint declaration of 1999 on practical arrangements for the codecision procedure – Preparation of political trialogue of 13 December 2006

(point 1.1.3 of the record of the IRG)

The Commission authorised Ms WALLSTRÖM, when presenting the questions mentioned at item 1.1.3 of record of the IRG, to conclude the discussions at the political trialogue of 13 December by accepting a final compromise following the line set out in SPI(2006)117/2.

ii) Preparations for December part-session

(point 1.2 of the record of the IRG)

Codecision – 1st reading

- GROOTE Report –Type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions and access to vehicle repair information (EURO 5) – COM(2005)683 – 2005/0282 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2006)5615.

Consultation

- HIGGINS Report – Community financial contributions to the International Fund for Ireland (2007-2010) – COM(2006)564 – 2006/0194 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2006)5476 and /2.

iii) Preparations for Council meeting (Environment) (18 December)
(point 1.3 of the record of the IRG)

- Proposal for a Parliament and Council Directive establishing a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy – COM(2005)505 – 2005/0211 (COD)

The Commission authorised Mr DIMAS to accept a Council Presidency compromise that could be supported by a qualified majority at the Council meeting (Environment) on 18 December, following the line set out in SI(2006)1285/2.

14.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL
(SI(2006)1253)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2006)1253 relating to Council meetings held from 7 to 10 December.

iv) Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC, Euratom) 2728/94 establishing a guarantee Fund for external actions (COM(2005)130 – 2005/0025 (CNS))
(point 2.1 of the record of the IRG)

The Commission authorised Mr ALMUNIA to accept the Council Presidency's compromise and the Council/Commission joint statement, following the line set out in SI(2006)1286/2.

v) Council meeting (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) (Brussels, 11 and 12 December) – Telecommunications
(point 2.2 of the record of the IRG)

Ms REDING reported on the main results of the Council meeting (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) devoted to Telecommunications in Brussels on 11 December.

Regarding policy on the radio spectrum, Ms REDING pointed out that the Member States were now aware of the enormous possibilities offered by wireless telecommunication services to the European economy. She particularly mentioned the frequencies that would shortly be released with the changeover from analog to digital television and could be used for other purposes.

Ms REDING then mentioned the Council's policy debate on the proposal for a Regulation on roaming on public mobile networks within the Community. She stated that most delegations supported the objectives of the Commission proposal and the need for a regulatory instrument to ensure in particular that the retail prices for roaming services were reduced. Ms REDING had expressed her opposition to the suggestion by a minority of Member States for a sunrise clause, as it would merely delay the price cut that was sought and increase administrative costs, but she had defended the simplicity and transparency of the Commission proposal. On the basis of the excellent work done by the Council Presidency, the future Presidency had stated that it intended to reach agreement on this matter during the first half of 2007.

Lastly, Ms REDING announced with great satisfaction the political agreement reached in the Council on the Commission proposal for the introduction of a single six-figure telephone number for emergency calls concerning missing children.

The Commission took note of this information.

vi) Results of the Council meeting (General Affairs and External Relations) (Brussels, 11 and 12 December) – General affairs
(point 2.2 of the record of the IRG; SI(2006) 1292)

Mr REHN reported on the enlargement part of the Council meeting (General Affairs and External Relations) held on 11 December 2006.

Although the Member States had initially taken a variety of positions on the action to be taken on the accession negotiations with Turkey, Mr REHN announced that the Council had eventually reached a unanimous agreement entirely aligned on the Commission recommendation of 29 November.

Mr REHN pointed out that the Council had also endorsed the Presidency statement on efforts towards a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue under UN auspices. Regarding the implementation of the April 2004 conclusions, the Council had decided to resume work without delay on the proposal for a Council Regulation on special conditions for trade with those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control.

Having regard to the results, Mr REHN highlighted the relevance and utility of the Commission's initiative of 29 November, which had enabled the Member States to come to a balanced and fair agreement in good time.

Mr REHN considered that priority should now be given to identifying the common interests of the EU and Turkey. He drew Members' attention to the importance of their presence in Turkey to encourage a quicker pace of reform and to communicate on questions of common interest.

Mr REHN concluded by paying tribute to the excellent work done by the Enlargement Directorate-General.

The Commission then held a discussion on the basis of this information, during which it considered the following questions in particular:

- the need for the EU to maintain the pace of high-level contacts with the Turkish authorities and to encourage them to show greater determination in the full implementation of the additional protocol to the Association Agreement ("Ankara Agreement");
- the Union's response if Turkey made such a gesture in the immediate future;

- the Commission's role in support of pro-European and reform forces in Turkey, particularly with a view to forthcoming elections there; in this connection, the importance of Commission Members visiting the country in the next few weeks so as to encourage the authorities to take all the measures needed with an eye to accession;
- the procedures and conditions for lifting the decision to suspend the opening of certain chapters;
- the link with other ongoing accession processes concerning countries in the Western Balkans.

The PRESIDENT highlighted the importance and significance of the agreement reached in the Council the previous day and welcomed the Council's unanimous firm support for the Commission's recommendation of 29 November, which clearly showed how relevant, balanced and timely its initiative had been. If the Commission had not taken the lead, the Member States would certainly have been even more divided. He considered that Turkey should not only enter into genuine negotiations with the EU but ultimately also convince public opinion in the Member States.

The PRESIDENT concluded by hoping that the European Council on 14 and 15 December could devote its time to a genuine debate on enlargement strategy in the broadest sense, and warmly thanking Mr REHN for the work done in the last few days.

The Commission took note of this information.

14.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

- vii) Action taken on Declaration on banning seal products in the EU**
(point 3.5.1 of the record of the IRG)

The Commission approved SP(2006)5636/2 on the action taken on the European Parliament Declaration on banning seal products in the European Union, for transmission to Parliament.

- viii) Action taken on Parliament's non-legislative resolutions**
(point 3.5.2 of the record of the IRG)

The Commission adopted SP(2006)5635 and /2 on action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its October II part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

14.4. OTHER MATTERS

- ix) Draft joint Commission and Council Secretary-General / High Representative paper – Elements for a strategy of the EU in Central Asia**
(point 5.3 of the record of the IRG; SI(2006)1304)

The Commission took note of SI(2006)1304, distributed under Ms FERRERO-WALDNER's authority.

15. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

15.1. STATE AID – HORIZONTAL FILE

Revised proposal for a new block exemption Regulation on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to *de minimis* aid and repealing Commission Regulation (EC) No 69/2001 of 12 January 2001 (SEC(2006)1658 AND /2; SEC(2006)1679)

The Commission:

- adopted, in principle, the block exemption Regulation on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the Treaty establishing the European Community to *de minimis* aid, in SEC(2006)1658/2;
- empowered the Commission Member responsible for the competition to adopt the Regulation formally in all the official languages for publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

**15.2. INFRINGEMENTS – REPORT A2/2006 – RECAPITULATIVE LIST
(SEC(2006)1611; SEC(2006)1607; SEC(2006)1610)**

The Commission held a brief discussion during which the criteria to govern decisions authorising contacts and the advisability of such decisions were mentioned in particular.

The Commission then considered the question of authorising contacts with the German authorities on Case 1995/4563. Mr McCREEVY felt that no contacts should be authorised in this case. The PRESIDENT accordingly concluded that there was no need to authorise contacts.

Following this discussion, the Commission adopted the decisions set out in SEC(2006) 1611, subject to the following clarifications:

1995/4563	<i>Germany</i>
Temporary posting of non-community staff by a community firm	
<u>Decision:</u>	Reasoned opinion 228

2001/5162	<i>Germany</i>
Legislation relating to the activity of chimney-sweeps	
<u>Decision:</u>	p.m.

1998/4802	Italy
Waste – Directives 75/442 and 91/156, Waste, Hazardous waste, Manfredonia waste disposal site	
<u>Decision:</u>	2 nd referral + authorisation of contacts + penalty payment: €85 708.80 per day; lump sum: €11 904 per day (minimum amount: €9 920 000); deadline for compliance – one month

1999/4797	Italy
Waste – Directives 75/442 and 91/156, Waste, Rodano waste disposal site	
<u>Decision:</u>	2 nd referral + authorisation of contacts + penalty payment: €192 844.80 per day; lump sum: €23 808 per day; deadline for compliance: one month

2006/2335	Czech Republic
Climate change – National allocation plans under Directive 2003/87/EC (Emissions Trading Directive)	
<u>Decision:</u>	Case closed

16. OTHER MATTERS

16.1. IMPROVING THE COMMISSION'S ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE EUROPE BY GOING LOCAL: RESULTS FROM THE PILOT REPRESENTATIONS PROJECT (SEC(2006)1672)

Ms WALLSTRÖM reported on what she saw as the extremely encouraging results of temporarily boosting the staff in a number of representations and regional offices in the Member States, pursuant to the plan of action adopted by the Commission in 2005 to improve communication on Europe.

She mentioned the main results of this pilot project: easier public access to consultation processes launched by the Commission; management of a growing number of partnerships with civil society, institutional counterparts and the business community; increase in the number of messages on European policies from the Commission to the media; and modernisation of electronic press services.

The Commission held a brief exchange of views on this question, highlighting:

- confirmation of the excellent results of the pilot project;
- support for the future strengthening of all representations in the Member States;
- importance of providing the communication policy with adequate resources and encouraging the local dimension to convey institutional messages.

Ms WALLSTRÖM concluded by noting the Commission's support for the pilot project and the general wish to extend the experiment to all the 35 representations and regional offices (37 following the forthcoming

accession of Bulgaria and Romania). It agreed to return to the question at the beginning of 2007.

The Commission took note of this information and of Ms WALLSTRÖM's note in SEC(2006)1672.

**16.2. DATA BASE – LISBON STRATEGY STRUCTURAL INDICATORS –
PROGRESS REPORT
(SEC(2006)1673)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr ALMUNIA in SEC(2006)1673.

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The meeting closed at 16.00.