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MINUTES
of the 1803rd meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 3 October 2007
(morning)

PV(2007)1803 final

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Single sitting: Wednesday 3 October 2007 (morning)

The sitting opened at 09.10 hours with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President
Mr BARROT	Vice-President
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President
Mr FRATTINI	Vice-President
Ms REDING	
Mr DIMAS	
Mr ALMUNIA	
Ms HÜBNER	
Mr BORG	
Mr POTOČNIK	
Mr FIGEL'	
Mr KYPRIANOU	
Mr REHN	
Mr KOVÁCS	
Ms KROES	
Ms FISCHER BOEL	
Mr McCREEVY	
Mr ŠPIDLA	
Mr PIEBALGS	
Mr ORBAN	

Items 10 to 13

Absent:

Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ

Mr MICHEL

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER

Mr MANDELSON

Ms KUNEVA

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission:

Ms ADAKAUSKIENĖ	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ	
Ms WEYAND	Chef de cabinet to Mr MICHEL	
Mr CHILD	Chef de cabinet to Ms FERRERO-WALDNER	
Mr FRASER	Chef de cabinet to Mr MANDELSON	
Mr BELL	Chef de cabinet to Ms KUNEVA	Item 10
Ms STANEVA	A member of Ms KUNEVA's staff	Items 11 to 13

The following also sat in:

Mr VALE DE ALMEIDA	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr PETITE	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr SØRENSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	Items 10 to 13
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	Items 1 to 11
Mr GASPAR	Acting Director-General, Bureau of European Policy Advisers	
Mr THEBAULT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the President	Item 10 (in part)
Mr CABRAL	Adviser hors classe in the PRESIDENT 's Office	Items 1 to 10
Mr SERVOZ	Secretariat-General	Item 10

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2007)1803/3; SEC(2007)1239/2)

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(2007)1803)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 1 October 2007.

3. MINUTES OF 1802ND MEETING (25 SEPTEMBER 2007)

(PV(2007)1802)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1802nd meeting.

4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

4.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2007)1240 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 24 and 28 September 2007.

4.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2007)1241)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 1 and 5 October 2007.

4.3. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2007)1242 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 24 and 28 September 2007.

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 24 and 28 September 2007, as archived in Greffe 2000 (Registry).

5. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2007)1243)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2007)96)

5.1. DG ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRY – AD14/15 FUNCTION OF DIRECTOR

(PERS(2007)64 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, Innovation Policy, in the Enterprise and Industry DG (PERS(2007)64 and /3).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 5 June and 6 September 2007 (PERS(2007)64/2 and /4).

(3 October 2007)

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 VERHEUGEN, it then decided to appoint Mr Jean-Noël DURVY to the vacant post.

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

5.2. *OLAF – AD14/15 FUNCTION OF DIRECTOR*
(PERS(2006)112 TO /6)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(ii) and (iii), and 29(2) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Operational and Policy Support, in the European Anti-Fraud Office (PERS(2006)112 to /3, and /6).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 22 May and 7 June 2007 (PERS(2006)112/4 and /5).

Having noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 2 of PERS(2007)96, the Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Mr Kjell LARSSON to the vacant post.

This decision would take effect immediately.

5.3. *DG HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION – ADOPTION OF A*
DOUBLE LIST FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN AND
ALTERNATE OF THE CHAMBER OF APPEAL OF THE COMMUNITY
PLANT VARIETY OFFICE
(PERS(2007)61 AND /2)

Having noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 3 of PERS(2007)96, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KYPRIANOU, decided:

(3 October 2007)

- to approve the double list (chairman and alternate) of four candidates, presented by order of merit, in point 3 of PERS(2007)96;
- to consider this list as the Commission proposal under Article 47 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94;
- to ask Mr KYPRIANOU to communicate this decision to the Council.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

5.4. *DG PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION – EXTENSION OF THE SECONDMENT IN THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE OF AN AD15 OFFICIAL*

Having noted the information in point 4 of PERS(2007)96, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to extend to 31 December 2009 the secondment in the interest of the service of Mr Frank ASBECK, and AD15 official, to the European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC).

This decision would take effect immediately.

5.5. *ADMINISTRATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ELECTION OF AN OFFICIAL AS MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT*

The Commission took note of the information in point 5 of PERS(2007)96 and on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Ms WALLSTRÖM and Mr KYPRIANOU, decided:

- to terminate, at 9 October 2007, the secondment in the interest of the service of Mr Margaritis SCHINAS to the post of Chef de cabinet to Mr KYPRIANOU, under Articles 37(a) and 38 of the Staff Regulations, and to reinstate him immediately in the function he had held previously;
- to grant Mr Margaritis SCHINAS leave on personal grounds from 10 October 2007 for the duration of his parliamentary term of office, under

Articles 15(2) and 40 of the Staff Regulations, as he had requested on 25 September 2007.

6. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 81 OF THE EC TREATY (CASE COMP/F/38.710 – BITUMEN, SPAIN) (C(2007)4441 TO /7; SEC(2007)1295)

The Commission

- took note of the opinions of the Advisory Committee on Restrictive Practices and Dominant Positions of 14 and 28 September 2007 in C(2007)4441/3 and /6;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 20 September 2007 in C(2007)4441/5;
- adopted, in the authentic languages (English and Spanish), the decision set out in C(2007)4441/7, noting that the companies to whom the decision was addressed had infringed Article 81 of the EC Treaty and imposing on some of these companies fines totalling €183 651 000;
- decided that the decision in C(2007)4441/7 would be notified to the companies concerned, together with the final report of the Hearing Officer;
- decided that the most important parts of the decision, together with the opinions of the Advisory Committee and the final report of the Hearing Officer, would be published in the official languages in the Official Journal (with business secrets removed);
- decided to publish the decision (with business secrets removed) on the Internet.

7. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 81 OF THE EC TREATY AND ARTICLE 53 OF THE EEA AGREEMENT (CASE COMP/37.860 – MORGAN STANLEY/ VISA INTERNATIONAL AND VISA EUROPE)
(C(2007)4471 TO /7; SEC(2007)1295; SEC(2007)1270)

The Commission

- took note of the opinions of the Advisory Committee on Restrictive Practices and Dominant Positions of 17 and 28 September 2007 in C(2007)4471/3 and /6;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 26 September 2007 in C(2007)4471/5;
- adopted, in the authentic language (English), the decision in C(2007)4471/7 finding that the companies to which the decision was addressed had infringed Article 81 of the EC Treaty and Article 53 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area and imposing fines on some of these companies totalling €10 200 000;
- decided that the decision in C(2007)4471/7 would be notified to the companies concerned, together with the final report of the Hearing Officer;
- decided that the most important parts of the decision, together with the opinions of the Advisory Committee and the final report of the Hearing Officer, would be published in the official languages in the Official Journal (with business secrets removed);
- decided to publish the decision (with business secrets removed) on the Internet.

8. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 8(2) OF COUNCIL REGULATION (EEC) 4064/89 ON THE CONTROL OF CONCENTRATIONS BETWEEN UNDERTAKINGS AND ARTICLE 57 OF THE EEA AGREEMENT (CASE COMP/M.3333 – SONY/BMG) (C(2007)4507 TO /8; SEC(2007)1270)

The Commission

- took note of the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Concentrations of 17 September 2007 in C(2007)4507/3;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 25 September 2007 in C(2007)4507/4;
- adopted, in the authentic language (English), the decision in C(2007)4507/7, declaring the notified operation to be compatible with the common market and the agreement on the European Economic Area;
- decided to notify the decision in C(2007)4507/7 to the companies 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 and the opinion of the Advisory Committee and the report of the Hearing Officer would be published in the official languages in the Official Journal of the European Union (with business secrets removed);
- decided to publish the decision (with business secrets removed) on the Internet.

9. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

***SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY – MINISTERIAL SEGMENT (NEW YORK, 25 SEPTEMBER TO 3 OCTOBER 2007)
(SEC(2007)1293)***

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms FERRERO-WALDNER in SEC(2007)1293.

**10. THE EUROPEAN INTEREST: SUCCEEDING IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION – CONTRIBUTION OF THE COMMISSION TO THE OCTOBER MEETING OF HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT
(COM(2007)581 AND /2)**

The PRESIDENT introduced the communication he was tabling for approval, reminding the meeting that the European Union had managed to devise a policy which encouraged Europeans to make the most of the opportunities presented by this development while at the same time acknowledging the legitimate concerns of those confronted by the consequences of such changes.

He then returned to the events of the past few months which had been the focus of considerable attention: the turbulence on the financial markets, the concerns about the potential consequences of this turbulence for growth, and the joint initiative of the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, and the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, to develop the external dimension of European economic policy.

In the light of this, the PRESIDENT applauded the intention of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council to put globalisation on the agenda for the informal meeting of Heads of State or Government on 18 and 19 October. In his view, it was the task of the Commission to lay the foundations for this debate.

He pointed out that the present Commission had rightly placed an emphasis on the issue of globalisation, which was at the heart of the consensus it had helped to build. The Hampton Court meeting in October 2005 had shown the importance of putting certain apparently separate issues back into the context of globalisation and of dealing with them together, providing a European response which the Member States could not deliver separately.

He mentioned the joint initiative on climate change and energy as a perfect illustration of the EU's ability both to respond to globalisation and to shape certain aspects of it. He also referred to the work on the internal market, social reality and migration, and the need to ensure that European policies remained as effective in future as they had been in the past, by adapting and updating the resources deployed and, in particular, by putting the emphasis on consumers, developing flexicurity and a global approach to migration.

He stressed the continuing importance of the Lisbon Strategy as a tool enabling the EU to confront globalisation with confidence and as a framework for maintaining coherence between the various efforts.

He reminded his colleagues that the October meeting was an informal gathering, but felt that it ought to be possible for the following elements to emerge: recognition of the existence of a definable European interest, which would pave the way for exploring the potential of globalisation; a better understanding of the EU's position in the global economy, and particularly the importance of openness, but also a vigorous defence of its interests; a focus on the Lisbon Strategy as the appropriate vector, and the fact that the spring European Council would provide an opportunity for reviewing progress.

In conclusion, the PRESIDENT felt that the document that was being presented could play a major role in the meeting of Heads of State or Government and could help to consolidate the line adopted by the Commission.

The Commission then conducted an in-depth analysis of the document, raising the following issues in particular:

- the highly political nature of the document, which sent a strong message to the Heads of State or Government, without necessarily reporting exhaustively on all aspects of the Union's work which contribute to the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy and which derive from the EU's response to the challenges of globalisation;
- the confirmation of the relevance of the framework provided by the Lisbon Strategy for tackling the phenomenon of globalisation;
- the need for debate on the questions raised by the communication and the interest it would arouse, particularly in Parliament, in the run-up to the next European elections;
- the changes that have occurred in the international situation since the meeting of Heads of State or Government at Hampton Court in October 2005, the improvement in the economic situation, but also the growing challenges raised by the worsening situation as regards climate change and the intensification of migratory flows;
- the positive prospects which globalisation offers for Europe and its citizens, and for populations and countries in other regions, despite the challenges already mentioned;
- the need to counter the protectionist policies that certain international players continue to pursue, this being a necessary corollary to the EU's determination to open itself up to healthy international competition;
- the pressing need to identify and pursue the "European interest", but not in such a way that the protection of this interest could be seen as a form of protectionism;

- the need to take into account certain non-economic aspects of the notion of "European interest", and particularly the promotion of European cultural diversity and multilingualism and respect for European humanist values as part of the response to the new social challenges;
- the role of this document in highlighting the structural changes which globalisation was bringing about in European society;
- the importance of ensuring that moves to enhance the external dimension of the EU's response to globalisation were accompanied by the continuing pursuit of ambitious internal policies;
- the need to continue to strike the right balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, for instance when determining the response to the consequences of climate change;
- the need to reaffirm the requirement of sustainability which must be linked to economic growth;
- the fact that completion of the internal market and the expansion of European small and medium-sized businesses represented important sources of sustainable economic growth;
- the need to counteract people's instinctive resistance to social changes which mainly sought to introduce major technological or social advances into their daily lives;
- the need for the public authorities to show their determination to help Europe's citizens to adapt to the changes brought about by globalisation, particularly by giving them the necessary means to do so;
- the need to include in the EU's response to the problems of globalisation a dimension devoted to communication with the public.

The PRESIDENT welcomed the strong consensus in favour of the document, which emerged from the discussion. It was important for the Commission to play a leading role in this debate and help to define the main themes. On the substance, he stressed that defending the European interest did not mean Europe retrenching within its borders, but third countries opening up their borders more extensively.

He pointed to the balanced message conveyed by the communication and the importance attached to the Lisbon Strategy as a framework for embracing any new initiative, thus ensuring the coherence of the whole and the effectiveness of the efforts undertaken.

He singled out one area which he considered particularly important in the communication and which ought to be highlighted when it was presented, which was the section on the goal of "shaping global regulation". He stressed that an open world needed well-defined rules, and cited the EU's experience in drafting common standards and rules. He mentioned in particular areas such as climate change, energy and consumer protection, which required regulation at global level and thus gave Europe a chance to promote its models to the rest of the world. He referred in passing to the growing recognition, even among the most sceptical commentators, of the driving role of the European Union in monitoring compliance with the rules, and mentioned specifically the repercussions of the *Microsoft* case as a case in point.

Finally, he thanked the Commission Members for their support for this text, which was an opportunity to reassert and develop the Commission's message about its vision of Europe.

Following the debate on the communication, the PRESIDENT noted the Commission's agreement on the following amendments, in English, to the document distributed as COM(2007)581/2:

- the words "bringing unprecedented social progress" were added to the end of the first sentence of the third paragraph of the Introduction, on page 2;

- the following sentence was inserted between the second and third sentences of the fifth paragraph of the section "*Shaping up to globalisation*", on page 4: "It is increasing its exports of high quality, high value agricultural products, encouraging farmers to respond to market demands, with benefits for our environment and food security.";
- the second sentence of the indent on "*Migration in a globalising Europe*" in the section "*Shaping up to globalisation*", on page 5, should read as follows: "A new global approach is needed so that migration strikes the right balance between the risks of labour market shortages, economic impacts, negative social consequences, integration policies and external policy objectives.";
- the fourth and fifth sentences of the indent on "*Mobilising the external dimension*" in the section "*Shaping up to globalisation*", on page 6, should read as follows : "At the same time, it is important for the EU to use its influence in international negotiations to seek openness from others: the political case for openness can only be sustained if others reciprocate in a positive manner. The EU needs to ensure that third countries offer proportionate levels of openness to EU exporters and investors and to have ground rules which do not impinge on our capacity to protect our interests and to safeguard our high product standards relating to health, safety, the environment and consumer protection.";
- the words "and society" were inserted after "European economy" in the last line of the second paragraph of the subsection "*More growth and jobs through improved co-ordination*", in the section "*Deepening the reform in the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs*", on page 7;
- the words "and cultural diversity" were inserted after "European values" in the third line of the first paragraph of the indent "*More R&D and innovation*" in the subsection "*The policy orientations*" in the section "*Deepening the reform in the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs*", on page 8;
- the third sentence of the first paragraph of the indent "*A more dynamic business environment*" of the subsection "*The policy orientations*" in the section

"Deepening the reform in the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs", on page 8, should read as follows: "The Commission will seek the views of SMEs and their representatives to help design a "Small Business Act" for Europe with a view to making a wide range of proposals to support SMEs by the end of 2008.";

- the following final paragraph was added to the indent *"Greater employability and investment in people"*, in the section *"Deepening the reform in the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs"*, on page 9: "More attention will also be given to active inclusion and equal opportunities. Adequate social protection should be promoted and the fight against poverty reinforced.";
- the word "globalised" was replaced by "a global" in the first sentence of the first paragraph of the section *"Setting the pace for global Europe"*, on page 10;
- the following two sentences were added to the end of the first paragraph of the section *"Setting the pace for global Europe"*, on page 10: "Active involvement and a sense of stronger ownership by all actors are prerequisites for a successful Lisbon Strategy. It will require a concerted commitment to engage in a capable and responsive communication strategy with EU citizens.".

Subject to the introduction of these amendments, the Commission approved the communication set out in COM(2007)581/2, for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments.

11. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS - COMMUNICATING EUROPE IN PARTNERSHIP

(COM(2007)568 TO /3; (COM(2007)569 AND /2; SEC(2007)1265; SEC(2007)1267; SEC(2007)1268; SEC(2007)1266; SEC(2007)1269)

Ms WALLSTRÖM presented the communication she was tabling for approval, pointing out that it was a continuation of the work carried out in previous years – action plan to improve communicating Europe, published in July 2005, Plan D for "democracy, dialogue and debate", published in October 2005, and the White Paper on a European Communication Policy, published in February 2006 – and that its principal objective was to introduce at European level new working methods for communication. She then went through the main points of the document:

- improving communication on EU policies, and restoring a balanced sharing of responsibilities between the European players. More specifically this would involve creating a new framework for working in partnership with the Member States, Parliament and the Council, in particular by means of an interinstitutional agreement. Ms WALLSTRÖM stressed that this method, based on partnership, would in no way affect the Commission's own powers in matters of communication. She stated that the Commission retained the initiative on areas for joint communication. She added that this framework would strengthen the involvement of the various players in joint communication initiatives and refine the planning and efficient use of resources;
- strengthening action at local level and obtaining a better grasp of the diversity of the communication cultures of the 27 Member States. Ms WALLSTRÖM felt certain that in order to involve the public in European debates, it was necessary to adapt communication to local cultures and to contribute, within the limits of the Commission's powers, to promoting European civic education. In this connection, she thanked Mr FIGEL' for his support and hoped to go on cooperating closely with his departments. She said that stepping up action at

local level would mean focusing communication resources on that level, in particular via the Commission's representations in the Member States and the "Europe Direct" information relays. She also drew attention to the need to do more for regional and local media and to ensure closer coordination between the information networks developed by individual Commission departments. Lastly she mentioned the development of public spaces particularly in the *Maisons de l'Europe*, managed jointly with Parliament, with the organisation of debates, cultural events and other activities that could serve as a relay to the local public;

- strengthening communication capacities in the context of the development of media technologies, with the definition of two strategies, one on the internet following the positive experiences of blogs and the European "EU Tube" channel, and the other on audiovisual media, through a de European public service mission that would promote the networking of radio and television bodies in Europe and would propos doubling the capacity of the Europe by Satelllite service;
- integrating certain innovative methods deriving from plan D, such as public consultations and polls to guide decision-making, in the range of techniques used by Eurobarometer. Ms WALLSTRÖM announced, as a further step under plan D, that a communication would be issued early next year, dealing with the ratification process for the Reform Treaty and participation in the 2009 European elections. She felt that an active contribution was needed to increase the turnout in these elections, and that the opportunity should be taken to debate European and national issues.

Lastly, she underlined the importance of the personal commitment of the Commission Members in order to guarantee the success of all these initiatives. She called on them to visit the capitals and the regions, to explain to stakeholders in the Member States the expected benefits of the new approach, and thus help create a propitious political climate for the partnership on communicating Europe. She acknowledged the efforts already made by Commission departments. But she thought that the real challenges were still ahead, and that the Commission must be

capable of producing a policy of reciprocal communication in partnership with the other players.

After this presentation, the Commission held a brief exchange of views during which the following points were raised:

- concern that the interinstitutional agreement might undermine the Commission's capacity and autonomy in matters of communication, and the desire that the mission of the interinstitutional group on information should be confined to coordinating priority communication measures;
- the urgent need to improve access to and presentation of the Europa site and to facilitate navigation and document searches;
- the importance of having a communication tool that presents in straightforward language the main Commission initiatives and their benefits for ordinary people, and of making it available to the institutional players in the Member States;
- the interest of highlighting and repeating the initiative launched in January 2007 under the German Council Presidency of visits by Commission officials to schools in their country of origin.

In response to these observations, Ms WALLSTRÖM thanked the Commission Members for their support. She said that simplification and improvement of the Europa site was one of the first objectives of the internet strategy that was being prepared. She also drew attention to the existing communication material, particularly the brochure entitled "50 ways forward - Europe's best successes" published by the Commission in March 2007. She was aware of the great added value, in terms of communication, of the initiative of visits to schools by European officials, adding that the action was being repeated under the present Council Presidency. In this connection she noted the usefulness of the management partnerships concluded with certain countries to enhance the effectiveness of communication on Europe.

The PRESIDENT concluded by emphasising the importance of this communication and highlighting the partnership approach it proposed. He felt that the involvement of the Member States, of Parliament and of the other players was crucial for communication on Europe to be a success, as recently demonstrated by the positive repercussions of the initiative of the French authorities during the ceremonies for their national day on 14 July. He also mentioned the importance of working together with the authorities of certain Member States in the process for the ratification of the Reform Treaty. He confirmed the Commission's role of initiative in this type of partnership, and the need for the Commission to retain control over its communication instruments.

He drew attention to the objective of setting up a European public space and the Commission's duty to contribute to it. He also noted the importance of promoting ownership of the European project by the public and providing clear information about European institutions and policies, and thus contributing to an open and democratic Union.

Finally the PRESIDENT thanked the Commission Members for their support for this communication and, while welcoming the results already achieved, he asked them to continue the efforts to make it a total success. He too recognised the importance in terms of media impact of the initiative of visits to schools by European leaders and officials, announcing that he intended to participate shortly in Portugal.

The Commission approved the communication and the proposal for an interinstitutional agreement in COM(2007)568/3 and COM(2007)569/2, for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and to the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment and the summary in the staff papers distributed as SEC(2007)1265 and SEC(2007)1267 respectively, the contents of which were noted.

The Commission also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on this dossier, as set out in SEC(2007)1268.

12. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

12.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Action to be taken on Parliament's legislative opinions

(SP(2007)4974)

The Commission decided to empower the Commission Members responsible for the sectors in question, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms WALLSTRÖM and, if necessary, with the other Members concerned, to adopt the amended proposals for transmission to Parliament and the Council, as set out in SP(2007)4974, drawn up following the September II part-session of Parliament, the contents of which were noted.

12.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

ii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2007)838)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2007)838 on the Council meetings between 27 September and 10 October 2007.

iii) Results of the Council meeting (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) – Telecommunications Session (Luxembourg, 1 and 2 October 2007)

(SI(2007)850)

- Completion of the internal market in postal services (Directive) – FERBER report – 2006/0196 (COD)

Mr McCREEVY reported on the results of the Council meeting (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 1 and 2 October 2007, as regards the amendment of Directive 97/67/EC on completion of the internal Community market in postal services. He was pleased with the compromise reached in the

Council, reminding the meeting that the agreement had come nearly a year after the Commission had adopted the proposal for the amendment of the Directive in question. He felt too that the agreement was an important milestone on the road to an internal market in services.

He then outlined the key elements of the compromise, particularly the date of 31 December 2010 for full opening of the postal markets, and the possibility for certain Member States to defer this opening for two years. He felt that the compromise met the Commission's key objectives and put back only slightly the date for opening originally proposed.

Mr McCREEVY also pointed to the political importance of the fact that the compromise reached in the Council was, barring some small details, a reflection of the discussions in Parliament at first reading; he felt that the consensus shown in Parliament had facilitated agreement in the Council. He noted once again that on codecision matters, Parliament was playing an increasingly important role in the preparation and implementation of compromise solutions, and he accordingly urged Commission Members to continue their efforts to associate Parliament wherever possible in the early stages of the legislative process.

The PRESIDENT congratulated Mr McCREEVY on the result achieved in the Council and stressed the importance the Commission attached to the implementation of the internal market in postal services. Although the Council had made some amendments to the Commission's initial proposal, he felt that the final outcome was in line with the Commission's objectives.

The Commission took note of this information.

12.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

iv) September II part-session

(SP(2007)4582 and /2)

The Commission took note of the information in SP(2007)4582/2 on the proceedings of the part-session of Parliament held in Strasbourg from 24 to 27 September 2007.

13. TRENDS IN THE MEMBER STATES (SEC(2007)1292)

Ms WALLSTRÖM briefly presented her information note covering the period 28 August to 26 September 2007.

She reported that media attention in September had focused on the development of the economic situation in Europe, essentially on the fears that growth might be slowed down by the conjunction of three factors: the American financial crisis, the increase in oil prices and the rising value of the euro. She pointed in particular to the importance attached to the fact that the financial markets issues had been raised at the recent session of the United Nations General Assembly.

She also mentioned, as a subject that had caught the headlines, the third energy package presented by the Commission and the various competition aspects of the energy sector. She noted in this connection a certain clash in Europe between the advocates of a free market and those who believed that competition could not be improved by means of liberalisation.

On the external front, she noted two distinct lines, with the handling of international affairs, dominated by the Iranian question and by the situation in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories, and with the handling of issues closer to home, dominated by the question of the status of Kosovo.

She also drew the Commission Members' attention to the results of the Eurobarometer poll on Europeans' perception of their neighbouring countries and the interest they attach to these neighbours. She noted that 61% of those interviewed considered it a good thing to help their neighbours to prosper, but that 79% also

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feared that this would be very costly for Europe. This, she felt, highlighted the usefulness of communicating the European neighbourhood policy correctly within the EU.

The Commission took note of this information and of Ms WALLSTRÖM's note (SEC(2007)1292.

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The meeting closed at 11.24 hours.