



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2007)1813 final

Strasbourg, 15 January 2008

MINUTES
of the 1813th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 19 December 2007
(morning)

PV(2007)1813 final

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Single sitting: Wednesday 19 December 2007 (morning)

The sitting opened at 08.08 hours with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair. The discussion of item 12 was chaired by Ms WALLSTRÖM.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	Items 1 to 11
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	Items 1 to 11
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Mr FRATTINI	Vice-President	Items 1 to 11
Ms REDING		Items 1 to 11
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		
Ms HÜBNER		
Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL'		
Mr KYPRIANOU		
Mr REHN		Item 10 (in part)
Mr MICHEL		Items 1 to 11
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms KROES		Items 1 to 11
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		
Mr McCREEVY		
Mr ŠPIDLA		
Mr PIEBALGS		
Ms KUNEVA		
Mr ORBAN		

Absent:

Mr BORG	Member
Ms FISCHER BOEL	Member
Mr MANDELSON	Member

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

Mr KOEHLER	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr BORG	
Mr MOUSNIER	A member of Ms FISCHER BOEL's staff	
Ms NIKOLAY	A member of Mr MANDELSON's staff	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr PETERS	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr MANDELSON	Items 10 (in part) to 12

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 12
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	Items 1 to 11
Ms CARVALHO	Bureau of European Policy Advisers	
Mr THEBAULT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the President	Item 10 (in part)
Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	A member of the President's staff	Items 1 to 11
Ms ERLER	Chef de cabinet to Mr VERHEUGEN	Items 1 to 10
Ms KONTOU	Chef de cabinet to Mr DIMAS	Items 1 to 10
Mr PESONEN	Chef de cabinet to Mr REHN	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr ARTJOKI	A member of Mr REHN's staff	Items 10 (in part) to 12
Mr SERVOZ	Secretariat-General	Items 1 to 10
Mr MOSER	DG Environment	Items 1 to 10

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2007)1813/3; SEC(2007)1690/2)

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)1813)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 17 December 2007.

3. MINUTES OF 1812TH MEETING (11 DECEMBER 2007)

(PV(2007)1812)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1812th meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

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

(SP(2007)6346)

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)6346, drawn up following the December part-session of Parliament, the contents of which were noted.

ii) Preparations for Council meeting (Environment) (Brussels, 20 December 2007)

(SI(2007)1135 to /3)

- Framework for the protection of soil (Directive) – GUTIERREZ-CORTINES report – 2006/0086 (COD)

The Commission authorised Mr DIMAS, with a view to the Council meeting (Environment) on 20 December 2007, to adopt an approach that would help secure political agreement, in accordance with the line set out in SI(2007)1135/3.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

iii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2007)1184)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2007)1184 on the Council meetings between 13 and 31 December 2007.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

iv) Results of Parliament's December part-session

(SP(2007)6355)

The Commission took note of the information on the proceedings of the part-session of Parliament held in Strasbourg from 10 to 13 December 2007, contained in SP(2007)6355.

5. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

STATE AID – INDIVIDUAL CASE

(SEC(2007)1734 AND /2; SEC(2007)1733)

The Commission adopted the decision in SEC(2007)1734/2.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2007)1691 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 10 and 14 December 2007.

6.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2007)1692 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 17 and 21 December 2007 and of the "finalisation" written procedures initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 17 December 2007.

6.3. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2007)1693 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 10 and 14 December 2007.

6.4. GENERAL EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES UNDER THE SEVENTH RESEARCH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMMES (EC AND EURATOM) (SEC(2007)1732)

The Commission granted general empowerment as set out in SEC(2007)1732 to the Commission Member responsible for Research, in agreement with the Commission Members responsible for Enterprise and Industry, Transport, the Information Society and Media, and Energy, with respect to their respective fields of responsibility.

It also decided to delegate powers to the Directors-General responsible for Research, Enterprise and Industry, Transport, the Information Society and Media, and Energy, with respect to their respective fields of responsibility for the adoption, on behalf of the Commission and under its responsibility, of measures for the implementation of the 7th research framework programmes (EC and Euratom), in accordance with the terms laid down in SEC(2007)1732.

6.5. EMPOWERMENT CONCERNING MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED IN THE EVENT OF THE COUNCIL'S FAILING TO ACT, FIXING FOR 2008 THE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSOCIATED CONDITIONS FOR CERTAIN FISH STOCKS AND GROUPS OF FISH STOCKS, APPLICABLE IN COMMUNITY WATERS AND, FOR COMMUNITY VESSELS, IN WATERS WHERE LIMITATIONS IN CATCH ARE REQUIRED (SEC(2007)1745)

The Commission granted the ad hoc empowerment as set out in SEC(2007)1745 to the Commission Member responsible for fisheries.

6.6. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation procedure between 10 and 14 December, as archived on "Greffé 2000" (Registry).

7. REVISED PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE PROMOTION OF CLEAN AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT ROAD TRANSPORT VEHICLES (COM(2007)817 TO /3; SEC(2007)1706)

The Commission adopted the revised proposal for a directive in COM(2007)817/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments.

8. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 81 OF THE EC TREATY AND ARTICLE 53 OF THE EEA AGREEMENT (CASE COMP/F/34.579 – MASTERCARD; CASE COMP/36.518 – EUROCOMMERCE; CASE COMP/38.580 – COMMERCIAL CARDS) (C(2007)6474 TO /7; SEC(2007)1712)

The Commission

- took note of the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Restrictive Practices and Dominant Positions of 13 December 2007 in C(2007)6474/4;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 3 December 2007 in C(2007)6474/5;
- adopted in the authentic language (English) the decision set out in C(2007)6474/7, 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 a fine on them;

- decided that the decision in C(2007)6474/7 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 opinion of the Advisory Committee and the final report of the Hearing Officer, would be published in the EU official languages in the Official Journal (with all business secrets removed);
- decided to publish the decision (with business secrets removed) on the Internet.

9. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

9.1. *FIFTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE EU TROIKA WITH THE UNITED STATES ON ISSUES OF JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY (WASHINGTON, 10-11 DECEMBER 2007)* **(SEC(2007)1737)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr FRATTINI in SEC(2007)1737.

9.2. *STATE OF PLAY ON NEGOTIATIONS FOR ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS* **(SEC(2007)1743)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr MANDELSON in SEC(2007)1743.

**9.3. *INTERNATIONAL DONORS' CONFERENCE FOR PALESTINE
(PARIS, 17 DECEMBER 2007)
(SEC(2007)1747)***

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms FERRERO-WALDNER in SEC(2007)1747.

**9.4. *13TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE
CHANGE (BALI, 3-15 DECEMBER 2007)
(SEC(2007)1748)***

Mr DIMAS reported on the results of the thirteenth session of the conference of the parties to the UN framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC) and of the third meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 15 December 2007.

He was pleased with the positive outcome of the conference, which had resulted in the adoption of a "Bali plan of action" to launch a negotiation process that would lead, by the end of 2009, to a comprehensive and global agreement on arrangements for combating climate change for the post-2012 period, when the first commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol expires.

He welcomed the adoption of this plan of action, which should make it possible to sustain and develop the mechanisms of the Kyoto protocol as regards reduction of carbon emissions. He also emphasised the real progress made in combating deforestation, aid to the developing countries in their efforts to adapt to the effects of climate change and transfers of clean technologies to those countries.

He was particularly happy that the United States would be taking part in the negotiations and that differentiated contributions had been set for emerging countries and other developing countries. He highlighted what had been achieved in recent years in the definition of concrete and measurable

objectives for reducing emissions. He acknowledged the essential role played by the EU, under the leadership of the Council Presidency, which had in recent months demonstrated its unity and determination to convince the other States to take part in the negotiations.

He also emphasised this role of driving force that the EU would have to play in the subsequent conduct of the negotiations, and its pioneering role in terms of actual implementation of the policies initiated by the Commission. He concluded by expressing his conviction that that this process would produce ambitious results that could provide a comprehensive response to the challenges of climate change.

The Commission held a brief exchange of views which looked at the technical aspects of the negotiations at the Bali conference and the signs of positive developments, at international level and particularly in the United States, in attitudes to climate change.

The PRESIDENT in turn highlighted the essential role played by the EU in the success of the Bali conference, not only by the European Council and the Commission but by all the Member States, which had together shown their determination through a coherent and united position. He thanked in particular the office of Mr DIMAS and the staff of the Directorate-General for the Environment, whose dedication had made a large contribution to this positive result. He urged that there be no let-up in these collective efforts in the subsequent stages of the negotiation process.

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr DIMAS in SEC(2007)1748.

**9.5. VISIT TO URUGUAY FOR THE MERCOSUR SUMMIT
(MONTEVIDEO, 16 DECEMBER 2007)
(SEC(2007)1744)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr ALMUNIA in SEC(2007)1744.

**10. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND THE COUNCIL SETTING EMISSION PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
FOR NEW PASSENGER CARS AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY'S
INTEGRATED APPROACH TO REDUCE CO₂ EMISSIONS FROM LIGHT-
DUTY VEHICLES.
(COM(2007)856 TO /3; SEC(2007)1723; SEC(2007)1724; SEC(2007)1725)**

Mr DIMAS presented the proposal he was tabling for adoption, setting it in the context of the Bali conference and the efforts being made by the Commission to combat climate change by fixing quantitative targets.

He reminded the meeting that the transport sector was a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and stated that while other sources of emissions had been on the decline, transport emissions continued to increase, thereby cancelling out the positive impact of progress achieved in other areas. He therefore emphasised the need for a fair distribution of efforts over all sectors.

Mr DIMAS focused on the targets set and the approach adopted in the communication approved by the Commission on 7 February, which now had to be translated into action.

He listed the three objectives pursued by the proposed Regulation: (i) to reduce CO₂ emissions and so improve the quality of air, (ii) to generate savings for consumers, by effective use of fuel, with special reference to the present context of

high oil prices, and (iii) to guarantee the competitiveness of the automobile sector by promoting innovation and the creation of high-quality jobs.

As regards the reduction of CO₂ emissions, Mr DIMAS felt that the target the Commission had referred to in its February 2007 communication (an average of 130 grams of CO₂/km from 2012 for the new vehicle fleet by means of technological motor improvements, and a further reduction of 10 grams by means of other improvements) would place the EU in the fore as regards fuel savings. This measure would have obvious benefits for consumers, and advantages for the automobile sector, which would have an incentive to invest in research and development and to innovate, thus ensuring the sustainability of its own competitiveness. He stressed that the proposed measures would apply to all new vehicles registered in the EU, so that manufacturers from non-member countries would be subject to the same requirements as European manufacturers.

Mr DIMAS dwelt on certain specific features of the proposal, and in the first place the margin of flexibility allowed, in compliance with the rules of competition, in terms of the allocation of the reduction of emissions over the different types of vehicle by a group of manufacturers or between independent manufacturers ("pooling"), and the exemption granted to manufacturers operating in niche markets.

It would be for the Member States to continue to record manufacturers' data on emissions, and to communicate it to the Commission. Manufacturers failing to comply with the objectives set would have to pay an excess emissions premium, which would serve as an incentive to innovation.

As regards the method of calculating the emissions accepted for each new vehicle, Mr DIMAS referred to the slope of the line giving the mathematical relationship between the mass of the vehicle and the emissions authorised, which had been set at 60%. He felt that this figure ensured a fair distribution of efforts between manufacturers.

The excess emissions premium had had to be set at a deterrent level in order to ensure compliance with the targets set, as the voluntary approach had not worked so

far. After careful analysis the amount had been set at 95 euros per excess gram. To allow for concerns expressed by the sector, it had been necessary to phase in the excess emissions premium.

The discussions during the final stages of the preparation of the dossier had focused on the way in which the proposal took into account potential technological innovations; Mr DIMAS referred to the provisions of Article 10, and in particular the review planned for 2010.

Summing up, Mr DIMAS felt that the proposal he had tabled was both credible from the point of view of environmental benefits and coherent with the approach taken following the Commission's discussion in February. He emphasised that it was also an important step in the EU's fight against climate change, and a strong signal from the Commission in the wake of the Bali conference. He also noted the financial gains that consumers could expect, and the contribution of the proposed measures to greater energy efficiency.

The PRESIDENT also underlined the importance of this proposal, which he too placed in the context of the Bali conference and the Union's objectives for combating climate change. He reminded the meeting that a set of measures on climate and energy issues would be tabled in January.

He regarded this first practical measure for limiting emissions from new vehicles as emblematic for the Commission's credibility in this area, and drew attention to the importance of maintaining the objectives set in February. The measures proposed after the consultation process between departments and Members' Offices had struck a balance between the environmental objective, the concerns of the automobile sector and the social aspects of the proposal.

Referring to the points that had been given particularly close consideration during the preparatory stage, the PRESIDENT pointed out that the review clause in Article 10 left the necessary margin in order to take account of the possibilities of innovation. He also felt that the 60% slope provided a fair balance in terms of distribution of efforts. The phasing-in of the excess emissions premium over four

years would give the sector time to prepare itself for full compliance with the objectives; but at the same time, once the four years were up, the amount of this premium would have to be set at a deterrent level to guarantee its effectiveness.

He concluded his introduction by asking the Members to support this important proposal, for which the Commission would assume political responsibility.

During the exchange of views which followed, the Commission considered in particular the following aspects:

- the very high political importance of the legislation proposed, which gave substance to commitments made by the Commission in the past and came just a few days after the close of the Bali conference;
- the difficulty of converting into economic benefits the challenges posed by climate change, while maintaining due respect for the environment, jobs and the competitiveness of the automobile sector;
- the outstanding quality of the preparatory work done by departments, including the exemplary nature of the impact assessment;
- the criteria that the proposal should meet: ambition, viability, social considerations and fairness;
- the expected environmental impact of the planned measures and their cost/effectiveness;
- the close link between the planned measures and questions of security of supply and price of oil;
- the effects for the European motor industry in terms of competitiveness on an increasingly global market and of jobs;
- the assessment of the impact that the options taken in the legislative proposal would have on the various segments of car types;

- the importance of promoting technological development in all its forms, including "eco-innovation", given that the European motor industry is currently in a highly favourable position on the world market as regards innovation;
- the scope of the future Directive in terms of coverage of the vehicle fleet;
- the amount, the timetable and the phasing-in of the excess emissions premium;
- the operation, the timetable and the scope of the various aspects of the review clause in Article 10;
- the exact slope of the line establishing the relationship between vehicle mass and the specific emission targets;
- the additional role that application of Member States' tax policy on vehicles could play in environmental protection and particularly for achieving the objective of limiting CO₂ emissions;
- the importance of supporting the technological and fiscal instruments applied to limit CO₂ emissions by general awareness-raising of consumers;
- the likely reactions to these proposals from companies and trade unions in the motor vehicle sector.

At the end of the discussion, Mr DIMAS provided a number of clarifications concerning the figures and further information on some of the points raised.

In the light of debate and following these clarifications, the PRESIDENT noted that there was broad support for the proposal; to strengthen this support, he suggested redrafting the text as follows:

- on the question of "eco-innovation", the following text would be inserted in the explanatory memorandum and as an additional recital: *"The aim of this Regulation is to create incentives for the car industry to invest in new technologies. The Regulation actively promotes eco-innovation and takes into*

account future technological developments. In this way, the competitiveness of the European Industry is enhanced and more high-quality jobs are created.";

- to bring out more strongly the phasing-in of the excess emissions premium, it would be specified that the premium would be 20 euros per gram in 2012, 35 euros in 2013, 60 euros in 2014, finally reaching 95 euros in 2015.

On conclusion of these discussions, the Commission:

- adopted in principle the proposal for a Regulation set out in COM(2007)856/3;
- empowered Mr DIMAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, to finalise and to adopt formally the proposal for a Regulation in the light of the outcome of the discussions that day and subject to the insertion of the amendments suggested during the meeting by the PRESIDENT, for transmission to 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 summary in the staff papers distributed as SEC(2007)1723 and SEC(2007)1724 respectively, the contents of which were noted;
- also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the above proposal for a Regulation, as set out in SEC(2007)1725;

11. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2007)1694/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2007)126/3)

***11.1. DG COMPETITION – APPOINTMENT OF AD15/16 DEPUTY
DIRECTOR-GENERAL***
(PERS(2007)92 TO /6)

The Commission had before it the application under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General, Competition (PERS(2007)92 to /4).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 29 November and 6 December 2007 (PERS(2007)92/5 and /6).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicant's qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms KROES, it then decided to appoint Mr Herbert UNGERER to the vacant post.

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

11.2. DG TRANSLATION – APPOINTMENT OF AN AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2007)49 TO /6)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Translation (CS-EL-ES-IT-MT-PT-SK-SL) in the Translation Directorate-General (PERS(2007)49/2 to /4).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 16 October and 22 November (PERS(2007)49/5 and /6).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr ORBAN it then decided to appoint Ms Gürli HAUSCHILDT to the post.

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

11.3. DG HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION - APPOINTMENT OF AN AD14/15 CHIEF ADVISER (EU-27)
(PERS(2007)21 TO /6)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) and (2) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Chief Adviser responsible for public health and risk analysis in the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection (PERS(2007)21/2 to /4).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 3 September and 18 October 2007 (PERS(2007)21/5 and /6).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KYPRIANOU, it then decided to appoint Ms Isabelle DE LA MATA BARRANCO to the post.

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

11.4. SECRETARIAT GENERAL – APPOINTMENT OF AN AD14/15 CHIEF ADVISER
(PERS(2007)29 TO /4)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Chief Adviser responsible for the Commission's mediation service in the Secretariat-General (PERS(2007) 29 and /2).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 15 and 31 May 2007 (PERS(2007)29 /3 and /4).

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

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

11.5. 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 an AD15 official.

11.6. PROMOTION OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS TO GRADE AD16 – 2007 ROUND

The Commission noted the procedure followed, as set out at point 6 of PERS(2007)126/3, and, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided:

- to promote to grade AD16 Mr Serge ABOU, Mr Walter DEFFAA, Mr Francisco GARCIA MORAN and Mr Stefano MANSERVISI, with effect from 1 September 2007;
- to proceed later with the promotion to grade AD15 of senior management officials in the basic post of Director.

**11.7. AMENDMENT OF THE RULES ON SPECIAL ADVISERS TO THE
COMMISSION
(C(2007)6655)**

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission adopted the decision amending the rules on special advisers to the Commission, set out in the document distributed as C(2007)6655.

This decision would take effect immediately.

11.8. LEGAL SERVICE – RETIREMENT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The PRESIDENT paid tribute to Mr Michel PETITE, Director-General of the Commission's Legal Service, for his successful career of nearly thirty years in the Commission, and thanked him warmly for the sterling service he had provided to the institution. While Mr PETITE was leaving out of personal choice, the PRESIDENT was sad to lose somebody who had been one of his most valued aides over the last three years.

The PRESIDENT listed the important offices held by Mr PETITE both on the staff of Commissioners and in other departments, dwelling more particularly on the post of Director-General of the Legal Service in which he had excelled.

The PRESIDENT stressed that his rich experience, his vision and his deep commitment had made Mr PETITE a driving force in the European project, especially in helping to assert the role of the European Commission. He also mentioned the key part Mr PETITE had played in a number of intergovernmental conferences and most recently in finalising the Treaty of Lisbon.

For all this, for his exemplary loyalty, for his unremitting dedication and for his high sense of professionalism, the PRESIDENT wished to express to Mr PETITE his unbounded gratitude and that of the entire Commission, and to wish him well for the coming years.

Mr PETITE then thanked the PRESIDENT for the outstanding spirit of cooperation in which he had worked with him, and wished the Commission every success along the path mapped out by the new Treaty of Lisbon.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

12.1. DISCONTINUATION OF COMMISSION PARTICIPATION IN THREE NATIONAL INFORMATION CENTRES ON EUROPE ("GRANDS CENTRES"), BASED IN PARIS, LISBON AND ROME (SEC(2007)1736)

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms WALLSTRÖM in SEC(2007)1736.

12.2. IMPORTS OF BEEF FROM BRAZIL (SEC(2007)1728)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr KYPRIANOU in SEC(2007)1728.

12.3. ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON IMPORTS OF CERTAIN MEAT PRODUCTS FROM POLAND

Mr KYPRIANOU reported on the state of play in the negotiations between the Russian Federation and Poland for the lifting of the embargo on certain meat products from Poland, in force since 2005.

He welcomed the positive developments in this highly sensitive matter, but still drew attention to the importance of maintaining a coherent EU position in the negotiations which came within the Community powers. He emphasised the desire of the Polish authorities to work jointly with the Commission particularly in drafting the technical memorandum due to be signed that day

in Kaliningrad by representatives of the veterinary services of the two countries.

The Commission then had a brief exchange of views on the information provided by Mr KYPRIANOU, expressing the hope for a positive outcome to the negotiations in progress, from both a political and technical angle. But there were still some important issues, on plant health matters in particular, that would have to be resolved with the Russian Federation during 2008.

The Commission took note of this information.

12.4. EUROPE AND YOU IN 2007 – A SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms WALLSTRÖM reported on the publication of the brochure *Europe and you in 2007*, a compilation of examples, in ten different areas, of progress made by Community policies and of major achievements for European citizens over the past twelve months.

Ms WALLSTRÖM pointed out that the brochure, currently available in English and French versions, with the other official languages to come shortly, should be seen in the context of the communication *A people's Europe*. The brochure followed a previous publication presenting the progress made in 2006; the examples included in this publication were a selection by the Communication Directorate-General and the Spokesman's Service from a wider range of proposals made by Commission departments.

Ms WALLSTRÖM was delighted by the considerable interest already aroused by *Europe and you in 2007*, just days after being presented to the media, put on line on the Commission's internet site and published on Friday 14 December in the form of a videoclip on *EU-Tube*, which had already been viewed by some 20 000 visitors to the site.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The PRESIDENT extended seasonal greetings to the Commissioners, all members of staff and their families.

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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 11.12 hours.