EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2009)1865 final

Strasbourg, 10 March 2009

MINUTES

of the 1865th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 4 March 2009

(morning)

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Single sitting: Wednesday 4 March 2009 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.10 in the Jean Monnet room with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	Item 10 (in part)
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Mr TAJANI	Vice-President	Item 10
Ms REDING		
Mr DIMAS		Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr ALMUNIA		
Ms HÜBNER		
Mr BORG		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL’		
Mr REHN		
Mr MICHEL		Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms KROES		
Mr McCREEVY		
Mr ŠPIDLA		
Mr PIEBALGS		
Ms KUNEVA		
Mr ORBAN		
Ms VASSILIOU		Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Baroness ASHTON		

Absent:

Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ
Ms FISCHER BOEL
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER

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

Mr QUEST	Chef de cabinet to Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ	
Mr CHRISTOFFERSEN	Chef de cabinet to Ms FISCHER BOEL	
Mr CHILD	Chef de cabinet to Ms FERRERO-WALDNER	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr GUEREND	Deputy Chef de Cabinet to Ms FERRERO-WALDNER	Item 10 (in part)

The following also sat in:

Mr VALE DE ALMEIDA	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr SANTAOLALLA	Legal Service	
Mr SØRENSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	Item 10 (in part)
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	
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 (in part)
Mr QUINN	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr DIMAS	Item 10 (in part)
Mr THOMAS	Chef de cabinet to Mr ALMUNIA	Item 10 (in part)
Mr BRUNET	Chef de cabinet de Ms VASSILIOU	Item 10 (in part)
Mr SERVOZ	Secretariat-General	Item 10 (in part)

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

1. AGENDAS
(OJ(2009)1865/3; SEC(2009)243/2)

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(2009)1865)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 2 March.

3. MINUTES OF 1864TH MEETING (25 FEBRUARY)
(PV(2009)1864)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1864th meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS
(SEC(2009)256)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Friday 27 February (SEC(2009)256).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. *LEGISLATIVE MATTERS*

i) Codecision procedure
(point 1.2 of the IRG record)

Dossier at first reading

– Novel foods (Regulation) – LIOTARD Report – 2008/0002 (COD)

The Commission authorised Ms VASSILLIOU to pursue contacts with Parliament and the Council in order to reach agreement at first reading following the line set out in SI(2009)53/2.

ii) Preparation for March I part-session of Parliament
(point 1.3 of the IRG record)

In accordance with the rules in force, the Commission authorised the Commission Members responsible, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms WALLSTRÖM and any other Members associated, to take a position on Parliament's amendments to its proposals.

It considered the following in particular:

Codecision – 1st reading

– Taking up, pursuit and prudential supervision of the business of electronic money institutions – PURVIS report – 2008/0190 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)989.

– Industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) – IPPC (Directive - recast) – KRAHMER report – 2007/0286 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)990 and /2.

– Charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures - Eurovignette III (Directive) – EL KHADRAOUI report – 2008/0147 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)991 and /2.

– Type-approval requirements for the general safety of motor vehicles (Regulation) – SCHWAB report – 2008/0100 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)992.

<u>Consultation</u>

– Statute for a European Private Company (Council Regulation) – LEHNE report – 2008/0130 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)993, /3 and /4.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

iii) Programming of Council business
(SI(2009)54)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2009)54 on the Council meetings between 5 and 18 March.

iv) Results of Council meeting (Justice and Home Affairs) (Brussels, 26 and 27 February)
(SEC(2009)291)

– Second-generation Schengen Information System (SIS II)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr BARROT in SEC(2009)291.

v) Adoption by the Commission of non-binding instruments at international level
(point 2.2 of the IRG record)

– Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and the League of Arab States on cooperation in the field of early warning and crisis response

The Commission confirmed the signature by Ms FERRERO-WALDNER on 3 March of the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and the League of Arab States on cooperation in the field of early warning and crisis response, following the line set out in note SI(2009) 49/3.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

vi) Action taken on Parliament's non-legislative resolutions
(point 3.4.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved documents SP(2009)988 and /2 on the action taken on Parliament's non-legislative resolutions adopted at its December II part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN AND NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

vii) Action taken on opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – Third quarter 2008
(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the replies to the opinions adopted by the Economic and Social Committee during the third quarter of 2008 as set out in SC(2009)5/2, for transmission to the Economic and Social Committee.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2009)245 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 27 February.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2009)246 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 27 February.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2009)247 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 23 and 27 February, as archived in e-Greffe.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2009)248)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 2 and 6 March.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2009)244)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (PERS(2009)31)

TOWN PLANNING COMPETITION TO DEFINE AN URBAN DESIGN FOR THE RUE DE LA LOI AND ITS SURROUNDINGS (SEC(2009)266)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr KALLAS in SEC(2009)266.

7. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 82 OF THE EC TREATY AND ARTICLE 54 OF THE EEA AGREEMENT *(CASE COMP/37.792 – MICROSOFT CORPORATION)* (C(2009)1361 TO /5)

The Commission:

– took note of the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Restrictive Practices and Dominant Positions of 13 February in C(2009)1361/3;

– took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 16 February in C(2009)1361/4;

– adopted in the authentic language version (English) the decision in C(2009)1361/5 deleting Article 7 of Decision 2007/53/EC relating to a proceeding pursuant to Article 82 of the EC Treaty and Article 54 of the EEA Agreement against Microsoft Corporation, and repealing Commission decision C(2005)2988 final;

– decided that the decision in C(2009)1361/5 would be notified to the company concerned, together with the final report of the Hearing Officer;

– 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.

8. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

MEETING WITH THE US SECRETARY OF STATE (WASHINGTON, 27 FEBRUARY)
(SEC(2009)290)

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms FERRERO-WALDNER, distributed as SEC(2009)290.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

PRESENTATION OF **BERLAYMONT SUMMA ARTIS**

Mr FIGEL' presented the *Berlaymont Summa Artis* catalogue, a copy of which was given to each Member of the Commission. In his presentation he highlighted the quality of the works exhibited, the cultural diversity they reflected and the multilingual aspect of the catalogue. Finally, he stressed that culture had a major role to play in bringing European citizens together and allowing them to fulfil their potential.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr FIGEL' for this initiative and for his long-standing efforts to promote European culture.

10. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION FOR THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL – DRIVING EUROPEAN RECOVERY (COM(2009)114)

The PRESIDENT reported on the outcome of the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government held in Brussels on 1 March and presented the Communication designed to contribute to the work of the European Council scheduled for 19 and 20 March.

Turning first to the working lunch on Sunday 1 March which had brought together the EU Heads of State and Government, he started by underlining how important this step had been in demonstrating European unity in responding to the crisis, despite the doubts that had been expressed beforehand. As a result of this meeting, it had been possible to reach a firm consensus with a view to the European Council. While the resulting press release had not contained a set of formal conclusions, it had arrived at exactly the right time to redress the wrong approach taken recently in certain national messages, in particular concerning the internal market and the situation in central and eastern Europe. He underlined the quality of the cooperation with the acting Presidency of the Council during this informal meeting.

He referred to the documents adopted or discussed at the previous Commission meeting, for instance the guidelines on impaired assets, the Communication on the automotive industry and the report on financial supervision produced by the high level expert group chaired by Jacques de Larosière, all of which had been warmly welcomed by the Heads of State and Government and which had demonstrated that the Commission was giving top priority to the crisis. Positive feedback had been received on the European Recovery Plan, the potential and timeliness of which were now widely recognised, and it was important to continue coordinating efforts closely on the basis of common principles.

The PRESIDENT also pointed to the considerably improved atmosphere of the discussions compared with the December European Council, highlighting the importance of maintaining this momentum and showing that adequate coordination and optimal exploitation of the European dimension would help Member States to emerge from this crisis faster and under better conditions. European public opinion was now largely behind the approach of making the internal market the key component of the recovery strategy, and the European Union was being seen more and more as part of the solution. The press release had made quite clear the potential benefits of coordination and the central role played by the Commission. Ms KROES' work on the French car industry plan had sent out a positive signal in terms of ensuring observance of internal market rules.

It had also been possible to assuage certain alarmist reactions to the situation in central and eastern Europe as a result of the solidarity expressed by the Heads of State and Government at the meeting. It had been acknowledged that the countries in the region should not be regarded as a group since their situations and the gravity of the effects varied considerably from one country to another, requiring individual treatment.

The PRESIDENT ended this report of the meeting of 1 March by emphasising the excellent work of the Czech Prime Minister, Mr Mirek Topolánek, and the major role played by the Commission.

He then turned to the Communication drawn up for the Spring European Council which he was submitting to the Commission for approval. It was intended to trigger a new phase in the approach, in keeping with the Recovery Plan which was the roadmap to help Member States emerge from the crisis.

Describing the initiatives discussed by the Commission at its previous meeting (the guidelines on impaired assets, the Communication on the automotive industry and the report of the high level expert group concerning financial supervision) as good examples of the way in which the Commission was dealing with the emerging crisis and of the benefits of European coordination, he said that the present Communication would build on this by tackling specific problems and strengthening the Community dimension through increased coordination. In the Communication, several aspects (the financial sector, the Economic Recovery Plan, action on employment and the international dimension with a view to the G20 meeting) had been interlinked and must be discussed together because of their reciprocal effects.

Recognition of the need for a coordinated approach increased the Commission's responsibility and obligation to produce results, which was why common principles were now being proposed to guide the measures taken by Member States in relation to the real economy.

Since the results would not be felt in the immediate future and there was likely to be a lot of criticism in the coming period, the Commission would have to stand firm and continue to uphold its contribution to the efforts to achieve recovery and a strong, competitive European economy.

The situation in the financial sector was very serious, however this Communication did provide a response which could serve as a framework for Member States. It also defined common principles with a view to the G20 meeting. Particularly important was the Communication's initial analysis of measures taken by the Member States in the context of their national recovery plans.

This document once again placed the Commission at the heart of the European debate on the direction to be taken, and should meet the needs of Member States. Coordination of national decisions was important given the impact (even where positive) that measures taken by one Member State could have on the situation of another.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT turned to social issues, welcoming the fact that his proposal to hold an employment summit in May had been backed by the Czech Presidency. It was important to demonstrate the Commission's commitment to the social dialogue. Also important was the need for the social partners to reach a consensus in order to cope with the crisis.

He concluded by saying that the Communication provided good guidelines to Member States, and by asking all the Commission Members to work towards ensuring a fruitful European Council.

The Commission then held an in-depth discussion during which the following points were raised:

General aspects

- the widespread support for the Communication, its realistic approach to the seriousness of the economic crisis and the very ambitious solutions being considered, including in relation to the knowledge economy;
- the difficulty in making accurate predictions about how long the crisis would last and what impact it would have on the European and global economy;
- the reminder that the current economic and financial crisis had originated outside Europe, and that the European Union must not only react firmly to the consequences of the crisis but also take immediate steps to correct the structural weaknesses of its own economy;
- the importance of maintaining and strengthening European integration as the only way in which Europe can emerge from the present crisis;
- the added value of close coordination and increased cooperation between the Commission and the Member States in implementing the European Economic Recovery Plan;
- the effects the crisis would have on public finances, and the importance of ensuring a return to budgetary stability;
- the need for a realistic analysis of the Community and national contributions to the measures to combat the crisis, the reminder of the respective powers of the European Union and Member States in the areas in question, and the limited financial capacity of both the EU and its Members which meant that only certain key measures could be funded;
- the need to preserve the Stability and Growth Pact;
- the constructive spirit which had presided over the discussions at the informal meeting of the Heads of State and Government on 1 March, and the concern to ensure that this approach would be echoed at the Spring European Council on

19 and 20 March, and would also be in evidence at the G20 meeting in London on 2 April;

– the need for the communication efforts to reflect the spirit of good cooperation that prevailed at the informal meeting on 1 March;

– the solidarity shown by the Union and its Member States in the face of the crisis, particularly with regard to many new Member States, some of which would have to implement major economic reforms while responding to a particularly difficult economic situation, and the fact that it was only their membership of the European Union that enabled these Member States to address the challenges effectively;

– the importance of a detailed communication strategy which must be well-structured, well-argued and, in particular, realistic about the scale of the crisis, must highlight the added value of European integration and must emphasise that the Union placed its citizens at the heart of all its efforts and initiatives to tackle the economic crisis and its effects;

– the need for the communication efforts to take account of the "technical" aspects as well as the significant social dimension of all the measures taken to tackle the effects of the crisis;

– the importance of explaining more clearly the need for priority public support for the banking sector in view of its crucial importance not only for the European economy as a whole but also to safeguard businesses, jobs and households;

– the continuing uncertainties surrounding the future of certain businesses, particularly in the automotive sector, and a reminder that the Commission would carefully examine the compatibility with Community law of any aid measures taken by the Member States in this field;

– the need for the Communication to emphasise that the crisis would have significant structural implications for the European economy and labour market as a whole and that an open, sustainable and long-term approach would be required to prepare European citizens and the European economy to meet challenges still largely unknown at this stage;

– the need to present, as soon as possible, a clear and detailed briefing paper setting out the challenges facing the European Union and the Commission's proposals;

Stabilisation of the financial system (Chapter 2 of the Communication)

– the importance of restoring confidence in the financial sector, since this was the essential condition for sustainable economic recovery and the creation of new jobs;

– the need to take measures to stabilise the financial markets and reinforce the supervision and control systems;

– a reminder of the financial supervisory measures already proposed, for example with regard to capital, credit rating agencies and securitisation, and the need to develop substantially and complete the previous initiatives in this area;

– the importance of the report by the group chaired by Jacques de Larosière, whose recommendations displayed strategic vision and realism, having regard to the legal framework provided by the Treaty and its significance for all the Commission's initiatives in the field of financial supervision;

– the need to examine, with all the players concerned, the proposed supervisory mechanisms, including the issue of whether or not to separate supervisory powers in relation to banking, insurance and securitisation activities; the responsibilities of the European Systemic Risk Council (ESRC); the role of the European Central Bank in the ESRC; and the control of the ESRC and the transparency of its decisions;

– the need for the Commission to make proposals as soon as possible following up the examination of the group of experts' recommendations, including those relating to the powers of the proposed new supervisory authorities, and, if necessary, to adopt additional measures such as a possible ban on certain financial products or measures concerning cross-border supervision, drawing on the considerable support in this area manifested by the Member States and public opinion;

– the importance of guaranteeing consumer protection with regard to financial products and of ensuring the quality, consistency and simplification of the products, and of providing consumers with financial information and training; these issues would be the subject of a forthcoming Commission initiative;

– the need to maintain a close link between, on the one hand, support measures for a bank and, on the other, restructuring and compensatory measures guaranteeing respect for the principle of fair competition;

European economic recovery (Chapter 3 of the Communication)

– the importance of combating protectionist trends and of defending at all times the principles of the internal market and competition rules; the Commission once again confirmed its determination to safeguard the general Community interest in this crucial area for European economic recovery;

– the significant stabilising effects of the internal market for the European economy and the need to reinforce these effects by additional measures;

– the importance of public private partnerships that helped to safeguard and create jobs, particularly in the car and construction industries, without underestimating the challenges in this field, since one effect of the crisis was the undercapitalisation of public entities and certain private entities;

– the role that could be played by Eurobonds in financing or co-financing projects;

– the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises for job creation and European economic recovery and the need to make more specific reference to these enterprises;

– the expected effects of the investment of €5 billion from the Community budget in European projects;

– the fact that economic analyses of certain international financial institutions must sometimes take specific European political, economic and social factors more into account;

The impact of the crisis on households and workers (Chapter 4 of the Communication)

– the contributions made by social policy and the European social model to finding a way out of the crisis;

– a reminder that short-term social measures should not create rigidities which jeopardised a return to full employment in the long term;

– the need to maintain social security and healthcare systems;

– the effects of the crisis on the most disadvantages sections of society;

– a reminder of the principle of freedom of movement of workers, of the current situation as regards transitional provisions and of the importance of the "services" Directive;

– the issue of the inclusion in the budget of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund aimed at assisting businesses in difficulties more rapidly and encouraging them to overcome the effects of the economic crisis for their employees;

– the importance of safeguarding pension funds, given the importance of private funded pension plans for many people in the EU;

– the need for the Commission to maintain close contacts with the social partners and prepare adequately for the employment summit in Prague in May as well as the meeting with the social partners at the tripartite social summit to be held in the run-up to the spring European Council;

International dimension

– the crucial role which the European Union could play as a prime mover and driving force on the international scene;

– the importance for the EU of preparing thoroughly for the G20 summit in London on 2 April and to speak with one voice; objectives should include defining the approach to be adopted regarding bad banks and impaired assets and a commitment to pursue the Doha Round negotiations;

– the importance of keeping markets open and strengthening international trade, as protectionist tendencies were not a viable alternative;

– the need to define and, in due course, develop the initiative on financing international trade;

– satisfaction that a number of global players had adopted the idea, first put forward by the Commission, of a Global New Deal aimed at a thorough overhaul of the international system of economic and financial governance;

– a reminder of the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen at the end of 2009, at which the EU must speak with one voice;

– the particularly difficult predicament of many developing countries which were now being hit by the third wave of the economic and financial crisis; this required a major solidarity effort by the EU and its Member States;

– in this context, and in particular at the forthcoming G20 summit, the need not to neglect developing countries and to draw up a European initiative to help them, bearing in mind too their importance for tackling global challenges such as climate change, energy security and migration;

– an announcement that a communication on a strategic, coordinated European initiative for helping developing countries would shortly be laid before the Commission.

The PRESIDENT thanked all the Commission Members for supporting the

Communication, and said it would be possible to incorporate many of the changes in wording suggested at the meeting.

He felt that the tone of the Communication should be neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but resolute, credible and realistic; although the situation was serious, solutions could be found, jointly, on the basis of an honest evaluation of the problems to be tackled, measures taken by the Member States and the preparation of tangible proposals.

Regarding the communication work required, the PRESIDENT said it was vitally important that all Commission Members were provided with a briefing paper as soon as possible and took part in the communication effort. He thought that the track record of the present Commission would be judged largely on the latter stages of its term of office, so everyone had to play an active part in explaining the decisions taken by the Commission and Europe’s contribution to resolving the crisis. He mentioned two points which should be given particular emphasis – the crisis exit strategy proposed in that day’s Communication and the evaluation of the measures taken by the Member States.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Communication could serve as a road map for the months ahead. He also noted the quality of the report submitted by the high-level expert group chaired by Jacques de Larosière, which had been endorsed by the Commission and would be used as a basis for specific proposals to be presented as soon as possible. Because of the current exceptional circumstances, Parliament and the financial industry strongly supported such measures, and it was important to take advantage of this momentum for change in the supervision field and work rapidly on drawing up ambitious proposals.

Turning to the international scene, he referred again to the Global New Deal project. It was important to obtain US support for this cause and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown was striving to do so in preparation for the G20 summit; these efforts should be supported. The PRESIDENT also highlighted the need to do everything possible to reach a strong consensus among the 27 Member States between now and the G20 summit.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT noted the agreement of the Commission Members on the texts circulated as COM(2009)114, subject to the following amendments made to the clean English version of volume I of the Communication:

– on page 2, in the introduction, the following sentence was added between the third and fourth sentences of the third paragraph:

  "Cleaning up the banking system is a prerequisite for a return to normal credit conditions."

– on page 4, the first sentence of the last paragraph in section 2.1 (*"Rebuilding confidence and lending"*) was deleted, and the beginning of the paragraph was amended to read as follows:

  "To improve credit conditions, the ECB and other central banks have been providing considerable liquidity."

– on page 6, the last sentence of the twelfth paragraph in section 2.2 ("*Responsible and reliable financial markets for the future*") was amended to read as follows:

  "*The feasibility of whether to combine one or more of these authorities should be examined with a view to ensuring maximum supervisory coherence and enhancing consistency and interaction between banking, insurance and markets supervisory experts.*"

– also on page 6, the second sentence of the fourteenth paragraph in section 2.2 was amended to read as follows:

  "*Drawing on views expressed by Member States, the existing Committees, the European Parliament, the ECB and other stakeholders, the Commission will prepare its proposals on the basis of an impact assessment, in line with its better regulation principles.*"

– on page 8, in the insert at the end of section 2.2, the second indent of point (5) was amended to read as follows:

"*Make proposals on how* ***sanctions*** *could be strengthened in a harmonised manner and better enforced (Autumn 2009)*"

– on page 9, after the last word in the third sentence of the third paragraph in section 3.1 ("*Implementing the European Economic Recovery Plan*"), the following footnote was inserted:

"*Including a number of new public private partnerships.*"

– also on page 9, the last sentence of the sixth paragraph in section 3.1 was deleted;

– again on page 9, the first sentence of the seventh paragraph in section 3.1 was amended to read as follows:

"*Action to raise skills, to boost investment in research, to promote the conditions for innovation, to spread high-speed Internet, to renew existing transport and energy infrastructure, including through increased use of public private partnerships, to upgrade energy efficiency and to increase renewable energy all fit squarely into the objectives of the EERP.*"

– on page 10, the eighth paragraph in section 3.1 was amended to read as follows:

"*Understanding and managing the long-term impact of the crisis on public finances – and managing the consequences for pension and healthcare systems – will be vital. Budget deficits should return to positions consistent with the need to ensure long-term sustainability of public finances as soon as economic conditions allow, notably in view of the future cost stemming from an aging population. Long-term sustainability should be ensured within the framework of the Stability and Growth Pact.*"

– also on page 10, the second sentence of the third paragraph in section 3.2 ("*The Single Market as a lever for recovery*") was amended to read as follows:

"*The Commission has recently presented proposals to reduce accounting burdens on microenterprises, with potential savings for business of around € 6* *billion* [footnote: *COM(2009)83 of 26.2.2009.*]*, and will continue to carefully weigh the burden of new initiatives.*"

- on page 11, the first sentence of the fifth paragraph in section 3.2 was amended to read as follows:

  "*Member States' action to address the crisis must take the Single Market dimension into account.*"

- also on page 11, the last sentence of the second paragraph in section 3.3 ("*Renewing the European economy beyond the crisis*") was deleted;

- on page 12, in the insert at the end of section 3.3, a new indent was added between the indent ending with the words "[…] *a low carbon economy.*" and the indent beginning "*Sharing information and best practice* […]", worded as follows:

  "*Taking full account of the crucial importance of SMEs by applying the 'think small first' principle.*"

- on page 15, at the end of section 4.1 ("*Alleviating the human cost of the crisis*"), the third sentence of the fifth indent in the insert was amended to read as follows:

  "*In this context, the Posted Workers Directive serves to facilitate free movement of workers in the context of cross-border provision of services, whilst effectively safeguarding against social dumping.*"

- also on page 15, in section 4.2 ("*An Employment Summit for Europe*"), the first indent after the words "*The Summit should deliver three objectives:*" was amended to read as follows:

  "*It should help accelerate recovery by focusing on structural reform to create more flexible, secure and inclusive labour markets.*"

Subject to inclusion of the above amendments and to final linguistic revision, the

Commission approved the Communication, and the annexes thereto, as set out in COM(2009)114 (volumes I and II), for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments.

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The meeting closed at 12.13.