



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2009)1869 final

Brussels, 8 April 2009

MINUTES
of the 1869th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 1 April 2009
(morning)

PV(2009)1869 final

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Single sitting: Wednesday 1 April (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.07 in the Jean Monnet room with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Mr TAJANI	Vice-President	
Ms REDING		
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		Items 7/10 (in part) to 12
Ms HÜBNER		Items 7/10 (in part) to 12
Mr BORG		
Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL'		
Mr REHN		
Mr MICHEL		Items 7/10 (in part) to 12
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms KROES		
Ms FISCHER BOEL		
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		
Mr McCREEVY		Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr ŠPIDLA		
Mr PIEBALGS		
Ms KUNEVA		
Ms VASSILIOU		
Baroness ASHTON		

Absent:

Mr ORBAN

(1 April 2009)

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

Mr SERBANESCU	A member of Mr ORBAN's staff
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The following also sat in:

Mr THEBAULT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms DURAND	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr SØRENSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	Items 7 to 12
Ms AHRENKILDE	DG Communication – Commission Spokesman's Service	
Mr GASPAR	Acting Director-General, Bureau of European Policy Advisers	
Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	Items 1 to 10
Mr LEFFLER	Chef de cabinet to Ms WALLSTRÖM	Item 12
Ms BARTON	A member of Mr DIMAS's staff	Items 7 to 10
Mr LEMAÎTRE	Chef de cabinet to Ms HÜBNER	Items 1 to 7/10 (in part)

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2009)1869/3; SEC(2009)391/2)

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)1869)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 30 March.

3. MINUTES OF 1868TH MEETING (24 MARCH)

(PV(2009)1868)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1868th meeting.

4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

4.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2009)393 ET SEQ.)

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

4.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2009)394 ET SEQ.)

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

4.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2009)395 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 March, as archived in e-Greffe.

4.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2009)396)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 30 March and 3 April.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2009)392/3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2009)45/3)

5.1. AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHARTS – 2009 SPRING PACKAGE

(SEC(2009)437/2; SEC(2009)438; SEC(2009)439/2; SEC(2009)440; SEC(2009)441)

Having taken note of the information set out in point 1 of document PERS(2009)45/3 and in document SEC(2009)437/2, the Commission:

(1 April 2009)

- approved the amendments to the organisation charts of DG Agriculture and Rural Development, DG Economic and Financial Affairs, DG Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) and the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, distributed respectively as SEC(2009)438, SEC(2009)439/2, SEC(2009)440 and SEC(2009)441;
- took note of the amendments to the organisation charts of Eurostat, the Joint Research Centre, DG Internal Market and Services and DG Taxation and Customs Union, as set out in SEC(2009)437/2.

**5.2. *DG COMPETITION – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2009)28 TO /3)***

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director (Cartels) in DG Competition (PERS(2009)28).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 9 and 12 March 2009 (PERS(2009)28/2 and /3).

It 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 Ms KROES, it then decided to appoint Mr Olivier GUERSENT to the vacant post.

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

**5.3. *DG INFORMATION SOCIETY AND MEDIA – LIST OF CANDIDATES
FOR THE AD14 POST OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ENIAC
JOINT UNDERTAKING
(PERS(2009)32)***

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 3 of PERS(2009)45/3, and, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms REDING, decided:

(1 April 2009)

- to approve the list of two candidates set out in point 3 of PERS(2009)45/3;
- to consider this list as the Commission proposal;
- to ask Ms REDING to communicate this list to the governing board of the ENIAC Joint Undertaking for the implementation of a Joint Technology Initiative on Nanoelectronics.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1. MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF EUROPEAN TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS – PREPARATION OF THREE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN THE RESEARCH FIELD UNDER THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN (BRUSSELS, 30 MARCH) (SEC(2009)473)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr POTOČNIK in SEC(2009)473.

6.2. COMMITMENTS BY MASTERCARD TO ADJUST ITS MULTILATERAL INTERCHANGE FEES (MIF) APPLIED TO CROSS-BORDER PAYMENT CARD TRANSACTIONS (SEC(2009)479)

The Commission took note of the information from Ms KROES in SEC(2009)479.

**6.3. VISITS TO ROMANIA AND BULGARIA (BUCHAREST AND SOFIA,
19-21 MARCH)
(SEC(2009)480)**

The Commission took note of the information from Ms VASSILIOU in SEC(2009)480.

**7. WHITE PAPER ON ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: TOWARDS A
EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION
(COM(2009)147 TO /4; SEC(2009)387 AND /2; SEC(2009)388 AND /2;
SEC(2009)389; SEC(2009)403)**

**8. ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER,
COASTS AND MARINE ISSUES
(SEC(2009)386 AND /2; SEC(2009)403)**

**9. ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: THE CHALLENGE FOR
EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AREAS
(SEC(2009)417 TO /3; SEC(2009)403)**

**10. ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: HUMAN, ANIMAL AND PLANT
HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE
(SEC(2009)416 TO /4; SEC(2009)403)**

Mr DIMAS presented the White Paper he was tabling for approval, in agreement with Mr BORG, Ms FISCHER BOEL and Ms VASSILIOU. He welcomed the possibilities that this new policy framework would offer the Commission for dealing with climate change adaptation issues.

Mr DIMAS pointed out that the European Union had already originated the most ambitious set of measures ever taken at world level to reduce greenhouse gases from

2012. The energy and climate change package adopted at the end of 2008 represented a major advance and an important step towards securing an international agreement at the Copenhagen conference.

However, the mitigation measures were not sufficient, since certain effects of climate change were inevitable even if the efforts to limit global warming to 2° C were successful.

He noted the dramatic increase in the number and intensity of the natural disasters that had occurred in Europe in the last 30 years. While recognising that not all of them could be attributed solely to climate change, he pointed out that scientific data bore out the link between rising temperatures and the frequency and severity of these extreme weather events, a trend which was set to worsen in the future. He mentioned the effects of this trend on infrastructures and ecosystems and on agriculture, energy, transport, health and tourism.

He stressed that individual adaptation efforts by themselves were not enough, and that they must form part of a strategic approach and a timely and coordinated policy response, which would prove less costly and more effective.

The White Paper set out a two-phased strategic approach which offered both a framework and the tools needed to assess the needs and the measures to be taken and enable appropriate decisions to be taken at the right level. He stressed that the measures were designed to supplement those taken by the Member States and not in any way to replace them.

The first phase, up to 2012, would focus on heightening understanding of the consequences of climate change by identifying possible adaptation measures in line with specific needs in different countries and regions, exploring private and public sources of financing and examining how to integrate adaptation measures into key areas of Community policy such as agriculture, health, water and the marine environment, or transport and energy infrastructures. This work would lay the basis for the formulation of a more complete strategy for 2013 and beyond.

Mr DIMAS stressed that an effective Community adaptation strategy would have to

cover all the areas in which the effects of climate change might be felt in the future. He therefore thanked all the Commission members and departments who had contributed to the initiative, in particular Mr BORG, Ms VASSILIOU and Ms FISCHER BOEL for the three working documents accompanying the White Paper (see points 8 to 10 of these minutes) and the PRESIDENT for his constant support for the work carried out in the area of climate change.

He ended by pointing out that the White Paper, while concerned primarily with adaptation in the European Union, recognised that the Union must also make every effort to enable a similar approach to be taken in non-member countries, in particular in neighbouring countries and the most vulnerable developing countries. He stressed that this was an opportunity to step up cooperation on these issues with partner countries and to present the proposals on adaptation as part of the current United Nations negotiations.

To conclude, he told the meeting that there was no single adaptation solution and that formulating appropriate responses would require cooperation and coordination between all levels (Community, national and local). He was convinced that now was the time to draw up a more complete European adaptation strategy for 2013 and beyond, and hoped that the PRESIDENT would be able to raise the issue of climate change at the G20 summit on 2 April.

Ms VASSILIOU thanked Mr DIMAS for the quality of the work done. She drew the Members' attention to the working document drawn up by her departments on health issues (see point 10 of these minutes) and stressed the interest in these issues expressed by the future Swedish Presidency. She pointed out that human, animal and also plant health would all be affected by climate change to varying degrees in the different regions of Europe concerned.

She explained that significant data and contributions were already available and that the aim of the working document drawn up by her departments was to present the problems already identified and their likely development in the immediate and longer term, the mechanisms already in place and the areas that needed to be further developed with a view to adapting to climate change.

Ms VASSILIOU spoke of the value that could be added by the Community dimension, particularly in supporting increased surveillance of human and animal diseases and transmissible diseases and the introduction of plans to prepare for health emergencies.

She highlighted the need for collaboration between the different services in the health sector; the human, animal and plant surveillance sectors had everything to gain from pooling their epidemiological, meteorological and entomological data or data on air and water quality.

She pointed out that the document called for closer cooperation with the World Health Organisation, which was working actively on the issue of the effects of climate change on health.

Ms VASSILIOU referred also to the outbreaks of animal diseases hitherto unknown in the regions affected by climate change and the need to adapt to this development. She touched also on the anticipated effects in the field of plant health, particularly the spread of certain diseases to new regions.

She pointed out that the Commission already had a system in place to monitor, inspect and assess developments in the situation, and that optimal use of the existing mechanisms in order to help the Member States would contribute to an integrated climate change adaptation approach.

Ms FISCHER BOEL praised the quality of the White Paper presented. She was pleased to have had the opportunity of being associated with it and of supplementing it by a staff working document on adapting agriculture to climate change (see point 9 of these minutes). She reminded the meeting that while farmers had always needed to take their environment into account and adapt to it, this did not mean that their capacity to adapt was unlimited and that there was no need for us to act, even though adaptation would involve time and expense. The Commission was therefore justified in helping farmers and suggesting ways forward.

She outlined the three main aspects of the document on adapting agriculture to climate change. Firstly, the document set out to specify the challenges faced by

European agriculture. Although its situation was not as unfavourable as that in other sectors, it was marked by considerable diversity between regions and also between types of production. Some regions might benefit to some extent from climate change, for example in terms of increases in harvests in northern Europe. However, in other cases drought would affect certain Member States in southern Europe already hit by shortage of water for irrigation. Against this backdrop, the main problem to be addressed by the European Union in the near future would probably be the increased frequency of natural disasters such as storms and floods, for which the best possible preparations should be made.

Secondly, the working document proposed specific adaptation measures with a view to launching a discussion on an area in which changes in habit were difficult. Lastly, the document also referred to the existing solutions and tools under the common agricultural policy, in particular the additional financing available under the rural development policy and the future financing to be made available under the European economic recovery plan recently approved by the Council.

However, Ms FISCHER BOEL believed that it was important to start thinking now about the challenges beyond 2013 posed by the adaptation to climate change and that the discussion of the issues affecting agriculture should begin before 2012. To conclude, she emphasised the need to synchronise the discussions on the adaptation of agriculture to climate change, on the common agricultural policy after 2013 and on the financial framework.

Mr BORG also thanked Mr DIMAS for the high standard of the work carried out and for the excellent cooperation between the departments concerned. He was pleased to be associated with the White Paper which, he felt, was both realistic and comprehensive, covering all the sectors affected by climate change in which adaptation would be needed. Marine and coastal areas were among the most exposed to the effects of climate change and he was encouraged to see that the document highlighted not only the impact of climate change on those areas but also what had to be done to support efforts at adaptation. Finally, he again gave his full support to the maritime-related aspects of the document presented.

These presentations were followed by a brief exchange of views during which the following points in particular were raised:

- the Commission's key role in preparing for the future climate changes;
- the need to pay close attention to the movement of populations and acceleration of migratory flows which would probably result from climate change;
- the importance of developing and encouraging greater awareness among European public opinion of issues relating to climate change and its effects;
- a reminder of certain specific features of agriculture in the Nordic regions of Europe with a request that they be taken into account in future discussions;
- a reminder of the international dimension of climate change and its consequences.

The PRESIDENT thanked the Commission Members who had prepared and contributed to the documents tabled, and their offices and the departments under their responsibility. He emphasised the importance of the climate change issue, which would be discussed at the G20 Summit and would probably be mentioned in its conclusions. The Commission needed to follow up these questions effectively, particularly in the run-up to the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen. He ended by saying that the Commission would come back to this issue soon to discuss how the momentum that had been generated could be kept up in spite of the difficulties caused by the economic crisis.

Following this exchange of views, the Commission approved the White Paper in COM(2009)147/4, 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 the summary thereof contained in the staff working documents distributed as SEC(2009)387/2 and SEC(2009)388/2, the contents of which were noted.

It also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the above communication, as set out in SEC(2009)389.

Lastly the Commission took note of the staff working documents distributed as SEC(2009)386/2, SEC(2009)417/3 and SEC(2009)416/4, which would also be sent to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments, together with the above White Paper.

11. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(SEC(2009)402)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Thursday 26 March (SEC(2009)402).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

11.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

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

(SP(2009)1615)

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(2009)1615, drawn up following the March II part-session of Parliament, the contents of which were noted.

ii) Codecision procedure

(point 1.2 of the IRG record)

Dossier at first reading

- Taking-up and pursuit of the business of insurance and reinsurance - Solvency II (Directive) – SKINNER report – 2007/0143 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SPI(2009)52/2.

iii) Preparation for the April 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

- Establishment of a Community Code on Visas (Regulation) – LAX report – 2006/0142 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)1669.

- European Regional Development Fund as regards the eligibility of energy efficiency and renewable energy investments in housing (Regulation) – ANGELAKAS report – 2008/0245 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)1670 and /3.

- Community statistics on the information society (Regulation) – NIEBLER report – 2008/0201 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)1672.

- Voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) (Regulation) – McAVAN report – 2008/0154 (COD)

Further to document SPI(2009) 45, approved at its 1868th meeting on 24 March, the Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)1686.

(1 April 2009)

- Community Ecolabel scheme (Regulation) – TATARELLA report – 2008/0152 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)1685/2.

Consultation

- Implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Directive) – BUITENWEG report – 2008/0140 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)1673 and /2.

- European supervision order in pre-trial procedures between Member States of the European Union (Framework Decision) – VARVITSIOTIS report – 2006/0158 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2009)1674.

iv) Preparation of agreements at first reading

(point 1.4 of the IRG record)

- Interoperability solutions for European public administrations (ISA) (Decision) – DAVID report – 2008/0185 (COD)

The Commission authorised Mr KALLAS to pursue contacts with Parliament and the Council in order to reach agreement at first reading following the line set out in SPI(2009)49.

- Second ‘Marco Polo’ programme for the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system (Regulation) – STOCKMANN report – 2008/0239 (COD)

The Commission authorised Mr TAJANI to pursue contacts with Parliament and the Council in order to reach agreement at first reading following the line set out in SPI(2009)50/2.

11.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

v) Programming of Council business

(SI(2009)82)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2009)82 on the Council meetings between 2 and 15 April.

vi) Results of the "Gymnich" informal Foreign Ministers' meeting (Hluboká nad Vltavou, 27 and 28 March)

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER reported on the work of the foreign ministers during the first day of their informal "Gymnich" meeting of 27 and 28 March, where the topics discussed had included the situation in the Middle East, Belarus and the civilian missions carried out under the European Security and Defence Policy.

On the subject of the Middle East she highlighted relations with Syria and the implications of the formation and composition of the new Israeli government for relations between the European Union and Israel.

She noted that the Commission had presented a revised proposal to the Council last December for a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with Syria. She stressed the importance of concluding the negotiations, Syria being the only country in the Middle East which had not yet signed an association agreement, and felt that such an agreement could be a useful framework for developing closer relations with a country which had a key role to play in consolidating peace in the region.

She then reported on the situation in the Gaza Strip, which had also been discussed at the informal meeting. In her view, the humanitarian situation had not improved since the days and weeks immediately after the end of the Israeli military intervention. There were a number of obstacles to implementing the conclusions of the conference in support of the Palestinian economy and the reconstruction of Gaza, held in Sharm El-Sheikh on 2

March, such as the restrictions still being placed on imports of certain essential supplies.

On the subject of relations with Belarus, Ms FERRERO-WALDNER mentioned the preparations for the Eastern Partnership inaugural summit to be held on 7 May. Certain questions about the participation of representatives of Belarus at the summit were still unresolved and would have to be dealt with before the beginning of May. She expressed her disappointment at the lack of a more positive response from Belarus to the most recent overtures by the European Union.

Finally she gave an update on the discussions on civilian missions under the European Security and Defence Policy. She summarised the most important points discussed at the meeting and concluded that further work needed to be done on both organisational aspects and matters related to training and the budget.

Mr REHN reported on the work on the second day of the "Gymnich" meeting, which had been devoted to the Western Balkans and had been organised as an informal meeting of the EU-Western Balkans forum, with the participation of ministers from these countries.

He stressed the importance of sending a clear signal about the European prospects of all the countries of the Western Balkans and regretted that some Member States had given the impression that they wanted to make ratification of the Lisbon Treaty a condition for agreeing to future accessions.

Mr REHN mentioned Montenegro's application for membership and said that the Commission would be asked to prepare an opinion on its accession at the next meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council in Luxembourg on 27 and 28 April.

He reported on the discussions about relaxing visa requirements, an area in which the ministers were keen to see practical progress. He referred to the work of his own department and that of Mr BARROT, and a number of expert

missions, to produce a series of reports for presentation before June detailing the way the different countries had fulfilled the requirements for visa liberalisation. He thought that visa requirements for the most advanced countries could be lifted before the end of 2009.

As regards the accession negotiations with Croatia, Mr REHN mentioned the dispute about the land and maritime borders between Slovenia and Croatia and the implications of this for the future of the negotiations. He described the measures that had been taken and the Commission's offer of mediation and thanked the different departments, particularly the Legal Service, for their contributions to the draft arbitration agreement which the Commission had put to the two countries.

However, a number of major differences between Croatia and Slovenia remained unresolved, not least the method for settling the dispute, and the Commission would continue its efforts to bring the two sides together.

A brief discussion followed, during which the following points in particular were raised:

- the message the Commission wanted to send out just a few weeks before the anniversary of the 2004 enlargement and before the European elections that any move to make future accessions conditional upon ratification of the Lisbon Treaty was counterproductive and contrary not only to the interests of current and future candidate countries, but also to the interests of the European Union as a whole and its Member States;
- the importance of pursuing not only the ratification process for the Lisbon Treaty but also the accession negotiations, by continuing to offer a European perspective to all countries of the Western Balkans and stressing the duty of the candidate countries to honour their commitments to the European Union as well as the EU's duty and that of its Member States towards the current and future candidate countries;

- the importance for the countries of the Western Balkans, and particularly for the young generation in these countries, of implementing visa liberalisation;
- the support for the Commission's efforts in the border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia, which could only be resolved through rapprochement between the two countries.

The PRESIDENT wound up the discussion by restating the Commission's position on enlargement and, in particular, its rejection of any suggestion that current and future accession negotiations were conditional upon progress in the ratification process for the Lisbon Treaty. He pointed to the success of the last enlargement from the point of view of both the new members and the older Member States and stressed the importance of fulfilling the mutual obligations between the European Union and the candidate countries. Finally, he called on Slovenia and Croatia to pursue their efforts at rapprochement and said that the Commission would continue to provide every possible support for resolving the dispute.

The Commission took note of this information.

11.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

vii) Results of March II part-session

(SP(2009)1625 to /3)

The Commission took note of the information in SP(2009)1625 to /3 on the proceedings of the part-session of Parliament held in Strasbourg from 23 to 26 March.

12. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

12.1. PREPARATION OF G20 SUMMIT (LONDON, 2 APRIL 2009)

The PRESIDENT informed the Commission Members of the latest preparations for the G20 Summit to be held in London on 2 April. He referred to the expectations regarding the Summit conclusions, in particular in relation to financial supervision and regulation (notably tax havens and hedge funds), international trade and economic recovery policies. He welcomed the growing convergence between the American and European positions, especially in terms of the response to the economic crisis and climate change, the need to boost the economy, the role of the State, and financial supervision and regulation. In addition, the Commission was eager to ensure that commitments on international trade were followed through, in particular as regards combating protectionist measures and financing and supporting trade.

Given these generally converging positions, he was confident of a positive outcome to this meeting of world leaders in terms of defining a common approach to deal with the economic crisis. Such an outcome could not be achieved without the contribution of the European Union and the Commission in particular, given its experience in supranational cooperation and regulation. The follow-up to the Summit would be important, and the decisions and commitments made there would have to be acted on. Here too the EU and the Commission had a role to play in putting forward a common strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, combat climate change and boost trade, an area in which the Commission had specific competence.

The Commission then held a discussion, during which the following main points were raised:

- the importance of ensuring that development policy objectives formed part of the conclusions of the G20 Summit, and in particular that the development aid commitments made by the EU and by international donors were maintained; the need to take advantage of the leverage effect

of this public aid, to target and accelerate the achievement of these commitments in the countries most seriously affected by the economic crisis, and to consider releasing resources as a result of improved coordination between the Member States and less fragmentation of the projects supported by all donors;

- the need to underline, despite the still unfavourable general economic outlook, the importance of the measures taken and the progress achieved by the EU since the Washington G20 Summit in November 2008, in particular in relation to macroeconomic policies, the banking sector, budgetary aid to certain Member States, and the way in which these measures had helped to restore confidence;
- the need to present a united front in this context, and in particular to ensure that a concerted position resulted from the preparatory work carried out at European level, notably at the Berlin meeting of the European members of the G20, the meetings of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, the Spring European Council and the informal meetings of Heads of State and Government of the European Union;
- the importance of monitoring the commitments to be made at the Summit and of continuing with the work at the next meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council;
- the need for constructive cooperation in the efforts to combat protectionism and promote the resumption and openness of trade, for instance by providing financing, and the importance of recognising and encouraging the change in the new American administration's approach to trade issues;
- the importance of continuing the concerted efforts by Member States and of ensuring a united, active and credible approach to the economic and financial crisis, in line with the principles of freedom, responsibility and solidarity, which must be respected in order to guarantee better

functioning of the world economy in the coming years;

- the positive attitude of the Chinese authorities to the G20 Summit and their support for the objectives of combating protectionism and climate change;
- the importance of highlighting the challenges posed by employment, which has been badly affected by the economic crisis;
- the need to relay the appeal by the G8 Employment Ministers meeting in Rome from 29 to 31 March, calling for the conclusion of a global social protection pact to restore confidence and deal with the challenge of the world economic crisis.

The PRESIDENT ended this exchange of views by thanking the speakers for their suggestions, which would be important in preparing the Commission's contribution to the G20 Summit, in which measures that had already been taken would also be mentioned. Moreover, it was essential to forge good relations with the new American administration at the European Union-United States summit to be held in Prague on 5 April.

The Commission took note of this information.

12.2. VISIT TO CUBA (HAVANA, 18 TO 20 MARCH 2009)
(SEC(2009)475)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr MICHEL set out in SEC(2009)475.

12.3. VISIT TO CHINA (BEIJING, 29 AND 30 MARCH 2009)
(SEC(2009)474)

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms FERRERO-WALDNER set out in SEC(2009)474.

12.4. EU-RUSSIA DIALOGUE ON ENERGY (MOSCOW, 20 MARCH 2009)
(SEC(2009)472)

The Commission took note of the information note from MR PIEBALGS, set out in SEC(2009)472.

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The meeting closed at 11.01 hours.