EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

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Strasbourg, 15 February 2011

MINUTES

of the 1947th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 9 February 2011

(morning)

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<u>Single sitting</u>: Wednesday 9 February 2011 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.41 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

<u>Present</u>:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Ms REDING	Vice-President	
Mr ALMUNIA	Vice-President	
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Ms KROES	Vice-President	
Mr TAJANI	Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Mr POTOČNIK	Member	
Mr REHN	Member	
Mr PIEBALGS	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr BARNIER	Member	
Ms VASSILIOU	Member	
Mr ŠEMETA	Member	
Mr DALLI	Member	
Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr LEWANDOWSKI	Member	
Ms DAMANAKI	Member	
Ms GEORGIEVA	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr OETTINGER	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr HAHN	Member	
Ms HEDEGAARD	Member	
Mr FÜLE	Member	
Mr ANDOR	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	

Absent:

Baroness ASHTON	High Representative/Vice-President
Mr DE GUCHT	Member
Mr CIOLOŞ	Member

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

Mr BANNERMAN	A member of Baroness ASHTON's staff	
Mr HOFFMEISTER	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr DE GUCHT	
Mr HAEUSLER	Chef de cabinet to Mr CIOLOŞ	

The following also sat in:

Mr LAITENBERGER	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr SØRENSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr DOENS	Head of the Commission Spokesperson Service	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Commission Spokeswoman	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr GRAY	European Commission Spokesperson Service	Item 8 (in part)
Mr SCHINAS	Bureau of European Policy Advisers	
Mr SOBRAL	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	
Ms SUTTON	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr PESONEN	Chef de cabinet to Mr REHN	Items 1 to 8 (in part)

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

The PRESIDENT opened the meeting with a brief review of the past year to mark the first anniversary of this Commission taking up office. He recalled the exceptional political circumstances which the Commission had faced over the last year – from the entry into force of a new Treaty to the sovereign debt crisis affecting certain euro-area Member States, and the adoption of the 2011 budget – and the surrounding debates, which had tested both the Community method and interinstitutional relations.

He noted with satisfaction the good results achieved throughout this difficult year, in particular the measures taken by the European Union to help stabilise the financial situation of Greece and Ireland, the new level of coordination introduced for economic and budgetary policy and the design of a permanent financial stability mechanism, alongside the efforts made to get the financial system back on its feet, encourage international coordination in the G20 and make effective progress on regulation and supervision of the financial sector. The Europe 2020 strategy, widely recognised as a well-targeted and important initiative, would play a major role in the recovery of growth and in the global response to the crisis.

He was pleased at the capacity for initiative which the Commission had demonstrated during the first year of its term of office and called for it to maintain this positive course, to continue to focus its efforts on the priorities and to react quickly to new situations; this approach was reflected in the improvements to working methods that had emerged from the recent Commission seminar. He thanked all the Members for their excellent cooperation and team spirit and emphasised the Commission's unique role in building Europe.

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1. AGENDAS
(OJ(2011)1947/3; SEC(2011)146/2; SEC(2011)166)

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(2011)1947)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 7 February.

3. MINUTES OF THE 1946TH MEETING (2 FEBRUARY) (PV(2011)1946)

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 1946th meeting for the following week.

4. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

STATE AID – INDIVIDUAL CASES (SEC(2011)164/2)

The Commission adopted the decisions in SEC(2011)164/2.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2011)148 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 31 January and 4 February.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2011)149 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 31 January and 4 February.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2011)150 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 31 January and 4 February, as archived in e-Greffe.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2011)151)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 7 and 11 February.

As regards written procedure PE/2010/9096, for which the expiry date was 11 February and which concerned the negotiating directives for an agreement with Singapore, the Commission agreed as follows:

"*In the context of its policy on good governance in the tax area, and in view of the specific request by the Council in May 2008 to include the principles of tax information exchange in the negotiation of relevant agreements with third countries as well as the explicit reference made by the Council in its conclusions of 23 October 2006 to engage in exploratory discussions on taxation of savings, the College decided that, prior to conclusion of an FTA and related PCA with Singapore, it will evaluate the degree to which Singapore is providing sufficient cooperation in the field of taxation of savings.*".

5.5. DELEGATION OF POWERS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUDIOVISUAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME WITH PROFESSIONALS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES (MEDIA MUNDUS) (SEC(2011)169 AND /2)

The Commission decided to delegate powers to the Director-General for Education and Culture for the adoption, on behalf of the Commission and under its responsibility, of measures for the implementation of the European audiovisual cooperation programme with professionals from third countries (MEDIA Mundus), in accordance with the terms set out in SEC(2011)169.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2011)147)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2011)21)

6.1. DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION – APPOINTMENT OF AD15 DIRECTOR

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr ANDOR, the Commission decided to fill the post of Director (Europe 2020: Employment policies) in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion by transferring in the interest of the service under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations Mr Jean-Louis DE BROUWER, AD15 official and currently Director (Migration and borders) in DG Home Affairs.

This decision would take effect on 1 March 2011.

6.2. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY/ OFFICE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS IN BRUSSELS – RENEWAL OF DIRECTOR'S TERM OF OFFICE

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to renew the term of office of Mr Gábor ZUPKÓ as Director of the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels until 12 February 2013.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.3. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY/OFFICE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND PAYMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ENTITLEMENTS – ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEPUTISING FOR DIRECTOR

Under Article 27 of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to designate the following officials, in the order set out below, to deputise for the Director of the Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements if he should be prevented from performing his duties:

- Mr Giuseppe SCOGNAMIGLIO, Head of the Sickness and Accident Insurance Unit;
- Ms Gilda CAPUANO, Head of the PMO Ispra Unit;
- Mr François AUGENDRE, Head of the PMO Luxembourg Unit;
- Ms Nicole SMITH, Head of the Salaries and Administration of Individual Rights Unit;
- Ms Manuela VEIGA, Head of the Communication, Human Resources and Change Management Unit;

- Mr Jean-Pierre VANDERSTRAETEN, Head of the Mission Expenses Unit;
- Mr Horácio BARATA, Head of the Budget and Internal Control Unit;
- Mr Bruno FETELIAN, future Head of the Pensions Unit.

This decision would take effect on 16 February 2011.

7. GREEN PAPER – FROM CHALLENGES TO OPPORTUNITIES: TOWARDS A COMMON STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR EU RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUNDING (COM(2011)48 TO /4; SEC(2011)163)

The Commission approved the Green Paper in COM(2011)48/4, for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments.

8. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (SEC(2011)155)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Friday 4 February (SEC(2011)155).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

8.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Action to be taken on Parliament's legislative opinions
(SP(2011)980)

The Commission decided to empower the Commission Members responsible for the sectors in question, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ 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(2011) 980, drawn up following the February I part-session of Parliament, the contents of which were noted.

ii) Preparation for the February II 2011 part-session of Parliament
(point 1.3 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – Codecision – 1st reading

– Amendment of Directive 2001/83/EC as regards the prevention of the entry into the legal supply chain of medicinal products which are falsified in relation to their identity, history or source (Directive) – MATIAS report – 2008/0261 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)837.

– EU guarantee to the European Investment Bank against losses under loans and guarantees for projects outside the European Union (Decision) – KALFIN report – 2010/0101 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)838 and /2.

Ordinary legislative procedure – Codecision – 1st reading / Non-legislative procedure (NLE)

– Implementation of the bilateral safeguard clause of the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement (Regulation) – ZALBA BIDEGAIN report – 2010/0032 (COD)

– Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States and the Republic of Korea (Council Decision) – STURDY report – 2010/0075 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)839.

Special legislative procedure (CNS)

– Setting of maximum permitted levels of radioactive contamination of foodstuffs and of feedingstuffs following a nuclear accident or any other case of radiological emergency (Council Regulation (Euratom) – recast) – BELET report – 2010/0098 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)842.

8.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iii) Programming of Council business
(SI(2011)25)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2011)25 on the Council meetings between 10 and 23 February.

iv) Results of the European Council (Brussels, 4 February 2011)
(SI(2011)30)

Following the letter sent to the Commission Members expressing his appreciation, the PRESIDENT referred to the conclusions of the European Council of 4 February 2011. He began by underlining the highly political and positive nature of this meeting. In the light of recent developments, in addition to the subjects of energy and innovation originally scheduled, the meeting had addressed the events in Egypt and the economic situation with a view to preparing the global response to the economic and financial crisis to be submitted to the European Council of 24-25 March.

He noted with satisfaction that the Commission was contributing actively to shaping and leading the European energy agenda, a fact that several Heads of State or Government had highlighted. The four commitments proposed by the Commission had been approved, namely the completion of the internal energy market by 2014, elimination of energy islands by 2015, stepping up of the efforts to increase energy efficiency in order to achieve the 2020 targets and a more coordinated approach to energy issues in external relations. As regards follow-up, he stressed that the energy efficiency proposals of the Commission to be adopted at the beginning of March must be sufficiently solid to ensure the targets were met and that the Commission should play a key role in order to enhance the coherence of the Union's external action in the field of energy.

The outcome of the European Council had also been positive with regard to innovation. Although it had not been possible to hold the debate itself due to time constraints, the conclusions followed the principles of the 'Union for innovation' flagship initiative proposed by the Commission as part of the Europe 2020 strategy, in particular continued financing of research and development against the current backdrop of smart fiscal consolidation, completing the European Research Area by 2014, improving conditions favourable to innovation, stepping up cooperation to launch the first pilot partnership ('Healthy ageing') and a common strategic framework for financing research and innovation.

The PRESIDENT then turned to the discussion on Egypt and the southern Mediterranean region. He highlighted the common wish to create the right conditions for the emergence of a pluralist democracy, and the contribution that the Commission could make by drawing up a set of measures in support of the transition and reform process, as requested by the European Council.

He also considered that recent events in the region should be taken into account in the neighbourhood policy review currently being conducted by Mr FÜLE, in collaboration with Baroness ASHTON. The Commission would hold an orientation debate on this subject before the final adoption of a policy decision in April.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT reported on the European Council's discussion on the economic situation. The Annual Growth Survey proposed by the Commission would provide the starting point for the future global response to the economic and financial crisis, on which the European Council would express its views on 24 and 25 March, since the discussions were based essentially on the fundamental principles set out in the Survey.

Most of the non-euro Member States had stated their wish to be fully associated with the efforts to enhance coordination of economic policies, under the normal Treaty rules and with due regard for the rights and obligations of all the Member States within the single market.

He referred to the work to be done in collaboration with the President of the European Council to arrive at a definition of what enhanced coordination could and should entail with regard to economic policies in the euro area. This closer coordination would not require any working methods or institutional arrangements other than those already provided for in Article 136 of the Treaty.

However, with regard to the measures affecting the 27 Member States and the internal market, he stressed that all 27 States must be involved, with due regard for the areas in which the Union had legislative powers and those which came under national powers but in which the Member States could coordinate their policies. He said it was necessary to demonstrate the need to make good use of the tools provided by the Community method, while pointing out the work already undertaken in collaboration with Mr REHN with a view to presenting a set of clear principles ahead of the summit of euro area members in mid-March.

He concluded by summarising the specific tasks that remained to be performed in the coming weeks: to finalise as quickly as possible the proposals for stimulating growth that could be of interest to all the Member States, to maintain the momentum created at the European Parliament and the Council by the Commission's six proposals on economic governance, to continue to make an active contribution to the setting up of the European financial stability mechanism and to adopt next week a favourable Commission opinion on limited amendment of the Treaty.

Taking the floor, Mr REHN spoke of the importance, following the last European Council and looking ahead to the meeting in mid-March, of continuing work on the global response that could be given to the current crisis in the euro area.

Pointing out that the Franco-German "competitiveness pact" was not a formal proposal that had been debated as such among the Heads of State or Government, he said that the strategy of a global response to the crisis would be largely based on the Commission's proposals and would comprise: (i) revival of the banking system, a key element that included continued stress testing and restructuring of the sector, (ii) stepping up by the Member States of fiscal consolidation and structural reforms, (iii) the strengthening of economic governance, which must be adopted by the Council and Parliament on the basis of what the Commission had already proposed, and (iv) greater solidarity through the European Financial Stability Facility and the implementation of security mechanisms (back stops).

The Commission should continue the debate on the "competitiveness pact" as part of the Annual Growth Survey by strengthening the message sent by the Survey and bringing it into line with the new initiatives. As regards the European Financial Stability Facility and the future European financial stability mechanism, Mr REHN said that it was important to ensure that the work continued on the basis of an appropriate amendment to the Treaty.

He pointed out too, in this context, that the lending capacity of the future mechanism should be increased to €500 billion and that it would be based on a combination of intergovernmental procedures for the financing mechanisms and European procedures for the conditions under which financial assistance could be granted, for example on the basis of Article 136 of the Treaty. The Commission would continue to play a key role in the new structure both in assessing the financial situation of the Member States concerned and in establishing and monitoring the adjustment programmes.

Mr REHN emphasised that the concept of "competitiveness pact" as defined by certain Member States on Friday was not satisfactory. He felt that if there was a real political will to take this forward, this should be done as part of the

Annual Growth Survey and the Treaty provisions, in particular Articles 121 and 136, together with economic governance reform and implementation of the European semester. He added that all matters concerning the single market affected all the Member States, not just those in the euro area.

Referring in conclusion to various interinstitutional policy areas, he said that he was confident the Commission would continue to play a central role.

Mr OETTINGER welcomed the fact that the Member States had reached a consensus on energy policy at the European Council and noted that they still faced the task of integrating national markets at European level and bringing gas and electricity prices into line with market prices.

He stressed the importance of a complete and transparent European energy market that was compatible with the competition rules and the principles of the single market, and the need for the European Union to factor the energy dimension into its external policy, for example in its relations with Russia. Finally, he raised the question of energy efficiency in Europe and the need to improve it, and referred to the action plan on this issue that would be presented in the near future.

Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN was pleased that the conclusions of the European Council marked an important step forward for research and innovation in the European Union. She therefore hoped to act swiftly on the basis of these conclusions and work with each Commission Member concerned to achieve tangible and positive results in these fields.

Mr FÜLE spoke of the political situation on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, particularly in Tunisia and Egypt, which could potentially have a major impact on the European Union's relations with its southern neighbours. He felt that the priority here was to improve the daily lives of the population in these countries and ensure that the values linked to human rights and democracy were fully respected.

In his view, any failure of the transition process, reflected in increasing instability in the countries concerned, would have repercussions not only in North Africa and the Middle East but also for the European Union. In the light of this, he and Baroness ASHTON had prepared packages of aid measures for Tunisia and Egypt to help the transition towards democracy and tackle the roots of the recent disturbances in those countries, which were as much about economic hardship as about demands for the principles of liberty, dignity and equality to be respected.

In the case of Tunisia, Mr FÜLE discussed the meetings between himself and Baroness ASHTON and the Foreign Minister in the interim government, and the forthcoming visit of Baroness ASHTON to Tunis. In this context he mentioned the projects to support the preparations for elections in the country and help improve its legal and regulatory system, as well as a number of short-, medium- and long-term measures to promote democratisation, support civil society, reinforce economic governance and combat corruption.

He explained that these new measures would result in the reorientation of European aid under current programmes, which was worth around €80 million per year. He had also raised the possibility with Tunisia's new Foreign Minister of holding a conference of donors and international investors in the near future, which would consider a plan to support the country.

In the case of Egypt, Mr FÜLE said that talks had started between the government and opposition groups and there were signs of some convergence of views on the creation of a constitutional committee, judicial review and international monitoring of the next presidential election, an end to the state of emergency, the release of demonstrators who had been arrested, greater freedom of the press, the implementation of court rulings on parliamentary elections, and the investigation and prosecution of corruption.

He also referred to recent statements by Baroness ASHTON, the Foreign Affairs Council, the Commission and the European Council, and stressed the need for close monitoring of developments in the political situation over the coming days. At the request of the European Council, he was working with Baroness ASHTON on measures to facilitate Egypt's transition towards some form of democratic governance and to promote economic prosperity and social inclusion. These measures would be implemented partly through the existing cooperation programmes which were worth €145 million per year.

In Mr FÜLE's view, these recent developments underscored the need for the Commission to maintain its ambitious targets for the planned reform of its neighbourhood policy, which would include a more political and differentiated approach to the countries concerned, particularly those in the grip of change. This reform would have to be prepared very carefully, and he hoped that there would be an opportunity for a preliminary policy debate on the subject in a Commission meeting in the near future.

Mr FÜLE wound up his presentation with a brief account of the situation in Morocco and his recent contacts with that country's Prime Minister and government.

The Commission then held an exchange of views which focused on the following aspects:

On the issues of energy and innovation

- satisfaction at the results of the European Council in the area of energy policy, but also certain doubts expressed by the European Parliament about the ability to put these results into practice;

- satisfaction, too, at the conclusions on innovation, but also the importance of publicising them more widely to the outside world; disappointment at the failure to discuss this question during the European Council, and the desire for it to be raised again at the next possible opportunity, to ensure that all Member States got to grips with the issue;

On aspects relating to tighter coordination of economic policies

- the progress achieved in the past year by the EU in relation to economic governance, and the request for a memo describing all the achievements in this area;

- the importance also of the mechanisms introduced, in terms of solidarity between Member States;

- the opportunity offered by the current situation to achieve further integration of economic policies now that the euro area governments had recognised the need for greater coordination;

- the key role played by the Commission in this matter because its proposals had provided the basis for the change and because it had been able, owing to its position, to liaise between the euro area and non-euro area Member States; the discussion on a competitiveness pact actually presented an opportunity to continue playing this role;

- the fact that this proposal for a competitiveness pact, put forward informally by two Member States, took on such importance in the European Council debate in terms both of the substance and of the intergovernmental method on which it was based;

- the negative reaction by the markets after the meeting of the European Council, the fears about further incidents in the euro area, and the political tension arising from the competitiveness pact which, moreover, risked undermining the climate in the coming weeks at a time when the political agenda was already very full;

- serious questions about the case for a competitiveness pact that would be independent of the European Semester process, and whether it would be effective in economic terms;

- the important political questions raised by this proposal, namely in relation to Member States' confidence in the European institutions, since this also had an effect on market confidence and the confidence of the European public, and also on the unity of the EU and cohesion between the euro area and the other Member States;

- the fact that the proposal for a pact was based on an insufficiently broad definition of competitiveness;

- the reminder that some domains were within national competence and could not be harmonised in the context of European economic governance;

- questions about the pace of change permitted by the intergovernmental approach and the Community method, and the usefulness of promoting the operational nature of the Treaty provisions on closer cooperation;

On issues relating to Tunisia, Egypt and, more generally, the neighbourhood policy

- the gratitude expressed to Baroness ASHTON and Mr FÜLE for their practical response to the events in the region, and in particular for taking into account the question of social inclusion in these countries;

- the case, at the same time, for reviewing the amount and content of aid provided to these countries and for considering support geared to regional and local levels, based on the regional policy applied within the EU; the need also to promote aid financed by EU regional authorities;

- the questions put by the European Parliament about the link between the mission of the European External Action Service and the financial aid programmes managed by the Commission;

- the need to hold a policy debate as quickly as possible on the situation in the Mediterranean region and, more generally, on the European neighbourhood policy;
- the wish, expressed by some, to see the EU play a stronger role in the Mediterranean region, and regret that Member States were making individual statements on these issues;
- a call for a more decisive strategy on the Mediterranean region and Africa in order to counter immigration and instability risks, and a reminder of existing policies and the financial restrictions which made it necessary to focus efforts on the domains where the greatest added value could be generated;
- the need to also pay attention to developments in some Balkan countries.

At the end of the debate, the PRESIDENT highlighted the significant progress made with the adoption of the conclusions on energy and innovation and noted that it was now up to the Commission to take the necessary actions for their implementation.

As regards the European neighbourhood policy, he agreed that a date for a policy debate on the issue should be set, while noting that existing strategies, particularly on trade and enlargement, should be maintained and could not be called into question every time changes occurred in the internal political situation of a partner country, even where these changes should be supported.

At the interinstitutional level, he noted the difficulties caused by the European Parliament's new role and the temptation for Member States to move away from the Community method towards the intergovernmental one. He stressed the need for the Commission, in this context, to maintain its position and to protect its own credibility. Only the Commission was in a position to be the link between older and more recent Member States and between members and non-members of the euro area and able to work efficiently at implementing a genuine economic union.

Referring more specifically to the ongoing debate on the issue of national competences for economic policy, the PRESIDENT recognised the uncertainties surrounding the possibility of getting Member States to agree on a European framework on certain aspects but he also stressed how essential such a framework was to achieve greater coordination.

He noted that the ‘competitiveness pact’ which appeared to cover only the euro area, went against the interests of the internal market, the integrity of which should be maintained, and that it included harmonisation proposals which touched upon extremely sensitive issues and would not be unanimously accepted.

He stressed that aiming for greater economic coordination required a method which did not divide the Union and which observed the principles of the Treaty. He also stated that this objective could be attained with adequate political will under the Community method.

The PRESIDENT concluded by recognising that there was still substantial work to be done but also by welcoming the fact that the need to move forward in terms of economic policy coordination had emerged from the debate in the end.

The Commission took note of this information.

v) Preparation for extraordinary COREPER I meeting (7 February) (point 2.2.1 of the IRG record)

– Authorising enhanced cooperation in the area of the creation of unitary patent protection (Council Decision) – LEHNE report – 2010/0384 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2011)27.

vi) Preparation for COREPER II meeting (9 February)
(point 2.2.2 of the IRG record)

– Application of the measures in Decision 2002/148/EC concluding consultations with Zimbabwe under Article 96 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement (Council Decision) – 2011/0013 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2011)24.

8.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

vii) Results of Parliament's February I part-session
(SP(2011)806)

The Commission took note of the information on Parliament's part-session held in Brussels on 2 and 3 February, set out in SP(2011)806.

viii) Action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its October II part-session
(point 3.3.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved SP(2011)609 and /3 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its October II part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

ix) Participation by Members of Parliament in international conferences
(point 3.4 of the IRG record)

– Forty-ninth session of the UN Commission for Social Development (New York, 9-18 February)

The Commission agreed to the request to the PRESIDENT from Mr Jerzy Buzek, President of Parliament, concerning the attendance of three Members of the European Parliament at the above-mentioned meeting as observers in the EU delegation, with a reminder about the procedure to be followed.

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

x) Participation by Members of the European Economic and Social Committee in international conferences
(point 4.3 of the IRG record)

– Second meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (New York, 7 and 8 March)

The Commission agreed to the request to the PRESIDENT from Mr Staffan Nilsson, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, concerning the attendance of one Member of the European Economic and Social Committee at the above-mentioned meeting as an observer in the EU delegation, with a reminder about the procedure to be followed.

xi) Action taken on opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – third quarter 2010
(point 4.4 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SC(2011)5/2 on the action taken by the Commission on the opinions adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee during the third quarter of 2010, for transmission to that Committee.

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The meeting closed at 12.12 hours.