



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2013) 2056 final

Brussels, 4 September 2013

MINUTES
of the 2056th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 24 July 2013
(morning)

PV(2013) 2056 final

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Single sitting: Wednesday 24 July 2013 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.09 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Baroness ASHTON	High Representative/ Vice-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 PIEBALGS	Member	
Mr BARNIER	Member	
Ms VASSILIOU	Member	
Mr ŠEMETA	Member	
Ms GEORGIEVA	Member	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr FÜLE	Member	
Mr ANDOR	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr BORG	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	

Absent:

Mr REHN	Vice-President
Mr DE GUCHT	Member
Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN	Member
Mr LEWANDOWSKI	Member
Ms DAMANAKI	Member
Mr HAHN	Member
Ms HEDEGAARD	Member
Mr CIOLOŞ	Member

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

Mr ALTAF AJ TARDIO	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr REHN	
Ms PERESSO	A member of Mr DE GUCHT's staff	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Ms REILLY	A member of Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN's staff	
Mr RADZIEJEWSKI	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr LEWANDOWSKI	
Ms TANKINK	A member of Ms DAMANAKI's staff	
Mr GAMBS	Chef de cabinet to Mr HAHN	
Mr VIS	Chef de cabinet to Ms HEDEGAARD	
Mr HÄUSLER	Chef de cabinet to Mr CIOLOŞ	

The following also sat in:

Mr SOBRAL	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service
Mr PAULGER	Director-General, DG Communication
Mr DOENS	Head of the Commission Spokesperson Service
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Commission Spokeswoman
Ms BENÍTEZ SALAS	Bureau of European Policy Advisers
Mr MORRISON	Chef de cabinet to Baroness ASHTON

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2013) 2056/FINAL; SEC(2013) 425/2)

The Commission took note of that day's agenda and of the tentative agendas for forthcoming meetings.

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET

(RCC(2013) 2056)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 22 July.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2054TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (10 JULY) AND THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 2055TH MEETING (17 JULY)

(PV(2013) 2054 AND /2; PV(2013) 2055; PV(2013) 2055, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2054th and 2055th meetings.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

- i) Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 – Cohesion policy – Common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund covered by the Common Strategic Framework and laying down general provisions on the European**

Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 (Regulation) – VAN NISTELROOIJ / KREHL report – 2011/0276 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2013) 440, /2 and /3.

ii) Establishment of the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur) (Regulation) – MULDER report – 2011/0427 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2013) 442/2.

iii) Public procurement / Procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors (Directives) – TARABELLA reports – 2011/0438 (COD) / 2011/0439 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2013) 441/2.

iv) Award of concession contracts (Directive) – JUVIN report – 2011/0437 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2013) 437.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

**v) Action taken on legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its June part-session
(SP(2013) 520)**

The Commission approved, for transmission to Parliament, document SP(2013) 520 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its June part-session.

**vi) Action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its May part-session
(SP(2013) 519 and /2)**

The Commission approved, for transmission to Parliament, documents SP(2013) 519 and /2 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its May part-session.

5. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

INFRINGEMENTS – URGENT INDIVIDUAL CASE

(SEC(2013) 443 AND /2)

The Commission adopted the decision in SEC(2013) 443/2.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2013) 426 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 15 and 19 July.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2013) 427 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 15 and 19 July.

6.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2013) 428 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 15 and 19 July, as archived in e-Greffe.

6.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES**(SEC(2013) 429 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 22 and 26 July and of the ‘finalisation’ written procedure initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 22 July.

6.5. DELEGATION OF POWERS FOR THE ADOPTION OF DECISIONS RELATING TO THE CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION REQUIRED UNDER ARTICLE 8 OF REGULATION (EU) 257/2010 SETTING UP A PROGRAMME FOR THE RE-EVALUATION OF APPROVED FOOD ADDITIVES IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATION (EC) 1333/2008 ON FOOD ADDITIVES (C(2013) 4787)

The Commission decided to delegate to the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers the power to adopt, on its behalf and under its responsibility, decisions determining, in accordance with Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) 257/2010, which of the information submitted for the re-evaluation of an approved food additive may remain confidential, under the terms set out in C(2013) 4787.

6.6. DELEGATION OF POWERS FOR THE ADOPTION OF DECISIONS RELATING TO THE CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION REQUIRED UNDER ARTICLE 12 OF REGULATION (EC) 1331/2008 ESTABLISHING A COMMON AUTHORISATION PROCEDURE FOR FOOD ADDITIVES, FOOD ENZYMES AND FOOD FLAVOURINGS (C(2013) 4788)

The Commission decided to delegate to the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers the power to adopt, on its behalf and under its responsibility, decisions determining, in accordance with

Article 12(3) of Regulation (EC) 1331/2008, which of the information submitted for updating the Community lists of substances following the common authorisation procedure laid down in the Regulation, and for which a request for confidentiality has been made, may remain confidential, under the terms set out in C(2013) 4788.

**7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – TOWARDS A MORE COMPETITIVE AND EFFECTIVE DEFENCE AND SECURITY SECTOR
(COM(2013) 542 TO /3; SWD(2013) 279 AND /2; RCC(2013) 110)**

The Commission approved the Communication in COM(2013) 542/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the national parliaments, together with the staff working document distributed as SWD(2013) 279/2, the contents of which were noted.

**8. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON INTERCHANGE FEES FOR CARD-BASED PAYMENT TRANSACTIONS
(COM(2013) 550 TO /3; SWD(2013) 288, VOLUMES 1 AND 2; SWD(2013) 289; SEC(2013) 434; RCC(2013) 111 AND /2)**

The Commission adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2013) 550/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee, the European Central Bank and the national parliaments, and, for information, to the Committee of the Regions and the European Data Protection Supervisor, together with the impact assessment and the summary thereof in staff working papers SWD(2013) 288 (volumes 1 and 2) and SWD(2013) 289, the contents of which

were noted.

It also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the above proposal for a Regulation, as set out in SEC(2013) 434.

9. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON PAYMENT SERVICES IN THE INTERNAL MARKET AND AMENDING DIRECTIVES 2002/65/EC, 2013/36/EU AND 2009/110/EC AND REPEALING DIRECTIVE 2007/64/EC (COM(2013) 547 TO /3; SWD(2013) 282; SWD(2013) 288, VOLUMES 1 AND 2; SWD(2013) 289; SEC(2013) 434; RCC(2013) 111 AND /2)

The Commission adopted the proposal for a Directive in COM(2013) 547/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee, the European Central Bank, the European Data Protection Supervisor and the national parliaments, and, for information, to the Committee of the Regions, together with the implementation plan, the impact assessment and the summary thereof in staff working papers SWD(2013) 282, SWD(2013) 288 (volumes 1 and 2) and SWD(2013) 289, the contents of which were noted.

It also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the above proposal for a Directive, as set out in SEC(2013) 434.

10. REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ON THE APPLICATION OF DIRECTIVE 2007/64/EC ON PAYMENT SERVICES IN THE INTERNAL MARKET AND ON REGULATION (EC) 924/2009 ON CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY (COM(2013) 549; RCC(2013) 111 AND /2)

The Commission approved the report in COM(2013) 549 for transmission to

Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the European Central Bank, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the national parliaments and the European Data Protection Supervisor.

11. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2013) 430/2 AND /3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2013) 105/2 AND /3)

11.1. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – APPROVAL OF LISTS OF CANDIDATES FOR HEAD OF EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION POSTS

(PERS(2013) 107; PERS(2013) 108)

The Commission took note of the information at point 1 of PERS(2013) 105/2 and, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to approve the lists of candidates in PERS(2013) 107 and PERS(2013) 108 for the posts of Head of the European Union Delegation in Ethiopia (AD13-14/AD13) and Head of the European Union Delegation in Rwanda (AD9-14/AD12); these lists would serve as a basis for the competent authority of the European External Action Service to make the final appointments.

This decision would take effect immediately.

11.2. SECRETARIAT GENERAL / DG BUDGET / DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – CLOSURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S REGIONALISED DELEGATION IN NEW CALEDONIA, AND OPENING OF A EUROPEAN COMMISSION OFFICE FOR THE PACIFIC OVERSEAS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

(PERS(2013) 109)

The Commission took note of the information in point 2 of PERS(2013) 105/2 and, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Baroness ASHTON, Mr PIEBALGS, Mr DE GUCHT, Mr LEWANDOWSKI, Ms GEORGIEVA and Mr FÜLE, decided to:

- agree to the closure of the European Union delegation in New Caledonia;
- approve the opening of a European Commission office for the overseas countries and territories, attached, for administrative purposes, to the Delegation of the European Union in Fiji;
- take note of the financial statement in PERS(2013) 109 evaluating the budgetary impact of this measure, while underlining that implementing the closure would have to take into account current budget constraints;
- take note that any decision connected with the decisions referred to above and concerning the adoption of new organisation charts or amendments to existing ones, and any decision to (re)deploy Commission resources, would have to be taken in accordance with the cooperation procedures put in place by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and in accordance with internal Commission procedures.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**11.3. DG EDUCATION AND CULTURE – APPOINTMENT OF AD14
DIRECTOR
(PERS(2013) 98 AND /2)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union for the post of Director of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Thessaloniki) of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 25 June and 11 July (PERS(2013) 98 and /2).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms VASSILIOU, the Commission decided to appoint Mr Joachim James CALLEJA to the post as a member of the temporary staff under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities to the post, for a period of five years, renewable once.

This decision would take effect on 1 October 2013.

11.4. DG DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION - EUROPEAID – APPOINTMENT OF AD15 DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The Commission took note of the information in point 1 of PERS(2013) 105/3 and, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Mr PIEBALGS et Mr FÜLE, decided to fill the post of Director-General of the Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation - Europeaid by transferring in the interest of the service under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations Mr Fernando FRUTUOSO DE MELO, an AD15 official and currently Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security.

This decision would take effect on 1 November 2013.

12. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL POLICY

Baroness ASHTON reported on the latest developments in the European Union's external policy, focusing in particular on a number of issues raised at the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 July.

Turning first to the peace process in the Middle East, she welcomed the breakthrough on 19 July with the agreement in principle on the resumption of peace talks by the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators. As a result of this development, a

meeting would be held in Washington in the coming days between the negotiators, Tzipi Livni and Saeb Erekat. Baroness ASHTON praised the courage of the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, which had made possible this very heartening result, with the active support of American Secretary of State John Kerry.

The European Union had also taken an important decision concerning the Middle East with the ‘Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards’ presented by the Commission. Recalling that the European Union did not recognise Israel’s sovereignty over the occupied territories, she said that these guidelines guaranteed respect for the Union’s financial commitments under international law, which had clarified the situation for all concerned. Announcing her intention to monitor the talks closely, she asked the Members to pledge themselves fully to measures to support Palestinian institution- and capacity-building, which were essential to achieve real peace.

Baroness ASHTON then turned to the situation in Egypt, which she had visited the previous week at the request of the representatives of the interim government. She had held talks with all political movements and civil society groups, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood and the Tamarod movement. She underlined the European Union’s very active and much appreciated role as a mediator over the past two years, for instance in the wake of the huge demonstrations of 30 June and the overthrow of the President, Mohammed Morsi, on 3 July. She made it clear that the intention was to provide support to Egypt so that it could find ways to reduce the rift in Egyptian society, resume the democratic transition process as soon as possible, obtain the release of political prisoners and, in fact, do everything necessary to avoid the risk of a civil war. The current, very difficult political situation was coupled with a serious economic recession. Given the unprecedented mobilisation of millions of Egyptians, Baroness ASHTON felt that the European Union should take the initiative and help get all the parties around the table in order to encourage them to bring about decisive democratic change, for instance by electing a national

parliament with the remit of adopting the country's future constitution.

Baroness ASHTON also referred to the agreement concluded between the Serbian and Kosovar Governments on 19 April thanks to the active mediation of the European Union. Underlining the historical nature of the agreement for the Union and the entire Balkan region, she said that this had led to the European Council of 28 and 29 June starting accession negotiations with Serbia and negotiations on a European Union Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo, on the Commission's recommendation. She thanked all those who had helped achieve this result through their support for her actions. She ended by referring to the importance of carefully following the municipal elections to be held in northern Kosovo in the autumn of 2013.

Moving on from the Balkans, Baroness ASHTON referred to the Eastern Partnership summit to be held in Vilnius in November, acknowledging in passing the many developments over the past year that could be attributed to the Commission in terms of bringing the European Union closer to the six countries in question. She thanked Mr FÜLE for his personal commitment and the dedication of staff in this matter.

Baroness ASHTON expressed satisfaction at the fact that more Commission Members had taken part in Foreign Affairs Council meetings and work in 2013. She referred to the Communication 'Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector' presented by Mr TAJANI and Mr BARNIER, in agreement with Mr KALLAS, approved that day by the Commission (see point 7 of these minutes), which would form the basis of discussions at the European Council meeting in December on European defence.

Lastly, Baroness ASHTON turned to the report she would be presenting to the Council in the autumn, following consultations with the PRESIDENT, in order to take stock of the operation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) approximately two years after it had been set up. She recalled the challenge of setting up a foreign policy service all over the world in the political context of the Arab Spring and against the background of a serious economic recession. The

service, based on a network of 141 delegations formed from several diplomatic services, with 3 400 people and modest financial resources, had the task of relaying the policies and values of the European Union. She underlined the difficulties that had had to be overcome when setting up services in countries in which the Union had not been represented before, such as Libya or Myanmar, to mention just a few, and in the course of carrying out action in other countries under very difficult circumstances, for instance in Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali. Moreover, changes had had to be made to structures under the pressure of events. She ended by saying that the report would provide an opportunity to look back at the past, but above all to see what could be improved, the aim being to hand on an even more effective external service to the next High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The Commission Members also raised the following points during the ensuing discussion:

General aspects

- the fact that the work of the High Representative was starting to bear visible fruit, reflected for instance in the positive development in relations between Serbia and Kosovo and the role of facilitator which the European Union was increasingly playing in the Middle East peace process; similarly, emphasis on the fact that Europe was the only intermediary capable of acting as a facilitator for all the stakeholders in the complex political situation in Egypt;
- the importance of European economic diplomacy in giving the single market a stronger external policy dimension;
- the fact that the Union should make full use of the instruments and means at its disposal to make its presence felt in the world; to this end, and with a view to enabling the Union to build on its ability to engage with the Middle East, the need for a discussion on setting up European think tanks in this domain;
- the case for reinforcing the external relations dimension in the areas under the remit of the Commission Members so that the institution could contribute

further to deploying the Union's soft power; the need for the Commission to consider discussing this matter in order to identify specific strategies and ensure that the Commission's action was more coherent;

- the need for communication on the European defence policy adopted that day as this was a concrete, operational contribution to the European Council to be held in December 2013; in this connection, the importance of the Commission's contribution to the EEAS report on defence;
- the importance of using the G20 as a platform for strengthening bilateral relations between the Union and the G20 member countries, particularly in the area of employment;
- the need to use the review of the operation of the EEAS to improve the way the different areas of Commission action were integrated into its activities;

Specific third countries or regions

- as regards more particularly Serbia and Kosovo, the fact that the European Union had been able to play its rightful role as mediator in that region, and a reminder of the vital importance of the western Balkans for Europe and hence the need for this to be a strategic consideration in Europe's action in the region;
- questions about how to distinguish between the military wing of Hezbollah and its political wing, following the decision of the Foreign Affairs Council of 22 July, adopted in line with Council common position 2001/931/CFSP on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism; similarly, questions about the consequences of this decision for the Lebanese Government; more general questions about the situation and balance of power in the Middle East;
- as regards Egypt, an insistence on the need for a return to a democratic process; a call for Europe to support the civil society organisations that were contributing to the ongoing transition in the country, particularly those opposing the attacks on women's rights; the importance of increasing the

accessibility of the programmes for education, higher education and vocational training for young people in the country;

- a reminder of the preparations under way for the EU-China summit in November and acknowledgement of the positive results expected from the recent visit of certain Commission Members to China focusing on the issue of green growth, which had helped to strengthen the dialogue between these two major partners;
- on the subject of Mali, the importance of showing that the stabilisation of the situation was due to the action of the European Union and not only the efforts by some of its Member States;
- a reference to the new measures announced by the Russian customs authorities which were causing serious concern among the Member States.

In reply to this exchange of views, Baroness ASHTON spoke first about the situation in Egypt. Legislative elections were due to be held in six months' time, before the inauguration of the new president, who would have to take the oath of office before parliament in order to restore the democratic order that was essential to inspire public confidence. A working party had been appointed to draft a new national constitution, which would be presented to parliament after the elections. This timetable was dependent on an end to the violence. She praised the peaceful approach of the Tamarod movement which commanded the fervent support of many young people. She deplored the incidents of violence against women, which could be partly explained by the breakdown of law and order, and reiterated that respect for women's rights was non-negotiable.

She then turned to the situation in Tunisia, where the economy showed signs of gradual recovery. However, there were still a number of difficulties relating to the constitution.

She mentioned the extremely complex and sensitive political situation in Lebanon and reported that the European Union was supporting the preparation of the various reforms that were needed and institution-building. Closer cooperation by the

Member States was needed to provide more effective support on the ground. Referring to the decision by the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 July regarding the military wing of Hezbollah, she said that this made it possible to differentiate between Hezbollah's political representatives in the Lebanese Government, on the one hand, and the members of the organisation associated with the terrorist acts perpetrated in the region, on the other. She explained that putting the armed wing of Hezbollah on the black list of terrorist organisations would not in any way affect the legitimate transfer of funds to Lebanon.

She then turned to the resumption of negotiations in the Middle East peace process. She stressed the important role of the European Union and the support it could provide, for example, to agricultural development and the expansion of small businesses. The Union played a significant role, too, in relations between the Gaza Strip and Israel, on the one hand, and Egypt, on the other. As for Iran, she expressed her willingness to relaunch the dialogue with those who would become the future Iranian negotiators after the election of the new president. Finally, on the subject of Mali, she pointed to the positive results of the European Union's military training mission and the forthcoming presidential elections, which would also be monitored by an EU mission.

Referring to the allegations that the Union's offices had been bugged by the United States, she reported on a series of meetings she had had with high-level representatives of the US administration, in which she had insisted on the need for assurances to restore the trust of the Member States and the European institutions. She stressed the challenges that would be associated with the issues of data security and IT security in general in connection with the negotiation of a future free trade agreement.

Finally, on the question of the review of the action of the EEAS, Baroness ASHTON said that the main aim of this exercise would be to produce recommendations for its future activities, including its relations with the Council, Parliament and Commission. The division of responsibilities within the current structure was under examination, and she insisted that the success of this young service could only be evaluated in hindsight, after a period of 15 years.

The PRESIDENT wound up the debate, thanking Baroness ASHTON for this progress report on foreign policy and for the review of the operations of the European External Action Service being produced under her authority.

Returning to the comments on the specific situation in certain countries, the PRESIDENT emphasised the importance of the continued mobilisation of the European Union, given its unique ability to maintain a dialogue with all of the stakeholders. In the case of the European Union's eastern and southern neighbours, he noted the powerful leverage effect of the role played by the Union in the progress that had been made, particularly in relations between Kosovo and Serbia. More generally, he was pleased with the state of the preparations for the Eastern Partnership Summit in November, but reminded the meeting that the goal of rapprochement with the Union of countries in that Partnership would be achieved as much through political association as by economic integration.

In connection with the forthcoming EU summits with Japan and China, following on from the summit with South Africa the week before, he welcomed the scope of the framework established by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union for managing the Union's external affairs. He also pointed to the advantages of the high representative's dual role, which was complex to implement but allowed for constructive synergies between the work of the EEAS and the action of the Commission. The external dimension of many of the policies for which the Commission was responsible justified the gradual development of a European diplomatic culture and the use of the complementary instruments available to the Union.

In connection with this he mentioned the contribution to be made to the European Council in December 2013 on the common security and defence policy, which consisted of the Commission communication adopted that day by the College and the report to be presented shortly by the EEAS. All of these elements gave the Union the means to play a greater role on the international scene.

Turning to the review of the work of the EEAS, the PRESIDENT stressed that a European diplomatic culture could not be created overnight, either strategically or

operationally, and this exercise was an opportunity to review certain issues in the light of experience, including the question of closer cooperation between the EEAS and the Commission. He confirmed his full support for Baroness ASHTON and urged the Members of the Commission to work closely with her departments.

The Commission took note of this information and these conclusions.

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The meeting closed at 10.41.