



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

**PV(2014) 2091 final**

*- English language version of the French text which is authentic -*

Strasbourg, 1 July 2014

# TEXTE EN

## MINUTES

**of the 2091<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Commission**

**held in Brussels**

**(Berlaymont)**

**on Wednesday 25 June 2014**

**(morning)**

—

**PV(2014) 2091 final**

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**Single sitting: Wednesday 25 June 2014 (morning)**

The sitting opened at 10.14 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

|                    |                                        |                        |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Mr BARROSO         | President                              |                        |
| Baroness ASHTON    | High Representative/<br>Vice-President |                        |
| Mr ALMUNIA         | Vice-President                         |                        |
| Mr KALLAS          | Vice-President                         |                        |
| Ms KROES           | Vice-President                         |                        |
| Mr TAJANI          | Vice-President                         | Items 1 to 9 (in part) |
| Mr ŠEFČOVIČ        | Vice-President                         |                        |
| Mr REHN            | Vice-President                         |                        |
| Mr PIEBALGS        | Member                                 |                        |
| Mr BARNIER         | Member                                 |                        |
| Mr ŠEMETA          | Member                                 |                        |
| Mr DE GUCHT        | Member                                 |                        |
| Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN | Member                                 | Items 1 to 9 (in part) |
| Mr LEWANDOWSKI     | Member                                 |                        |
| Mr OETTINGER       | Member                                 |                        |
| Mr HAHN            | Member                                 |                        |
| Ms HEDEGAARD       | Member                                 |                        |
| Mr ANDOR           | Member                                 |                        |
| Mr CIOLOŞ          | Member                                 |                        |
| Mr BORG            | Member                                 | Items 1 to 9 (in part) |

Absent:

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Ms REDING    | Vice-President |
| Mr POTOČNIK  | Member         |
| Ms VASSILIOU | Member         |
| Ms DAMANAKI  | Member         |
| Ms GEORGIEVA | Member         |
| Mr FÜLE      | Member         |
| Ms MALMSTRÖM | Member         |
| Mr MIMICA    | Member         |

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

|                  |                                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ms ROUCH         | A member of Ms REDING's staff    |
| Ms CAREMIER      | Adviser in Mr POTOČNIK's Office  |
| Mr ASIMAKIS      | Chef de cabinet to Ms VASSILIOU  |
| Ms CHRISTOPHIDOU | Chef de cabinet to Ms DAMANAKI   |
| Ms HRISTCHEVA    | Chef de cabinet to Ms GEORGIEVA  |
| Mr MORDUE        | Chef de cabinet to Mr FÜLE       |
| Mr VOLLBRACHT    | A member of Ms MALMSTRÖM's staff |
| Mr BEHRNDT       | Chef de cabinet to Mr MIMICA     |

The following also sat in:

|                      |                                                       |                  |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Mr LAITENBERGER      | Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT                      |                  |
| Mr ROMERO REQUENA    | Director-General, Legal Service                       |                  |
| Mr ZUPKO             | Deputy Director-General (acting),<br>DG Communication |                  |
| Mr DOENS             | Head of the Commission Spokesperson<br>Service        |                  |
| Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN | Commission Spokeswoman                                |                  |
| Mr THEBAULT          | Head of the Bureau of European Policy<br>Advisers     |                  |
| Mr SOBRAL            | Deputy Chef de cabinet to the<br>PRESIDENT            |                  |
| Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA | Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office                     |                  |
| Ms SUPERTI           | Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr TAJANI                   | Item 9 (in part) |
| Mr NOCIAR            | Chef de cabinet to Mr ŠEFČOVIČ                        | Items 1 to 8     |
| Mr KÜTT              | Chef de cabinet to Ms GEOGHEGAN-<br>QUINN             | Item 9 (in part) |
| Ms DARMANIN          | Chef de cabinet to Mr BORG                            | Item 9 (in part) |

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

The PRESIDENT paid tribute to Mr TAJANI, Mr REHN and Mr LEWANDOWSKI, who were attending their last Commission meeting before taking up their duties as newly elected Members of the European Parliament. He also included Ms REDING, who had likewise been elected to the European Parliament. He thanked all four of them for the work they had accomplished for the European Union and stressed how much he had enjoyed their friendship and working with them over the past five years. He wished them every success in their new roles. He announced that he would be hosting a dinner in October, at which they would be present, to celebrate the end of the current mandate with all the Members of the Commission.

In their turn, Mr TAJANI, Mr REHN and Mr LEWANDOWSKI thanked the PRESIDENT for the trust he had placed in them, and all the members of the Commission for the constructive spirit in which work had been conducted. They expressed their gratitude for having had the honour of serving the common European project and welcomed the Commission's achievements despite the difficulties linked to the crisis. They also thanked the Secretary-General, the members of their cabinets and all the Commission departments for their support and the quality of their work.

The PRESIDENT took the floor again to say that he had received the letters of resignation of Mr REHN, Mr LEWANDOWSKI and Mr TAJANI. He added that the Finnish government had already proposed Mr Jyrki Katainen to replace Mr REHN.

On a more general note, and for the sake of clarity, the PRESIDENT described the procedure for replacing a resigning Member of the Commission and the changes that had been introduced since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). He pointed out that before the entry into force of the TFEU, resigning Commissioners were replaced simply through the appointment by the Council of a new Member, whereas Article 246 TFEU now provided that a resigning Commissioner was replaced for the remainder of his/her term of office by a new Member of the same nationality appointed by the Council, by common accord with the President of the Commission, after consulting the European Parliament.

As the Treaty did not specify the procedure to be followed in any more detail, he recalled the approach that had been followed in the only case where a Member of the Commission had been replaced since the entry into force of the TFEU. He listed the various steps required for replacing a resigning Member of the Commission, indicating that (i) first of all, the resigning Member submitted his/her letter of resignation to the President of the Commission, (ii) the President of the Commission then informed the Council and the European Parliament of the resignation, (iii) the government of the Member State of origin of the resigning Member proposed a candidate by means of a letter addressed to the Council, (iv) the Council consulted the European Parliament in writing, thereby conferring on the proposed person the status of designated Member, (v) then the President of the Commission informed the European Parliament of the portfolio he intended to assign to the new Member of the Commission, (vi) the European Parliament decided on the internal arrangements for its consultation, heard the designated Member and adopted an opinion on his/her appointment, (vii) the President of the Commission notified the Council of its agreement to the appointment and, lastly, (viii) the Council adopted the formal decision, thus completing the appointment procedure.

The PRESIDENT expected that, in all probability, the Commission would carry out its duties with a reduced number of Members only until 17 July, on which date the European Parliament was planning to approve the appointment of the new Members of the Commission.

\* \* \*

**1. AGENDAS**

**(OJ(2014) 2091/FINAL; SEC(2014) 373/2)**

The Commission took note of that day's agenda and of the tentative agendas for forthcoming meetings. It also took note of the addition of items 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 (on administrative decisions) to that day's agenda.

**2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET**

**(RCC(2014) 2091)**

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 23 June.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 2089<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (11 JUNE) AND THE MINUTES OF THE 2090<sup>TH</sup> MEETING (18 JUNE)**

**(PV(2014) 2089; PV(2014) 2089, PART 2; PV(2014) 2090)**

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2089<sup>th</sup> and 2090<sup>th</sup> meetings.

**4. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW**

**4.1. STATE AID – INDIVIDUAL CASES**

**(SEC(2014) 398)**

The Commission adopted the decisions in SEC(2014) 398.

#### **4.2. STATE AID – HORIZONTAL CASES**

**i) Commission Regulation declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**

(C(2014) 4105 and /2; SWD(2014) 196; SWD(2014) 197; SEC(2014) 381; RCC(2014) 54)

The Commission:

- adopted the Commission Regulation in C(2014) 4105/2;
- took note of the impact assessment and the summary thereof in SWD(2014) 196 and SWD(2014) 197;
- also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the above Commission Regulation, as set out in SEC(2014) 381;
- decided to publish the Regulation in the Official Journal of the European Union.

**ii) European Union Guidelines for state aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014 to 2020**

(C(2014) 4104 to /3; SWD(2014) 196; SWD(2014) 197; SEC(2014) 381; RCC(2014) 54)

The Commission:

- adopted the European Union Guidelines for state aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014 to 2020 in C(2014) 4104/3;
- took note of the impact assessment and the summary thereof in SWD(2014) 196 and SWD(2014) 197;
- also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the

above Guidelines, as set out in SEC(2014) 381;

- decided to publish the Guidelines in the Official Journal of the European Union.

## **5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS**

### **5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED**

**(SEC(2014) 374 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 16 and 20 June.

### **5.2. EMPOWERMENT**

**(SEC(2014) 375 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 16 and 20 June.

### **5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS**

**(SEC(2014) 376 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 16 and 20 June, as archived in e-Greffe.

### **5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES**

**(SEC(2014) 377)**

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 23 and 27 June.

**5.5. AD HOC EMPOWERMENT FOR SIGNING, ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION, ITSELF ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN STABILITY MECHANISM, AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CYPRUS  
(C(2014) 4145 TO /3)**

The Commission decided to empower Mr REHN, Member of the Commission responsible for economic and monetary affairs and the euro, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, on its behalf and under its responsibility, to sign, after approval by the Board of Governors of the European Stability Mechanism, amendments of limited scope to the Memorandum of Understanding setting out the detailed economic policy conditions to accompany financial support granted to Cyprus, under the terms set out in C(2014) 4145/2 and /3.

**6. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 101 OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ARTICLE 53 OF THE EEA AGREEMENT (CASE AT.39965 – MUSHROOMS)  
(C(2014) 4227 TO /7; RCC(2014) 56)**

The Commission:

- took note of the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Restrictive Practices and Dominant Positions of 20 June in C(2014) 4227/3;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 23 June in C(2014) 4227/6;
- adopted in the authentic language (English) the decision in C(2014) 4227/7 finding that the companies to which the decision was addressed had infringed Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 53 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area, requiring the

parties to put an end to the infringements immediately and imposing on some of these companies fines totalling €32 225 000;

- decided that the decision in C(2014) 4227/7 would be notified to the companies concerned, together with the final report of the Hearing Officer;
- decided that the key parts of the decision, together with the Advisory Committee's opinion and the Hearing Officer's final report, would be published in the official languages of the Union in the Official Journal of the European Union (with business secrets and other confidential information removed);
- decided to publish the decision on the internet (with business secrets and other confidential information removed).

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

### ***BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION AT 31 MAY 2014***

#### ***(INFO(2014) 46)***

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr LEWANDOWSKI in INFO(2014) 46.

## **8. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS**

**(SEC(2014) 378/3)**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**(PERS(2014) 94/3)**

#### **8.1. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY/SECRETARIAT GENERAL – COMMISSION DECISION ON THE STATUS OF THE CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT-ELECT AND THE COMMISSIONERS- DESIGNATE**

**(C(2014) 4432 AND /2)**

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission adopted the decision on the status of the candidate for President/President-elect and the Commissioners-designate, as set out in C(2014) 4432/2.

This decision would take effect immediately.

#### **8.2. DG EDUCATION AND CULTURE – APPOINTMENT OF AD15/16 DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**(PERS(2014) 37 TO /4)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General in charge of Directorates D and E, in DG Education and Culture (PERS(2014) 37 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 21 May and 4 June 2014 (PERS(2014) 37/3 and /4).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with

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the PRESIDENT and Ms VASSILIOU, it then decided to appoint Mr Jens NYMAND-CHRISTENSEN to the post.

This decision would take effect on a date to be fixed later.

**8.3. DG TRANSLATION – APPOINTMENT OF AD15/16 DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
(PERS(2014) 41 TO /4)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General in charge of Directorates A, B, C and D in DG Translation (PERS(2014) 41 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 16 April and 20 May 2014 (PERS(2014) 41/3 and /4).

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, it then decided to appoint Mr Christos ELLINIDES to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 September 2014.

**8.4. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 AND AD14 (EU-28) DIRECTOR  
(PERS(2013) 157 TO /5)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), 29(1)(b) and 29(2) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director in charge of 'Institutional and Administrative Policies' in the Secretariat-General (PERS(2013) 157, /2 and /3).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 13 May and 5 June 2014 (PERS(2013) 157/4 and /5).

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The Commission proceeded to consider the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Mr James MORRISON to the post.

This decision would take effect on a date to be fixed later.

**8.5. DG DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION - EUROPEAID –  
AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND  
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AND A PRINCIPAL ADVISER**

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr PIEBALGS and Mr FÜLE, the Commission decided:

- to fill the post of Director of the 'Human and Society Development' Directorate in DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid by transferring in the interest of the service pursuant to Article 7 of the Staff Regulations Mr Luis RIERA FIGUERAS, an AD15 official and currently Principal Adviser in charge of the Task-force for an enhanced dialogue with International Organisations in that DG;
- to abolish the Task-force for an enhanced dialogue with International Organisations upon the departure of Mr Luis RIERA FIGUERAS;
- to fill the post of Principal Adviser in DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid held until then by Mr Luis RIERA FIGUERAS by transferring in the interest of the service pursuant to Article 7 of the Staff Regulations and with the corresponding budgetary support Ms Androulla KAMINARA, an AD14 official and currently Principal Adviser in DG Communication, a temporary post which would be abolished upon departure of the jobholder.

These decisions would take effect on 1 July 2014.

**8.6. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – APPROVAL OF THE LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE POST OF HEAD OF DELEGATION IN ALBANIA  
(PERS(2014) 95)**

The Commission took note of the information in point 6 of PERS(2014) 94/3 and, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to approve the list of candidates for the AD13-14/AD13 post of Head of Delegation in Albania in PERS(2014) 95, which would serve as a basis for the competent authority of the European External Action Service to make a final appointment.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**8.7. LEGAL SERVICE/SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – COMMISSION DECISION ON THE WAIVER OF THE DUTY OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF MR JOSÉ MANUEL DURÃO BARROSO, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, IN CASE T-562/12, DALLI V COMMISSION  
(C(2014) 4332)**

The Commission adopted the decision on the waiver of the duty of confidentiality of Mr José Manuel DURÃO BARROSO, President of the European Commission, in Case T-562/12, *Dalli v Commission*, set out in C(2014) 4332.

**8.8. GENERAL ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE MEDIATION SERVICE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2013  
(SEC(2014) 384)**

The Commission took note of the General Activity Report of the Mediation Service of the European Commission 2013 distributed as SEC(2014) 384.

## **9. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS**

### **9.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS**

#### **i) Use of the denomination ‘Palestine’**

(SI(2014) 259)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 259.

#### **ii) Amendment of Regulation (EU) 269/2014 concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine (Council Regulation) – 2014/0171 (NLE)**

(SI(2014) 260)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 260.

#### **iii) Signing, on behalf of the European Union, and provisional application of the Association Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part (Council Decision) – 2013/0155 (NLE)**

(SI(2014) 263)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 263.

#### **iv) The role of the European Union in FAO after the Treaty of Lisbon: Updated Declaration of competences and new arrangements between the Council and the Commission for the exercise of membership rights of the EU and its Member States**

(SI(2014) 266 to /3)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 266, /2 and /3.

**v) On the institutional implications of moving to the second phase of the Implementation by Ukraine of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation**

(SI(2014) 267)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 267.

**9.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL**

**vi) Programming of Council business**

(SI(2014) 268)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2014) 268 on the Council meetings between 25 June and 9 July.

**vii) Preparation for European Council (Brussels, 26 and 27 June)**

The PRESIDENT reported on the preparations for the European Council on 26 and 27 June. In relation to the expected appointment of the next Commission President, he referred first to the discussion to be held at the Council meeting on the strategic priorities for the coming five years, in accordance with Article 15(1) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). The draft, which had been the responsibility of the President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy, and which the Commission had helped to produce, would consist of a series of general policy priorities rather than a list of measures. This would be submitted to the next Commission President and would be passed on to the other European institutions as a roadmap for the coming years. Without going into details, the PRESIDENT listed the main strategies: (i) growth, competitiveness and jobs, (ii) inclusion and protection of citizens, (iii) energy, (iv) freedom, security and justice, and finally (v) external relations.

With regard to the second important issue on the Council agenda (the country-specific recommendations in the context of the European Semester),

the PRESIDENT said that they would convey a balanced general message supporting continued fiscal consolidation that was tailor-made and conducive to growth, with certain qualifications concerning the relative importance, at the present time, of growth and fiscal flexibility. The Commission's position on this matter was that fiscal recovery and growth were not mutually exclusive. Highlighting the need to continue the efforts to reduce the level of public debt, still too high generally, he conceded that, given the fragility of the current recovery, more would need to be done to strengthen the Union's growth and job-creation capacities. He expressed the hope that the Member States would take ownership of and implement the Commission's country-specific recommendations, which focused on ways of achieving these objectives. He referred, in this connection, to the progress made in the context of the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT), which the Council would also be discussing.

In relation to justice and home affairs, the European Council would identify guidelines for legislative and operational planning in the European area of freedom, security and justice, and would emphasise, in relation to the migration issue, the need to strike the right balance between solidarity and responsibility, as well as between security and protection of fundamental rights. The guidelines would also focus on the need to build a European area of justice based on the principles of recognition and mutual trust.

As for energy and combating climate change, the European Council would examine the energy security strategy presented by the Commission on 28 May and, more broadly, would discuss the 'Europeanisation' of energy policy, including its external dimension. The PRESIDENT went on to give a concise report on the progress in the work on the 2030 framework for energy and climate policies, also presented by the Commission, in which the question of burden-sharing appeared to be particularly significant as far as the Member States were concerned. Winding up this chapter, the PRESIDENT confirmed again that energy security and combating climate change were two

sides of the same coin. He would therefore take care to ensure that the European Council regarded the discussions on energy this week and those on climate change to be held in October as part and parcel of the same issue.

Lastly, he turned to the external relations matters to be tackled by the European Council. First, he pointed to the historic importance, both for the countries concerned and for the Union, of the signing on 27 June of the Association Agreements with Moldova and Georgia, and the last chapters of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, following five years of difficult negotiations. He welcomed the political determination shown by both sides which had made this result possible, while stressing the series of reforms to be introduced by the Union's partner countries and the need for Europe to remain both vigilant and dynamic in relation to its eastern neighbours. In this connection, he announced that he would shortly be visiting Serbia and Albania.

He went on to note that the European Council would take a position on the approach to be adopted, including the possibility of additional sanctions, with regard to Russia, which was bound to react to the signing of these Association Agreements, in particular with Ukraine. In this connection, he reminded the meeting of European support for the 15-point peace plan of the new Ukrainian president, Petro Poroshenko, at a time of continued clashes and territorial violations in the east of the country. He noted, too, Russian President Vladimir Putin's announcement that he intended to ask the Russian parliament to cancel a mandate for sending troops to the Ukraine. In conclusion, he welcomed the measures in support of Ukraine already taken by the Union in recent months and to be continued, for example, at the donor coordination meeting on 8 July.

Taking the floor, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ referred to the General Affairs Council held the previous day in preparation for the European Council on 26-27 June. The country-specific recommendations that were part of the European Semester

had been broadly welcomed, although there was some debate about certain recommendations concerning the pension systems of a small number of Member States. The question of granting Albania candidate-country status for EU membership had also been discussed. However, the talks had mainly focused on the drafting of the document setting out the strategic priorities for Europe to be proposed by the European Council to steer the Union's political agenda in the coming years, and therefore the agenda of the Commission and its future president. With regard to the appointment of the Commission president, Herman van Rompuy, the President of the European Council, intended to reach a formal decision on this matter on Friday.

Before turning to the items on the agenda of the European Council in the field of external relations, Baroness ASHTON referred to a recent report by the UN Agency for Refugees stating that there were now 50 million refugees worldwide, more than at the end of the Second World War. She stressed that this situation gave rise to considerable expectations, in particular as regards Europe.

She dwelt in particular on the very worrying situation in Iraq, with the rapid deterioration of security and the sudden worsening of the humanitarian crisis that had led to numerous deaths and caused mass displacements of civilians fleeing the fighting. She referred to the firm condemnation by the Foreign Affairs Council on 23 June of the attacks carried out in the country by armed groups, in particular the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), and reiterated the Union's support for the Iraqi authorities in their fight against terrorism and its firm commitment to the country's unity and territorial integrity.

On the diplomatic front, she reported on her recent contacts with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, and the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, aimed at encouraging the search for a lasting political solution

involving the whole of Iraqi society. She was in favour of the setting up of a government of national unity able to respond to the aspirations of all population groups and communities and to reflect the wishes of the people expressed at the elections on 30 April, while stressing the importance of involving regional leaders in this process.

In addition, she confirmed that the Union was still actively committed, through its delegations or as part of its bilateral relations, to monitoring closely the extremely serious situation in Syria and Libya in particular and contributing to the efforts of the international community.

Concerning the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme, she would take part in the forthcoming round of discussions in Vienna. She hoped that these talks would lead to a constructive conclusion before 20 July, when the intermediate agreement reached in November 2013 was due to expire.

A discussion followed in which the Members of the Commission raised the following issues in particular:

- the wish to see the crosscutting dimension of the digital economy and a reminder of the areas to be followed up in the context of financial regulation which were more clearly set out in the economic chapters of the draft European Council conclusions;
- on the subject of immigration, the importance for the Commission of highlighting the clear distinction between the competences of the European Union and those of the Member States, and consequently of calling on the Member States to take their share of the responsibilities;
- the value of examining the methods that could make it possible to monitor investments and stakeholdings by non-member third countries in the Union;
- as regards the situation in Iraq, questions on the role of the

Prime Minister, Mr Nouri al-Maliki, and certain groups and communities there, and on the position of the Iraqi Kurds; support for the efforts by the US on this matter;

- in this context, the need to consider a response to critics who were highlighting the link between Western support for the overthrow of dictatorships during the Arab Spring and the emergence of conditions conducive to the increased power of fundamentalist groups;
- also, the issue of the indoctrination and training in terrorist acts of young Europeans in certain Middle East countries and the cooperation efforts that need to be put in place to combat this growing phenomenon.

Baroness ASHTON spoke of the contrast in the situation of countries that had experienced the overthrow of regimes during the Arab Spring with, on the one hand, the positive developments in Tunisia, and even Egypt, despite the recent sentencing of journalists accused of having supported the previous regime, and on the other hand, the spiral of violence affecting Iraq and Libya. She explained the difficulties of the latter two countries, at least in part, by the fact that the governments that had succeeded the failed regimes were not very representative. This was why, over and above the fight against terrorism, the Union continued to insist in its external relations on capacity-building in democratic principles in the countries concerned, which was also a prerequisite for lasting stability in this region.

As for the indoctrination of young Europeans in certain Middle East countries, she saw the need to examine all aspects of the issue, whilst at the same time noting that the Council had established monitoring arrangements that also covered the reintegration of these young people when they returned to Europe.

The PRESIDENT thanked the Commission Members for their contributions. As regards the conclusions of the next European Council, he responded

favourably to the call to strengthen the multi-sectoral dimension of the digital economy and its role in the future growth and competitiveness of the Union. He also said that the Commission had already proposed a wording that highlighted the work still needed in the area of financial regulation. As regards information on investments in the Union originating in non-member countries, he noted that the Commission had no legal capacity to ask Member States for this and that Eurostat did not have this information either. He suggested examining the matter with a view to obtaining possible concrete suggestions.

The Commission took note of this information.

### **9.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT**

#### **Action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its March part-session**

(SP(2014) 455 and /2)

The Commission approved documents SP(2014) 455 and /2 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its March part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

#### **Action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its March part-session**

(SP(2014) 457 to /3)

The Commission approved, for transmission to Parliament, documents SP(2014) 457, /2 and /3 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its March part-session.

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The meeting closed at 11.20.