



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2014) 2108 final

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

Brussels, 10 December 2014

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2108th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 3 December 2014

(morning)

PV(2014) 2108 final

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

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Single sitting: Wednesday 3 December 2014 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.20 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	Chair	
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President	
Ms GEORGIEVA	Vice-President	Item 7 (in part)
Mr ANSIP	Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Vice-President	
Mr KATAINEN	Vice-President	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	
Ms THYSSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Lord HILL	Member	
Ms BIENKOWSKA	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms CREȚU	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	
Mr MOEDAS	Member	

Absent:

Ms MOGHERINI

High Representative /
Vice-President

Ms BULC

Member

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

Mr RENTSCHLER	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI
Ms JAGER	Chef de cabinet to Ms BULC

The following also sat in:

Mr SELMAYR	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr PAULGER	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr SCHINAS	Head of the Spokesperson Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms METTLER	Head of the European Strategic Policy Centre	
Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms SUTTON	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr TIMMERMANS	
Ms WERNER	A member of Ms GEORGIEVA's staff	Items 1 to 7 (in part)
Ms KLINGBEIL	Deputy Secretary-General	Item 7

Secretary: Ms DAY, Secretary-General, assisted by Mr GENISSON, Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2014) 2108 /FINAL; SEC(2014) 616)

The PRESIDENT reminded the Commissioners that they would be swearing their oath of office before the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg on 10 December.

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

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET

(RCC(2014) 2108)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 1 December.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2106th AND 2107th COMMISSION MEETINGS (19 AND 25 NOVEMBER)

(PV(2014) 2106; PV(2014) 2107)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2106th and 2107th meetings.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2014) 90)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 28 November (RCC(2014) 90).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Trilogue

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Directive 96/53/EC of 25 July 1996 laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic (Directive) – LEICHTFRIED report – 2013/0105 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 449/3.

- Trademarks package – amendment to Council Regulation (EC) 207/2009 of 26 February 2009 on the Community trade mark (Regulation) / Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to trade marks (Directive – recast) – WIKSTRÖM reports – 2013/0088 (COD) / 2013/0089 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 457/3.

- Amendment of Directive 2001/18/EC as regards the possibility for the Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs in their territory (Regulation) – RIES report – 2010/0208 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 458.

- Novel foods (Regulation) – NICHOLSON report – 2013/0435 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 459.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 223/2009 on European statistics (Regulation) – BAYET report – 2012/0084 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 474 and /2.

ii) European Parliament dossier

(point 3.2 of the IRG record)

- Use of Passenger Name Record data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime (Directive) – KIRKHOPE report – 2011/0023 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 720/2.

iii) Council dossiers

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Signature, provisional application and conclusion of the Multilateral Agreement between the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the European Community, the Republic of Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Kingdom of Norway, Serbia and Montenegro, Romania and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo on the Establishment of a European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) (Council Decision) – LICHTENBERGER report – 2006/0036 (APP)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 452.

- Activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement (Directive – recast) – 2014/0091 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 461.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iv) Programming of Council business

(SI(2014) 473)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2014) 473 on the Council meetings between 4 and 17 December.

v) Preparation of Council meeting (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy – Transport session) (Brussels, 3 December)

(point 4.2.2 of the IRG record)

- Implementation of the Single European Sky (Regulation – recast) – MARINESCU report – 2013/0186 (COD) / Amendment to Regulation (EC) 216/2008 in the field of aerodromes, air traffic management and air navigation services (Regulation) – SASSOLI report – 2013/0187 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 462/2.

- Conclusions on the infrastructure of the trans-European transport network

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 467.

- Authorisation for Member States to sign and/or ratify, in the interest of the European Union, the 1995 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for fishing vessel personnel of the International Maritime Organisation (Council Decision) – RIBEIRO report – 2013/0285 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 468/2.

**vi) Preparations for Council meeting (Justice and Home Affairs)
(Brussels, 4 and 5 December)**

(point 4.2.3 of the IRG record)

- Data protection package – Protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and the free movement of such data (Directive) / Protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data (Regulation) – LAURISTIN / ALBRECHT reports – 2012/0010 (COD) / 2012/0011 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 463/2.

vii) Preparation of Council meeting (Competitiveness) (Brussels, 4 and 5 December)

(point 4.2.4 of the IRG record)

- Personal Protective Equipment (Regulation) – FORD report – 2014/0108 (COD)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2014) 465.

**viii) Preparations of Council meeting (Economic and Financial Affairs)
(Brussels, 9 December)**

(point 4.2.5 of the IRG record)

- Uniform conditions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 806/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to *ex-ante* contributions to the Single Resolution Fund (Council Implementing Regulation) – 2014/0336 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 464/2.

- Amendment to Directive 2011/96/EU on the common system of taxation applicable in the case of parent companies and subsidiaries in different Member States (Council Directive) – KLEVA KEKUŠ report – 2013/0400 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 469.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

ix) Results of November II part-session

(SP(2014) 686)

The Commission took note of the information on the proceedings of the part-session of Parliament held in Strasbourg from 24 to 27 November, as set out in SP(2014) 686.

x) Action to be taken on Parliament's legislative resolutions and other resolutions of a legal nature

(SP(2014) 730)

The Commission took note of document SP(2014) 730, drawn up following the part-session of Parliament held from 24 to 27 November.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2014) 617 ET SEQ)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 24 and 28 November.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2014) 618 ET SEQ)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 24 and 28 November.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2014) 619 ET SEQ)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 24 and 28 November, as archived in e-Greffe.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2014) 620)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 1 and 5 December.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2014) 621/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2014) 142/2)

6.1. DG AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT – APPOINTMENT OF AD15 DIRECTOR

The Commission, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr HOGAN, as well as Mr ANSIP, Mr KATAINEN and Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, decided to fill the post of Director 'Single CMO, Economics and Analysis of Agricultural Markets' in the

Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development by transferring, in the interest of the service under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Jens SCHAPS, AD15 official and currently Director 'Trade Defence' in the Directorate-General for Trade.

This decision would take effect on 1 January 2015.

6.2. DG REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART, CREATION OF AD15 ADVISER HORS CLASSE POST AND APPOINTMENT TO THIS FUNCTION

The Commission, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, after consulting Ms CREȚU, as well as Mr ANSIP, Mr DOMBROVSKIS, Mr KATAINEN and Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, decided:

- to approve the creation of a temporary post of adviser *hors classe* in the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy; this post would be abolished upon departure of the job holder;
- to reinstate in this function, Ms Katarina MATHERNOVA, currently on leave on personal grounds.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6.3. DG HOME AFFAIRS – LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE AD14 POST OF DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION (EMCDDA) (PERS(2013) 146 TO /4)

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 3 of PERS(2014) 142/2, and, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr TIMMERMANS, decided:

- not to propose a list of candidates under Council Regulation

(EEC) 302/1993 on the establishment of a European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA);

- to suggest to the Management Board of the EMCDDA that it publish a new vacancy notice for the post of director in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and in the press;
- to suggest to the Management Board of the EMCDDA that, in the present case, it exceptionally extend the term of office of the current director until a new director took up his/her duties;
- to instruct Mr AVRAMOPOULOS to communicate these decisions to the Management Board of the EMCDDA.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6.4. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER LEAVING OFFICE
(C(2014) 9296)

The Commission adopted the decision set out in C(2014) 9296.

The Commission:

- took note of the letter dated 26 November 2014 addressed to the President of the Commission from former President José Manuel BARROSO and of the commitments expressed therein by Mr BARROSO regarding compliance with the obligations set out in the treaties, in particular Articles 245 and 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, the protection of the confidentiality of matters dealt with by the Commission during his two terms as President and his resolve to avoid any specific activities that could be contrary to his obligations;

- took note of the honorary, unpaid activities that Mr BARROSO intended to accept as Honorary Chairman of the Honorary Committee of the European Business Summit, as an honorary board member of the Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe (Lausanne), as an honorary professor at the Macao Polytechnic Institute and as Honorary Co-President of the European Centre for Culture;
- authorised the unpaid cultural or political activities contemplated by Mr BARROSO as a member of the international board of the Madrid Opera House and as an advisory board member of Women in Parliament.

**6.5. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – ADJUSTMENT IN 2014 OF THE CORRECTION COEFFICIENTS APPLIED TO THE REMUNERATION AND PENSIONS OF OFFICIALS AND OTHER SERVANTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND OF THE RATE OF CONTRIBUTION TO THE PENSION SCHEME OF OFFICIALS AND OTHER SERVANTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(SEC(2014) 631; SEC(2014) 632; SEC(2014) 633; SEC(2014) 634)**

The Commission took note of SEC(2014) 631, SEC(2014) 632, SEC(2014) 633 and SEC(2014) 634.

7. POLICY DEBATE ON THE COMMISSION'S 2015 WORK PROGRAMME

The PRESIDENT began by saying that he intended to hold a seminar of the College of Commissioners (the date would be determined later) in order to discuss in detail how the political statements made by Members of the Commission on all the decisions adopted by the Commission could best be coordinated, in parallel with the

activities of the Spokesperson's Service. He then turned to the main discussion item on that day's agenda, namely preparation of the Commission's annual work programme for 2015. He noted that the Commissioners would discuss this topic again at their meeting on 10 December and that the adoption of the work programme was scheduled for the Commission's meeting in Strasbourg on 16 December.

Mr TIMMERMANS stressed that the drafting of the new Commission's first work programme was important as it opened a new page politically and reflected a new way of working that was more cross-sectoral and consisted of proposing large-scale initiatives where there was a need to resolve major problems and intervening with as much moderation as possible when it came to the regulation of points of detail.

The 2015 work programme would have to lend real substance to the ten-point agenda for jobs, growth, fairness and democratic change – the platform on which the PRESIDENT had been elected and the Commissioners appointed. He therefore insisted that the initiatives to be included in the work programme would focus directly on the main projects announced in these political guidelines, while at the same time ensuring that existing legislation was implemented and pursuing better lawmaking. He drew attention to the groundwork that had already been laid, resulting in an initial list of politically consistent initiatives based on the three strands of the work programme, i.e. (i) the measures planned for 2015, (ii) the proposed withdrawal of certain pending proposals in line with the principle of political discontinuity, where this was justified, and (iii) the legislative instruments that were going through the interinstitutional process and would in principle enter into force in 2015.

Taking stock of progress so far, Mr TIMMERMANS felt that, as it stood, the draft work programme still left something to be desired as, in his view, the initiatives proposed in some quarters did not always spell out clearly how they contributed to the Commission's political guidelines – in which growth and jobs were the top priorities – or what tangible results were expected in the short term, i.e. from 2015.

He gave a number of examples where he thought that there was a case for legislating differently by adopting a more political approach. He also stressed the potential for achieving rapid, concrete results by improving the functioning of the internal market. Lastly, he argued that the proposed list of legislative initiatives to be withdrawn was insufficient at this stage. He asked the Commission Members to review more thoroughly the 400 or so proposals currently in the interinstitutional pipeline. He was convinced that, although such a list would be contested here and there for the sake of defending sectoral interests, the Commission had to show that it put political priorities ahead of established practices.

Mr ANSIP spoke about the work to be done to complete the digital single market, describing the state of play in the interinstitutional negotiations on two key points. Firstly, as regards the tangible benefits which the ‘telecommunications package’ should provide for European citizens, he mentioned in particular the ultimate goal of ‘roam like at home’. Given the sensitivity and complexity of the set of measures presented in the package, he called on all the Members of the Commission to help bring positions closer together, arguing that a step-by-step approach would allow major progress to be made in the medium term. Secondly, as regards the negotiations on reforming data protection, he stressed that reform was vital for electronic services on the internet, an area where consumer confidence had to be regained.

Turning to the initiatives to be taken in the course of 2015, he listed a number of proposals likely to produce tangible benefits for the general public, for example the updating of the EU rules on copyright in the digital era, following a balanced approach that ensured a fair reward for creative artists and access to their works on equal terms throughout the Union. He also emphasised the need to put an end to the current practice of placing geographical barriers on broadcasting.

He then spoke about other measures designed to support e-commerce in the interests of businesses and consumers, in particular a proposal aimed at removing the obstacles to delivering parcels from one Member State to another and an initiative

aimed at the clearer definition of rights in digital contracts. He confirmed his intention of presenting, towards the middle of 2015, an overall strategy for the digital single market, together with an action plan, in order to exploit the considerable potential of this market in terms of growth and jobs.

Finally, he mentioned a number of legislative texts which he intended to review from 2015 onwards in order to examine their compatibility with the digital single market, for example the Directive on privacy and electronic communications, which might be looked at once the negotiations on data protection had been completed.

Mr OETTINGER took the floor to argue for greater consistency and complementarity between investments in digital infrastructure at European, national and regional level. He felt that coordination between the structural funds, the Connecting Europe Facility and the state aid rules ought to be more carefully thought out and referred to the measures to optimise investments which could be launched following the investment plan for Europe presented by the Commission on 26 November.

He then came back to the ‘telecommunications package’, stressing the need to encourage all the stakeholders to take real ownership of the goal of a digital single market and show a shared commitment to making progress in eliminating national digital borders. He also raised certain issues that were currently the subject of controversy, in particular the technical transitional measures that would inevitably have to be taken before roaming was abolished outright, and the sensitive question of internet neutrality.

With regard to the proposed data protection reforms, he briefed the meeting on the interinstitutional negotiations and highlighted the inevitable difficulties in striking the right balance between data use and data protection. Negotiations on the Network Information Security Directive, which represented a big step forward for the general public in Europe, should also be brought to a conclusion.

With regard to future initiatives, he dwelt on the future copyright proposal, for which significant preparatory work had already been completed. Consultations on the proposal involving all the parties concerned should take place early next year.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ referred to the objective set out in the political guidelines of an EU with greater energy resilience and a visionary policy on climate change. A number of legislative proposals were currently being considered, several of which could be included in the Commission's 2015 work programme, with the aim of implementing various pillars of the energy union strategy. Although intensive consultations were already under way to evaluate the political and technical viability of the first proposals which were likely to be approved, it was necessary not just to carefully prepare the proposals themselves, but above all to coordinate them in the light of their innovative nature for the parties concerned. When the time came, it would be absolutely vital to group these proposals together to ensure that they were presented coherently. He thanked the Members of the Commission and the DGs concerned for their assistance.

Turning to the main obstacles to energy union, he said that discussions would continue until the end of this year and that a strategic framework would be established on that basis which it should be possible to put forward early in 2015.

He focused in particular on the specific initiatives planned for 2015 to complete the internal energy market and exploit its potential to the full, reporting on the work being carried out in this area in close cooperation with Mr ARIAS CAÑETE. He mentioned a communication on the 10% electricity interconnection target for the EU which had been endorsed by the European Council and which he hoped to present in the first quarter of 2015. He also referred to a communication on simplifying arrangements for switching supplier, which should result in big savings for consumers.

With regard to the central issue of security of supply, the objective was to update the legal framework by amending the security of gas supply Regulation in the second

half of 2015. This work was being coordinated by Mr ARIAS CAÑETE. The EU was engaged in ongoing efforts to enable implementation of the energy accord concluded that autumn between Ukraine and Russia, and of the stages after March 2015.

Lastly, with regard to the implementation of the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies, he mentioned a key proposal which would be tabled in 2015 in cooperation with Mr ARIAS CAÑETE with the aim of reforming the EU emissions trading scheme, a priority project of interest to European industry and the EU's international partners alike.

Mr ARIAS CAÑETE stressed that the objectives of the strategic framework for energy union should be clearly explained. It was particularly important to spell out to the general public the reasons for this crucial development in European energy policy and the real benefits that consumers could expect to derive from it.

Acknowledging that completion of the internal energy market was inevitably a medium to long-term objective in view of the considerable work that needed to be done not just in terms of infrastructure but also of developing network codes and capacity allocation mechanisms, he said that a number of clear signals should be given from 2015 onward. For that reason, he stressed the important part to be played by the proposal to overhaul the emissions trading scheme, while underlining the importance of striking the right balance between meeting the EU's greenhouse gas emission targets and finding an approach that did not damage the development of European industry.

Although he endorsed the general objectives of the eco-design and eco-labelling Directives, he felt that a number of aspects required clarification. In particular, he referred to improvements that he intended to make to the third 'eco-design' work plan for 2015-17 concerning various energy-using products, which he hoped to table in the first quarter of 2015. It was vital to systematically assess the impact, especially

on consumers, of proposed eco-design standards so that they would only be implemented if there were a real need.

Mr TIMMERMANS cautioned against making promises that could not be kept, thereby disappointing people. The purpose of this meeting was to examine the initiatives to be tabled in 2015, not throughout the Commission's term of office. He therefore advised everyone to act with restraint, realism and a degree of prudence. He also suggested forging close contacts with the European Parliament with a view to explaining the Commission's policy choices, focusing on their real contribution to growth and job creation, which were the EU's top priorities. Lastly, the Commission departments should be urged to examine whether the approach they had taken to date was still the right one or whether it could be improved, particularly in the light of the principle of political discontinuity which he had invoked previously.

The PRESIDENT welcomed the fact that the Commission was setting out some long-term perspectives, which was an essential part of its role. However, the purpose of the 2015 work programme was to define precisely and specifically what the Commission would be putting on the co-legislators' table next year. To this end he encouraged the Commissioners to focus on what was achievable, bearing in mind, in particular, the time needed for consultation and preparation before a proposal was adopted by the Commission. He also drew attention once again to the commitment made by him and by the Commission as a whole to address with energy the major problems affecting the lives of EU citizens and to interfere as little as possible in the regulation of minor matters. The Commission's credibility was at stake, not just with the public but also with the national governments.

In the light of the exchanges just held, he suggested that Mr TIMMERMANS, with all the Members of the Commission, should draw up three different lists: (i) a list A of Commission initiatives to be withdrawn, (ii) a list B of initiatives to be reviewed, and (iii) a list C of initiatives that were to work their way through the interinstitutional procedure.

In the course of the ensuing debate, the Commission discussed the following main points:

- general support for the approach put forward and for sending a clear signal, at the beginning of the new Commission's term of office, that it wished to act differently, in accordance with its political undertakings;
- the need for legislative initiatives to take full account of the actual situation and the opinion of the affected parties; the key criterion of EU value added that must be the Commission's guiding principle;
- the highly political nature of the Commission's work programme, which must emphasise the political project it intended to carry out in 2015 under its 'contract' with the European Parliament and the Council; a suggestion that the name 'work programme' could be changed to highlight its political dimension;
- the importance of the considerable potential for growth and jobs of the 'single market' chapter of the work programme, as a result of the opening of new markets and increased competition;
- the importance, in the context of the work programme, of legislating for the present rather than the short- or long-term future; in this context, the need to take initiatives, for example in the area of telecommunications, concerning technological neutrality, data protection and promoting competition, in order to provide economic players with a greater incentive to invest;
- the relevance of measures, already taken or planned, to simplify legislation in the context of European policies;
- the importance of overall political coherence with regard to the initiatives to be included on the three lists referred to by the PRESIDENT;

- the need to ensure objectivity when withdrawing legislation in different policy areas: when drafting the Commission's work programme, the need to take a strategic and resolutely political approach, as opposed to a technocratic or dogmatic one, to the examination of initiatives already tabled, while bearing in mind that in some cases, it was advisable to maintain pressure on the legislator and avoid conveying the impression that the Commission was politically indecisive;
- the recommendation that the withdrawal of initiatives, where necessary, should be accompanied by a re-examination of the problems these measures were designed to address and the search for more effective ways of resolving them, and also by clearer communication to stakeholders;
- as part of the “Better Regulation” measures, the objective of examining the cumulative effect over time of the initiatives proposed by the Commission in order to ensure, overall balance;
- the desirability of promoting EU rules but, at the same time, recognition of the diverse situations in different Member States and the difficulties that could result from such an approach; the importance, therefore, of adopting a nuanced approach and examining the possibility of alternative measures at national level or specific support to help certain Member States comply with EU rules;
- an invitation to engage in a discussion on ways of raising awareness of EU players from the same political family of the need to adopt coherent positions on EU legislative initiatives, whichever institution they belonged to;
- the fact that the Commission would have to explain its political choices and communicate its work programme in a dynamic way.

Replying to some of these comments, Mr TIMMERMANS stressed that the narrative of the Commission's 2015 work programme comprised a number of elements of political discontinuity that must be included in the programme itself. He reiterated

the need to withdraw the initiatives that were clearly bound to fail in the interinstitutional procedure or whose expected results fell some way short of the objective initially pursued. Nevertheless, he did not underestimate the risk that these withdrawals might be politically exploited to try to discredit the Commission or pin an ideological label on it. He therefore advocated the principle of sound and accurate communication to defend the Commission's choices and reply objectively to criticisms.

Concluding the debate, the PRESIDENT once again stressed the highly political nature of this exercise and reiterated his full support for the action taken by Mr TIMMERMANS as part of the preparation of the work programme. There would be an opportunity to return to this important dossier at the Commission meeting on 10 December.

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The meeting closed at 11.05.