



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2015) 2130 final

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

Brussels, 17 June 2015

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2130th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill)

on Tuesday 9 June 2015

(afternoon)

—

PV(2015) 2130 final

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

EN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Attendance list	4-6
1. AGENDAS (OJ(2015) 2130/FINAL; SEC(2015) 252/2)	7
2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET (RCC(2015) 2130).....	7
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 2128 TH AND 2129 TH MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (27 MAY AND 3 JUNE) (PV(2015) 2128 AND /2; PV(2015) 2128, PART II AND /2; PV(2015) 2129; PV(2015) 2129, PART II)	7
4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (RCC(2015) 49)	8
4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS	8
4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL	9
4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT	10
4.4. RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS, THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS.....	10
5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS.....	11
5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2015) 253 ET SEQ.).....	11
5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2015) 254 ET SEQ.)	11
5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2015) 255 ET SEQ.).....	11
5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2015) 256)	11
5.5. AD HOC EMPOWERMENT AUTHORISING THE MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS,	

TAXATION AND CUSTOMS TO SIGN, ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION, ITSELF ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN STABILITY MECHANISM, AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CYPRUS (C(2015) 3856).....	12
6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2015) 257/2)	12
6.1. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – SPECIAL ADVISERS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION (PERS(2015) 51/2)	12
6.2. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER LEAVING OFFICE (C(2015) 3878)	13
6.3. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER LEAVING OFFICE (C(2015) 3921)	13
7. OTHER BUSINESS.....	14
ECONOMIC SITUATION IN GREECE.....	14
8. DEBATE ON EUROPEAN UNION SOCIAL POLICY (SEC(2015) 270; RCC(2015) 50).....	14

Single sitting: Tuesday 9 June 2015 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.23 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President	
Mr ANSIP	Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Vice-President	
Mr KATAINEN	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	
Ms THYSSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Lord HILL	Member	
Ms BULC	Member	
Ms BIENKOWSKA	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	
Mr MOEDAS	Member	

Absent:

Ms MOGHERINI

High Representative/
Vice-President

Ms GEORGIEVA

Vice-President

Mr OETTINGER

Member

Ms CREȚU

Member

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

Mr RENTSCHLER	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI
Mr HAGER	Chef de cabinet to Mr OETTINGER

The following also sat in:

Mr SELMAYR	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service
Mr PESONEN	Acting Director-General, DG Communication
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service
Ms METTLER	Head of the European Political Strategy Centre
Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr HERMANS	Chef de cabinet to Ms THYSSEN
Mr DA SILVA PENEDA	European Political Strategy Centre

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2015) 2130/FINAL; SEC(2015) 252/2)

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(2015) 2130)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 8 June.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 2128TH AND 2129TH MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (27 MAY AND 3 JUNE)
(PV(2015) 2128 AND /2; PV(2015) 2128, PART II AND /2; PV(2015) 2129;
PV(2015) 2129, PART II)**

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2128th and 2129th meetings.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2015) 49)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 5 June (RCC(2015) 49).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Trilogue

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- ‘Equipment’ Package – Cableway installations (Regulation) – LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE report – 2014/0107 (COD) / Personal Protective Equipment (Regulation) – FORD report – 2014/0108 (COD) / Appliances Burning Gaseous Fuels (Regulation) – STIHLER report – 2014/0136 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 232 and /2.

ii) Council dossiers

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Structural measures improving the resilience of EU credit institutions (Regulation) – HÖKMARK report – 2014/0020 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 224/2.

- Amendment to Regulation (EU) 2015/104 as regards certain fishing opportunities (Council Regulation) – 2015/0108 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 227.

- Reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants and amendment of Directive 2003/35/EC (Directive) – GIRLING report – 2013/0443 (COD)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2015) 230.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2015) 238)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2015) 238 on the Council meetings between 11 and 24 June.

iv) Non-legislative dossier

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- *Energy Diplomacy Action Plan*

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 229 and /2.

v) Preparations for Council meeting (Justice and Home Affairs) (Brussels, 15 and 16 June)

(point 4.2.4 of the IRG record)

- ‘Data Protection’ Package – Protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (Regulation) – ALBRECHT report – 2012/0011 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 234.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

vi) Action taken on legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its April I and II part-sessions

(point 5.6.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved SP(2015) 362 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its April I and II part-sessions, for transmission to Parliament.

vii) Action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its April I part-session

(point 5.6.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SP(2015) 363 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its April I part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS, THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

viii) Action taken on opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – December 2014 and January 2015 Plenary Sessions

(point 6.3.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SC(2015) 19/2 on the action taken by the Commission on the opinions adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee during the December 2014 and January 2015 sessions, for transmission to that Committee.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2015) 253 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 1 and 5 June.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2015) 254 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 1 and 5 June.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2015) 255 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 1 and 5 June, as archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2015) 256)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 8 and 12 June.

**5.5. AD HOC EMPOWERMENT AUTHORISING THE MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS, TAXATION AND CUSTOMS TO SIGN, ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION, ITSELF ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN STABILITY MECHANISM, AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CYPRUS
(C(2015) 3856)**

The Commission decided to empower Mr MOSCOVICI, the Member of the Commission responsible for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, to sign, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, on behalf and under the responsibility of the Commission, itself acting on behalf of the European Stability Mechanism, and after approval by its Board of Governors, amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding setting out the detailed economic policy conditions attached to the financial assistance to Cyprus, in accordance with the terms set out in C(2015) 3856.

**6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2015) 257/2)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2015) 50/2)**

**6.1. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – SPECIAL ADVISERS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
(PERS(2015) 51/2)**

The Commission decided to postpone to a later date the appointment of the new special advisers to the Members of the Commission for a period until

31 March 2016.

**6.2. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER
LEAVING OFFICE
(C(2015) 3878)**

The Commission adopted the decision set out in C(2015) 3878.

The Commission decided that the academic activity planned by the former Member of the Commission, Mr Andris PIEBALGS, as Research Fellow at the Florence School of Regulation of the European University Institute was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), provided Mr PIEBALGS fulfilled his obligations of discretion and collective responsibility and confidentiality under Articles 245 and 339 of the TFEU and Section 1.7 of the Code of Conduct for Commissioners.

The Commission instructed the Secretary-General to inform Mr PIEBALGS of this decision and of the above conditions.

**6.3. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER
LEAVING OFFICE
(C(2015) 3921)**

The Commission adopted the decision set out in C(2015) 3921.

The Commission decided:

- that the activity planned by the former Member of the Commission, Mr Dacian CIOLOȘ, to take part on 19 June 2015 in a session on the development of the agri-food sector in the framework of the International Economic Forum, held in St. Petersburg, and to conclude with the World Bank a short (four to six days) expert contract, was compatible with

Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), provided Mr CIOLOŞ fulfilled his obligations of discretion and collective responsibility and confidentiality under Article 245 TFEU and Section 1.7 of the Code of Conduct for Commissioners;

- that this authorisation also covered future participation in any other one-off conferences to which the World Bank might wish to invite Mr CIOLOŞ as an expert under similar conditions.

The Commission instructed the Secretary-General to inform Mr CIOLOŞ of this decision and of the above conditions.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

ECONOMIC SITUATION IN GREECE

The Commission referred to the latest developments in Greece's economic situation.

8. DEBATE ON EUROPEAN UNION SOCIAL POLICY (SEC(2015) 270; RCC(2015) 50)

The PRESIDENT launched the social policy debate by highlighting its importance in his view and illustrating his point with the two objectives he had set himself at the beginning of his term of office. These two objectives were to do everything possible to narrow the gap between European public opinion and the institutions of the Union and to put an end to the idea that Europe was neglecting the social dimension. He thus reaffirmed the major project he had set himself of leading a Commission with ambitious social policy goals, both for reasons of social justice and to remain

consistent with the Union's political priorities.

He pointed out that one of these priorities was the completion of the internal market with the Energy Union and the Digital Single Market. Although these initiatives had a clear economic impact, he insisted on the fact that they also aimed at improving social well-being and reducing the growing inequality in the distribution of wealth. He noted that the same applied to the Commission's Investment Plan for Europe, which he considered to be a major social programme in the sense that it would create many jobs. In other words, he emphasized that the Union's objectives also included the social dimension, as specifically indicated in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). He therefore considered that defining the direction European social policy should take was a matter for all the Commissioners.

To conclude his introduction he spoke of his wish to see the Commission contribute to the development of a set of minimum social rights for all Europeans either in the form of legislation or as recommendations to the Member States.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS explained that the policy debate that day, based on the background note and its three annexes, which gave a comprehensive overview of the labour market and the social context across the Union, was devised as a collective exercise in political ownership. He presented its objectives, which were (i) to report on the actions already under way at European level in the area of social policy, (ii) to define the new big challenges facing the Union, and (iii) to provide a framework for the measures the Commission would take in 2015 and beyond. He reminded the meeting that the President's political guidelines mentioned the need to strengthen social fairness in the Union and to reconnect with the key principles of a social market economy.

Describing the current socio-economic situation in Europe today, he said that although there were sign of recovery in all the Member States, including as a result of favourable external factors such as the fall in oil prices, there were still a number

of obstacles to growth and job creation, with a particularly high rate of unemployment in certain areas and a social situation characterised by significant inequalities.

Against this general background, it was also important to factor in the impact of the crisis on the social divide, which needed a political response equal to the imbalances it had exacerbated, for example the fragmentation of the labour markets, the spread of poverty, and the skills gap. In parallel to this work, lessons ought to be drawn from experience to date, in order to mitigate the social impact of the fiscal and macro-economic recovery programmes that had been put in place to bring an end to the crisis. He pointed out that for example those Member States that were the most resilient in the crisis, including those which had benefited from a European assistance programme, were those which had a flexible labour market, effective education systems and a suitable social safety net.

As for the means, he stated that the Union had different instruments at its disposal to support and guide the social policies implemented by the Member States in this area of shared competence. He gave the example of the country-specific recommendations issued as part of the European Semester, which in 2015 focused on strengthening the social protection and education systems.

With regard to the financing instruments, he referred to the significant resources made available to the Member States by the five European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), a sizeable part of which was destined to combat poverty and social exclusion under the European Social Fund (ESF) or took the form of investment in social infrastructure – in particular educational or medical infrastructure and social housing – under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Mr DOMBROVSKIS then came to the main priorities which should, in his view, guide the Commission's work in the area of social policy in order to achieve the

objectives set out in the Treaties, i.e. creating quality jobs, sustainable development, encouraging social convergence, reducing inequality between men and women, and improving social inclusion policy, in particular for Roma.

Concerning the Union's social *acquis* and the framework set out for labour law, which had made a huge contribution to the setting of minimum standards and the completion of the single market, he felt it was appropriate to update them taking into account a comprehensive vision, legislating better in the area of social policy and working on the quality of social dialogue and the participation of social partners in the European decision-making process.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS concluded by noting that the scale of the challenges required action in all areas of European policy. He indicated that the Commission would be presenting its proposals for reform of the Europe 2020 strategy by the end of the year in order to turn it into an effective post-crisis growth strategy. He also reminded the meeting of the fundamental objective of deepening the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) with an effective and more equitable social dimension, which was the subject of the report of the five presidents (of the European institutions) that would be discussed by the Commission at its next meeting.

Ms THYSSEN welcomed the opportunity for this eminently political debate in an area where expectations were high. She hoped that the discussion would produce a common understanding of what social policy should be at European level and the direction it should take, while remaining within the framework of the Commission's agenda focusing on job creation, growth, fairness and democratic change.

The Union had the tools and instruments to do this, such as the coordination established in the European Semester, the structural funds and social dialogue. Thus, while legislative competence in the field of social policy was essentially a national responsibility, the European Union nevertheless had a shared responsibility to support and complement the broad objectives of national policies.

On the substantive issues, she explained her vision of a European social policy by referring first to its fundamental objective of job creation, through education and training, including work-based training. These aspects would feature prominently in the skills agenda which would be presented to the Commission shortly.

She then turned to the measures aimed at ensuring the quality of the jobs created, which would entail updating the legislative *acquis* in areas such as safety, hygiene and health protection at work, and covering new occupational risks, such as exposure to carcinogenic substances in certain occupations.

Ms THYSSEN also mentioned in this context the Labour Mobility Package to be adopted by the Commission before the end of the year and which she was currently working on, trying to strike the right balance between the principle of free movement of labour and fair implementation.

She also expressed her support for a set of minimum social rights that would guarantee adequate protection in a rapidly changing world requiring extensive flexibility in the organisation of the labour market. She cited examples such as the right of access to training, the right to a minimum income, to an active labour market policy, childcare services and outplacement, all of which would protect workers and enhance the resilience of European economies.

She then spoke of the need to promote the upward convergence of Member States' social policy, which would enhance the viability of the single market and economic and monetary union over time. She considered that focussing on specific targets, on the model of the youth guarantee, was an effective way of moving towards convergence objectives. Taking the example of unemployment benefits as a future example, she explained that the drive for convergence could consist of setting a reference lower limit and ceiling for net unemployment benefits in relation to previous salary. She also emphasised the importance of active labour market policies in this context.

Finally, she stressed the fundamental role that the social partners and social dialogue would have to play in these various mechanisms, and concluded by expressing her conviction that it was time for an ambitious redefinition of European social policy to restore European citizens' trust as the recovery took hold.

During the discussion that followed, the Commission mentioned the following points:

- widespread support from Members of the Commission for the need to use the means available to the European Union to tackle excessively high unemployment and address the growing inequalities in certain regions of Europe; the need to respond to European citizens' legitimate expectations and to reassert, through its actions, the Union's commitment to the guiding principle of the social market economy, according to which economic growth and social justice should go hand in hand;
- endorsement of the indissoluble link that existed in the Union's general political narrative between growth and employment, the social dimension and competitiveness; the argument that completion of the single market was a precondition for reviving the labour market in the European Union and the need to resist any temptation to resort to protectionism; the need to prioritise the two objectives of reviving the job market and completing the single market as vectors of greater social cohesion in Europe;
- calls by some Members for an ambitious approach to correct the serious impact of the economic and financial crisis on the social dimension in certain EU Member States in the long term; comments by other Members on the limited powers of the European Union in the field of social policy, compared with the primary responsibility of the Member States and consequently the need for a cautious approach, particularly given the significant differences between the situations across the Union;

- precisely on account of the differences in the situations and problems to be addressed in the various Member States, the need for the Union to do everything possible to promote upward convergence;
- an emphasis on the significant added value the Commission could contribute to the Member States by supporting them in implementing active labour market policies; the success of such policies in promoting job creation and cutting short-term unemployment in certain Member States that had been particularly hard hit by the crisis;
- the need for decisive action to tackle long-term unemployment; the fact that job-creating innovation often emerged at the interface of several disciplines; hence the stimulus the Commission could give to breaking down the barriers between disciplines in education and training to update skills; the need, in parallel, to encourage more general cooperation between the business sector and the education sector;
- the need to highlight education, in particular by emphasising the multiplier effect of investment in education systems; the benefits of offering training tailored to individual needs and of ensuring high quality, state-of-the-art teacher training throughout the Union;
- with regard to the Labour Mobility Package to be adopted by the Commission later in the year, support for the idea of making mobility an attractive prospect to address skill shortages in certain professions and certain sectors of the European labour market; at the same time, the need to prevent abuse and possible failings in the current system and to dispel certain myths about the arrival of EU workers in the labour market of other Member States;
- the wish of some Members that the Commission would address the particularly complex issue of labour market duality in the face of the rise in precarious jobs

both in the public and private sectors; the growing inequalities and poverty resulting from this phenomenon throughout the EU; the risk that precarious employment would have the perverse effect of turning some people away from the labour market; accordingly, support for the PRESIDENT's proposal to promote a set of minimum social rights guaranteeing, for example, fair working conditions and fair pay, and relative predictability, better means of tackling social exclusion and its consequences on a sustainable basis;

- for others, emphasis of the need to prioritise job creation over and above concerns about the quality of employment; the need to bear in mind a number of examples demonstrating that a flexible labour market did not always mean a race to the bottom in terms of social conditions; the importance of making life easier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and of making it easier to set them up, since they were an important source of employment;
- the need to encourage ownership of social policy issues, active involvement by trade unions and social partners in seeking solutions to accompany the social and economic transformations under way, and constructive collaboration between policy makers and social partners to address the new challenges of the 21st century;
- with regard to gender equality, the need to continue the EU's current efforts to promote work-life balance and reduce the gap in pay and pensions;
- the validity of the objective of using the full range of instruments available to the Union; the need to continue to ensure that the existing rules were implemented while at the same time updating outdated rules where necessary, for example the Directive on the posting of workers, which dated from 1996; in particular, the need to examine the new economic models that were appearing in emerging markets and develop innovative solutions in cooperation with stakeholders;

- the importance of differentiated and targeted approaches in measures to fight social exclusion, depending on the categories of persons threatened with exclusion;
- the particular case of the integration of the Roma and the need to include this aspect in the Member States' general social strategies;
- the need to reinforce the Anti-Discrimination Directive in order to ensure equal access to public and private buildings for people with disabilities.

The PRESIDENT reiterated the need to ensure a minimum set of social rights in the Union in order to take account of the actual situation of most Europeans, whose life plans were directly linked to the predictability of employment and the resulting income. The Commission's proposed measures should address this first and foremost, while recognising that other situations existed.

Ms THYSEN explained that, building on the guidelines and the vision emerging from the social policy debate, work in this area was only just beginning. She stressed the urgent need to create the conditions for a sustainable recovery of job creation in Europe but also to act in support of people, above all the disadvantaged, in order to avoid the fragmentation of society and give Europeans renewed confidence in the future. To achieve this, the Union needed to pursue a smart social market economy, with the social partners, without promising too much in terms of common rules but respecting the principle of subsidiarity. EU action should not be limited to social protection but should enable the whole of European society to prosper.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Ms THYSEN for their presentations and the other Commission Members for their contributions to the policy debate.

It was his conviction that unless the Commission made sufficiently ambitious social

policy proposals, the public would continue to find it hard to accept the structural reforms implemented in the Member States. He therefore hoped that the Commission would become more closely involved in this area, not in order to give the impression that it had more power than was really the case but to show that one of its functions was to support processes of transformation.

Judging by the comments made during the debate, he also recommended not limiting social policy to all aspects of the labour market, since he considered that it had a much broader scope. He also recommended reading the guidelines of the 1997 Employment Summit, which explained social policy very clearly.

Winding up, he urged the meeting not to forget the middle classes, which were the most disappointed by the policies implemented in the Member States and at EU level and the most affected by the breakdown of the 'social elevator'. He called for more attention to be paid to these classes in the Commission's proposed measures.

In conclusion, he hoped that the Commission would draw on all aspects of social policy, including social security, education and solidarity measures.

The PRESIDENT proposed returning to this policy debate within the month in order to draw conclusions for taking the process further.

The Commission took note of the conclusions of this policy debate and of the background note in SEC(2015) 270.

*

* *

The Commission's other discussions on certain agenda items are recorded in the special minutes.

*

* *

The meeting closed at 15.51.