



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2015) 2142 final

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

Brussels, 21 October 2015

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2142nd meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 14 October 2015

(morning)

PV(2015) 2142 final

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Single sitting: Wednesday 14 October 2015 (morning)

The sitting opened at 10.42 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President	Items 1 to 8
Ms MOGHERINI	High Representative / Vice-President	
Ms GEORGIEVA	Vice-President	
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	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Ms THYSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Lord HILL	Member	
Ms BULC	Member	
Ms BIEŃKOWSKA	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	
Mr MOEDAS	Member	

Absent:

Mr VELLA	Member
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member
Ms CREȚU	Member

(14 October 2015)

*- English language version of the French text which is authentic -*The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission:

Mr MÜLLER	Chef de cabinet to Mr VELLA
Ms SCHMITT	Chef de cabinet to Mr AVRAMOPOULOS
Mr DE MICHELIS	Chef de cabinet de Ms CREȚU

The following also sat in:

Mr SELMAYR	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr PESONEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr SCHINAS	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
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 DELVAUX	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr SZOSTAK	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 8
Ms SUTTON	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr TIMMERMANS	Items 1 to 8
Mr MANSERVISI	Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI	Items 1 to 8
Mr KARNITSCHNIG	Chef de cabinet to Mr HAHN	
Ms LOBILLO BORRERO	Chef de cabinet to Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Item 9 (in part)
Mr FELKE	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr MOSCOVICI	
Mr VERWEY	Head of the Structural Reform Support Service	
Mr MORRISON	Secretariat-General	

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2015) 2142/FINAL; SEC(2015) 403/FINAL)

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) 2142)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 12 October.

3. MINUTES OF 2141ST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (6 OCTOBER)

(PV(2015) 2141)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2141st meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2015) 79)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 9 October (RCC(2015) 79).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Trilogue meetings

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Indices used as benchmarks in financial instruments and financial contracts (Regulation) – VAN NIEUWENHUYZEN report – 2013/0314 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 381/2.

- Free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain public documents in the European Union and amendment of Regulation (EU) 1024/2012 (Regulation) – DELVAUX report – 2013/0119 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 387.

- Requirements relating to emission limits and type-approval for internal combustion engines for non-road mobile machinery (Regulation) – GARDINI report – 2014/0268 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 383.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

ii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2015) 389)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2015) 389 on the Council meetings between 15 and 29 October.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

iii) Results of Parliament's October I part-session

(SP(2015) 562; SP(2015) 563)

The Commission took note of the information in SP(2015) 562 and SP(2015) 563 on the proceedings of the part-session of Parliament held in Strasbourg from 5 to 8 October.

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

(SP(2015) 595)

The Commission decided to empower the Commission Members responsible for the sectors in question, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr TIMMERMANS and, if necessary, with the other Members concerned, to adopt the amended proposals for transmission to Parliament and the Council, as set out in SP(2015) 595, drawn up following the October I part-session of Parliament, the contents of which were noted.

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

v) Action taken on opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – April and May 2015 Plenary Sessions

(point 6.3.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SC(2015) 32/2 on the action taken by the Commission on the opinions adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee during the April and May 2015 sessions, for transmission to that Committee.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2015) 404 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 5 and 9 October.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2015) 405 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 5 and 9 October.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2015) 406 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 5 and 9 October, as archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2015) 407)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 12 and 16 October.

**6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2015) 408)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2015) 95)**

6.1. DG INFORMATICS – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART

On a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr OETTINGER, and also Mr ANSIP and Mr KATAINEN, the Commission decided to create a post of Deputy Director-General in DG Informatics.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**6.2. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER
LEAVING OFFICE
(C(2015) 6996)**

The Commission adopted the decision set out in C(2015) 6996.

The Commission decided that the activity planned by former Commissioner Mr Tonio Borg as a lecturer in public law at the University of Malta was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

The Commission instructed the Secretary-General to inform Mr BORG of this decision.

**6.3. ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AFTER
LEAVING OFFICE
(C(2015) 6998)**

The Commission adopted the decision set out in C(2015) 6998.

It decided that:

- taking into account the opinion of the ad hoc Ethics Committee of 5 October, the activity planned by former Commissioner Mr Dacian CIOLOŞ as a Member of the Board of Trustees of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), provided Mr CIOLOŞ (i) fulfilled his obligations of discretion and collective responsibility and confidentiality under Article 245 of the TFEU and Section 1.7 of the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, and (ii) refrained from lobbying the Commission and/or its departments with regard to any request by the IFPRI for financing from the European Union;
- the activity planned by Mr CIOLOŞ as a Member of the Board of Trustees of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was also compatible with that as Special Adviser to the President of the Commission in the field of international food safety, provided Mr CIOLOŞ (i) took care to fulfil all the obligations imposed on Special Advisers, (ii) immediately informed the Commission should a situation arise where there was risk of conflict of interest between his post as Special Adviser to the President of the Commission and his post as Member of the Board of Trustees of the IFPRI, and (iii) was not involved in any case connected to or having an effect on the financing of the IFPRI.

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

7. OTHER BUSINESS

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2015 (INFO(2015) 80)

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms GEORGIEVA in INFO(2015) 80.

8. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL – MANAGING THE REFUGEE CRISIS: STATE OF PLAY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY ACTIONS UNDER THE EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION (COM(2015) 510 AND /2; RCC(2015) 81 AND /2)

In the context of preparing the European Council meeting of 15 and 16 October, the PRESIDENT launched the discussion on the Communication on 'Managing the refugee crisis: State of Play of the Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration', submitted to the Commission for approval that day. This was the Commission's contribution to the discussions by the Heads of State or Government on the management of the current migration crisis.

Mr TIMMERMANS underlined the importance of this European Council meeting which would take stock of the operational measures immediately taken under the priority actions identified by the Commission and endorsed by the European Council at its informal meeting on 23 September in a bid to manage the huge influx of refugees into the European Union.

He recalled the efforts made by the Commission in the meantime to keep its side of the bargain, from setting up the first support teams for managing the reception and

registration of refugees (hotspots) in Italy and Greece to significantly increasing reception capacities, and including the initial operations to relocate refugees in Europe.

Referring also to the Commission's proposals to deploy the EU's 2015 and 2016 budgets to support the approved priority actions, he pointed out in particular that the Amending Letter to the 2016 budget which the Commission was adopting that day, supplemented by mobilisation of the emergency aid reserve at the beginning of next year, proposed an additional sum of €900 million to finance new actions, as announced on 23 September.

Turning then to another essential matter also agreed on 23 September, namely that Member States would together match the EU's contribution, he had to admit that this was far from being the case. Hence the importance of this Communication from the Commission which would be presented the next day to the Heads of State or Government, and which listed the financial and operational measures taken and those still to be taken at national level.

While the task to be accomplished remained huge, he congratulated the Greek authorities in particular on their efforts to cooperate with the Commission on the migration issue. Italy was also gradually introducing the expected measures although it still needed to improve its management of the return of illegal migrants.

However, implementation of the measures to relocate refugees from Italy and Greece to other Member States was still at a very early stage and it was essential to continue these efforts.

Mr TIMMERMANS sincerely hoped that the European Council would reach agreement on managing illegal migration and on financing, in particular with an eye to the conference in Valletta on 11 and 12 November that would be attended by EU Member States and the African and other countries directly concerned.

Lastly, he reported that he would be going to Turkey that very afternoon, together with Mr HAHN, to discuss the migration action plan which the EU had proposed to

the Turkish authorities. He trusted that this visit would result in an agreement on the action plan before the start of the European Council, but he did not underestimate the problems that would have to be overcome to achieve this.

Ms GEORGIEVA in turn underlined the considerable efforts made by the EU to contribute its share to the financing of the immediate key measures in the European Migration Agenda. She drew attention to the fact that, in so doing, the Commission had exhausted its margin of flexibility for both the 2015 and the 2016 budgets, and consequently urged caution when planning payments and restraint when asking for additional resources.

Given the lasting budget commitment that would be necessary, she suggested in addition that the Commission should initiate a debate on the medium and long-term outlook for migration, in particular from the point of view of the budget implications.

Mr HAHN referred to the cash-flow problems that existed despite the Commission's budgetary efforts, and the challenge posed by donor coordination on the ground. Given the seriousness of the humanitarian situation, it was vital to urge Member States to assume their responsibilities and to exert pressure on them to increase their financial contributions to the Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis.

Member States should also be made to understand that the EU did not have unlimited financial resources, and could not, for example, assume sole responsibility for the cost of securing its external borders. Moreover, it would have to account for its management of the refugee crisis before the EU Court of Auditors.

As for the Commission's annual reports on the progress achieved by candidate and potential candidate countries, which were ready for adoption, he trusted that they would feature on the agenda of a Commission meeting in the near future as it was very important to show that the current upheavals were not affecting this long-term political and strategic process or the Commission's objective analysis.

Mr MIMICA welcomed the fact that the work on transferring funds to the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa was under way, but regretted that EU Member States were contributing only modest sums. He recommended encouraging them to step up their efforts as this would have a direct impact on the success of the Valletta conference. Similarly, he underlined the fact that Member States must also try and match the EU's contribution to the Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis because this could have an immediate impact on the current general crisis.

As regards the humanitarian aspect of management of the refugee crisis, Mr STYLIANIDES announced that a first contract had been signed with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for a total of €50 million. Concerning the civil protection mechanism, which remained a short-term assistance instrument, only eight Member States had so far responded positively to his request for logistical and practical support.

Ms MOGHERINI, too, returned to the subject of the situation of the emergency trust fund for Africa, to which only a small number of Member States had contributed so far. She stressed that it was vitally important for the EU to invest in addressing the root causes of migration and that economic and social development was the priority for the developing countries to which the Fund must respond. There could be no enduring cooperation with developing countries based solely on a policy of returning irregular migrants. The Union had to take on a political and diplomatic role by focusing more on the humanitarian aspects of the crisis.

She also stressed the need to raise the issue of the return of irregular migrants at the European Council in order to clarify the responsibility for organising such returns. In her view, responsibility for this had to lie with the Member States, whereas they were clearly expecting the Union to take an initiative. It was therefore important to discuss this issue with the Heads of State or Government and to remove an ambiguity which could ultimately jeopardise the viability of the agreements negotiated with the migrants' countries of origin.

Although the support teams for managing the reception and registration of refugees were gradually becoming operational in Greece and Italy, the number of refugees relocated in Member States other than the host country was still low.

On the question of Libya, the European External Action Service (EEAS) was ready, in the event of the formation of a government of national unity, to revive the EU-funded programmes in Libya and to adapt them if necessary.

Finally, Ms Mogherini recommended establishing a high-level dialogue with Turkey on a wide range of topics. She also recommended recognition by the Union of Turkey's status as a strategic partner. All the measures taken to that end, such as the inclusion of Turkey in the list of safe countries, could have a positive impact on the bilateral relationship.

In the course of the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following key points:

- support for the Communication, which clearly set out, on the one hand, the measures taken by the Commission in relation to its proposals endorsed by the European Council and, on the other, the delay by the Member States in implementing them;
- the political capital gained by the Commission thanks to its contribution to managing the current migration crisis, its initiatives, its ambition and the speed of its response;
- to preserve this political capital and combat populist trends, the need for the priority actions and operational measures proposed by the Commission to yield positive and concrete results in the short term; to this end, the need for the Commission to take the lead in ensuring that Member States took action;
- the suggestion to examine the idea of relaxing the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact, given that the current migration crisis was expected to have lasting impact;

- support for the suggestion of initiating a reflection in the medium and long term on the Union's migration strategy, and in particular on its budgetary consequences;
- in order to stop the influx of irregular migrants, insistence that it was necessary, first and foremost, to resolve the readmission issue with third countries;
- the desirability of making a credible financing proposal to Turkey for its cooperation with the Union in managing the influx of refugees; the impossibility of finding the necessary amounts from the EU budget, which was insufficient for the purpose, and hence the need to consider alternative means of providing the necessary funding;
- moreover, the need also to offer Turkey something more than financial aid in exchange; for example, an invitation to study the possibility of a military contribution to securing borders or seconding of experts from the Member States; the desirability, in particular, of opening the negotiating chapter on energy as part of the accession process, since this chapter was now of interest to the Turkish authorities given the new energy scenario in its neighbourhood.

At the PRESIDENT's request, the Director-General of the Commission's Structural Reform Support Service, Mr VERWEY, reported on the work carried out by his teams on the ground, in Greece and Italy.

After the deployment of the first support team for managing the reception and registration of refugees in Italy at the end of September, he confirmed that an equivalent team in Greece was now operational on the island of Lesbos, although the registration procedure there still had to be improved; in particular, there was a need for more automated equipment and better reception conditions.

On the relocation mechanism, he noted that after a first transfer of asylum seekers from Italy on 9 October, preparations were under way in Greece for relocations which he hoped could take place next week. However, he drew attention to the

complexity of this operation, especially as asylum seekers were sometimes reluctant to accept a relocation in the Member State proposed to them.

As regards implementation of the return policy, which was an integral part of the European agenda on migration, he confirmed that in the last few days flights for the return of illegal migrants had started up again from Greece. He also reported that, facilitated by his teams on the ground, some progress had been made on cooperation between the Greek authorities and their Pakistani counterparts under the readmission agreements in force between the EU and Pakistan.

He also indicated that Commission departments were actively collaborating with the Greek authorities to strengthen Greece's reception capacities, a key condition for standardising the application of the Dublin system. In this respect, he expected the Greek authorities to submit to the Commission a formal assessment of their short and medium term needs very shortly.

Mr VERWEY concluded by stressing the need for better cooperation between the different departments and levels of the Greek administration, despite the very recent progress. He also referred to a number of difficulties the Greek authorities had had accessing the financial resources made available to them by the Union and the support provided by his teams on the ground in order to remedy the situation as quickly as possible. A working meeting between the Commission and the Greek authorities the following week would be dedicated to this matter.

Mr TIMMERMANS thanked everybody for their contributions. He noted the support, which he shared, for Ms GEORGIEVA's proposal to draft a medium and long-term strategy to take account of the need to support the Union's efforts on migration and of its impact on the general budget of the Union.

He was in favour of the idea of reminding Member States of the financial contributions they had agreed to but also pointed out that a fair number of them had had to devote substantial resources to managing the consequences of the refugee crisis at national level.

As for the return policy, he recommended encouraging non-EU countries to draw up and implement an efficient return policy through the Union's development aid programmes.

Mr TIMMERMANS considered it essential to develop a strategic partnership with Turkey based on mutual concessions. He pointed out Turkey's central role in managing the current migratory flows while the domestic situation continued to deteriorate following the recent tragic events. He confirmed his intention, with Mr HAHN, to continue on that same day discussions with Istanbul on the terms of a mutual commitment between the Union and Turkey in the context of the action plan the Union was proposing to Turkey on the subject of migration.

The PRESIDENT then took the floor and picked up on some of the points raised during the discussion.

Firstly, he remarked on the small number of Member States that had confirmed their financial contribution to the emergency fund set up for Africa and took note of the EUR 28 million in official commitments gathered at this stage, which he then compared with the EUR 1.8 billion expected from the Member States to match the financing promised by the Union. He found this unacceptable and was prepared to draw the European Council's attention to it.

As for Turkey, he proposed examining the possibility of including the progress reports on candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership on the agenda of a Commission meeting in November.

Concerning negotiations on the action plan between the Union and Turkey on the subject of migration, he mentioned the meeting he had had on 5 October with the President of the Republic of Turkey, Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. With regard to the possible concessions on the European side, he mentioned (i) speeding up implementation of the roadmap on liberalising visas, to which he felt the Union should respond positively, (ii) the possibility of opening new chapters of negotiation in the accession process, which was met with reluctance by one Member State, and (iii) the inclusion of Turkey on the list of safe countries of origin in terms of asylum,

which he supported, but in which respect he noted differing opinions among the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Heads of State or Government of the Union. He also endorsed the idea of talking to the Turkish authorities about security matters.

The PRESIDENT also briefly mentioned another item on the agenda of the European Council meeting that week, i.e. the question of a referendum in the UK on its membership of the Union. He noted that the UK had not yet made known its specific intentions with regard to the European Union. He would receive Mr David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, at a working lunch on 15 October and would inform the College of developments in the discussions at a future meeting. In the meantime he asked Members of the Commission to refrain from publicly voicing opinions on this extremely delicate matter.

To conclude, the Commission agreed to think in the medium and long term about the Union's migration strategy and in particular its budgetary consequences.

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2015) 510/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council, and, for information, to the national parliaments.

9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – TRADE FOR ALL – TOWARDS A MORE RESPONSIBLE TRADE AND INVESTMENT POLICY

(COM(2015) 497 TO /4; RCC(2015) 80)

Ms MALMSTRÖM briefly presented the Communication on a more responsible trade and investment policy which had been adopted that day in response to the intense discussions on EU trade policy that had taken place over the last two years in all Member States. She explained that the strategy proposed in the

Communication covered a wide range of areas and aimed in particular to make the EU's trade policy more responsible, which meant that it would be more efficient and transparent, reflecting not only the interests of the Union but also its fundamental values.

A more efficient trade policy had to keep its promises of growth and new economic opportunities. That was already the case in many respects, with one in seven jobs in the EU depending on trade. She also noted the success of the free trade agreement with South Korea that had come into force four years ago, which had resulted in a 50 % increase in EU exports to that country.

Ms MALMSTRÖM expressed her determination to promote greater transparency of trade negotiations under the new strategy and pointed out that, in this spirit, the main negotiating texts would be published, as was already the case for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the United States.

She reminded the Meeting that the emphasis on European values in the EU's trade policy was in line with a commitment made before Parliament and reiterated in the PRESIDENT's political priorities. That was why trade policy should be regarded as a powerful foreign policy tool and trade agreements as a means of promoting European values such as respect for human rights, fair and ethical trade, and the fight against corruption.

The trade strategy set out in the Communication would also update the current programme of trade negotiations by putting these new principles into practice. With this in mind, she referred to the important ongoing negotiations, including the TTIP, the free trade agreement with Japan and the bilateral investment agreement with China.

To conclude, Ms MALMSTRÖM presented a number of changes to the text of the Communication and explained that they sought to make explicit the willingness to consider the possibility of launching, on the one hand, negotiations on a free trade agreement with China, once the bilateral investment agreement had been concluded and certain appropriate conditions met, and, on the other, negotiations on investment

agreements with Hong Kong and Taiwan once the investment agreement with China had been concluded.

Mr KATAINEN noted that the trade strategy set out in the Communication was the most ambitious ever proposed. With regard to the current negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the United States, his preference was for the Commission to adopt a more proactive approach to promoting this future agreement in order to overcome the reluctance of a section of public opinion and to highlight the considerable economic impact that could be expected if the TTIP were concluded.

In the course of the brief discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points: (i) the importance of tactful handling of the sensitivities of the EU's dairy sector when referring to the prospects of negotiating a free trade agreement with Australia and New Zealand, (ii) the need for reciprocal concessions by the United States in the context of the TTIP negotiations and (iii) the case for assessing the Trans-Pacific Partnership once it came into force.

Following this presentation, the Commission approved the Communication in COM(2015) 497/4 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments.

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The meeting closed at 11.54.