



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2016) 2172 final

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

Brussels, 22 June 2016

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2172nd meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill building)

on Tuesday 7 June 2016

(afternoon)

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Single sitting: Tuesday 7 June 2016 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.20 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President	
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	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	
Ms THYSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Lord HILL	Member	
Ms BIENKOWSKA	Member	Items 6/7/8 (in part) to 11
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms CREȚU	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	
Mr MOEDAS	Member	

Absent:

Ms MALMSTRÖM

Member

Mr MIMICA

Member

Ms BULC

Member

(7 June 2016)

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

Mr CEBALLOS BARÓN	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms MALMSTRÖM
Mr ČAJO	A member of Mr MIMICA's staff
Mr FAJARDO	A member of Ms BULC's staff

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	
Mr SWIEBODA	European Political Strategy Centre	
Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms SILLAVEE	PRESIDENT's Office	
Ms SUTTON	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr TIMMERMANS	Items 1 to 8
Ms PANZETTI	Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI	Items 1 to 9
Ms WERNER	Chef de cabinet to Ms GEORGIEVA	Items 1 to 9
Mr PRADALIE	A member of Mr ANDRIUKAITIS's staff	Item 11 (in part)
Ms SCHMITT	Chef de cabinet to Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	
Mr CEBULA	A member of Ms BIENKOWSKA's staff	Items 1 to 6/7/8 (in part)
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service	
Mr RUETE	Director-General, DG Migration and Home Affairs	Items 1 to 8

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2016) 2172/FINAL; SEC(2016) 259/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(2016) 2172)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 6 June.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 2169TH AND 2170TH MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (18 AND 25 MAY) AND THE MINUTES OF THE 2171ST MEETING (1 JUNE)

(PV(2016) 2169; PV(2016) 2169, PART II; PV(2016) 2170; PV(2016) 2170, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2169th and 2170th meetings and decided to hold over for one week approval of the minutes of its 2171st meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2016) 74)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 3 June (RCC(2016) 74).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. HORIZONTAL ITEM

i) Commission Work Programme 2016 – Withdrawals of pending proposals – Publication of the list of withdrawals in the Official Journal of the European Union

(point 1.1 of the IRG record)

As announced on 25 January, the Commission decided to withdraw COM(2014) 364 and publish the withdrawal of COM(2013) 97 and COM(2014) 364 in the Official Journal of the European Union, following the line set out in SI(2016) 237.

4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

ii) Trilogue meetings

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Framework on market access to port services and financial transparency of ports (Regulation) – FLECKENSTEIN report – 2013/0157 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2016) 229.

- Multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean repealing Regulation (EC) 302/2009 (Regulation) – MATO report – 2015/0096 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2016) 230.

- European Border and Coast Guard and repeal of Regulation (EC) 2007/2004, Regulation (EC) 863/2007 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC (Regulation) – PABRIKS report – 2015/0310 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2016) 233.

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

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2016) 235.

iii) Council dossier

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (Council Regulation) – MATERA report – 2013/0255 (APP)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2016) 231/3.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iv) Programming of Council business

(SI(2016) 247)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2016) 247 on the Council meetings between 9 and 22 June.

v) Non-legislative dossiers

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- African Peace Facility – Payments to the Burundian Contingent of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM)

- African Peace Facility – Financial management of APF contribution to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troop allowances

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2016) 217 and SI(2016) 234 and /2.

- Position to be taken by the European Union within the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors regarding the revision of Annex III of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (Council Decision) – 2016/0012 (NLE)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2016) 240.

- Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the launch of negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement with Indonesia

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2016) 241.

**vi) Preparations for Council meeting (Justice and Home Affairs)
(Luxembourg, 9 and 10 June 2016)**
(point 4.2.3 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons (Directive) – FORD report – 2015/0269 (COD)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2016) 238.

vii) Latest developments in the Council
(point 4.4 of the IRG record)

- Establishment of National Competitiveness Boards within the Euro Area (Council Recommendation) – COM(2015) 601

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2016) 236.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

viii) Non-legislative dossier

(point 5.1 of the IRG record)

- Committee of inquiry into Emission Measurements in the Automotive Sector (EMIS) – Request for JRC documents – Explanatory note on RDE-LDV Working Group and its expert sub-groups

The Commission took note of SP(2016) 362 and its annexes.

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

(point 5.6.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved SP(2016) 372 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.

x) Participation by Members of Parliament in international conferences

(point 5.7 of the IRG record)

- 22nd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Marrakech, 14 to 19 November)

The Commission agreed to the request to the PRESIDENT from Mr Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament, concerning the attendance of twelve Members of the European Parliament at the above-mentioned meeting from 14 to 19 November as observers in the EU delegation, with a reminder about the procedure to be followed, as set out in SP(2016) 369.

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

xi) Action taken on opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – October and December 2015 plenary sessions
(point 6.3.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SC(2016) 20 on the action taken by the Commission on the opinions adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee during the October and December 2015 sessions, for transmission to that Committee.

xii) Follow-up to Committee of the Regions opinions – February plenary session
(point 6.4.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SR(2016) 13/2 on the action taken by the Commission on the opinions adopted by the Committee of the Regions at its session of February 2016, for transmission to the Committee of the Regions.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2016) 264/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2016) 52/2)

5.1. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – LAUNCH OF THE 2015 APPRAISAL EXERCISE FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT STAFF

On a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to authorise the launch of the 2015 appraisal exercise for senior management in line with the rules applied during the previous exercise.

**5.2. EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE – PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTING MEMBERS OF THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
(PERS(2016) 53)**

The Commission took note of the information in point 2 of PERS(2016) 52/2 and, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, decided to authorise Ms GEORGIEVA, the Member of the Commission in charge of the fight against fraud, to:

- communicate to the high level ad hoc group the preferential list of candidates approved by the Commission, as set out in point 2 of PERS(2016) 52/2, where the candidates were listed in order of preference;
- use the list as a basis to negotiate with the other institutions in order to reach an agreement on a common list.

The high level ad hoc group would meet on 13 June 2016 in order to draw up a common list for transmission to the three institutions for approval.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK ON ESTABLISHING A NEW PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK WITH THIRD COUNTRIES UNDER THE

EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION

(COM(2016) 385 TO /3; RCC(2016) 76)

7. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE CONDITIONS OF ENTRY AND RESIDENCE OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS FOR THE PURPOSES OF HIGHLY SKILLED EMPLOYMENT

(COM(2016) 378 AND /2; SWD(2016) 193 AND /2; SWD(2016) 194 AND /2; SEC(2016) 267; RCC(2016) 75)

8. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – ACTION PLAN ON THE INTEGRATION OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS

(COM(2016) 377 TO /4; RCC(2016) 75)

Mr TIMMERMANS opened the discussion of the set of proposals submitted to the College for approval with a view to adding a new section to the European Agenda on Migration adopted in May 2015, to meet the challenge of the huge influx of refugees and migrants in Europe. He reminded the meeting of the numerous measures already taken, particularly the Joint Statement by the European Union and Turkey, emphasising the success of the latter, as the number of tragedies in the eastern Mediterranean had fallen considerably since its implementation.

He presented the new partnership framework with third countries (item 6 of these Minutes), the objective of which was to focus the Union's action and resources on the external aspect of migration management in order to optimise its tangible effects. The idea was to form tailored partnerships with the main third countries of origin and transit by drawing on all the Union's policies and instruments in order to save lives at sea, increase the number of returnees, enable migrants and refugees to

remain close to their home country and, in the long term, support development in partner countries with a view to addressing the root causes of illegal migration. Over the course of the next five years, € 8 billion of European funds would be mobilised, supplemented by the Member States' contributions, whether diplomatic, technical or financial, to increase the tangible results. He added that the Union was also planning to develop an ambitious external investment plan to open up development opportunities for partner countries that could discourage their people from economic emigration.

Mr TIMMERMANS emphasised the importance of this new framework, which he saw as a complete rethinking of the way in which the Union and its Member States could combine their efforts to cooperate with third countries by making agreements with them that were suited to their specific situations. It offered a coherent, targeted and sustainable solution with short- and long-term prospects, and would allow the Union and the Member States collectively to revise their commitment and financial assistance if the Union's partners did not succeed in managing migration.

He ended his presentation by mentioning the need to convince the Member States to subscribe to this new partnership framework.

Ms MOGHERINI highlighted the fact that the partnership framework strengthened the external dimension of the Union's policies in the European Agenda on Migration and provided tangible follow-up to the Valletta summit of November 2015 between the European Union and Africa on the issue of migration. Moreover, prevention was an important part of the framework.

Whilst saving lives at sea and dismantling smuggling networks remained priorities, the objective of the proposal was to support the countries hosting migrants and to encourage growth in partner countries. To this end, the Union was prepared to increase its financial and operational support and to invest in partner countries' long-term economic and social development, in their security, in respect for the rule of law and human rights, and in improving the living standards of their populations,

thereby tackling the causes of migration.

In the short term, the Union would make partnership agreements with Jordan and Lebanon, and later with Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia, in parallel with cooperation with Tunisia and Libya which it intended to strengthen.

Ms MOGHERINI welcomed the fact that the Commission's proposal went beyond the issue of migration and represented a turning point in the Union's development policy, particularly with regard to Africa, by promoting its economic and social development and providing for investment there. In order for this ambitious project to succeed, there were three conditions to be met: (i) forming a close partnership with the third countries concerned; (ii) implementing a credible policy for returning illegal migrants, in compliance with international law and respecting human rights; and (iii) providing opportunities for legal migration, all of which required close collaboration with the Member States, as Mr TIMMERMANS had stressed.

In conclusion, the Union, a leading international player, could not take sole responsibility for managing migration; this had to be shared with the rest of the world. This was the essence of the message that she intended to put across at the summit on migration that would take place in September in the margins of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN).

Mr HAHN also welcomed this initiative from the Commission, praising its truly European dimension and hoping that its logic would be carefully communicated as a 'win-win' agreement with the partner countries and not just a financial expedient that the Union would use to try to keep the migrant phenomenon at a distance.

He recommended that the risk factors specific to each partner country should be analysed, in particular the elements on which a country's economy was highly dependent (an energy source or tourism, for example). The country in question should be helped, through a combination of the European instruments and policies proposed in the partnership, to acquire the means to break this dependency,

strengthen its stability and reduce emigration of its citizens. It was also necessary to make a very clear distinction in public communication between refugees and migrants. Finally, the success of this initiative would also depend on increased security of the Union's external borders. At the same time, Mr HAHN suggested seeking an international solution for identifying migrants and setting up an international readmission system, two points that he felt should be promoted.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS presented the proposal for a directive establishing the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly skilled employment (item 7 in these Minutes), which would make it possible to improve the current European 'blue card' system and make it more ambitious. This initiative was part of the current Commission's political priorities, and its objective was the development of a European system enabling the Union to act as a single player at international level to attract talent from abroad.

The proposal effectively established a common system at Union level and allowed increased mobility for blue-card holders within the Union, whilst lowering the salary threshold applicable, for increased flexibility. In addition, it would give highly qualified beneficiaries of international protection the right to apply for a blue card and strengthen the employment and residency rights of holders and their families.

In this context, he stressed that this system would not compromise the EU's investment in the manpower already present on its territory, for example by developing skills and combating unemployment. He pointed out simply that Europe's demographic trend would lead to a shortage of some highly specialised skills, for example in health and IT, which would need to be resolved by calling upon qualified migrants.

Mr TIMMERMANS stated that Member States were still responsible for their own job markets and, in this context, for deciding whether to admit qualified migrants. The EU was merely providing them with the tools to help them attract the skilled

workers they needed.

Lastly, Mr AVRAMOPOULOS turned to the Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals (item 8 of these Minutes), which had been devised specifically to ensure that persons residing legally in the EU integrated fully into their host societies. He noted that this meant the Commission was simultaneously pursuing economic and social cohesion objectives.

Regardless of their differences, Member States were all facing the same challenge, and the Commission's role was to provide them with financial and structural support to strengthen the integration measures included in the different policies in this area. He added that the cost of failing to integrate migrants would greatly exceed the investments that Member States would be required to make.

Among the key areas for action were pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, which needed to prepare migrants and local authorities for the integration process. He felt this process was particularly useful for those being resettled. He also stressed the importance of taking action in the fields of education, employment and vocational training to facilitate the recognition of qualifications and skills and enable migrants to rapidly integrate into the job market. Lastly, the various ways of helping migrants integrate and participate in the cultural life of their host countries included access to basic services (health, housing) and social inclusion.

In operational terms, he explained that the Commission proposed better coordination between the various parties working on integration at national, regional and local level, and a more strategic approach to EU funding for integration in order to provide better support for Member States' actions on the ground. In conclusion, he stated his belief that European societies would need to become even more diverse than they already were, and called on everyone to make the most of this diversity for the good of the EU.

Ms THYSSEN welcomed the scale of the Action Plan on the integration of

third-country nationals which, together with the other proposals on the table, formed a positive set of initiatives. She added that the skills profiles tool developed as part of the ‘strategy for new skills’, awaiting approval that week, could also make a contribution.

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

On the new partnership framework with third countries for migration

- the support of the Commission Members for the innovative approach proposed through this partnership, which mobilised all of the EU's policies and instruments;
- the contribution they intended to make to it in their respective areas of competence, especially with regard to social, agricultural and health policies;
- the need to take practical steps to follow up the results of the Valletta Summit on migration held with African countries;
- the recommendation of taking inspiration from the Investment Plan for Europe and some of its mechanisms for the future development of an investment plan in the EU's third-country partners; the desire for the EU's tools in this field to be used in various different ways; the suggestion of examining ways to help the private sector invest in infrastructure; the idea of granting microfinance loans to women in these countries;
- in budgetary terms, the aim of consolidating and reorganising the funding that would be allocated to the partnerships in order to reach the headline amount of € 8 billion; the € 3.1 billion contribution from the European Development Fund; the 1:10 leverage effect that the EU's contribution could have on that made by the Member States, and which could bring the total package up to € 62 billion;

On the proposal relating to the legal migration framework

- the wide support within the Commission for this initiative and its potential effects, and an emphasis on its European dimension;
- the skills deficit in certain areas facing the EU in the medium term and the fierce competition this would create internationally for attracting talented individuals.

The PRESIDENT brought the debate to a close by thanking the Commission Members responsible for the various proposals for their excellent work, which the entire College had supported.

Following this exchange of views, the Commission:

- approved, subject to final linguistic revision, the Communication in COM(2016) 385/3 for transmission to Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Investment Bank and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Directive in COM(2016) 378/2 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment and the summary thereof in staff working documents SWD(2016) 193/2 and SWD(2016) 194/2, the contents of which were noted;
- also took note of the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, distributed as SEC(2016) 267;
- approved, subject to final linguistic revision, the Communication in COM(2016) 377/4 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments.

**9. COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION – COMMISSION CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL STRATEGY
(SEC(2016) 300 AND /2; RCC(2016) 77)**

The PRESIDENT asked Ms MOGHERINI to present the Commission's contribution to the Union's global strategy on foreign and security policy, which, once finalised, she would be submitting to the European Council of 28 and 29 June. He was pleased that the High Representative, in her dual role, was performing her role as Vice-President of the Commission to the full.

Ms MOGHERINI reminded the meeting that the content of the Communication had already been discussed in a policy debate on 18 March and been the subject of several exchanges as part of the work of the group of Commissioners responsible for external relations as well as an inter-service consultation since September 2015.

She summarised the general underlying philosophy, explaining that the global strategy would be organised geographically by region and focus on the issues of prosperity and security, while aiming to defend and develop the Union's interests based on the idea that the best way to achieve this would be to promote its values.

She felt that Union had to be strong domestically if it was to make a difference externally. This was why the global strategy would emphasise four principles – commitment, responsibility, partnership and unity.

As for the procedure, the aim was for the European Council to endorse the global strategy she would submit to it at its meeting at the end of June in order to ensure the broadest possible political ownership and to support various public initiatives in the Member States. Once this approval had been obtained, the global strategy would be translated into operational strategies, during which time she would need all Members of the Commission to work together to link the political instruments together, not forgetting that from this point of view, when it came to turning the strategy into reality, the ball was in the Commission's court.

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

- support for the approach developed in the Communication for the future strategy;
- the value of promoting the Union's strengths; along the same lines, the idea of highlighting the fact that in international agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the United States, the Union was considered as one single market;
- the proposal to reinforce in the strategy's economic arguments the need for fair competition at global level in order to allow all countries, including the poorest, to benefit from open markets;
- among the challenges to be faced at international level, the need to take account of health risks that could have a global impact, such as the Zika virus;
- the wish to avoid giving the impression that, with its global strategy, the Union was tending towards creating a European army, which could meet with strong opposition in certain Member States.

The PRESIDENT thanked all those who had contributed to this discussion and pointed out that the Commission would be able to come back at a later date to the operational deployment of the future strategy that Ms MOGHERINI was getting ready to finalise for submission to the European leaders in a few days' time.

The Commission took note of this information and of the note distributed in SEC(2016) 300/2.

10. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

10.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2016) 260 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 30 May and 3 June.

10.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2016) 261 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 30 May and 3 June.

10.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2016) 262 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 30 May and 3 June, as archived in Decide.

10.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2016) 263 TO /3)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 6 and 10 June and of the finalisation written procedures initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 6 June.

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – Convergence Report 2016 (prepared in accordance with Article 140(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union)
(INFO(2016) 56)

At the PRESIDENT's request, Mr DOMBROVSKIS briefly presented the Commission's 2016 Convergence Report, which had been adopted that day by written procedure (PE/2016/3722 – COM(2016) 374 final).

He began by repeating the objective of the report, which was to review the progress made by the seven Member States intending in the long term to adopt the euro (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Sweden) towards fulfilling the convergence criteria set out in Article 140(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

He then went through the main results presented in the 2016 report, which showed that none of the Member States in question met all the conditions. He gave details of each country's progress with regard to the five main convergence criteria. All of them had achieved the long-term interest rates criterion but only six met the price stability criterion and none met the particularly important exchange rate criterion. He noted that in order to meet this criterion it was necessary to participate in the European exchange rate mechanism for at least two years; however none of the Member States in question had reached that level of participation.

Mr MOSCOVICI confirmed these details and Mr DOMBROVSKIS' analysis of them.

The Commission took note of this information and of the note distributed as INFO(2016) 56.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1. COMMISSION DECISION ON THE ADMISSIBILITY OF A PROPOSED CITIZENS' INITIATIVE 'MORE THAN EDUCATION – SHAPING

ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS'**(C(2016) 5250 AND /2)**

Mr TIMMERMANS presented the proposed citizens' initiative submitted to the Commission on 13 April 2016 'More than education – Shaping active and responsible citizens'.

He briefly explained the content of the initiative, pointing out that, under the current procedure, the Commission at this stage had to give a view only on the legal admissibility of the proposal and therefore on its registration. However, he confirmed that, according to the analyses carried out by his departments, the legal conditions laid down by the current provisions were duly met in this case. He therefore proposed that the Members of the Commission should adopt the decision recording the formal registration of the initiative.

This registration would allow the organisers of the initiative to collect signatures from the citizens of the Member States of the Union for one year. In a second stage, if the initiative collected one million signatures in at least seven Member States, as laid down in the Treaties, the Commission would then carry out an in-depth analysis of the initiative and decide on the case for presenting a proposal.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr TIMMERMANS for this information.

The Commission found, pursuant to Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) 211/2011, that the conditions of admissibility of the citizens' initiative 'More than education — Shaping active and responsible citizens' were fulfilled. The Commission therefore decided to register the initiative, in accordance with document C(2016) 5250/2, and authorised Mr TIMMERMANS to sign the decision on its behalf and to notify the organisers of the initiative.

After the Commission meeting, the organisers withdrew the initiative. Document C(2016) 5250/2 was therefore rendered obsolete and was not notified to the organisers.

11.2. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RATIFICATION PROCEDURE

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ explained his initiative to propose to the Members of the Commission, in agreement with Mr ARIAS CAÑETE, to adopt by written procedure (PE/2016/3923), as early as that week, the proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the EU, of the agreement concluded in Paris at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) in December 2015.

Following the recent statement by the members of the G7 calling for the agreement to be fully ratified by the end of the year, he noted that adoption would enable the proposal to be submitted to the Environment Council, which was to meet on 20 June. This solution made it possible to start as soon as possible the formalities prior to the final ratification of the agreement by the Council on behalf of the EU.

Mr ARIAS CAÑETE noted that, so far, around fifteen countries had ratified the Paris Agreement and that the US and China, for their part, had stated their intention of completing ratification by the end of 2016. It was therefore important for the EU to speed up its timetable for ratification and continue to take the lead in the fight against climate change.

In conclusion, he referred to the legal status of the future Council Decision, which was a mixed agreement, since the ratification proposed by the Council would be made on behalf of the Member States, following which they would submit the proposal for ratification by their national parliaments.

The Commission took note of this information.

11.3. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE RENEWAL OF APPROVAL OF THE ACTIVE SUBSTANCE GLYPHOSATE

Following his information point the previous week, Mr ANDRIUKAITIS noted that the latest Commission proposal to extend the approval of glyphosate for a period of 18 months – the estimated time needed by the European Chemicals Agency to deliver its opinion – had been the subject of a vote the previous day in the Technical Committee under the committee procedure.

However, he noted that, once again, a qualified majority had not been reached on the proposal, since seven Member States had abstained from voting. He regretted this institutional deadlock, and noted the ambiguous position of certain Member States which were seeking to induce the Commission to take a decision in their stead.

In these circumstances, Mr ANDRIUKAITIS proposed to refer the matter to the Appeal Committee at ambassador level on 23 June with a view to obtaining a qualified majority in favour of the Commission proposal. Otherwise the Commission would in any event be legally bound to adopt a decision by 30 June at the latest.

He reiterated once again the need to ensure that a decision was taken on the basis of scientific evidence and called on the Member States to duly take a position. He undertook to keep the College informed of developments in this matter.

During a brief discussion, the Members of the Commission confirmed their support for the approach advocated by Mr ANDRIUKAITIS, and noted the ambiguity of the positions taken by certain Member States, the need to insist on a science-based approach and, lastly, the attention to be given to external

communication.

The PRESIDENT concluded by thanking Mr ANDRIUKAITIS for his efforts in handling this matter. He pointed out the rationale behind the procedure laid down for consulting Member States in relation to implementing acts proposed by the Commission, and deplored the fact that it might be undermined in this case by the reluctance of some to take a position. The Commission should therefore continue to explain its position in public and to highlight the need for the Member States to fully assume their political responsibilities.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The meeting closed at 14.28.