



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2017) 2204 final

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

Brussels, 29 March 2017

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2204th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill building)

on Tuesday 14 March 2017

(afternoon)

PV(2017) 2204 final

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Single sitting: Tuesday 14 March 2017 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.27 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President
Ms MOGHERINI	High Representative / 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 ARIAS CAÑETE	Member
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member
Ms THYSSEN	Member
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member
Ms BULC	Member
Ms BIEŃKOWSKA	Member
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member
Ms CREȚU	Member
Ms VESTAGER	Member
Mr MOEDAS	Member
Sir Julian KING	Member

Absent:

Mr MIMICA

Member

Mr VELLA

Member

Mr HOGAN

Member

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

Mr ČAJO	A member of Mr MIMICA's staff
Mr NEALE	A member of Mr VELLA's staff
Mr RYAN	Adviser in Mr HOGAN's office

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
Mr SZOSTAK	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office
Ms SILLAVEE	PRESIDENT's Office
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service

Secretary: Mr ITALIANER, Secretary-General, assisted by Ms COLLOMP, senior expert, and Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI, administrator in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2017) 2204/FINAL; SEC(2017) 134/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(2017) 2204)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 13 March.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2202ND MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (28 FEBRUARY AND 1 MARCH) AND MINUTES OF THE 2203RD MEETING (8 MARCH)

(PV(2017) 2202)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2202nd meeting and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2203rd meeting for the following week.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2017) 23)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 10 March (RCC(2017) 23).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Trilogues

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) 1225/2009 on protection against dumped imports from countries not members of the European Community and Council Regulation (EC) 597/2009 on protection against subsidised imports from countries not members of the European Community (Regulation) – FJELLNER report – 2013/0103 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 91/3 and /4.

- Setting of a framework for energy efficiency labelling and repeal of Directive 2010/30/EU – TAMBURRANO report – 2015/0149 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 92/3.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

ii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2017) 87)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2017) 87 on the Council meetings between 16 and 29 March.

iii) Non-legislative dossier

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- Council conclusions on the 2016 European Court of Auditors' special report No 31 of 22 November 2016: 'Spending at least one euro in every five from the EU budget on climate action: ambitious work underway, but serious risk of falling short'

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 83.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

iv) Non-legislative dossier – Preparations for March II part-session
(point 5.1.1 of the IRG record)

- QO O-000007/2017 – Review of the regulation on the statute and funding of European political parties and foundations

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2017) 151.

v) Action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its November I 2016 part-session
(point 5.6.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved documents SP(2017) 148 and /2 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its November I 2016 part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

vi) Action taken on legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February I and II part-session
(point 5.6.3 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SP(2017) 156/2 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February I and II part-sessions, for transmission to Parliament.

vii) Participation by Members of Parliament in international conferences
(point 5.7 of the IRG record)

- 34th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (Geneva, 27 February to 24 March)

The Commission agreed to the request to the PRESIDENT from Mr Antonio TAJANI, the President of the European Parliament, concerning the attendance of seven Members of the European Parliament at the above-mentioned meeting, from 20 to 21 March as observers in the EU delegation, with a reminder about the procedure to be followed as set out in SP(2017) 162.

5. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

INFRINGEMENTS – URGENT INDIVIDUAL CASE

(SEC(2017) 151)

The Commission adopted the decision in SEC(2017) 151.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2017) 135 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 6 and 10 March.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2017) 136 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 6 and 10 March.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2017) 137 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 6 and 10 March, as archived in Decide.

6.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2017) 138)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 13 and 17 March.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2017) 139/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2017) 12)

7.1. SERVICE FOR FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR

(PERS(2016) 114 TO /3)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) and 29(1)(b) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (PERS(2016) 114).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 23 December 2016 and 12 January 2017 (PERS(2016) 114/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On

a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Ms MOGHERINI, it then decided to appoint Ms Hilde HARDEMAN to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 May 2017.

**7.2. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2017) 5 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, ‘Policy Coordination II’, in the Secretariat-General (PERS(2017) 5).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 13 February and 2 March (PERS(2017) 5/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants’ qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Mr William SLEATH to the post.

This decision would take effect on 16 March 2017.

**7.3. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – APPOINTMENT OF
AD14/15 PRINCIPAL ADVISER
(PERS(2016) 101 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Principal Adviser responsible for coordination of the Luxembourg site in the Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security (PERS(2016) 101).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 17 January and 9 February 2017 (PERS(2016) 101/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Mr Georges BINGEN to the post.

This decision would take effect on 16 March 2017.

**7.4. DG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15
PRINCIPAL ADVISER
(PERS(2016) 126 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Principal Adviser seconded as Director of the Research Executive Agency (REA) in the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (PERS(2016) 126).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 6 and 16 February 2017 (PERS(2016) 126/2 and/3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr MOEDAS and also Mr ANSIP, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Mr KATAINEN, it decided to appoint Mr Marc TACHELET to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 April 2017.

**7.5. DG EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE – TERMINATION
OF EXTERNAL SELECTION PROCEDURE TO APPOINT AN AD14
DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND
TECHNOLOGY (EIT)
(PERS(2015) 77 TO /4)**

On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr NAVRACSICS and also Mr ANSIP, Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Mr KATAINEN, the Commission decided:

- to terminate – without making any appointment – external selection procedure COM/2015/20008 for the post of Director of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture;
- to instruct Mr NAVRACSICS to notify this decision to the Governing Board of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.6. DG INFORMATICS – TERMINATION OF INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL SELECTION PROCEDURE TO APPOINT AN AD14/15 DIRECTOR, AND INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION (AT GRADE 14/15) AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION (AT GRADE AD14) OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR A DIRECTOR POST (PERS(2015) 113 TO /3; PERS(2017) 13)

On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr ANSIP, the Commission decided:

- to terminate – without making any appointment – internal and interinstitutional selection procedure COM/2015/1832 for the post of Director, ‘Digital workplace solutions’ in the Directorate-General for Informatics;
- to authorise the internal, interinstitutional and external publication, under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), 29(1)(b) and 29(2) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice set out in PERS(2017) 13 for the post of Director, ‘Digital Services’, in the Directorate-General for Informatics.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**7.7. DG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION – TERMINATION OF EXTERNAL SELECTION PROCEDURE TO APPOINT A PRINCIPAL ADVISER, AND CHANGE TO ORGANISATION CHART
(PERS(2016) 79)**

On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr MOEDAS and also Mr ANSIP, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Mr KATAINEN, the Commission decided to terminate external selection procedure COM/2016/10369 for the post of Principal Adviser responsible for ‘Evidence-based policy-making’ in the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, and to abolish that post.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**8. JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND TO THE COUNCIL – ELEMENTS FOR AN EU STRATEGY FOR SYRIA
(JOIN(2017) 11 TO /4; RCC(2017) 25)**

Ms MOGHERINI, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Mr HAHN and Mr STYLIANIDES, presented for approval the joint communication aimed at establishing a forward-looking Union strategy for Syria. She explained that the aim of the initiative was to determine how the Union could help to facilitate the emergence of a sustainable political solution in Syria within the existing framework put in place by the United Nations, as well as how it could continue to help the millions of Syrians in need and encourage resilience among the Syrian people and stability and reconciliation in Syria, whilst supporting the reconstruction of Syria and the voluntary, dignified and safe return of the refugees and people displaced within the country once a credible transition had begun.

She stressed that the joint communication, which she would present in person to the Foreign Affairs Council on 3 April, would guide the Union's work in the coming months and years and would in the first instance form an important basis for work at the Brussels conference 'Supporting the future of Syria and the Region', which the Union would co-chair with the United Nations, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar and the United Kingdom on 5 April.

She felt it was a critical time for Syria as the conflict entered its sixth year and the peace talks held in Geneva under the aegis of the United Nations had restarted. She drew attention to the direct support the Union had provided to the United Nations process, in particular through ongoing political dialogue with regional players – Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Qatar – under the Union's regional initiative on the future of Syria. She also pointed out that the European Union had been the largest contributor in terms of the international response to the Syrian humanitarian crisis right from the start of the conflict.

Ms MOGHERINI closed her presentation by stressing that although the Syrian conflict no longer made the headlines as often, it was not over and the Union intended to use its leveraging potential to continue the preparatory diplomatic and operational work in close cooperation with the regional partners and international organisations so that the international aid would be ready, coordinated and could be implemented efficiently when the time came, in a Syria that was at peace and was stable, reconciled and democratic.

She also said that she would attend the international conference in Washington on 22 March as part of the coalition led by the United States with a view to fighting ISIS. The conference would focus in particular on the results of the ongoing military operations, the fight against foreign fighters and the stabilisation of the liberated areas, and also on the humanitarian crises in Iraq and Syria.

Mr HAHN added that since 2011 when the conflict started, the Union and the

Member States had been the main donors of the aid granted to Syrians who had been displaced within their country and to refugees in neighbouring countries, giving EUR 9.4 billion. He referred to the actions financed thanks to that aid, for example in the fields of education, health, food security, language learning and micro-loans to encourage economic activity.

For the future, he insisted on the need for a sustainable political solution in Syria as a prerequisite to EU aid for returning refugees and for the reconstruction of the country. He highlighted the needs that would have to be addressed in parallel to foster a constructive and inclusive transition in Syria and to promote democracy, human rights and freedom of expression by strengthening Syrian civil society organisations as well as supporting a national reconciliation process based on efforts to consolidate peace. The financing needs, including the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable, once a lasting political settlement had been initiated, were currently estimated at between at least EUR 120 billion and EUR 200 billion. He said that he too would soon be visiting Washington where he would meet, in particular, representatives of the international financial institutions to continue the discussion on how to share the workload in Syria.

Mr STYLIANIDES ended his presentation of the communication by pointing out that the Syrian humanitarian crisis was one of the most serious the world had seen since the Second World War. 13 million people were affected, either because they had been displaced within Syria or because they had fled to other countries in the region or beyond. In general terms, he stressed that the humanitarian action could help encourage a reconciliation process and create a climate of trust between all stakeholders in society if it was done impartially, which was why it was necessary to call for access in conflict areas to humanitarian aid and personnel, as had recently been the case in Mosul in Iraq.

The Commission approved the joint communication in JOIN(2017) 11/4, for transmission to the European Parliament and the European Council and, for

information, to the national parliaments.

**9. DECISION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON THE SETTING UP OF A COMMISSIONERS' GROUP ON TRADE AND HARNESSING GLOBALISATION REPLACING THE COMMISSIONERS' GROUP ON THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES
(C(2017) 1711 AND /2)**

The PRESIDENT summarised to the Commission his decision to replace the Commissioners' Group on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the United States, created on 1 March 2015 at his initiative, with a Commissioners' group on trade and harnessing globalisation. He said that the composition of this new group was the same as that of the group it was replacing, and pointed out that, like all the other Commissioners' groups, it was also open to all Commission Members who wished to participate. He also asked the co-Chairs of the Group, Mr TIMMERMANS and Mr KATAINEN, to inform all the Members of the Commission of the timetable for the meetings.

The Commission took note of the PRESIDENT's decision in C(2017) 1711/2.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND TURKEY

Ms MOGHERINI referred to the recent diplomatic tensions that had arisen when certain Member States with large populations of Turkish origin banned political rallies on their territory organised by the Turkish authorities, amid

preparations for the referendum on an amendment to Turkey's constitution to be held on 16 April. Although cooperation between the EU and Turkey in numerous areas was continuing, she felt the current situation should be given due and careful consideration, while pointing out that permission for political rallies was solely the responsibility of Member States, in accordance with national and international law. She also noted that these tensions had originated from multiple, complex issues, and were probably being used as a political tool.

She referred to the joint statement she had published with Mr HAHN the previous day, 13 March, reacting to the publication of an opinion by the Venice Commission on Turkey's planned constitutional reform, in which the Council of Europe body expressed grave concerns, especially with regard to the concentration of power. Their statement called for calm and asked Turkey to avoid making disproportionate declarations and actions that would only exacerbate current tensions, emphasising that the matters for discussion should be resolved through direct communication channels which, naturally, remained open. Finally, they stated that they would continue to offer their good offices in the interests of relations between the EU and Turkey.

In conclusion, Ms MOGHERINI felt it essential that the Union make its stance absolutely clear, while respecting the competences of Member States and ensuring their positions were coordinated, in order to send a common and consistent message to the Turkish authorities.

Mr HAHN in turn underlined the importance of avoiding any escalation of tensions between Turkey and certain Member States. He felt that the Union should maintain a balanced and calm position while clearly expressing its concerns, especially with regard to the opinion of the Venice Commission on the Turkish government's proposed constitutional reform.

In relation to his own particular policy area, Turkey's accession negotiations

were still formally ongoing, even if for the time being it was not planned to open any new chapters. In this regard, the Turkish authorities were required to comply with their legal obligations and with the international standards that they had accepted. As regards the implementation of the March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement on the reception of migrants, he cited the very substantial financial assistance provided by the EU to Syrian refugees in Turkey and pointed out that the Commission would continue to disburse funds allocated on the basis of actual need.

Mr STYLIANIDES said that he favoured a pragmatic approach that would take into account the importance of continuing the ongoing cooperation on the management of migration flows and of following the Commission's balanced, measured course of action set out by Ms MOGHERINI and Mr HAHN in their joint statement.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS then emphasised the key role the Commission could play as a mediator in order to ease the dramatic tensions between Turkey and certain EU countries and encourage a unified approach to the current crisis among all Member States.

Ms MOGHERINI took the floor again to describe the collateral impact of these tensions on public opinion in the Western Balkan nations, whose governments were fully committed to the accession process. She stressed the fact that the European perspective was a fundamental and decisive element of the EU's action in this neighbouring region.

The PRESIDENT welcomed the fair and balanced tone of the statement issued by Ms MOGHERINI and Mr HAHN, which responded to the numerous Heads of State or Government who had wished for a joint Union position to be defined with regard to the tensions with Turkey.

The Commission took note of this information.

10.2. WORK IN RELATION TO THE WHITE PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

The PRESIDENT briefly touched upon the follow-up to the White Paper on the future of Europe adopted on 1 March, referring to the discussion papers that would be published by the Commission between April and June. He recalled the topics addressed in the White Paper, namely developing the social dimension of Europe, harnessing globalisation, deepening economic and monetary union, the future of Europe's defence, and the future of EU finances. He called for these documents to be prepared carefully and for informal consultations to be held with a large number of stakeholders, including the political groups represented at the European Parliament.

He also referred to the three Commission seminars that he had announced would be held by the summer and to their dates; the venues would be decided on soon. He again expressed a wish for the seminars to consist of sessions for free discussion, without a detailed agenda, at which, within the context of the subject of the seminar, all the issues that Commission members deemed important could be raised. The seminar on 3 May would be held in Brussels owing to the visit to the Commission that day by the Estonian government, which would hold the next presidency of the Council of the EU.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The meeting closed at 14.29.