



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2017) 2226 final

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

Strasbourg, 14 November 2017

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2226th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 27 September 2017

(morning)

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

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Single sitting: Wednesday 27 September 2017 (morning)

The sitting opened at 10.14 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 DOMBROVSKIS	Vice-President	
Mr KATAINEN	Vice-President	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	
Ms THYSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Ms BIENKOWSKA	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms CREȚU	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	Items 1 to 9/10/11 (in part)
Mr MOEDAS	Member	
Sir Julian KING	Member	
Ms GABRIEL	Member	

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Absent:

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ
Ms BULC

Vice-President
Member

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

Mr NOCIAR	Chef de cabinet to Mr ŠEFČOVIČ
Mr FAJARDO	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms BULC

The following also sat in:

Mr SELMAYR	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr PESONEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr SCHINAS	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms METTLER	Head of the European Political Strategy Centre	
Mr PAQUET	Deputy Secretary-General	
Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr SHOTTER	Chief adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr GRASSI	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Ms ARKI	PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr SMULDERS	Chef de cabinet to Mr TIMMERMANS	
Ms SCHMITT	Chef de cabinet to Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Items 1 to 14
Ms JUUL-JØRGENSEN	Chef de cabinet to Ms VESTAGER	Items 9/10/11 (in part) to 15
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service	
Mr RUETE	Director-General, DG Migration and Home Affairs	Items 1 to 14

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2017) 2226/FINAL; SEC(2017) 405/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) 2226)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 25 September.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2222ND, 2223RD, 2224TH AND 2225TH MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (26 JULY, 6 SEPTEMBER, 12 SEPTEMBER AND 20 SEPTEMBER 2017)

(PV(2017) 2224; PV(2017) 2224, 2ND PART)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2224th meeting and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2222nd, 2223rd and 2225th meetings for a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2017) 115)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 22 September (RCC(2017) 115).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Trilogues

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Regulations (EU) 1316/2013 and (EU) 2015/1017 as regards the extension of the duration of the European Fund for Strategic Investments as well as the introduction of technical enhancements for that Fund and the European Investment Advisory Hub (Regulation) – BULLMANN & FERNANDES report – 2016/0276 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 433/2.

- Financial rules applicable to the general budget of the European Union and amending Regulation (EC) 2012/2002, Regulations (EU) 1296/2013, (EU) 1301/2013, (EU) 1303/2013, (EU) 1304/2013, (EU) 1305/2013, (EU) 1306/2013, (EU) 1307/2013, (EU) 1308/2013, (EU) 1309/2013, (EU) 1316/2013, (EU) 223/2014, (EU) 283/2014 and (EU) 652/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and Decision 541/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (Regulation) – GRÄSSLE / ASHWORTH report – 2016/0282 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 423.

- Amendment of Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services in view of changing market realities (Directive) – VERHEYDEN / KAMMEREVERT report – 2016/0151 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 424/2.

ii) European Parliament dossiers – October I part-session

(point 3.2 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – First reading

- Maritime Safety Package – Amendment of Directive 2009/45/EC on safety rules and standards for passenger ships (Directive) – AIUTO report – 2016/0170 (COD) / Amendment of Council Directive 98/41/EC on the registration of persons sailing on board passenger ships operating to or from ports of the Member States of the Community and amendment of Directive 2010/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on reporting formalities for ships arriving in and/or departing from ports of the Member States (Directive) – BILBAO BARANDICA report – 2016/0171 (COD) / System of inspections for the safe operation of ro-ro ferry and high-speed passenger craft in regular service, amendment of Directive 2009/16/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on port State control and repeal of Council Directive 1999/35/EC (Directive) – RIQUET report – 2016/0172 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2017) 587 and /2 and took note of the compromise texts attached to SP(2017) 587.

- Management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Convention Area of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and amendment of Council Regulations (EC) 1936/2001, (EC) 1984/2003 and (EC) 520/2007 (Regulation) – MATO report – 2016/0187 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2017) 588 and took note of the compromise text annexed thereto.

- Amendment of Directive 2011/65/EU on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (Directive) – VÁLEAN report – 2017/0013 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2017) 589, further to note SI(2017) 299, which it had already approved on 21 June 2017.

iii) Council dossiers

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repeal of Decision 2241/2004/EC (Decision) – MALINOV / MANN report – 2016/0304 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 415.

- Binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 for a resilient Energy Union and to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement, and amendment of Regulation (EU) 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions and for reporting other information relevant to climate change (Regulation) – GEBRANDY report – 2016/0231 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 416/2.

- Inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry into the 2030 climate and energy framework and amendment of Regulation (EU) 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions and for reporting other information relevant to climate change (Regulation) – LINS report – 2016/0230 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 417/2 and /3.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iv) Programming of Council business

(SI(2017) 432)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2017) 432 on the Council meetings between 28 September and 11 October.

v) Non-legislative matters

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- Proposal for an Interinstitutional Proclamation on the European Pillar of Social Rights – COM(2017) 251

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 420.

- World Customs Organization – Meeting of the Harmonized System Committee from 25 September to 6 October – *Commission position for the coordination of a European Union position on the customs classification of an ‘Electrically Heated Tobacco Product’*

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 413/2.

- Authorisation, granted to the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to open negotiations on a Comprehensive Agreement with the Kyrgyz Republic (Joint Recommendation for a Council Decision) – JOIN(2017) 20

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 421.

vi) Latest developments in the Council

(point 4.4 of the IRG record)

- Follow-up to the judgement of the Court of Justice of 21 December 2016 in Case C-104/16 P (Council v Front Polisario) – Agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco concerning liberalisation measures on agricultural and fishery products

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2017) 427.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2017) 406 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 18 and 22 September.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2017) 407 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 18 and 22 September.

5.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2017) 408 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 18 and 22 September, as archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2017) 409 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 25 and 29 September and of the finalisation written procedure initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on Monday 25 September.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2017) 410)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2017) 104)

6.1. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15
DIRECTOR
(PERS(2017) 94 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 of the ‘Land Transport’ Directorate of DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2017) 94).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 and 20 July 2017 (PERS(2017) 94/2 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 BULC and also Mr ŠEFČOVIČ and Mr KATAINEN, it decided to appoint Ms Elisabeth WERNER to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 October 2017.

**6.2. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2017) 18 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 of the ‘Aviation’ Directorate of DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2017) 18).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 13 June and 20 July 2017 (PERS(2017) 18/2 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 BULC and also Mr ŠEFČOVIČ and Mr KATAINEN, it decided to appoint Mr Filip CORNELIS to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 October 2017.

6.3. DG INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART, TRANSFER AND SECONDMENT OF AD15 OFFICIAL

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

- to create a temporary principal adviser post in DG International Cooperation and Development;
- to transfer to the post, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Gustavo MARTIN PRADA, currently Director of the ‘International Cooperation and Development Policy’ Directorate in the same DG;

- to second Mr Gustavo MARTIN PRADA in the interests of the service under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations, to the European External Action Service with effect from 1 November 2017.

All expenses would be borne by the European External Action Service during this secondment.

These decisions would take effect on 1 November 2017.

**6.4. DG INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT –
INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION (AT GRADE
AD14/15) AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION (AT GRADE AD14) OF A
VACANCY NOTICE FOR A DIRECTOR POST
(PERS(2017) 105)**

On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr MIMICA and Ms MOGHERINI, the Commission decided 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) 105 for the post of Director ‘International Cooperation and Development Policy’ in DG International Cooperation and Development.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 101 OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ARTICLE 53 OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (CASE AT.39824–TRUCKS)
(C(2017) 6467 TO /7; RCC(2017) 120)**

The Commission:

- took note of the opinions of the Advisory Committee on Restrictive Practices and Dominant Positions of 18 and 25 September in C(2017) 6467/4 and C(2017) 6467/6;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 26 September in C(2017) 6467/5;
- adopted in the authentic language (English) the decision in C(2017) 6467/7 finding that the companies to which the decision was addressed had infringed Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 53 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area, requiring the parties to put an end to the infringements immediately and imposing on them fines totalling € 880 523 000;
- decided to notify each of the companies to which the decision was addressed of decision C(2017) 6467/7 and of the final report of the Hearing Officer;
- decided that the key parts of the Decision, together with the Advisory Committee's opinions and the Hearing Officer's final report, would be published in the official EU languages in the Official Journal of the European Union (with business secrets and other confidential information removed);
- decided to make the decision (with business secrets and other confidential information removed) available on the internet.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

GENERAL POLICY DEBATE – FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – ELECTIONS IN GERMANY AND SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

The PRESIDENT returned to two events of recent days that were of European importance, namely the results of the legislative elections in Germany on 24 September and the speech given the previous day by the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, calling for a sovereign, united and democratic Europe.

First of all, the Commission discussed the results of the German election, and the resulting new balance of power with a view to forming the future government coalition.

Moving on to the French President's speech on Europe, the Commission welcomed this second visionary speech on Europe, echoing the PRESIDENT's State of the Union address a few days earlier.

The PRESIDENT also welcomed this positive speech, which he had discussed with the French President when it was in the drafting stage. He noted that some of the announcements made in it related to proposals that had already been put forward by the Commission or announced in his State of the Union address, or else were currently being studied by the co-legislators.

The Commission took note of this information.

- 9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ON PRESERVING AND STRENGTHENING SCHENGEN
(COM(2017) 570 AND /2; RCC(2017) 119)**
- 10. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING REGULATION (EU) 2016/399 AS REGARDS THE RULES APPLICABLE TO THE TEMPORARY REINTRODUCTION OF BORDER CONTROL AT INTERNAL BORDERS
(COM(2017) 571 AND /2; RCC(2017) 119)**
- 11. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE SCHENGEN BORDERS CODE RELATING TO THE TEMPORARY REINTRODUCTION OF CONTROLS AT INTERNAL BORDERS WITHIN THE SCHENGEN AREA
(C(2017) 6560; RCC(2017) 119)**

At the request of the PRESIDENT, Mr TIMMERMANS presented the set of proposals being tabled that day for approval by the College with a view to adapting the rules on Schengen to present-day realities and needs. The package consisted of (i) a Communication on preserving and strengthening Schengen, (ii) a proposal for a Regulation amending the rules applicable to the temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders, and (iii) a Recommendation on the implementation of the provisions of the Schengen Borders Code relating to the temporary reintroduction of controls at internal borders within the Schengen area.

Mr TIMMERMANS noted that most of these proposals codified the progress made by the EU over the last two years on managing migratory flows and protecting itself against the terrorist threat. Indeed, during that period the Union had faced some of the most testing times in its history, with a migration crisis on an unprecedented scale on the one hand and deadly terrorist attacks in a number of European countries on the other.

While the EU had demonstrated its ability to cope, he felt that the rules in the Schengen Borders Code for reintroducing border controls dated back to a different era with different problems. Given the present exceptional circumstances, he felt that the Commission was justified in proposing measures to modernise the Schengen Borders Code. There was also a need to be ready for the possibility of further waves of migration in the future, whether due to the great disparity in wealth between the countries of the world, climate change or armed conflict.

In particular, the Member States should - as a last resort - be allowed to take action in exceptional circumstances involving a serious threat to public order or their internal security, but in doing so they must observe strict conditions to guarantee freedom of movement, while strengthening security within the Schengen area, in accordance with the wishes of the people of Europe.

Mr TIMMERMANS put the scale of the proposed changes to the Schengen system into perspective, describing them as an evolution rather than a revolution. He saw them as an important step in the right direction, designed to reinforce solidarity between the Member States and enhance their ability to act together to confront common challenges.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS felt that the decisions the Commission was preparing to take were both important and sensitive. The Schengen system was one of the great achievements of European integration which the Commission was determined to preserve and strengthen.

He explained that the existence of a Schengen area characterised precisely by the absence of checks at the internal borders could give rise to shared concerns about security. For this reason he felt the Commission had to do its utmost to maintain a delicate balance between free movement on the one hand and security on the other. This was possible only with the help of a coordinated and unified Schengen framework, which should also include Romania and Bulgaria.

In his view, the proposed changes to the Schengen Borders Code should ensure that

the reintroduction of checks at the internal borders remained the exception, by making it a measure of last resort that was coordinated with the neighbouring Member States affected in order to limit its impact and governed by procedures consistent with the nature of the objectives being pursued.

The present proposals introduced new tools to improve the management of migration and ensure better protection against the terrorist threat, while still fully preserving the principles and philosophy of the Schengen area. The proposals also strengthened the obligation on Member States to coordinate the introduction of border controls with the other Member States most directly affected, as part of a Europe-wide approach. This would help to avoid any abuse of the rules and the introduction of restrictions on free movement that would be justified only by political reasons.

Sir Julian KING stressed the importance of allowing EU Member States to take measures to bolster their security in exceptional circumstances, but within a framework that respected the benefits of the Schengen system. European citizens regarded the European Union as playing an important role in protection in security matters, so the Commission should be seen here as a facilitator. He underlined the balance struck by the proposals between giving greater flexibility to Member States to prolong border controls and imposing stricter conditions for reintroducing this type of control as a last resort.

He concluded by pointing to the principle underlying the package of proposals, which was that Member States should exhaust all the instruments at their disposal at national and European level to guarantee the security of their citizens before considering the introduction of temporary internal border controls.

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

- the balanced nature of the package of measures proposed;

- the realistic and pragmatic approach adopted by the Commission;
- the need to introduce objective criteria for reinstating border controls and to compel Member States to coordinate their action with the neighbouring Member States likely to be affected by this measure;
- the need to update the Schengen Borders Code so that it remained fit for purpose and was appropriate for the new security challenges countries faced;
- these changes, and the more stringent procedural guarantees accompanying them, also ensured that internal border controls would continue to be the exception and a measure of last resort to be applied only if necessary and proportionate, in order to limit their impact on freedom of movement;
- from this point of view, the belief that the initiatives proposed were entirely consistent with the philosophy and spirit of Schengen, while at the same time enhancing its effectiveness and its ability to ensure public security, coupled with guarantees to protect citizens' fundamental right to free movement;
- the Members' support for enlarging the Schengen area to include Bulgaria and Romania to create unity among Member States in the face of the threats and to bring them together in a reinforced Schengen area;
- the importance of the communication measures that would accompany the adoption of the proposals, in order to explain their objectives and the balance of the package as a whole and to allay fears of any restriction on freedom of movement;
- others, however, stressed the importance of ending internal border controls in the Schengen area;
- there was a risk that the Council might amend the Commission's proposals to allow border controls to be extended under certain conditions, thus making it easier to maintain them;

- Members pointed to the wide range of measures created to tackle the various security threats and the many tools that could be used before resorting to the reintroduction of border controls;
- consequently, some considered that one option was to abolish internal border controls without taking any steps to authorise their prolongation and allowing the current controls to expire on 11 November 2017, as originally intended.

Mr TIMMERMANS urged Members to examine the border controls in the strict and wider framework of the procedures and conditions prior to their introduction, which were set out in detail in the proposals submitted that day. This framework ensured an overall balance.

He also alluded to the risk that Member States which had introduced internal border controls might perpetuate such controls by making repeated requests for an extension, as was currently allowed by the Schengen Borders Code.

He therefore firmly believed that the Member States had to be allowed to introduce border controls, provided that the decision was based on objective criteria and was not politically motivated. He concluded that the proposals presented that day represented the best solution the Commission could offer the Member States, because it would make it possible to impose a series of conditions on their decisions to reintroduce border controls which would ensure that they were both effective and proportionate.

Finally, Mr TIMMERMANS explained that, pending the adoption of these new provisions, the Commission planned to issue guidelines to the Member States to improve the application of the Schengen rules. These would take the form of a recommendation reminding Member States that the temporary reintroduction of internal border controls must remain an exceptional measure of last resort, that its impact on free movement must be limited, and priority must be given to alternative measures, such as police checks and cross-border cooperation. He also explained that Member States must regularly evaluate any temporary controls, inform the

other Member States concerned and cooperate with them, and refrain from any unjustified measures.

Mr AVRAMOPOLOUS pointed out that communication measures would be needed to respond to criticism that the Commission's proposals would lead to the end of freedom of movement and the Schengen system. In this respect he said the considerable progress made with the introduction of the European Border and Coast Guard had significantly reinforced the security of the Union's external borders, meaning that there was less justification for reintroducing internal border controls.

Sir Julian KING pointed out that the alternative to that day's proposals was permanent checks on certain internal borders that were not subject to any means of control by the Commission or by the other Member States, even those directly concerned. He added that, by definition, it would not be possible to implement the many new provisions in the proposals that aimed at ensuring the security of citizens.

At the invitation of the PRESIDENT, the Director-General of the Legal Service explained that the Schengen Borders Code was still applicable. The authorisations granted to Member States by the Council to reintroduce controls for a maximum period of two years would expire on 11 November. He did not rule out the Council making individual decisions in the future authorising the introduction of controls of this type, the conformity of which would have to be analysed by the Commission.

The PRESIDENT closed the discussion by highlighting the need to set a framework for the measures adopted by Member States that introduced border controls, in close coordination with the other Member States. He reiterated his attachment to the Schengen area and his desire not only to preserve it but also to strengthen it, which he felt to be the main objective of the proposals being discussed that day.

He noted the Commissioners' agreement.

At the end of this discussion, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2017) 570/2, for transmission to Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2017) 571/2, for transmission to Parliament, the Council and the national parliaments;
- adopted the Recommendation in C(2017) 6560 in principle and, acting under Article 13 of its Rules of Procedure, empowered Mr AVRAMOPOULOS, the Member responsible for migration, home affairs and citizenship, to adopt formally, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Recommendation in all the official languages of the Union as soon as the texts became available, for notification to the Member States and for publication in the Official Journal of the European Union for information purposes.

**12. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON THE DELIVERY OF THE EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION
(COM(2017) 558 TO /3 ; RCC(2017) 117)**

**13. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL ENTRY ROUTES FOR PEOPLE IN NEED OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION
(C(2017)2017) 6504 TO /3 ; RCC(2017) 117)**

**14. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ESTABLISHING A COMMON 'RETURN HANDBOOK' TO BE USED BY MEMBER STATES' COMPETENT AUTHORITIES WHEN CARRYING OUT RETURN RELATED TASKS
(C(2017) 6505 AND /2 ; RCC(2017) 117)**

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS briefly presented the set of documents submitted for

approval by the Commission in the field of migration i.e. (i) the Communication on the delivery of the European Agenda on Migration, (ii) the Recommendation on the development of legal entry routes for people in need of international protection, and (iii) the Recommendation establishing a common 'return handbook' to be used by the competent authorities of the Member States.

Summarising the main political messages of this package, he pointed out that by uniting its efforts, Europe was achieving tangible and positive results, in particular a net reduction in arrivals of irregular migrants, which was why there was a proposal to go further in developing a truly European migration policy that was fair and sound. He went on to mention three important areas of activity for the coming period.

Firstly, it was a matter of continuing to show solidarity by rapidly relocating anyone eligible who had arrived in Italy or Greece before 26 September, the expiry date of the relocation mechanism, whilst at the same time endeavouring to help reform the asylum system set out in the Dublin Regulation and the Common European Asylum System.

Secondly, Mr AVRAMOPOULOS insisted on the need to intensify the execution of decisions to return illegal migrants by encouraging the European Border and Coast Guard to make full and active use of the extension of its mandate in that area and the Member States to further rationalise their return policy with the help of the common handbook. To these measures he added the need to strengthen cooperation with the third countries of origin with regard to readmission and to use all available European and national levers.

Thirdly, he felt it was time to step up the efforts to develop legal entry routes into the Union for people in need of international protection. He informed the meeting that the Commission Recommendation proposed creating 50 000 additional resettlement places, relying on ambitious commitments from the Member States who would be supported by a budget line of € 500 million intended for this purpose.

Finally, Mr AVRAMOPOULOS stressed that the Union, together with the Member States that wished to be involved, would launch pilot projects to accommodate migrant students, seasonal workers and skilled workers depending on their needs and the skills they were looking for.

He closed his presentation by thanking the Commissioners for supporting the proposals.

The Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2017) 558/3 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;
- adopted the Recommendations in C(2017) 6504/3 and C(2017) 6505/2 in principle and, acting under Article 13 of its Rules of Procedure, empowered Mr AVRAMOPOULOS, the Member responsible for migration, home affairs and citizenship, to adopt formally, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Recommendations in all the official languages of the Union as soon as the texts became available, for notification to the Member States and for publication in the Official Journal of the European Union for information purposes.

15. OTHER BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW IN POLAND

The Commission reviewed the situation with regard to respect for the rule of law in Poland.

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

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The meeting closed at 11.55.