



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

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

Brussels, 20 March 2019

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2285th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 27 February 2019

(morning)

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Single sitting: Wednesday 27 February 2019 (morning)

The sitting opened at 10.17 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President	
Ms MOGHERINI	High Representative / Vice-President	Items 8/9/10 (in part) and 11
Mr ANSIP	Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Vice-President	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr KATAINEN	Vice-President	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr HAHN	Member	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	
Ms THYSSEN	Member	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	Items 1 to 10
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Ms BULC	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	
Sir Julian KING	Member	

Absent:

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member
Mr MIMICA	Member
Ms BIEŃKOWSKA	Member
Ms CREȚU	Member
Mr MOEDAS	Member
Ms GABRIEL	Member

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

Ms ÅSENIUS	Chef de cabinet to Ms MALMSTRÖM
Ms LONČARIĆ	A member of Mr MIMICA's staff
Mr COMPTOUR	A member of Ms BIENKOWSKA's staff
Ms RUS	Chef de cabinet to Ms CREȚU
Mr VICENTE	Chef de cabinet to Mr MOEDAS
Mr MATEO GOYET	A member of Ms GABRIEL's staff

The following also sat in:

Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	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	
Mr SZOSTAK	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr THOLONIAT	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 10
Mr REMY	PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr GRASSI	Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI	Items 1 to 8/9/10 (in part)
Mr WYNANDS	Chef de cabinet to Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Items 1 to 10
Ms BERNAERTS	Chef de cabinet to Ms THYSSEN	Items 1 to 10
Mr BAILLY	Chef de cabinet to Mr MOSCOVICI	Items 1 to 10
Ms VILA NUÑEZ	Secretariat-General	
Ms KORING	Secretariat-General	
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service	

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2019) 2285/FINAL; SEC(2019) 2285)

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(2019) 2285)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Friday 22 February 2019.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2283RD AND 2284TH COMMISSION MEETINGS (12 AND 20 FEBRUARY 2019)

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2283rd and 2284th meetings for a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2019) 21)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Thursday 21 February 2019 (RCC(2019) 21).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. HORIZONTAL MATTERS

i) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – Trilogues

(point 1.1.1 of the IRG record)

- Digital Europe programme for the period 2021-2027 (Regulation) – MLINAR report – 2018/0227 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 176/2.

- Space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme, and repeal of Regulations (EU) 912/2010, (EU) 1285/2013, (EU) 377/2014 and Decision 541/2014/EU (Regulation) – SALINI report – 2018/0236 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 190/2.

- InvestEU Programme (Regulation) – FERNANDES & GUALTIERI report – 2018/0229 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 191.

ii) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – Council
(point 1.1.3 of the IRG record)

- System of Own Resources of the European Union (Council Decision) – LEWANDOWSKI & DEPREZ report – 2018/0135 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 187 and /2.

iii) Criteria for the delineation between delegated and implementing acts – Paragraph 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making
(point 1.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the line set out in SPI(2019) 10.

4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

iv) Trilogues
(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Directive 2008/106/EC on the minimum level of training of seafarers and repeal of Directive 2005/45/EC (Directive) – RIQUET report – 2018/0162 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 167.

- European Maritime Single Window environment and repeal of Directive 2010/65/EU (Regulation) – CLUNE report – 2018/0139 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 169.

- Preparation for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the Union – Common rules ensuring basic air connectivity with regard to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the Union – TELIČKA report – 2018/0433 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 119.

- European Border and Coast Guard and repeal of Council Joint Action 98/700/JHA, Regulation (EU) 1052/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Regulation) – METSOLA report – 2019/0330 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 185/2.

- Creation of a European network of immigration liaison officers (Regulation – recast) – KYENGE report – 2018/0153 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 204.

- European business statistics, amendment of Regulation (EC) 184/2005 and repeal of ten legal acts in the field of business statistics (Regulation) – LEWANDOWSKI report – 2017/0048 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 188/2.

(27 February 2019)

- Prudential supervision of investment firms and amendment of Directives 2013/36/EU and 2014/65/EU (Directive) – FERBER report – 2017/0358 (COD) / Prudential requirements of investment firms and amendment of Regulations (EU) 575/2013, (EU) 600/2014 and (EU) 1093/2010 (Regulation) – FERBER report – 2017/0359 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 189.

- Capital Markets Union Action Plan – Amendment of Directive 2009/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive 2011/61/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to cross-border distribution of collective investment funds (Directive) – KLINZ report – 2018/0041 (COD) / Cross-border distribution of collective investment funds and amendment of Regulation (EU) 345/2013 and (EU) 346/2013 (Regulation) – KLINZ report – 2018/0045 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 208.

- Rules and procedures for compliance with and enforcement of Union harmonisation legislation on products and amendment of Regulations (EU) 305/2011, (EU) 528/2012, (EU) 2016/424, (EU) 2016/425, (EU) 2016/426 and (EU) 2017/1369 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and Directives 2004/42/EC, 2009/48/EC, 2010/35/EU, 2013/29/EU, 2013/53/EU, 2014/28/EU, 2014/29/EU, 2014/30/EU, 2014/31/EU, 2014/32/EU, 2014/33/EU, 2014/34/EU, 2014/35/EU, 2014/53/EU, 2014/68/EU and 2014/90/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (Regulation) – DANTI report – 2017/0353 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 193.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 469/2009 concerning the supplementary protection certificate for medicinal products (Regulation) – DE GRANDES PASCUAL report – 2018/0161 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 201 and took note of the compromise text annexed thereto.

- Promotion of fairness and transparency for business users of online intermediation services (Regulation) – SCHALDEMOSE report – 2018/0112 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 196.

- Strengthening the security of identity cards of Union citizens and of residence documents issued to Union citizens and their family members exercising their right of free movement (Regulation) – DEPREZ report – 2018/0104 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 203.

- CO₂ emission performance standards for new heavy-duty vehicles (Regulation) – EICKHOUT report – 2018/0143 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 202.

- European Labour Authority (Regulation) – LENAERS report – 2018/0064 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 206/2.

- Persistent organic pollutants (Regulation – recast) – GIRLING report – 2018/0070 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 213.

v) Council dossiers

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Council Directive 93/13/EEC of 5 April 1993, Directive 98/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directive

2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards better enforcement and modernisation of EU consumer protection rules (Directive) – DALTON report – 2018/0090 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 127/3.

- Harmonised rules on the appointment of legal representatives for the purpose of gathering evidence in criminal proceedings (Directive) – SIPPEL report – 2018/0107 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 186.

- Preparation for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the Union – Establishing contingency measures in the field of social security coordination following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union – HARKIN & LAMBERT report – 2019/0019 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 207/2.

- Amendment of Regulations (EU) 596/2014 and (EU) 2017/1129 as regards the promotion of the use of SME growth markets – SANDER report – 2018/0165 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 209/2.

- Implementation of enhanced cooperation in the area of the financial transaction tax (FTT) (Council Directive) – 2013/0045 (CNS)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2019) 211.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

vi) Programming of Council business

(SI(2019) 216)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2019) 216 on the Council meetings between 28 February and 13 March.

vii) Non-legislative dossiers

(point 4.1 of the IRG Record)

- Position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union, in the sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the scheduling of substances under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 (Council Decision) – 2018/0437 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 194.

- International Maritime Organization – Union submission to the 74th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 74) of the IMO (London, 13-17 May 2019) concerning consideration on the enhancement of the implementation of the regulation 18 of MARPOL Annex VI / Union submission to the 101st session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 101) (London, 5-14 June 2019) concerning a proposal for the new output to review the LSA Code and Resolution MSC.81(70) to address the in-water performance of SOLAS lifejackets – Presentation and initial examination of a draft Commission working document

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 195.

- Business and Human Rights – European Union position on the United Nations open-ended inter-governmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 63.

- Third Eastern Partnership Ministerial meeting on the Digital Economy (Bucharest, 28 February 2019)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 212.

viii) Latest developments in the Council

(point 4.4 of the IRG Record)

- Budgetary Instrument for Convergence and Competitiveness – Options for implementing the Euro Summit Statement of December 2018

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 215/2.

ix) Action taken on legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its January I and II 2019 part-sessions

(point 5.6.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved, for transmission to Parliament, documents SP(2019) 150 and /2 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its January 2019 I and II part-sessions.

x) Preparation of the 37th African, Caribbean and Pacific-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP-EU) (Bucharest, 18 to 20 March 2019) – Replies to the questions

(point 5.9 of the IRG Record)

The Commission approved the replies to the oral questions from the Joint Parliamentary Assembly set out in SP(2019) 119/2, for transmission to the Assembly.

xi) Preparation of the 37th African, Caribbean and Pacific-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP-EU) (Bucharest, 18 to 20 March 2019) – Follow-up to the resolutions adopted at the 36th Parliamentary Joint Assembly (Cotonou, 3 to 5 December 2018)

(point 5.10 of the IRG Record)

The Commission approved the replies to the resolutions adopted by the Joint Parliamentary Assembly set out in SP(2019) 153, for transmission to the Assembly.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2019) 72 ET SEQ.)

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

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2019) 73 ET SEQ.)

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

5.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2019) 74 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 February, archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2019) 75 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 25 February and 1 March.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2019) 76)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2019) 6)

6.1. DG EUROSTAT – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2018) 66 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 ‘Business and trade statistics’ Directorate in Eurostat (PERS(2018) 66).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 16 November and 13 December 2018 (PERS(2018) 66/2 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 THYSSEN and also Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Mr KATAINEN, it decided to appoint Ms Sophie LIMPACH to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 March 2019.

6.2. DG JUSTICE – TERMINATION OF THE EXTERNAL SELECTION
PROCEDURE TO APPOINT AN AD14 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2017) 93 TO /4)

On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms JOUROVÁ and also Mr TIMMERMANS, Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Mr KATAINEN, the Commission decided to terminate external selection procedure COM/2017/10374 for the post of Director of the ‘Consumers’ Directorate in DG Justice and Consumers, without making an appointment.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**6.3. DG INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT –
AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART, TRANSFER OF AN
AD15 OFFICIAL UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS
AND SECONDMENT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE SERVICE UNDER
ARTICLES 37 AND 38 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS, AND
TRANSFER OF AN AD15 OFFICIAL UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE
STAFF REGULATIONS**

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

- to create a temporary post of Principal Adviser in DG International Cooperation and Development; this post would be abolished upon the departure of the job holder;
- to transfer to the post, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Anders HENRIKSSON, currently Principal Adviser responsible for the Knowledge, Performance and Results task force in the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development;
- to second Mr Anders HENRIKSSON, in the interest of the service, under Article 37(a) of the Staff Regulations, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark for a renewable period of two years;
- to transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Philippe BRUNET to the permanent post of Principal Adviser responsible for the Knowledge, Performance and Results task force in the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development.

These decisions would take effect on a date to be determined.

6.4. DG EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE – MODIFICATION OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND TRANSFER OF TWO GRADE AD15 OFFICIALS

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 create a temporary post of Principal Adviser in the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture; this post would be abolished on departure of the job holder;
- to transfer to the post, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Michel MAGNIER, currently Director of the Directorate for Culture and Creativity in the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture;
- to transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Tamas SZUCS, currently Principal Adviser responsible for Cross-Sectoral Cooperation ET2020 and FP9 in the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, to the post of Director of the Directorate for Culture and Creativity in the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

These decisions would take effect on a date to be determined.

6.5. DG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION — EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THE AD14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FUEL CELLS AND HYDROGEN 2 JOINT UNDERTAKING (FCH 2)

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

- to propose to the Governing Board of the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 Joint Undertaking that the term of office of its Executive Director, Mr Bart BIEBUYCK, be extended for four years with effect from 16 May 2019 in accordance with Article 8 of the Statutes of the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 Joint Undertaking annexed to Council Regulation (EU) 559/2014;
- to ask Mr MOEDAS, the member of the Commission responsible, to communicate this decision to the Governing Board of the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 Joint Undertaking.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6.6. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – APPROVAL OF LISTS OF CANDIDATES FOR THE POSTS OF HEAD OF EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU AND SOMALIA, AND DEPUTY HEAD OF THE EU DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK (AD9-14/AD12) (PERS(2019) 7)

The Commission took note of the information in point 6 of PERS(2019) 6 and, on a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to approve the lists of candidates in PERS(2019) 7 for the posts of Head of the European Union Delegations to Guinea-Bissau and Somalia and Deputy Head of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations in New York; these lists would serve as a basis for the competent authority of the European External Action Service to make the final appointments.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.7. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – COMMUNICATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF ICELAND OF THE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS OF THE UNIFORM FORMAT FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION RESIDENCE PERMIT FOR THIRD-COUNTRY

NATIONALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EXCEPTIONAL AD HOC PROCEDURE

The Commission took note of the information in point 7 of PERS(2019) 6 and, on a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to communicate to the Republic of Iceland the technical specifications for the uniform format for EU residence permit for third-country nationals, applicable to Member States and the four Schengen Associated Countries, specified in Part II of Annex 1 to Commission Implementing Decision C(2018) 7767, in accordance with the exceptional ad hoc procedure laid down in Article 57 of Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.8. *DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – DECISION ON THE CONDUCT OF OFFICIALS AND OTHER STAFF DURING THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN IN 2019*
(C(2019) 1120)

On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission adopted the decision in C(2019) 1120.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.9. *DG BUDGET – DECISION ON THE APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 53 OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT PLANS OF THE COMMISSION, OF THE RESEARCH DIRECT AND INDIRECT ACTIONS IN 2019*
(C(2019) 1638)

On a proposal from Mr OETTINGER, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission adopted the decision in C(2019) 1638.

It also decided to instruct the Director-General of DG Budget to inform the

budgetary authority of this decision and to put it into effect at the end of this procedure.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**6.10. *DECISION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
ON THE FUNCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE
HEARING OFFICER IN CERTAIN TRADE PROCEEDINGS
(C(2019) 1110)***

The Commission took note of the decision of the President on the function and terms of reference of the hearing officer set out in C(2019) 1110.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

***COMMISSION DECISION ON THE ADMISSIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED
CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'EUROPE CARES – INCLUSIVE
QUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES'
(C(2019) 1545)***

Mr TIMMERMANS presented the draft decision being submitted to the College for approval on the registration of the proposed European citizens' initiative entitled 'Europe CARES – Inclusive Quality Education for Children with Disabilities'. In substance, this initiative, in order to guarantee the right of disabled children and adults to inclusive education in the European Union, called on the Commission to establish a common European framework in this field to ensure that no child was left behind when it came to early intervention services, education and transition towards the labour market.

He reminded the meeting that in accordance with the conditions for admissibility provided for in Regulation (EU) 211/2011 on the European citizens' initiative, the proposed actions must, in order to be registered, manifestly fall within the Commission's powers to submit proposals for legal acts for the purpose of

implementing the Treaties, and fulfil the other conditions set out in Article 4(2) of that Regulation.

He noted that the request submitted by the proponents of the European citizens' initiative fell within the Commission's powers to propose legal acts for the purpose of implementing the Treaties, under Articles 19(1) (appropriate action to combat discrimination), 165(2) and (4) (support for the Member States' education systems) and 166(2) and (4) (support for the Member States' vocational training systems) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

In conclusion, he pointed out that the College's task that day was to decide only on the legal admissibility of the proposal and not at this stage to analyse its substance or political expediency. If, in the space of a year, one million signatures were collected from citizens of at least seven Member States, the Commission would have three months to decide whether or not to consent to the requests, duly justifying its decision.

The Commission confirmed that the admissibility criteria under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) 211/2011 were fulfilled for the proposed citizens' initiative entitled 'Europe CARES – Inclusive Quality Education for Children with Disabilities'. The Commission therefore decided to register the initiative, in accordance with document C(2019) 1545, and authorised Mr TIMMERMANS to sign the decision on its behalf, to notify the organisers of the initiative thereof in the authentic language (English), and to publish it, for information, in the Official Journal of the European Union.

**8. EUROPEAN SEMESTER OF ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY POLICY
COORDINATION FOR 2019 – COMMUNICATION FROM THE
COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN
COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK AND THE
EUROGROUP – ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS ON STRUCTURAL**

**REFORMS, PREVENTION AND CORRECTION OF MACROECONOMIC
IMBALANCES, AND RESULTS OF IN-DEPTH REVIEWS UNDER
REGULATION (EU) 1176/2011**

(COM(2019) 150 TO /3; SWD(2019) 1000; SWD(2019) 1001; SWD(2019) 1002;
SWD(2019) 1003; SWD(2019) 1004; SWD(2019) 1005; SWD(2019) 1006;
SWD(2019) 1007; SWD(2019) 1008; SWD(2019) 1009; SWD(2019) 1010;
SWD(2019) 1011; SWD(2019) 1012; SWD(2019) 1013; SWD(2019) 1014;
SWD(2019) 1015; SWD(2019) 1016; SWD(2019) 1017; SWD(2019) 1018;
SWD(2019) 1019; SWD(2019) 1020 AND /2; SWD(2019) 1021;
SWD(2019) 1022; SWD(2019) 1023; SWD(2019) 1024 AND /2;
SWD(2019) 1025; SWD(2019) 1026; SWD(2019) 1027; RCC(2019) 22)

**9. EUROPEAN SEMESTER OF ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY POLICY
COORDINATION FOR 2019 – PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION
ON GUIDELINES FOR THE EMPLOYMENT POLICIES OF THE
MEMBER STATES**

(COM(2019) 151; RCC(2019) 22)

**10. EUROPEAN SEMESTER OF ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY POLICY
COORDINATION FOR 2019 – PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE
COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION OF 20 SEPTEMBER 2016 ON THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY BOARDS**

(COM(2019) 152; RCC(2019) 22)

The PRESIDENT asked Mr DOMBROVSKIS, Ms THYSSEN and Mr MOSCOVICI to present the European Semester of Economic and Budgetary Policy Coordination Winter Package 2019, in particular the Country Reports.

This 2019 Winter Package comprised (i) the country evaluation reports on progress on structural reforms and prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances addressed to the 28 EU Member States, including, for the first time, Greece, (ii) a general communication containing a categorisation of the Member States drawn up

on the basis of the in-depth reviews conducted as part of the macroeconomic imbalance procedure, (iii) a proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the Member States' employment policies, and (iv) a Commission report on the progress made in implementing the Council Recommendation of 20 September 2016 on the establishment of National Productivity Boards.

Two other items in this package were being submitted at the same time for adoption by written procedure pursuant to Article 12(5) of the Commission's Rules of Procedure. These were (v) the second Enhanced Surveillance Report for Greece after the conclusion of the stability support programme in the framework of the European Stability Mechanism, and (vi) the Commission opinion on the updated draft budgetary plan for 2019 submitted by Slovenia. The deadline for these written procedures was that day at 12.00.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the general communication set out in COM(2019) 150/3 for transmission to Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Central Bank and the Eurogroup and, for information, to the national parliaments, together with the staff working documents – the Country Reports – distributed as SWD(2019) 1000, SWD(2019) 1001, SWD(2019) 1002, SWD(2019) 1003, SWD(2019) 1004, SWD(2019) 1005, SWD(2019) 1006, SWD(2019) 1007, SWD(2019) 1008, SWD(2019) 1009, SWD(2019) 1010, SWD(2019) 1011, SWD(2019) 1012, SWD(2019) 1013, SWD(2019) 1014, SWD(2019) 1015, SWD(2019) 1016, SWD(2019) 1017, SWD(2019) 1018, SWD(2019) 1019, SWD(2019) 1020 and /2, SWD(2019) 1021, SWD(2019) 1022, SWD(2019) 1023, SWD(2019) 1024 and /2, SWD(2019) 1025, SWD(2019) 1026 and SWD(2019) 1027, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Council Decision set out in COM(2019) 151 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;

- approved the Report to the Council in COM(2019) 152 for transmission to the Council and, for information, to the European Parliament and the national parliaments.

In addition, in the same European Semester of Economic and Budgetary Policy Coordination Winter Package 2019, the second Enhanced Surveillance Report for Greece and the Commission opinion on the updated draft budgetary plan of Slovenia were adopted by written procedure pursuant to Article 12(5) of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the deadline for which was set at 12.00 on Wednesday 27 February (PE/2019/1384 and PE/2019/1326, respectively).

11. OTHER BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

11.1. RESULTS OF THE SUMMIT OF EU LEADERS AND LEADERS OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES (SHARM EL-SHEIKH, 24-25 FEBRUARY 2019)

The PRESIDENT asked Ms MOGHERINI to brief the College on the main results of the Summit of EU leaders and leaders of the League of Arab States which the two of them had attended, representing the European Union alongside the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, several EU leaders, and Mr HAHN, on 24 and 25 February in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Ms MOGHERINI explained that the holding of this summit, the first ever organised between the European Union and the League of Arab States, which had brought together the representatives of a total of 49 countries, in itself constituted a positive result that deserved to be highlighted. To this result was added the adoption of a joint declaration summarising the wide range of subjects examined during the summit, in which areas the European Union and

the League of Arab States intended to strengthen their cooperation in order to tackle together their common challenges, at both regional and international level.

She highlighted the main conclusion of the discussions, namely the parties' commitment to multilateralism and cooperation based on international law in the areas of economic partnership, migration and crisis management. She noted that the leaders had, in particular, discussed their concerns regarding the threats to peace and security. On regional issues, they had discussed, above all, the Middle East peace process and the recent events in Syria, Libya and Yemen.

Overall, this first summit of its kind had thus been positive, and it would be followed by regular ministerial meetings, the second of which would be held in Brussels in 2021.

The PRESIDENT considered, despite some communication difficulties, that the summit had been useful and had provided an opportunity to examine important issues of common interest to the European Union and the League of Arab States, including fundamental values such as respect for human rights and tolerance.

The Commission took note of this information.

11.2. WITHDRAWAL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM FROM THE UNION UNDER ARTICLE 50 OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

The PRESIDENT took the opportunity to report very briefly on his meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh with the British Prime Minister, Theresa May, with whom he had discussed the latest developments concerning the agreement with the United Kingdom setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal from the Union under Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union.

He also referred to the votes that the Prime Minister had announced would be

held in the British parliament by mid-March.

The Commission took note of this information.

**11.3. RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

At the PRESIDENT's request, Mr TIMMERMANS referred to a number of recent facts and developments which he felt it was important to bring to the attention of the College with regard to respect for the rule of law in Romania and Hungary.

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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 11.56.