



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2019) 2292 final

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

Brussels, 7 May 2019

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

**of the 2292nd meeting of the Commission
held in Strasbourg
(Winston Churchill building)
on Tuesday 16 April 2019
(afternoon)**

PV(2019) 2292 final

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

EN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Attendance list	4-6
1. AGENDAS (OJ(2019) 2292/FINAL; SEC(2019) 2292)	7
2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET (RCC(2019) 2292)	7
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2289 TH , 2290 TH AND 2291 ST MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (26 MARCH, 3 AND 10 APRIL 2019) (PV(2019) 2289).....	7
4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (RCC(2019) 48)	7
4.1. HORIZONTAL ITEM.....	8
4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS	10
4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL	15
4.4. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT	15
5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS.....	16
5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2019) 176 ET SEQ.).....	16
5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2019) 177 ET SEQ.)	16
5.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2019) 178 ET SEQ.)	16
5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2019) 179 AND /2)	17
6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2019) 182).....	17
DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR (PERS(2019) 12 TO /3).....	17
7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, AND THE	

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – MORE EFFICIENT DECISION-MAKING IN SOCIAL POLICY: IDENTIFICATION OF AREAS FOR AN ENHANCED MOVE TO QUALIFIED MAJORITY VOTING (COM(2019) 186 AND /2; RCC(2019) 50).....	18
8. JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – EUROPEAN UNION, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN – JOINING FORCES FOR A COMMON FUTURE (JOIN(2019) 6 AND /2; RCC(2019) 49)	21
9. OTHER BUSINESS.....	21
<i>RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL POLICY</i>	21

Single sitting: Tuesday 16 April 2019 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.24 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
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member
Mr VELLA	Member
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member
Ms THYSSEN	Member
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member
Mr HOGAN	Member
Ms BULC	Member
Ms BIENKOWSKA	Member
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member
Ms CREȚU	Member
Ms VESTAGER	Member
Mr MOEDAS	Member
Sir Julian KING	Member
Ms GABRIEL	Member

Absent:

Mr HAHN	Member
Mr MIMICA	Member
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member

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

Mr DÓCZY	A member of Mr HAHN's staff
Ms LONČARIĆ	Adviser in Mr MIMICA's Office
Ms KIRALY	Chef de cabinet to Mr NAVRACSICS

The following also sat in:

Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Director-General, DG Communication
Mr SCHINAS	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission
Mr MOTOC	European Political Strategy Centre
Mr THOLONIAT	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office
Mr REMY	PRESIDENT's Office
Mr GRASSI	Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI
Ms LLANO CARDENAL	A member of Mr DOMBROVSKIS's staff
Mr SNELS	Secretariat-General
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service

Secretary: Mr SELMAYR, Secretary-General, assisted by Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI,
Deputy Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2019) 2292/FINAL; SEC(2019) 2292)

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) 2292)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 15 April 2019.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2289TH, 2290TH AND 2291ST MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (26 MARCH, 3 AND 10 APRIL 2019)

(PV(2019) 2289)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2289th meeting, and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2290th and 2291st meetings until a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2019) 48)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 12 April 2019 (RCC(2019) 48).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. HORIZONTAL ITEM

i) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – European Parliament – April II 2019 part-session

(point 1.1.2 of the IRG record)

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

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2019) 334/2, further to note SI(2019) 309, which it had already approved on 26 March 2019.

- 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 SP(2019) 365 and /2, further to note SI(2019) 233/2, which it had already approved on 6 March 2019.

- European Defence Fund (Regulation) – KRASNODEBSKI report – 2018/0254 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 366, further to note SI(2019) 218/2, which it had already approved on 6 March 2019.

- ‘Fiscalis’ programme for cooperation in the field of taxation (Regulation) – GIEGOLD report – 2018/0233 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 335, further to note SI(2019) 281, which it had already approved on 20 March 2019.

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

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 367, further to note SI(2019) 257,

which it had already approved on 12 March 2019.

- Connecting Europe Facility and repeal of Regulations (EU) 1316/2013 and (EU) 283/2014 (Regulation) – MARINESCU & VIRKKUNEN & TELIČKA report – 2018/0228 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 368, further to note SI(2019) 273/2, which it had already approved on 12 March 2019.

- Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repeal of Regulation (EU) 1293/2013 (Regulation) – GERBRANDY report – 2018/0209 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 369, further to note SI(2019) 282/2, which it had already approved on 20 March 2019.

- Justice programme (Regulation) – WEIDENHOLZER & HAUTALA report – 2018/0208 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 370, further to note SI(2019) 255, which it had already approved on 12 March 2019.

- Rights and Values programme (Regulation) – VALERO report – 2018/0207 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 371, further to note SI(2019) 267, which it had already approved on 12 March 2019.

ii) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – Council

(point 1.1.3 of the IRG record)

- Common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum and Migration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Border

Management and Visa Instrument (Regulation) – NOVAKOV & KREHL report – 2018/0196 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 358.

4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

iii) European Parliament dossiers – April II 2019 part-session

(point 3.2 of the IRG Record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – First reading

- European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre and Network of National Coordination Centres (Regulation) – REDA report – 2018/0328 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2019) 372, further to note SI(2019) 342, which it had already approved on 3 April 2019.

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

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2019) 383/2, further to note SI(2019) 202, which it had already approved on 27 February 2019.

- Amendment of Regulation (EU) 575/2013 as regards exposures in the form of covered bonds (Regulation) – LUCKE report – 2018/0042 (COD) / Issue of covered bonds and covered bond public supervision and amendment of Directive 2009/65/EC and Directive 2014/59/EU (Directive) – LUCKE report – 2018/0043 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 373, further to note SI(2019) 268/2, which it had already approved on 12 March 2019.

- Amendment of Regulation (EU) 648/2012 as regards the clearing obligation, the suspension of the clearing obligation, the reporting

(16 April 2019)

requirements, the risk-mitigation techniques for OTC derivatives contracts not cleared by a central counterparty, the registration and supervision of trade repositories and the requirements for trade repositories (Regulation) – LANGEN report – 2017/0090 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 374, further to note SI(2019) 162, which it had already approved on 20 February 2019.

- Disclosures relating to sustainable investments and sustainability risks and amendment of Directive (EU) 2016/2341 (Regulation) – TANG report – 2018/0179 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 375, further to note SI(2019) 310, which it had already approved on 26 March 2019.

- Amendment of Regulation (EU) 1095/2010 establishing a European Supervisory Authority (European Securities and Markets Authority) and amendment of Regulation (EU) 648/2012 as regards the procedures and authorities involved for the authorisation of CCPs and requirements for the recognition of third-country CCPs (Regulation) – HÜBNER report – 2017/0136 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 376, further to note SI(2019) 316, which it had already approved on 26 March 2019.

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

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 377, further to note SI(2019) 286, which it had already approved on 20 March 2019.

(16 April 2019)

- Amendment of Directive (EU) 2017/1132 as regards the use of digital tools and processes in company law (Directive) – ZWIEFKA report – 2018/0113 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 378, further to note SI(2019) 113, which it had already approved on 12 February 2019.

- Rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences and repeal of Council Decision 2000/642/JHA (Directive) – RADEV report – 2018/0105 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 379, further to note SI(2019) 153, which it had already approved on 20 February 2019.

- 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 – 2018/0330A (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 380, further to notes SI(2019) 345 and /2, which it had already approved on 3 April 2019.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 810/2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (Regulation) – LÓPEZ AGUILAR report – 2018/0061 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 381, further to notes SI(2019) 99 and SI(2019) 179, which it had already approved on 6 and 20 February 2019.

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

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 382, further to note SI(2019) 204,

which it had already approved on 27 February 2019.

- Prevention of the dissemination of terrorist content online (Regulation) – DALTON report – 2018/0331 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2019) 403.

- Amendment of Directive 2009/33/EC on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles (Directive) – GRZYB report – 2017/0291 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 384, further to note SI(2019) 170, which it had already approved on 20 February 2019.

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

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 385, further to notes SI(2019) 213 and SI(2019) 262, which it had already approved on 27 February and 12 March 2019.

- Adaptation of a number of legal acts providing for the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny to Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Regulation) – SZÁJER report – 2016/0400A (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 386, further to note SI(2019) 165, which it had already approved on 20 February 2019.

- Type-approval requirements for motor vehicles and their trailers, and systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles, as regards their general safety and the protection of vehicle occupants and vulnerable road users, amendment of Regulation (EU) 2018/... and repeal of Regulations (EC) 78/2009, (EC) 79/2009

and (EC) 661/2009 (Regulation) – THUN UND HOHENSTEIN report – 2018/0145 (COD)

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 401, further to note SI(2019) 339, which it had already approved on 3 April 2019.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on migration and international protection (Regulation) – WIKSTRÖM report – 2018/0154 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2019) 402, further to note SI(2019) 347, which it had already approved on 3 April 2019.

Delegated and implementing acts

- Supplement to Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the deployment and operational use of cooperative intelligent transport systems (Commission Delegated Regulation) – RIQUET report – 2019/2651(DEA) – Objection under Article 105(3) of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure

The Commission took note of SP(2019) 405.

iv) Council dossier

(point 3.3 of the IRG Record)

- EU Emergency Travel Document and repeal of Decision 96/409/CFSP (Council Directive) – GÁL report – 2018/0186 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 363.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

v) Programming of Council business

(SI(2019) 366)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2019) 366 on the Council meetings between 18 April and 1 May 2019.

vi) Non-legislative dossier

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- Position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the International Maritime Organization's Marine Environment Protection Committee and Maritime Safety Committee on the adoption of amendments to Annex II to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, amendments to the International Code on the Enhanced Programme of Inspections During Surveys of Bulk Carriers and Oil Tankers, 2011, amendments to the International Life-Saving Appliance Code, amendments to Forms C, E and P of the appendix to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, and to the International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-flashpoint Fuels (Council Decision) – 2019/0087 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 364.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

vii) European Parliament proceedings – Oral question O-000004/2019 – Negotiations with the Council and Commission on Parliament's right of inquiry – Legislative proposal

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2019) 412.

viii) Action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February 2019 part-session
(points 1.1.4 and 5.6.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SP(2019) 354/2 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February 2019 part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2019) 176 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 8 and 12 April 2019.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2019) 177 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 8 and 12 April 2019.

5.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2019) 178 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 8 and 12 April 2019 archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2019) 179 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 15 and 19 April 2019 and of the finalisation written procedure initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on Monday 15 April 2019.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2019) 182)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2019) 28)

**DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15
DIRECTOR**

(PERS(2019) 12 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 MOVE.INEA, the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency at DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2019) 12).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 22 February and 11 April 2019 (PERS(2019) 12/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to consider the applicant's qualifications for the post. It also considered the applicant's 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 Dirk BECKERS to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 May 2019.

7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – MORE EFFICIENT DECISION-MAKING IN SOCIAL POLICY: IDENTIFICATION OF AREAS FOR AN ENHANCED MOVE TO QUALIFIED MAJORITY VOTING (COM(2019) 186 AND /2; RCC(2019) 50)

Mr DOMBROVSKIS presented the Communication submitted to the College for approval that day, with a view to launching a debate on more efficient decision-making in social policy at EU level by moving to qualified majority voting in certain areas.

He began by pointing out that this initiative had been announced by the PRESIDENT in his State of the Union address of September 2018, and that it formed part of the Commission's work programme for 2019. This Communication was the fourth of its kind, following those presented by the Commission on the increased use of qualified majority voting in the areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy in September 2018, taxation in January 2019, and energy and climate in April 2019.

The purpose of the Communication presented that day was to assess the case for activating the *passerelle* clauses laid down in the Union's treaties to increase the use of qualified majority voting and of the ordinary legislative procedure in certain aspects of social policy, which would make the decision-making process more efficient and give the European Parliament full codecision-making powers in these areas.

He stressed that that day's initiative did not aim to alter the competences of the Union's Member States and institutions, or the treaties, but to explore the possibility of using mechanisms laid down in the treaties and already approved by Member States to act with greater flexibility where this provided added value.

He accepted that the discussions at the Council might not be easy, especially given that two of the previous Communications had met with a lukewarm response. Moreover, the social partners, whose role in social policy at European level was defined by the treaties, were taking a cautious approach. Finally, he added that the activation of *passerelle* clauses required a unanimous vote by the European Council.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS noted nevertheless that, in relation to social policy, qualified majority voting was the rule and unanimity voting the exception. It was for this reason that the Union had already made great strides, including during the current Commission's term of office, given that 24 of the 27 legislative acts proposed by the Commission had been adopted.

He concluded by reiterating that the Communication presented that day did not announce any tangible initiatives or set any deadlines, but rather launched a debate. The decision concerning this balanced approach focusing on European added value was therefore left for the next legislative term.

Ms THYSSEN confirmed that qualified majority voting was standard practice where social policy was concerned, leading to good results and substantial benefits. She explained that wider use of qualified majority voting would make it possible to (i) address current shortcomings while ensuring equal treatment for all, (ii) tackle challenges relating to the job market more effectively, but also (iii) foster a culture of compromise between Member States and strengthen democratic legitimacy by increasing the involvement of the European Parliament.

She expressed her support for the objective approach chosen. In the five areas where unanimity voting was still required, she proposed activating a *passerelle* clause in only two of them: non-discrimination, and social security and social protection of workers. In relation to the first, non-discrimination, she noted that the Union acquis had developed unequally. As regards the second, social security and social protection of workers, qualified majority voting would allow social security systems to be modernised and further harmonised. She acknowledged the sensitivity of this issue for Member States, which was why the Communication proposed that the

Union should go no further than issuing recommendations within the meaning of Article 292 TFEU.

As regards the three other areas where unanimity voting was required, she pointed out that according to the Commission's analysis, there was no need at present to propose the activation of *passerelle* clauses.

In conclusion, she highlighted the reasonable method adopted by the Commission in its Communication, given that adjustments could be made to it later.

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

- in the context of the European Parliament election campaign, the case for preventing populist attacks which could exploit the Commission's initiative, and for explaining very clearly in all communication activities that the Commission aimed to launch a debate without any intention of transferring more social policy powers to European level;
- the need for unified communication on the issue of qualified majority voting between the Commission members responsible for the four Communications presented on the topic;
- the suggestion that it be pointed out that the Union was exploring means of ensuring greater efficiency in the decision-making process while fully respecting national social systems.

The PRESIDENT emphasised this last point and called on Members to explain fully the nature of the problem for which it was suggested the decision-making process be improved. He invited Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Ms THYSEN to act as educators and draw on specific examples in their communication activities. He concluded by thanking them for their presentation.

Following this discussion, the Commission approved the Communication in COM(2019) 186/2 for transmission to Parliament, the European Council, the

Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments.

**8. JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – EUROPEAN UNION, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN – JOINING FORCES FOR A COMMON FUTURE
(JOIN(2019) 6 AND /2; RCC(2019) 49)**

The Commission approved the joint communication in JOIN(2019) 6/2, for transmission to the European Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the national parliaments.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL POLICY

The PRESIDENT asked Ms MOGHERINI to update the College on recent developments in external policy, particularly those relating to Libya, Sudan, Algeria and Ukraine.

Ms MOGHERINI began by reporting on the situation in **Libya**, since the military offensive by General Khalifa Haftar targeting Tripoli. This offensive had been launched on the eve of a national conference on the political transition in Libya, organised under the auspices of the United Nations, with the support of the European Union.

She said that the European Union had joined the United Nations in calling for an end to the military offensive and for a ceasefire, and in urging all parties to take steps to ensure humanitarian access to the people affected. The European Union was calling on the parties to restart the political process launched under the national conference. She explained that this was the united position of the

28 Member States which it was important to preserve, as they had not always been in complete agreement on Libya in the past.

As regards the situation on the ground, the European Union had been the first to support the action by the United Nations in Libya. In terms of the humanitarian response, she explained that the problem lay not so much in access as such, as in the safety of the supply routes. She added that there did not appear to be any immediate risk of a sharp increase in the number of departures to Europe, but she was still concerned by the situation of migrants in detention centres, while voluntary returns of migrants carried out with the support of the European Union were continuing. Finally, she noted that the assault on Tripoli seemed to have stalled.

She also highlighted the role played by numerous other external actors in the Libyan situation, referring particularly to the divisions between the Arab countries.

Ms MOGHERINI then turned to the situation in **Sudan**, where a transition was under way following the removal of the Head of State, Omar al-Bashir, by the army following four months of mass demonstrations in the country. She described the mood of uncertainty in the country and said that the international community was reserving judgment on the situation, particularly as regards the role of the army, even though the military had declared its intention to promote the political transition to an elected government. She said that the European Union had coordinated its message on the current situation in Sudan with the African Union.

As regards **Algeria**, which had already been the subject of discussion in the Council and in ministerial meetings of the G7, she stressed that the country was now at an important crossroads and had set 4 July 2019 as the new date for the presidential election. An EU mission would shortly be travelling to the country and would ascertain whether it would be necessary to dispatch an election observation mission to monitor the presidential vote. In any event, she noted that the demonstrations were being conducted peacefully, although the risk of escalation could not be ruled out, and she recommended extreme caution in communications on the European side.

Finally, she turned to **Ukraine**, where the second round of the presidential election would take place on 21 April and, barring a complete change in the situation, which was unlikely, would result in Volodymyr Zelensky succeeding the current president, Petro Poroshenko.

She felt that the European Union should approach the forthcoming transition cautiously and carefully, sending a message of friendship to the Ukrainian people and of support for the programme of reforms in the country, beyond any partisan consideration.

The inauguration ceremony for the new Ukrainian president would take place in June, so Mr Poroshenko would still be in office at the time of the Eastern Partnership Conference in Baku on 3 May. She added that a new Ukrainian parliament would be elected in October. She therefore proposed monitoring the situation closely in the weeks and months to come.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS agreed with the analysis presented. He added that in May 2019 Ukraine was expected to fulfil all the conditions concerning the Union's macro-financial assistance programme. The financing in question should therefore be paid in June 2019, in the complex political context just described by Ms MOGHERINI.

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

on Libya

- the gravity of the current situation, the case for the European Union to seek a rapprochement with various influential actors in the country and in that part of the world, and the need to provide aid to Libya in order to prevent matters spiralling out of control with potentially harmful repercussions for the European Union;

on Ukraine

- the current paralysis in the renegotiation of the long-term contract on the transit through Ukraine of Russian gas intended for the European Union, and the difficulties that might arise if the talks failed to make any progress before the summer.

Ms MOGHERINI returned to the case of Libya, saying that the situation on the ground had not deteriorated before the offensive against Tripoli which started on 4 April and had in fact improved, with economic activity picking up. She added that the European Union and its Member States had already initiated a rapprochement with many influential actors in this connection. She wondered whether it was a good idea to offer incentives which would make it possible to promote an outcome in which all the parties involved would win.

In the case of Ukraine, she suggested that the future president should be judged on his actions and hoped that the Union would help his government to continue on the path of reforms which the country had already embarked on with the EU's support, particularly in the fight against corruption.

The PRESIDENT then invited Ms MALMSTRÖM to present to the College the latest developments concerning the **forthcoming trade negotiations between the European Union and the United States**.

Ms MALMSTRÖM reminded the meeting that the recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations with the United States for an agreement on the elimination of customs tariffs on industrial goods had been adopted by the Council on 15 April by qualified majority, despite one Member State voting against it and a number of others abstaining. Thanks to the adoption of this recommendation, the Union was able to fulfil its side of the commitments in the Joint Statement of 25 July 2018 signed by the PRESIDENT and the US President.

(16 April 2019)

On 17 April the Commission would publish the list of retaliatory measures which the Union could adopt following the World Trade Organisation's ruling on 28 March 2019 on the illegality of the tax exemptions granted to Boeing.

The PRESIDENT thanked Ms MOGHERINI and Ms MALMSTRÖM for their presentations.

He wound up the session by pointing out that this was the last Commission meeting to be held in Strasbourg during the current Parliament.

In conclusion, the PRESIDENT spoke of the emotional response throughout Europe to the news of the fire that had devastated Notre-Dame in Paris the night before. Thought would now have to be given to how the Union could support the French authorities once they had indicated their needs.

The Commission took note of this information.

*

* *

The meeting closed at 14.28.