



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2020) 2348 final

- *English translation of the French version which is authentic* -

Brussels, 6 October 2020

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

**of the 2348th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 9 September 2020
(morning)**

PV(2020) 2348 final

- *English translation of the French version which is authentic* -

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Single sitting: Wednesday 9 September 2020 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.13 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President
Mr TIMMERMANS	Executive Vice-President
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President
Mr HAHN	Member
Ms GABRIEL	Member
Mr SCHMIT	Member
Mr GENTILONI	Member
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member
Mr BRETON	Member
Ms FERREIRA	Member
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member
Mr REYNDERS	Member
Ms DALLI	Member
Ms JOHANSSON	Member
Mr LENARČIČ	Member
Ms VÁLEAN	Member
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member
Ms URPILAINEN	Member
Ms SIMSON	Member
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr CALLEJA CRESPO	Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Director-General, Directorate-General for Communication	
Mr MAMER	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Mr LEARDINI	Deputy Secretary-General	
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Ms VILA NUÑEZ	Policy Coordinator in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Ms DEWANDRE	Policy Coordinator in the PRESIDENT's Office	Item 9
Ms SPINANT	Commission Spokesperson's Service	
Ms ALLOUIS-LE LOSTEC	Secretariat-General	
Mr HEMMELGARN	Secretariat-General	

Secretary: Ms JUHANSONE, Secretary-General, assisted by Ms DEPREZ, Director in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2020) 2348/FINAL; SEC(2020) 2348/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(2020) 2348)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 7 September 2020.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2345TH, 2346TH AND 2347TH MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (8, 15 AND 24 JULY 2020)

(PV(2020) 2345; PV(2020) 2345, 2ND PART; PV(2020) 2346; PV(2020) 2346, 2ND PART; PV(2020) 2347; PV(2020) 2347, 2ND PART)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2345th, 2346th and 2347th meetings.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2020) 135)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held by videoconference on Friday 4 September 2020 (RCC(2020) 135).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. HORIZONTAL MATTERS

i) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – European Parliament dossier – September 2020 part-session

(point 1.1.2 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – First reading

- Amendment of Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (Decision) – ANDROULAKIS report – 2020/0097 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2020) 385.

ii) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – Council dossiers

(point 1.1.3 of the IRG record)

- Climate mainstreaming in the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 251/5.

- System of Own Resources of the European Union (Amended Proposal for a Council Decision) – FERNANDES & HAYER report – 2018/0135 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 252.

- Common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition 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) / Financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repeal of Regulation No 1306/2013 (Regulation) – MÜLLER report – 2018/0217 (COD) / Recovery and Resilience Facility (Regulation) –

MUREŞAN & GARDÍAZABAL RUBIAL & PÎSLARU report –
2020/0104 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 253/3.

- InvestEU Programme (Regulation) – FERNANDES & TINAGLI report – 2020/0108 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 255/2 and /4.

- Additional draft texts for the EU-UK Agreement on the Future Partnership [Product specific rules of origin, Services and investment, Public procurement]

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2020) 256 and /2.

4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

iii) European Parliament dossiers – September 2020 part-session

(point 3.2 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – First reading

- Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2015/757 in order to take appropriate account of the global data collection system for ship fuel oil consumption data (Regulation) – PAULUS report – 2019/0017 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2020) 386/2.

- Measures for a sustainable rail market in view of the COVID-19 pandemic (Regulation) – 2020/0127 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2020) 388.

iv) Council dossiers

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Decision No 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES) (Decision) – PIZZARO report – 2019/0188 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 257.

- Empowerment of France to negotiate an agreement supplementing its existing bilateral Treaty with the United Kingdom concerning the construction and operation by private concessionaires of a Channel Fixed Link (Decision) – 2020/0160 (COD) / Amendment of Directive (EU) 2016/798, as regards the application of railway safety and interoperability rules within the Channel Fixed Link (Regulation) – 2020/0161 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 244.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

v) Correspondence and other positions

(point 5.1.2 of the IRG record)

- Proposed withdrawal of a measure under the regulatory procedure with scrutiny in view of the impossibility of the European Parliament to exercise its right of scrutiny – Amendment to specifications for titanium dioxide (E171) as food additive as regards inclusion of particle size parameters and lowering the maximum levels for heavy metals – D066794/03 – 2020/10116 (RPS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2020) 389, further to note SP(2020) 374, which it had already approved on 28 July 2020.

vi) Action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its July II 2020 part-session

(point 5.6.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SP(2020) 390 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its July II 2020 part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

vii) European Parliament resolutions under Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

(point 5.7 of the IRG record)

- A safety net to protect the beneficiaries of the EU programmes (European Parliament Resolution) – Setting up a Multiannual Financial Framework contingency plan – OLBRYCHT & MARQUES report – 2020/2051 (INL)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2020) 392.

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

viii) Relations with national Parliaments

(point 6.1 of the IRG record)

- Reply to a questionnaire from the French Senate's Committee of Enquiry on the COVID-19 crisis

The Commission approved the line set out in SNP(2020) 10/2.

4.5. OTHER BUSINESS

ix) Draft Implementing Regulation imposing definitive antidumping duties on imports of certain polyvinyl alcohols (PVA) originating in the People's Republic of China following an initial investigation

(point 7.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the line set out in SPI(2020) 26.

**5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION
(RCC(2020) 101)**

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2020) 101 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 2 September 2020.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

**6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2020) 266 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 20 July and 4 September 2020.

**6.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2020) 267 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 20 July and 4 September 2020.

**6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2020) 268 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 20 July and 4 September 2020 archived in Decide.

**6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2020) 269 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 7 and 11 September 2020.

6.5. GRANTING OF AN EMPOWERMENT TO AUTHORISE THE CONCLUSION OF PROCEDURAL APPEAL ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS THAT ARE BASED ON THE MODEL USED FOR THE MULTI-PARTY INTERIM APPEAL ARBITRATION ARRANGEMENT (C(2020) 6156)

The Commission adopted the decision in C(2020) 6156. Specifically, the Commission decided to empower the Member of the Commission in charge of trade, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, to adopt, on behalf of the Commission and under its responsibility, subject to the conditions laid down in Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Decision, decisions authorising the conclusion of agreements relating to an interim appeal arbitration arrangement and based on a model already approved by the Commission.

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2020) 270 AND /2)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2020) 74 AND /2)**

At the PRESIDENT's invitation, Mr HAHN presented an additional proposal for an administrative decision which was tabled directly to the College for approval.

Mr HAHN explained that it was proposed that Ms Sandra GALLINA, Deputy Director-General for Health in DG Health and Food Safety, deputise for the Director-General until the successor of the current Director-General had been appointed and taken up his/her duties.

7.1. DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY – DEPUTISING FOR THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Ms KYRIAKIDES, the Commission decided that Ms Sandra GALLINA, Deputy Director-General for Health in DG Health and Food Safety, would deputise for the Director-General of DG Health and Food Safety, in accordance with Article 27 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, until the successor of the current Director-General had been appointed and taken up his/her duties.

This decision would take effect on 1 October 2020.

**7.2. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF AD14 PRINCIPAL ADVISER
(PERS(2019) 87 TO /4)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations for the permanent post of Principal Adviser in charge of Digitalisation and Intelligent Mobility in DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2019) 87 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 24 January and 12 March 2020 (PERS(2019) 87/3 and /4).

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 HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms VĂLEAN, it then decided to appoint Mr Richard SZOSTAK to the post.

This decision would take effect on a date to be determined.

**7.3. DG STRUCTURAL REFORM SUPPORT – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15
DIRECTOR
(PERS(2020) 75 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) and Article 29(1)(b) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the ‘Resources and Aid Programme’ Directorate in DG Structural Reform Support (PERS(2020) 75).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 16 and 23 July 2020 (PERS(2020) 75/2 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 HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms FERREIRA, it then decided to appoint Ms Judit ROZSA to the post.

This decision would take effect on a date to be determined.

**7.4. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL / REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD –
APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 PRINCIPAL ADVISER - MEMBER OF
THE REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD
(PERS(2020) 63 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Principal Adviser - Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in the Secretariat-General (PERS(2020) 63).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 15 and 18 June 2020 (PERS(2020) 63/2 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 HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after

consulting Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, it then decided to appoint Mr Michael GREMMINGER to the post.

This decision would take effect on a date to be determined.

**7.5. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL / REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD –
APPOINTMENT OF AD14 PRINCIPAL ADVISER - MEMBER OF THE
REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD
(PERS(2020) 11 TO /4)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union for a Principal Adviser - Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in the Secretariat-General (PERS(2020) 11 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 22 June and 2 July 2020 (PERS(2020) 11/3 and /4).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, the Commission decided to appoint Ms Dora DENNING to the post as a member of the temporary staff under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities for a non-renewable period of three years.

This decision would take effect on a date to be determined.

**7.6. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL / REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD –
TERMINATION OF EXTERNAL SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR THE
APPOINTMENT OF AD14 PRINCIPAL ADVISER - MEMBER OF THE
REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD, AND REPUBLICATION OF THE
VACANCY NOTICE
(PERS(2020) 10; PERS(2020) 76)**

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after

consulting Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, the Commission decided:

- to terminate the AD14 internal selection procedure, reference COM/2020/10391, concerning the appointment of a Principal Adviser - Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board without making an appointment;
- to republish the vacancy notice in PERS(2020) 76 for a Principal Adviser - Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, to be engaged as a member of the temporary staff under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.7. DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION – LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE AD14 POST OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN LABOUR AUTHORITY (ELA) (PERS(2020) 66 TO /3)

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

- to approve the list of four candidates, set out in point 6 of PERS(2020) 74, for the post of Executive Director of the European Labour Authority (ELA), and to consider this list as the Commission proposal;
- to ask Mr SCHMIT, the Member of the Commission responsible, to communicate this decision to the Management Board of the European Labour Authority.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.8. DG TRADE – TRANSFER OF AN OFFICIAL FROM THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (EEAS) TO THE COMMISSION

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr DOMBROVSKIS, the Commission decided to approve the transfer, under Article 8 of the Staff Regulations, of Mr Rupert SCHLEGELMILCH from the European External Action Service to the Commission and assign him to the post of Director of the 'The Americas, Agriculture and Food Safety' Directorate in DG Trade.

This decision would take effect on 16 September 2020.

**7.9. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY / SECRETARIAT
GENERAL – APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE
EUROPEAN FISCAL BOARD
(PERS(2020) 77)**

The Commission took note of the information in point 8 of PERS(2020) 74 and, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided:

- to appoint Mr Xavier DEBRUN as a member of the European Fiscal Board for a three-year term during which he would have the status of Special Adviser to Mr DOMBROVSKIS;
- to authorise Mr HAHN, the Member of the Commission responsible, to amend Mr Xavier DEBRUN's contract in the event of duly justified needs, subject to the availability of sufficient budgetary appropriations;
- to authorise the Director-General of DG Human Resources and Security to implement this decision by signing the contract on behalf of the authority empowered to conclude contracts of employment.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**7.10. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – 2019 GENERAL ACTIVITY REPORT OF
THE MEDIATION SERVICE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
(SEC(2020) 292)**

The Commission took note of the 2019 General Activity Report of the Mediation Service of the European Commission distributed as SEC(2020) 292.

**8. DECISION OF THE PRESIDENT AMENDING DECISION P(2019) 1 OF
1 DECEMBER 2019 ON THE ORGANISATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF
THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
(P(2020) 5)**

The Commission took note of the decision of the PRESIDENT set out in P(2020) 5.

**9. REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND THE COUNCIL – STRATEGIC FORESIGHT 2020 – CHARTING THE
COURSE TOWARDS A MORE RESILIENT EUROPE
(COM(2020) 493 TO /3; RCC(2020) 136)**

The PRESIDENT invited Mr ŠEFČOVIČ to present to the College the Commission's first-ever annual Strategic Foresight Report. The Report proposed an innovative approach, which would help to develop future-proof EU policies today and shape a future that was aligned with EU citizens' aspirations by making use of the Commission's many sources of information, intelligence and experience, as well as foresight analysis produced by think tanks and other bodies.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ explained that, in order to make the Union's action more effective in both the short and the long term, the Report identified megatrends that would shape the future and covered both the new challenges to be overcome and new opportunities to be seized so as to better guide the EU in its strategic choices,

particularly with regard to its long-term objectives of achieving green and digital transitions that were also fair.

In itself, the Report marked a cultural shift, since the aim was to ensure that strategic foresight was systematically embedded in EU policy-making in all its areas of intervention.

In addition, the Commission had become the first public administration in the world to take strategic foresight to the highest political level by giving it a strategic dimension, and it was being watched closely by several international organisations.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ stressed the major political significance of this exercise. He pointed to the well-chosen timetable, which meant that the annual Strategic Foresight Report could usefully inform the PRESIDENT's annual State of the Union address as well as the preparation of the Commission's work programme for the following year.

In view of the crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, it seemed right that this first Report should focus particularly on exploring ways in which strategic foresight could strengthen the resilience of the EU and its Member States. The Report therefore set out the first lessons learnt from the crisis by examining the capacities, vulnerabilities and opportunities that it had revealed from four interdependent angles – socio-economic, geopolitical, green and digital. The Report also noted that resilience had become a new guiding force in EU policy-making, and addressed the consequences.

He also explained that dashboards had been chosen as an appropriate means of effectively monitoring changes in the EU's resilience capabilities. The Report presented prototype dashboards by way of illustration, but he explained to the College that these tools would in fact be developed in close cooperation with the Member States and the main stakeholders.

In his view, the proposed approach for evaluating resilience should also feed into a forward-looking reflection exercise at EU level on the possibility of designing an integrated framework to measure the wellbeing of the population. The crisis linked

to COVID-19 had highlighted the importance of certain aspects relating to quality of life and sustainability that conventional, purely economic, indicators, such as gross domestic product, could not fully gauge.

Lastly, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ explained that the Report set out a clear programme for political foresight activities, based around three cross-cutting topics that should be further developed in the coming year; the three topics were, firstly, the EU's open strategic autonomy, secondly, the future of jobs linked to the green transition and the qualifications needed for those jobs, and, thirdly, deepening synergies between the green transition and the digital transition in EU policy.

He ended by thanking the PRESIDENT and her cabinet warmly, as well as the other Members of the College and the Commission departments, particularly the Joint Research Centre and the Secretariat-General, for their contribution to this significant, and high-quality, piece of work.

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

- the College's overwhelming support for the Report, which was praised for its quality and timeliness, as well as the aim pursued by this world first;
- the wide-ranging political implications of this Report, which established a new tool for defining an enlightened strategic direction for the EU;
- the clear value of the tool as a means of highlighting major trends over the long term, anticipating future crises and learning from past crises;
- a further advantage of this tool, by virtue of it having been developed independently by the European Commission;
- its added value for developing effective EU policies to shape a Europe that was more resistant to adversity, coped better in crises and was able to successfully see through its green and digital transitions;

- an illustration of the relevance of strategic foresight to the Commission’s work with the example of the recent communication on critical raw materials, the aim of which was to strengthen the EU’s open strategic autonomy;
- the opportunity this Report gave the College to discuss the Union’s long-term vision;
- encouragement to include the scenarios identified using the foresight work in the programme for the Conference on the Future of Europe;
- the merits of the first Report’s focus on resilience;
- a comment to the effect that resilience ought to be made part of national recovery plans;
- the relevance of the four-dimensional analysis of resilience and satisfaction with the importance given to social and economic aspects, bearing in mind their impact on democracy and perceptions of the EU in particular;
- a call to be mindful of the fact that Member States’ specific territorial features influenced their level of resilience;
- the importance of strengthening the resilience of public administrations;
- the usefulness of the proposed dashboards and their potential to enable demographic aspects to be measured in more detail;
- the importance of discussing the dashboards with the Member States in advance to ensure constructive and fruitful cooperation;
- a call to be careful when interpreting the overview that the dashboards would provide;
- the usefulness of having included the prototype dashboards in the Report as an illustration to help readers;

- the need to ensure that this tool was consistent with other existing tools, such as the European Semester;
- a call to work on defining qualitative growth and no longer to focus solely on quantitative growth; the example of the approach used in Sweden to measure growth in qualitative terms;
- with regard to the major cross-cutting trends that the strategic foresight work could focus on in the coming year, the importance of preparing citizens for the jobs that would emerge from the green transition to ensure stability in society.

With the ambitious recovery plan for Europe in mind, the PRESIDENT considered it important to monitor the Member States' performance in terms of resilience and to ensure that the results observed were robust.

She reiterated the importance of fine-tuning ways of measuring citizens' wellbeing in terms that went beyond purely economic growth, despite it being a difficult concept to gauge and model. She therefore encouraged the idea of exchanging experience with Sweden.

With regard to the cross-cutting issues that could usefully be analysed in the strategic foresight exercise, she proposed using a single expression to cover the concept of 'open strategic autonomy', as it was currently referred to in the Report.

The PRESIDENT welcomed the College's broad support for the work begun with the first-ever annual Strategic Foresight Report. She encouraged Mr ŠEFČOVIČ to continue to instil a culture of strategic foresight in the Commission, in the interest of the Union and for the sake of EU citizens' futures.

The Commission approved the Report in COM(2020) 493/3, for transmission to Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the national parliaments.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1. FIRE IN A REFUGEE CAMP ON THE GREEK ISLAND OF LESBOS

Mr SCHINAS reported on the fire during the night of 8-9 September that had devastated the Moria refugee camp, the largest in Greece, housing over 12 000 migrants on the island of Lesbos. He explained that the day before, 30 refugees had tested positive for COVID-19 and been immediately placed in quarantine, which had caused rumours to circulate in the camp and triggered panic. Although there were no casualties, the camp was almost completely destroyed except for the hospital, which had remained intact, and thousands of refugees were now without shelter.

Against this very tense background, he had met the Greek Prime Minister in order to assure him of the Commission's support in managing the consequences of the fire, starting with the immediate transfer to the Greek mainland of the unaccompanied minors in the camp.

The Moria camp was a legacy of the past. It had been constructed as a matter of urgency to deal with the unprecedented influx of migrants to Greece in summer 2015 and was badly overcrowded, even if its current population of 12 700 asylum seekers was less than six months ago when the camp had 25 000 inhabitants. The Greek government intended to close this camp and transfer its inhabitants to a new reception centre in the centre of the island of Lesbos. In the meantime, alternative reception solutions had to be found.

He pointed out, lastly, that at the request of the Greek State, the Commission could trigger the Civil Protection Mechanism in order to strengthen the necessary humanitarian aid.

Ms JOHANSSON said that before the COVID-19 epidemic, the Lesbos reception centre had more than 20 000 asylum seekers, 10 000 of whom had subsequently been relocated. Of the approximately 13 000 persons still in the Moria camp, 4 000 were unaccompanied minors.

Mr LENARČIČ confirmed that the Commission was ready to assist the Greek government in dealing with the consequences of the destruction of the Moria camp. He pointed out, however, that the Civil Protection Mechanism could only be activated at the request of the Greek State.

The Commission took note of this information.

10.2. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The PRESIDENT asked Mr BORRELL to give the College an overview of the latest developments in external relations.

Mr BORRELL referred first to the tensions arising from the various manoeuvres by Turkey in recent weeks in the Mediterranean, and then to the situation in Libya following his recent visit there. He also spoke of his visit to Egypt. He then reported, with Mr VÁRHELYI, on the progress made in the dialogue that had taken place on 8 September between Serbia and Kosovo*, with EU mediation.

Mr BORRELL also touched on the consequences of the Navalny affair, the situation in Venezuela and Mali, and the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

On the subject of Belarus, he reported on the ongoing discussions and work at the Council on EU sanctions against a number of persons responsible for acts of violence, repression against peaceful demonstrators, and falsification of the results of the election.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Lastly, Mr BORRELL and Mr LENARČIČ described the situation in Lebanon after the disaster in the port of Beirut, and the assistance the EU was providing to the country and its battered population.

The PRESIDENT concluded the discussion by proposing that the College return to the question of sanctions against Belarus at its next meeting. Even though the Commission had limited competences in this field, she wanted the College to agree a position on which Mr BORRELL would be able to draw, particularly in Council discussions.

She said that after the cancellation of the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the Commission's next meeting would be held in Brussels but would remain scheduled on the same date and at the same time, Tuesday 15 September at 13.00, the day before her State of the Union speech before the MEPs.

The Commission took note of this information.

10.3. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 225 OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ presented to the Commissioners the Resolution adopted by the European Parliament under Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), entitled 'A safety net to protect the beneficiaries of EU programmes: setting up a MFF contingency plan'.

He pointed out initially that the PRESIDENT, on taking office, had undertaken to refer at meetings of the Commission to each of the resolutions passed by the European Parliament under Article 225 TFEU asking the Commission to submit any appropriate proposal. The Resolution before them that day was the first to be the subject of a policy debate by the Commissioners and it asked the Commission to put forward a contingency plan that would make it possible to extend the programmes covered by the

multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the 2014 to 2020 period in the event that agreement was not reached in time by the co-legislators on the next multiannual financial framework, for the 2021-2027 period.

Mr HAHN held that drawing up a contingency plan would send a counter-productive signal at this point in negotiations and in the light of the agreement in principle reached by the Heads of State and Government at the last European Council from 17 to 21 July. He argued that the contingency plan would divert attention away from the key objective, which was to obtain final approval for the proposal for a multiannual financial framework for the 2021-2027 period and for the recovery plan. He took the view that the agreement in principle of the July European Council bolstered the Commission's position and argued in favour of intensifying interinstitutional negotiations. He also noted that no fewer than five trilogues were planned in September on the next multiannual financial framework, which was cause for relative optimism regarding a favourable outcome to the negotiations.

The PRESIDENT emphasised the difficulty of the task, referred back to the considerable effort that the Commission had to undertake in May to submit a revised proposal for a multiannual financial framework and a recovery plan in view of the crisis brought about by COVID-19, and pointed out that it took four days for the Heads of State and Government to reach an agreement in principle at the European Council. At this stage of negotiations, she held that everything should be done to define the parameters of a compromise agreement on all the outstanding points, whether they be the budget ceiling, making funding conditional on the rule of law or governance issues.

Mr HAHN pointed out that the Commission and the European Parliament took the same stance on the need to introduce new own resources in the Union budget and that the European Parliament wanted to see the adoption of a legally binding interinstitutional agreement on this point. Although he believed that it was still too early to envisage such an agreement, he noted that the Council itself had tasked the Commission with proposing a list of new

own resources by June 2021 as a working hypothesis. He suggested that the Commission should produce a road map that was as binding as possible. He was of the opinion, moreover, that it was important to settle the issue of new own resources once and for all next year, rather than in stages, bearing in mind that it would need to be ratified in each Member State.

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

- the importance of adopting as rapidly as possible the European Union's next multiannual financial framework and the recovery plan so as to enable it to coordinate its collective economic recovery and avoid the implementation of 27 juxtaposed recovery plans;
- a reminder of the role of the Commission as an impartial mediator and of the need for the approval of the European Parliament in order for the next multiannual financial framework and the recovery plan to be adopted, hence the need to take due account of Parliament's positions during the negotiations;
- the European Parliament's commitment to bring about the introduction of new own resources, as illustrated by its ambition concerning a tax on financial transactions;
- the advantage that the introduction of new own resources would constitute not just for the European Parliament and the Commission, but also for the Member States, which would not have to envisage increasing their national contributions to the European Union budget;
- the comment by certain Commissioners that introducing new own resources was unfortunately a process full of pitfalls;

- the doubts expressed on the feasibility of a tax on financial transactions as a new own resource, inasmuch as such a tax was already the subject of enhanced cooperation between ten Member States;
- the nonetheless favourable conditions for introducing new own resources and the considerable pressure to do so being exerted by the European Parliament and certain Member States;
- the significant success that the introduction of new own resources during its term of office would represent for this Commission.

The PRESIDENT wound up the discussion by pointing out that the Commission had the sole right of initiative and that it intended to use it. She noted that certain Member States were still against a tax on financial transactions and the same was true of a digital services tax. She therefore took the view that it would be worthwhile to look into other options, relying on the support of the European Parliament, and she confirmed the intention of the College to submit proposals on new own resources in the first half of 2021.

The Commission took note of this information.

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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 11.04.