



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2020) 2356 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 2 December 2020

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

**of the 2356th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 11 November 2020
(morning)**

PV(2020) 2356 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

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Single sitting: Wednesday 11 November 2020 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.09 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	Executive Vice-President	Items 1 to 14.2
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President	Items 1 to 14.2
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President	
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Mr SCHMIT	Member	
Mr GENTILONI	Member	
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member	
Mr BRETON	Member	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member	
Mr REYNDEERS	Member	
Ms DALLI	Member	
Ms JOHANSSON	Member	
Mr LENARČIČ	Member	
Ms VÁLEAN	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member	
Ms McGUINNESS	Member	

Attended by videoconference:

Ms GABRIEL	Member
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Absent:

Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President
Ms URPILAINEN	Member
Ms SIMSON	Member

The following sat in to represent an absent Member of the Commission:

Ms SPANOU	Chef de cabinet to Mr SCHINAS
Mr LAHTI	Chef de cabinet to Ms URPILAINEN
Mr GRASSI	Chef de cabinet to Ms SIMSON

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms BANKS	Deputy Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr MAMER	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr FLOSDORFF	Executive Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr VANDENBERGHE	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 8 to 11
Ms HILI	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Item 12
Ms SPINANT	Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms ALLOUIS-LE LOSTEC	Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General	

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2020) 2356/FINAL; SEC(2020) 2356/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) 2356)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 9 November 2020.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2351ST, 2352ND, 2353RD, 2354TH AND 2355TH MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (30 SEPTEMBER, 6, 14, 19 AND 28 OCTOBER 2020)

(PV(2020) 2351; PV(2020) 2351, 2ND PART; PV(2020) 2352; PV(2020) 2353; PV(2020) 2353, 2ND PART; PV(2020) 2354)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2351st, 2352nd, 2353rd and 2354th meetings and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2355th meeting for a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2020) 168)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held by videoconference on Friday 6 November 2020 (RCC(2020) 168).

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)

- Just Transition Fund (Regulation) – KEFALOGIANNIS report – 2020/0006 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 368/2.

- Rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Regulation) – JAHR report – 2018/0216 (COD) / Financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (Regulation) – MÜLLER report – 2018/0217 (COD) / Amendment of Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (EU) No 251/2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of aromatised wine products, (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union and (EU) No 229/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in favour of the smaller Aegean islands (Regulation) – ANDRIEU report – 2018/0218 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 371/3.

- Technical Support Instrument (Regulation) – KARAS, PÎSLARU & GEESE report – 2020/0103 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 373/2.

- Protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States (Regulation) – SARVAMAA & GARDÍAZABAL RUBIAL report – 2018/0136 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 309/2.

- Transitional provisions for the support by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) in the year 2021, and amendment of Regulations (EU) No 228/2013, (EU) No 229/2013 and (EU) No 1308/2013 as regards resources and their distribution in respect of the year 2021 and amendment of Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013, (EU) No 1306/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 as regards their resources and application in the year 2021 (Regulation) – KATAINEN report – 2019/0254 (COD).

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 386.

ii) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – European Parliament dossier

(point 1.1.2 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – First reading – Other dossiers

- Recovery and Resilience Facility (Regulation) – MUREȘAN, GARDÍAZABAL RUBIAL & PÎSLARU report – 2020/0104 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2020) 560.

iii) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – Council dossiers

(point 1.1.3 of the IRG record)

- Erasmus: the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport, and repeal of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 (Regulation) – ZVER report – 2018/0191 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 376.

- Methods and procedure for making available the Own Resources based on the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base, on the European Union Emissions Trading System and on Plastic packaging waste that is not recycled, and on the measures to meet cash requirements (Council Regulation) – FERNANDES & HAYER report – 2018/0131 (NLE) / Amendment of Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 1553/89 on the definitive uniform arrangements for the collection of own resources accruing from value added tax (Council Regulation) – FERNANDES & HAYER report – 2018/0133 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 378.

4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

iv) Trilogues

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 715/2007 on type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions from light passenger and commercial vehicles (Euro 5 and Euro 6) and on access to vehicle repair and maintenance information (Regulation) – DE LANGE report – 2019/0101 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 374/2.

- Amendment of Regulation (EU) No 654/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the exercise of the Union's rights for the application and enforcement of international trade rules (Regulation) – VEDRENNE report – 2019/0273 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 375.

- v) European Parliament dossiers – November I 2020 part-session**
(point 3.2 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – First reading

- Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 as regards the introduction of capacity limits for Eastern Baltic cod, data collection and control measures in the Baltic Sea, and Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 as regards permanent cessation for fleets fishing for Eastern Baltic cod (Regulation) – HERBST report – 2019/0246 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2020) 558, further to note SI(2020) 303, which it had already approved on 6 October 2020.

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

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2020) 559, further to note SI(2020) 307, which it had already approved on 6 October 2020.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

- vi) Request from the Council for a study, based on Article 241 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**
(point 4.3 of the IRG record)

- Article 241 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – Council Decision (EU) 2019/1905 of 8 November 2019 requesting the Commission to submit a study on the Union's options to update the existing legislation on the production and marketing of plant reproductive material, and a proposal, if appropriate in view of the outcomes of the study

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2020) 377.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION

(RCC(2020) 109; RCC(2020) 110)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2020) 109 and RCC(2020) 110 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held by videoconference on Wednesday 28 October and Wednesday 4 November 2020.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2020) 355 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 26 October and 7 November 2020.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2020) 356 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 26 October and 8 November 2020.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2020) 357 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 26 October and 6 November, as archived in Decide.

6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2020) 358 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 9 and 13 November 2020 and of the finalisation written procedures initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on Monday 9 November 2020.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2020) 359 TO /3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2020) 99 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 to appoint Ms Beate GMINDER to the post of Deputy Director-General in charge of the Task Force 'Migration Management' in DG Migration and Home Affairs.

He highlighted Ms GMINDER's outstanding skills, remarkable career and recognised expertise, which would be valuable assets in her new post.

The PRESIDENT said that these assets would be put to good use in coordinating the setting-up of a new refugee reception centre on the island of Lesbos between the

Greek authorities, the Member States, the Commission, the EU agencies and the international organisations concerned.

**7.1. DG MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS – APPOINTMENT OF AN
AD15/16 DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL
(PERS(2020) 80 TO /4)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General in charge of the Task Force ‘Migration Management’ in DG Migration and Home Affairs (PERS(2020) 80 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 26 October and 3 November 2020 (PERS(2020) 80/3 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 after consulting Ms JOHANSSON, it then decided to appoint Ms Beate GMINDER to the post.

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

**7.2. DG COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY
– APPOINTMENT OF AN AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2020) 100 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 ‘Electronic Communications Networks and Services’ Directorate in DG Communication Networks, Content and Technology (PERS(2020) 100).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 22 July and 3 September 2020 (PERS(2020) 100/2 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 BRETON, it then decided to appoint Ms Rita WEZENBEEK to the post.

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

**7.3. DG COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY
– APPOINTMENT OF AN AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2020) 101 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the 'Policy Strategy and Outreach' Directorate in DG Communication Networks, Content and Technology (PERS(2020) 101).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 1 and 10 September 2020 (PERS(2020) 101/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr BRETON, it then decided to appoint Mr Thibaut KLEINER to the post.

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

**7.4. DG COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY
– APPOINTMENT OF AN AD14/15 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2020) 102 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 'Digital Society, Trust

& Cybersecurity' Directorate in DG Communication Networks, Content and Technology (PERS(2020) 102).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 1 and 17 September 2020 (PERS(2020) 102/2 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 BRETON, it then decided to appoint Ms Lorena BOIX ALONSO to the post.

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

7.5. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – TERMINATION OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR AN AD14/15 DIRECTOR POST AND APPOINTMENT OF AN AD15 DIRECTOR

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided:

- to terminate internal selection procedure COM/2019/1457 for a post of Director of the 'Account Management Centre' Directorate in DG Human Resources and Security, with immediate effect and without making an appointment;
- to fill this post by transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, of Ms Gail KENT, an AD15 official and currently Director of the 'Data' Directorate in DG Communication Networks, Content and Technology.

Unless otherwise indicated, this decision would take effect on a date to be determined.

7.6. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART AND INTERNAL PUBLICATION OF AN AD14/15 PRINCIPAL ADVISER POST (PERS(2020) 103; SEC(2020) 388)

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided:

- to create a Diversity and Inclusion Office, reporting directly to the Director-General and led by a Principal Adviser;
- to create a permanent post of Principal Adviser for diversity and inclusion;
- to authorise the internal publication, with immediate effect, of the vacancy notice in PERS(2020) 103 for the post of Principal Adviser for Diversity and Inclusion in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations;
- to approve the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2020) 388.

Unless indicated otherwise, these decisions would take effect on 16 November 2020.

7.7. DG BUDGET – APPLICATION OF THE PROCEDURE UNDER ARTICLE 50 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS (SECOND PHASE) TO AN AD16 OFFICIAL

The Commission continued the discussions that it had begun on this point at its meeting of 14 October 2020 (PV(2020) 2353).

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to apply the second phase of the procedure provided for

in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations to Mr Giovanni KESSLER, an AD16 official and currently Adviser Hors Classe in DG Budget.

This decision would take effect on 1 December 2020.

**7.8. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL / REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD –
EXTERNAL PUBLICATION OF THE VACANCY NOTICE FOR A POST
OF PRINCIPAL ADVISER – MEMBER OF THE REGULATORY
SCRUTINY BOARD AT GRADE AD14
(PERS(2020) 104)**

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, the Commission decided to authorise the external publication, under Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice set out in PERS(2020) 104 for a post of Principal Adviser – Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, to be recruited as a member of the temporary staff, under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of other servants of the European Union, for a non-renewable period of three years, which could exceptionally be extended for one year.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.9. DG BUDGET – DELEGATION OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE
2021-2027 EU PROGRAMMES TO EXECUTIVE AGENCIES
(C(2020) 7876 TO /3; SWD(2020) 268 AND /2; RCC(2020) 173)**

The Commission took note of the information in point 8 of PERS(2020) 99 and, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided:

- to approve in principle the communication in document C(2020) 7876/3;
- to take note of the staff working document in SWD(2020) 268/2;

- to empower Mr HAHN, the Member of the Commission responsible, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and in accordance with Article 13 of the Rules of Procedure, to adjust the figures in the Communication in accordance with the final agreement of the European Parliament and of the Council on the amounts of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework, and to transmit the revised version to the executive agencies for approval, and to the budgetary authority for information;

On this basis, the delegating Directorates-General and the executive agencies would be able to continue preparing the necessary measures for the delegation package. Once the Committee for Executive Agencies had given its approval, the legal acts confirming the agency mandates would be presented to the College for final approval.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**7.10. COMMISSION DECISIONS ON POST TERM-OF-OFFICE ACTIVITIES
OF THREE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
(C(2020) 9044; C(2020) 9045; C(2020) 9046)**

The Commission adopted the Decisions set out in C(2020) 9044, C(2020) 9045 and C(2020) 9046.

The Commission specifically decided that the professional activities envisaged by Mr Günther OETTINGER, Mr Tibor NAVRACSICS and Mr Phil HOGAN after leaving office as Members of the Commission were compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and with the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, subject to certain specific conditions and obligations.

**8. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND**

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS –
BUILDING A EUROPEAN HEALTH UNION: REINFORCING THE EU’S
RESILIENCE FOR CROSS-BORDER HEALTH THREATS**

(COM(2020) 724 TO /3; RCC(2020) 171)

**9. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND OF THE COUNCIL ON SERIOUS CROSS-BORDER THREATS TO
HEALTH AND REPEALING DECISION No 1082/2013/EU**

(COM(2020) 727 TO /3; RCC(2020) 171)

**10. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND OF THE COUNCIL ON A REINFORCED ROLE FOR THE
EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY IN CRISIS PREPAREDNESS AND
MANAGEMENT FOR MEDICINAL PRODUCTS AND MEDICAL DEVICES**

(COM(2020) 725 TO /3; RCC(2020) 171)

**11. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING REGULATION (EC) No 851/2004
ESTABLISHING A EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DISEASE PREVENTION
AND CONTROL**

(COM(2020) 726 TO /3; RCC(2020) 171)

The PRESIDENT introduced the College’s discussion on the set of measures proposed by the Commission to improve the protection of public health in the EU.

She took the opportunity to refer to the latest news concerning the development of one or several safe and effective vaccines against COVID 19, pointing out that the utmost vigilance was required regarding the rapid marketing authorisation of these vaccines by the European Medicines Agency. The Russian and Chinese vaccines were now being administered on a large scale and some Member States had announced that they would be using them in vaccination campaigns for their own populations. The European Medicines Agency was fully involved in the procedures ensuring the transparency of the authorisation process and the full disclosure of the

data collected for each product. It was essential that developments be closely monitored, particularly by the group of Commissioners concerned.

She also said that the name of a future European health authority should be chosen with care to ensure effective communication and give it a proper European identity.

Ms KYRIAKIDES presented to the College the set of measures proposed for its approval with a view to reinforcing the EU's health security framework and the role of the European agencies directly involved in crisis preparedness and response.

She began by explaining the context in which these proposals had been drawn up, pointing out that Europe was still facing an extremely worrying increase in cases of COVID-19 infection, as well as in hospital admissions and deaths.

The current crisis showed how much the health situation of any one Member State was contingent upon that of the others and highlighted the need to work together to minimise the negative effects of an epidemic on citizens and businesses and thereby effectively address public health threats.

At the beginning of the pandemic the adoption of unilateral measures by the Member States had led to a considerable fragmentation of the fight against a cross-border threat, ultimately making all the Member States more vulnerable.

At that time the Commission had noted a clear lack of preparedness and coordination, which had rapidly given rise to a shortage of medical equipment and screening capacities.

She also stressed that, added to the lack of foresight and response, the measures adopted had sometimes been contradictory both within and between Member States. These measures had become incomprehensible to the public and therefore difficult to comply with.

Now that citizens were confronted with health threats that transcended national borders, they expected the Union to play a more active role in protecting them and

were asking for more Europe in public health issues. This was something now acknowledged by the Member States, the European Parliament and stakeholders.

She noted that the Member States were now asking the Commission to provide a central coordination role. The Commission should make the most of this sign of trust by strengthening the foundations of a safer, better prepared and more resilient EU in the field of health.

The measures proposed that day, by strengthening the EU's crisis preparedness and response to cross-border health threats, were the first concrete steps in implementing a European Health Union.

These proposals entailed the recasting of the existing legislation on serious cross-border health threats and strengthened the crisis preparedness and response role of the EU's main agencies, namely the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

She stressed that the proposals thus envisaged a radical change in the EU's collective response capacity and the coordination of its action. The European Health Union could become the framework for all the health initiatives to be launched during the current mandate, whether they related to the Beating Cancer Plan, the Pharmaceutical Strategy or the European Health Data Space. These profound changes were all proposed within the framework of the existing Treaties, under which competences were still limited.

Ms KYRIAKIDES then considered the longer-term benefits of setting up a European Health Union, particularly from the standpoint of citizens.

She began by saying that the Member States and the EU would be stronger together and better equipped to provide a coherent response to cross-border public health threats. In particular, they would be able to adopt common measures on the basis of recommendations made by the ECDC. Crisis response plans established at EU and

national level and regularly subject to crisis simulations and audits would enable the Union to be better prepared.

From now on it would be possible to declare an emergency at EU level and activate its emergency response mechanisms independently, albeit in close coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, healthcare staff would be trained in the preparedness measures set out in this framework.

A rapid response pool of experts would be set up within the ECDC, which could be mobilised and deployed rapidly in the Member States. The Commission would also work with the Member States to develop common data and indicators so as to have a precise picture of the preparedness and capacity of health systems.

With regard to the long-term outlook, Ms KYRIAKIDES reminded the meeting of the urgent need to prepare for the next pandemic or health emergency.

That day's proposals would also make it possible to better anticipate public health risks thanks to the extended mandate of the ECDC, which would be able to develop state-of-the-art systems for the surveillance of emerging diseases, pathogens and other health threats. The ECDC would also be able to provide information to improve risk assessment, act quickly in real time and take informed decisions.

The additional resources to be allocated to the EMA would give it the tools to closely monitor potential shortages of medicines and medical devices. It would also play a bigger role in coordinating clinical trials and vaccine research, which was crucial in a crisis where speed was essential.

Lastly, she stressed that in a health emergency it was important to be able to rapidly implement the state-of-the-art measures, whether medical or non-medical, and to also be aware of biomedical innovations relevant to a crisis. To do this it was necessary to have the capacity to develop, buy and store the necessary goods.

This was why next year the Commission would propose the setting up of a European equivalent of the US Biomedical Advanced Research and Development

Authority (BARDA), the Health Emergency Response Authority (HERA). This would be a game-changer in terms of strategic preparedness and capacity to anticipate threats and strengthen the EU's common response and resilience to cross-border health threats.

In conclusion, Ms KYRIAKIDES said that neither Europe nor the rest of the world were ready for COVID-19. The lessons of this crisis should therefore be learned to ensure that the EU would be better prepared for future epidemics. The European Health Union was a key step forward in integration in a priority area for citizens and was set to become an important part of the current Commission's legacy.

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

- the importance of the proposed package of measures, which was the first building block of a future European Health Union to meet the security needs of Europeans;
- the timeliness of the Health Union as a topic for debate at the Conference on the Future of Europe;
- the significance of the major European demographic trends for the creation of the Health Union, given the ageing population that made the Union more vulnerable, and of the determining factors in the development of the pandemic, such as household composition and population density;
- the change in the Member States' position on the EU's role in the field of public health, given that the COVID-19 pandemic had shown it had been impossible to effectively manage an intrinsically cross-border crisis at nation-state level;

- the opportunity the health crisis provided to make a qualitative leap in managing public health at EU level, even if the EU's competences under the Treaties remained limited;
- the need, clearly understood by EU citizens, for a European continent that protected them effectively;
- the suggestion by some that the future European equivalent of the US Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) should have the status of executive agency rather than decentralised agency;
- the need to ensure that a future European health authority would be able to share data securely, plan in advance the investments needed to develop vaccines and then plan their large-scale manufacture;
- questions on the role of the future authority as regards research into existing molecules compared to the much more costly development of new molecules;
- the advisability of drawing up specific provisions on emergency procurement at EU level in compliance with EU competition rules;
- the considerable efforts undertaken with the support of the European cohesion funds to purchase medical and protective equipment and train qualified staff to manage the pandemic;
- the importance of demonstrating that the EU was as capable of protecting human health, despite its limited competences, as it was of protecting animal welfare, where it had played a leading role in the past.

Ms KYRIAKIDES thanked the Members of the College for their support. She expected a degree of nervousness on the part of the Member States, since their citizens were impatiently waiting for a vaccine to be available and lockdown measures to be lifted. She stressed the need for the Commission to closely monitor the vaccination strategies that would be implemented at national level.

The European Medicines Agency would play a central role in speeding up the process for authorising the marketing of pharmaceuticals, for which the Commission's forthcoming strategy on this point would set out concrete measures.

She also pointed out that authorisation for marketing the vaccines must necessarily involve the European Medicines Agency and that if Member States used national authorisation procedures, they must assume full responsibility for these. Requests for information to the Russian authorities concerning their vaccine had not been answered, even though disclosure of those data was essential for the use of such a vaccine in the EU.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2020) 724/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the national parliaments.
- adopted the proposals for regulations in COM(2020) 727/3, COM(2020) 725/3 and COM(2020) 726/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments.

**12. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – NEW CONSUMER AGENDA – STRENGTHENING CONSUMER RESILIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY
(COM(2020) 696 AND /2; RCC(2020) 170)**

The PRESIDENT asked Ms JOUROVÁ and Mr REYNDERS to present to the College the Communication proposing a new consumer agenda, the purpose of which was to give European consumers the means to increase their resilience with a view to sustainable economic recovery.

Ms JOUROVÁ began by stressing that consumer policy was a concrete example of a Europe that protects and that proposed solutions which balanced consumer interests and business interests. She added that the European Union was the best place for consumer protection thanks to the continued support of the Commission, while acknowledging that the COVID-19 pandemic had put these achievements to the test.

She said the new consumer agenda therefore set a new strategic framework for consumer policy for the next five years, taking account of the EU's political priorities. It covered (i) the green transition, (ii) the digital transformation, (iii) redress and enforcement of consumer rights, (iv) the specific needs of certain consumer groups, in particular vulnerable groups, and (v) international cooperation. The agenda proposed 22 measures in order to achieve those key objectives.

Mr REYNDERS explained that the new agenda had two main ambitions, which were to strengthen consumer protection in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and to give consumers the means with which to become real players in the green and digital transition.

He stressed that the pandemic had affected consumers in many ways, including in their online consumption patterns. He also noted an increase in online fraud and felt that close contact with digital platforms was needed to resolve that problem.

In addition, he observed that by ensuring that the five main priority areas were duly taken into account, the agenda would act as a guide to strengthening the single market in the new multiannual financial framework. By encouraging measures for a greener, more digital and fairer single market, the aim was to gain the confidence of consumers, whose spending accounted for 54% of the Union's gross domestic product. This would stimulate economic recovery through demand. In this respect, he felt there was a need to ensure the effective protection of consumers' interests while also supporting businesses, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises. He added that the opportunity should also be taken to promote sustainable products

and improve information on the sustainability of products.

As for the green transition, he said that consumers were increasingly keen to contribute personally to achieving climate neutrality, preserving natural resources and biodiversity, and reducing water, air and soil pollution. This momentum should therefore be harnessed by measures that enabled all consumers, regardless of their financial situation, to play an active role in the green transition without imposing a specific lifestyle and without social discrimination. Initiatives had already been taken to ensure that the products sold to EU consumers complied with the policy objectives mentioned, including the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Union's biodiversity Strategy, and the Zero Pollution Action Plan. He added that the new Circular Economy Action Plan defined a number of initiatives to combat early obsolescence, promote durability and recyclable and repairable products, and support business initiative. He also considered it essential for the future transformation to take account of consumer interests in the context of the digital economy, maintaining that consumers should be able to understand products and to compare and accept online offers.

Mr REYNDERS then referred to the issue of how to effectively enforce consumer rights, which were primarily the responsibility of the national authorities, but in which the Union played an important coordinating and supporting role. He pointed out that consumer policy instruments protected all consumers in their relations with supply stakeholders. With consumers generally being the weakest players in a transaction, their health, their safety and their economic interests should be protected. Some particularly vulnerable groups of consumer needed special safeguards. He also mentioned the growing financial vulnerability of many EU households, which was a real source of concern. That was why the new agenda included specific measures for low-income consumers, older people and people with disabilities as well as children and minors.

He added that in a globalised and interconnected world it was important to ensure strong international cooperation between the authorities and all the stakeholders in

the supply chain to ensure effective protection for consumers in the EU. At the same time, the Union had to promote its high level of consumer protection as a European value. In this respect he announced the intention to draw up an action plan to strengthen the EU's cooperation with China on product safety with regard to online sales.

Lastly, Mr REYNDERS concluded by pointing out that the new consumer agenda proposed a new governance framework that provided for greater coordination with stakeholders.

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

- the broad support for the new agenda for the next five years with the aim of further protecting European consumers' rights;
- the need to give citizens wishing to contribute to the green and digital transitions the means to act, in particular through more relevant and reliable information and appropriate labelling;
- the need to ensure the same consumer protection for online and offline purchases;
- the fact that digital campaigns can mislead and harm the most vulnerable groups of consumers in particular;
- the welcome focus of the new agenda on vulnerable groups of consumers, in particular older people and people with disabilities as well as children and minors;
- the wish for the Commission to present an initiative on animal welfare labelling;

- the observation that large digital platforms could use their dominant position on the market to the detriment of small retailers and the call for particular vigilance in this regard;
- the need for investment in the implementation of the European Green Deal and the contribution that sustainable finance could make, which would require better financial literacy.

The PRESIDENT concluded the discussion by thanking Ms JOUROVÁ and Mr REYNDERS.

Following these presentations, the Commission, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, confirmed the adoption of the Communication in COM(2020) 696/2 by the finalisation written procedure, the deadline for which was set at 10.00 on Friday 13 November 2020 (PE/2020/7945).

13. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – UNION OF EQUALITY – LGBTIQ EQUALITY STRATEGY 2020-2025 (COM(2020) 698 TO /3; RCC(2020) 169)

The PRESIDENT invited Ms JOUROVÁ and Ms DALLI to present the first ever EU strategy to promote equal treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people, covering the period 2020 to 2025.

She said that the strategy reflected the Commission's determination to create the conditions that would allow everyone in the EU to live in accordance with their identity without fear of exposure to discrimination.

Ms JOUROVÁ said that the objective was to eliminate the obstacles to equality for LGBTIQ people and to make clear progress by 2025 towards an EU in which

LGBTIQ people, in all their diversity, were safe and had equal chances of integrating into society and thus realising their potential.

She reported, with supporting figures, differing situations in the EU for LGBTIQ people. Without overlooking the encouraging progress made in some respects, there was an urgent need to put an end to the flagrant and persistent attacks to which LGBTIQ people were subject and to denounce unequivocally the unhealthy discourse directed against them in some Member States.

In order to do this, it was therefore necessary to take measures to guarantee that all EU citizens, whether or not LGBTIQ, enjoyed the same fundamental rights. She stressed that the strategy presented that day for the College's approval did not seek to create a privileged status for LGBTIQ people, which would have a stigmatising effect and also be counterproductive. The aim was to allow them to live their lives openly, without fear, in dignity and in harmony with their identity, which was a right granted to all citizens under the EU's founding principles.

Ms JOUROVÁ mentioned some flagship legislative proposals envisaged by the strategy. She referred in particular to the ambition to include hate crimes and hate speech directed against LGBTIQ people among the areas of crime covered by Article 83 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and to the objective of encouraging the mutual recognition of parenthood among the Member States.

Finally, she said that, beyond its content, the initiative presented that day was important by reason of its form. By approving for the first time ever a fully-fledged strategy to promote the equality of LGBTIQ people, and not simply a list of actions as in 2015, the Commission was sending a clear and strong signal of its determination to eradicate manifestations of hostility against them.

Ms DALLI stressed that being an LGBTIQ person was not a matter of ideology or a life choice; the citizens in question were quite simply seeking to live their lives with dignity and in accordance with their identities.

The strategy presented that day envisaged a series of targeted measures that took account of the multiple aspects and the complexity of the subject. The measures aimed, first, at combatting discrimination against LGBTIQ people, secondly, at guaranteeing their safety in public and private spaces and on-line, thirdly, at building inclusive societies that respected their peers and, fourthly, at making the EU a defender and an example of the equality of LGBTIQ people in the world.

She said that in this way the Commission intended to combat the manifestations of hostility that LGBTIQ people encountered in every sphere of their lives and throughout their lives.

LGBTIQ people, almost from the moment they were born, could be subject to violations that compromised their entire lives due to denial of their identities. She cited the example of parents who were forced, in the name of persistent stereotypes, to determine the sex of their intersex child at the time of birth, with the risk that the child would be trapped in an identity that was not its own, and to subject the child to irreversible surgery or medical treatments.

It was also essential to share good practices among the Member States to ensure that, throughout education, all children, without distinction, were integrated and considered to be equal.

She also called for significant progress in the mutual recognition of marriages and same-sex unions to ensure that all the rights of those involved were protected, including in the exercise of the freedom of movement.

Having made her case feelingly, Ms DALLI said it was the EU's responsibility to do everything in its power to prevent human lives from being undermined, abused and even ruined in the name of harmful stereotypes.

She welcomed the successive advances made since the appeal made to the Commission in 2013 by two EU ministers, which allowed the EU to equip itself now with a genuine strategy to promote the equality of LGBTIQ people.

She added that it was the current Commission's fourth contribution to a genuine Union of equality – a contribution that was all the more necessary because the COVID-19 had affected the most vulnerable groups disproportionately. She said that this contribution had been preceded by the EU gender equality strategy, the EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025 and the Strategic EU Framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation for the period after 2020.

In conclusion, she expressed the hope that the strategy presented that day would meet the expectations of a very large number of Member States, the European Parliament and civil society.

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

- the imperative need to act with determination to promote a Union of equality which included LGBTIQ people and the undeniable added value of the strategy presented, bearing in mind that fundamental rights applied to all citizens, whether or not LGBTIQ;
- the fact that the strategy presented that day would contribute to defending respect for human dignity, freedom, equality and respect for human rights, which were mentioned in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and which were the very foundation of the Union;
- the requirement never to take these values for granted and to continue tirelessly to ensure that non-discrimination, tolerance and solidarity remained expressions of these values which were common to the Member States;
- the reminder of the prohibition of all discrimination based on sex or sexual orientation;
- the insistence that LGBTIQ identities were objective, innate characteristics that society must accept, in the same way as other personal characteristics, and

whose dignity it must respect;

- in line with the PRESIDENT's State of the Union speech in September 2020, the need to combat discrimination and attacks against LGBTIQ people and to condemn, loudly and clearly, the very worrying situations observed in some Member States;
- the urgent need for the EU to make progress towards equality for LGBTIQ people in order to play, with all the necessary credibility, a leadership role in this field on the international scene;
- the reminder of the scale of the work to be done; the observation that, although homosexuality had been removed from the list of mental illnesses in the international classification of diseases published by the World Health Organization, sexual relations between people of the same sex remained liable to heavy criminal penalties in more than 70 countries throughout the world;
- the College's strong support for Ms DALLI, whose personal commitment was commended, in order to contribute to making the measures envisaged in the strategy a reality.

Following this discussion, Ms JOUROVÁ and Ms DALLI answered a question concerning the risks of discrimination in employment against heterosexual people, stressing that recruitment could take place only on the basis of the candidates' qualifications and never on the basis of their sexual orientation. They also pointed out that this information could not be required for employment purposes and that it constituted sensitive personal data within the meaning of the general data protection regulation, precisely because it was linked to peoples' identity.

The PRESIDENT said that the first ever Commissioner for equality would be an undoubted asset for achieving a genuine Union of equality that recognised the LGBTIQ identity as such, in the name of human dignity. She thanked Ms JOUROVÁ and Ms DALLI for their personal commitment to the defence of a

just cause.

Following these presentations, the Commission, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, confirmed the adoption of the Communication in COM(2020) 698/3 by the finalisation written procedure, the deadline for which was set at 10.00 on Thursday 12 November 2020 (PE/2020/7968).

14. OTHER MATTERS

14.1. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The PRESIDENT turned to the recent US elections and the particularly complex domestic political situation of the United States at the present time. These elections had shown that American democracy was resilient and that the country's institutions worked well. From the Union's perspective, she felt it was important to have a constructive partnership with the United States.

She was therefore in favour of relaunching a transatlantic dialogue without delay and putting forward a mutually beneficial cooperation programme to the President-elect, Mr Joe Biden, who would take office on 20 January 2021.

One of the key areas in which the Union would seek closer cooperation was combating climate change. Rejoining the Paris climate agreement, from which the United States had recently withdrawn, was a priority for the President-elect. She welcomed this change of direction which would provide the Union with an additional partner in this global struggle. However, renewed involvement on the part of the United States also meant that European companies would henceforth have a serious competitor and would have to prepare themselves accordingly.

Upcoming legislative initiatives by the Union concerning digital services and the digital single market and, in particular, the creation of a framework for

gatekeepers should enable it to take the lead on the digital economy and technology. In the current institutional context, the new US administration would probably struggle to legislate in this area when it took office. In addition, it was time to reap the benefits of a technical dialogue with the United States on 5G which was drawing to a conclusion by deploying the toolbox recommended by the Commission last September.

The PRESIDENT mentioned the other areas of cooperation which should be developed with the United States and in which it was important for the Union to gain a powerful ally, namely health and pandemic risks, the reform of multilateral bodies like the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization, security, including the Iran nuclear deal and, lastly, trade.

She announced her intention to set up a clearing house system led by the PRESIDENT's cabinet which would centralise contacts with the President-elect's transition team with a view to ensuring a cohesive approach. The EU should seize any opportunities to establish the closest possible partnership in the areas which reflected its political priorities.

She invited Mr DOMBROVSKIS to inform the College of the latest developments in the *Airbus-Boeing* trade dispute and asked Mr BORRELL to comment on the American election from the international relations perspective.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS briefed the College on the twenty-year *Airbus-Boeing* dispute between the United States and the Member States of the Union. He focused on the Union's countermeasures which had taken effect on 10 November. The Union would place tariffs on the United States mirroring the subsidies awarded by the American authorities to aircraft maker *Boeing* to the detriment of *Airbus*. The World Trade Organization (WTO) had authorised the Union on 26 October 2020 to take countermeasures worth USD 4 billion in the *Boeing* case. These countermeasures included additional

tariffs of 15% on aircraft and additional tariffs of 25% on a range of agricultural and industrial products imported from the United States, thereby strictly mirroring the countermeasures imposed by the United States in the context of the *Airbus* case.

The WTO had allowed the United States in October 2019 to take countermeasures against European exports worth up to USD 7.5 billion. This award was based on an Appellate Body decision which had found that the Union and its Member States had not fully complied with the previous WTO rulings with regard to Repayable Launch Investment for the A350 and A380 programmes. The United States had imposed these additional tariffs on 18 October 2019.

The Member States of the Union had decided on 7 November to adopt these countermeasures because the United States had not sought to negotiate a settlement of this dispute. These new countermeasures put the Union on an equal footing with the United States, with sizeable tariffs on each side based on the two WTO decisions related to aircraft subsidies. That said, the European Commission had informed the United States that it was ready to work with them to resolve this dispute and also to agree on long-term disciplines on aircraft subsidies. He hoped that progress could be made on this matter when the new administration took office early in 2021.

Mr BORRELL spoke of the difficulties that could be expected in the coming weeks as a result of the domestic political situation of the United States in terms of the presidential election and the composition of the Senate.

On the foreign policy front, one of the most important events for the transatlantic relationship would be the United States' return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concerning the Iran nuclear deal, to which Mr Biden was committed. The Union was ready to work closely with the United States on this matter. In general, the future President had declared his

intention of relaunching negotiations on regional security issues with Iran.

Turning to trade issues, in particular within the context of relations with China, he said that the Union was already engaged in a structured dialogue on the subject with the current secretary of state, Mr Pompeo. The new administration was not expected to adopt a fundamentally different approach.

Winding up this part of the discussion on transatlantic relations, he recommended maintaining contact with Republican Party representatives while developing ties with the new administration.

Mr BORRELL then reviewed other recent developments in international affairs.

He commended the conduct of the elections in Bolivia and the peaceful transition to which they had given rise.

Turning to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, he said that fighting had stopped and that Azerbaijan and Armenia had concluded a peace deal brokered by Russia.

Lastly, the resumption of civil war in Ethiopia following a military operation by the army in the dissident Tigray region was a matter of major concern.

The Commission took note of this information.

14.2. OUTCOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ON THE 2021-2027 MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK AND THE NEXTGENERATIONEU RECOVERY INSTRUMENT

The PRESIDENT invited Mr HAHN to give the College a brief overview of the outcome of the negotiations between Parliament and the Council on the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework and the NextGenerationEU

recovery instrument.

Mr HAHN explained that, after twelve trilogues on the next multiannual financial framework and five more on the rule of law mechanism, a political agreement on these two key issues had finally been reached on 10 November. He felt this outcome was extraordinary, as the total amount of 1 800 billion euros to be allocated to the multiannual financial framework and the NextGenerationEU recovery fund represented a major milestone in the history of the European Union.

To finance the recovery, the Commission would borrow on the markets at preferential rates reflecting the Union's solid credit rating, and would redistribute the amounts borrowed to the Member States.

To facilitate the subsequent repayment of these loans, new own resources would be input to supplement the Member States' contributions to the EU budget. The roadmap agreed on 10 November contained clear commitments on the nature of these new own resources, the schedule for the corresponding proposals that would be tabled by the Commission and their introduction. A carbon border adjustment mechanism and a digital levy would need to be put forward by June 2021, with a view to being introduced by 1 January 2023 at the latest. Moreover, by June 2021 a proposal would also be put forward on a new own resource based on the greenhouse gas emission quota trading system, while others, to be proposed by June 2024, could include a financial transaction tax, a financial contribution linked to the corporate sector or a new common corporate tax base. The new own resources would allow the Union to finance part of the interest and repayments due under the NextGenerationEU plan.

One of the salient features of the agreement reached on 10 November was the extra 15 billion euros provided for priority programmes in relation to last July's agreement in principle with the European Council. The Union's

multiannual financial framework would continue to play a key role in supporting the recovery and allowing beneficiaries of European funds to carry on operating in these very difficult times. It would be financed in part by a mechanism with a fixed budget of 11 billion euros for 2022-2027, with annual amounts yet to be specified which would depend on budgeted competition fines. Mr HAHN also explained that 50% of the total allocation of 1 800 billion euros would support the modernisation of the European economy, while traditional policies such as cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy would also continue to receive substantial financial support. Key programmes, such as Horizon Europe, EU4Health and Erasmus+, would be strengthened, receiving an extra 4 billion, 3.4 billion and 2.2 billion euros respectively.

As regards the rule of law mechanism, which was an essential requirement for the European Parliament, he thanked all those at the Commission who had enabled an agreement to be reached behind the scenes.

Mr HAHN concluded by explaining that the agreement on the multiannual financial framework now needed to be formally adopted by Parliament and the Council. At the same time, work needed to continue to ensure the final adoption of all other related elements, including sectoral legislation and the decision on own resources. In addition, negotiations on the annual budget for 2021 needed to take place, which meant that the Commission would be required to draft an amending letter to the 2021 budget by the end of the week.

A brief discussion ensued, during which the Commission mainly referred to the historic importance of the agreement and the fact that it would allow the interinstitutional negotiations concerning various initiatives that depended on it to reach a definitive conclusion in a few weeks' time.

Mr HAHN also informed the College of the second SURE bond issue in an

amount of 14 billion euros on capital markets, where demand had greatly exceeded supply.

In conclusion, the PRESIDENT thanked Mr HAHN and his team for the very important work accomplished on this matter. She was particularly satisfied with the agreement on new own resources. These resources were now seen by all key players as a necessity and a step forward. The protection of biodiversity had also been highlighted. The agreement still needed to be formally adopted by Parliament and the Council and ratified by the national parliaments before becoming a reality.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT indicated that she would hold a videoconference that day, in accordance with Article 324 of the Treaty on European Union, with the President of the European Parliament and the German Chancellor on behalf of the Council Presidency.

The Commission took note of this information.

**14.3. COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE PROPOSED
CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVE
FOR A BAN ON BIOMETRIC MASS SURVEILLANCE PRACTICES'
(C(2020) 7869)**

Ms JOUROVÁ presented a draft decision being tabled for approval by the College concerning the registration of a proposal for a European citizens' initiative entitled, in the authentic language (English), 'Civil society initiative for a ban on biometric mass surveillance practice'. In essence, this initiative called upon the Commission, in the interests of protecting fundamental rights, to (i) introduce an explicit ban on biometric mass surveillance into EU law, (ii) provide Member States' national authorities with guidelines with regard to the obligations arising from existing data protection regulations, (iii) strengthen compliance with those obligations, and (iv) collect data on current uses of biometric technology in public spaces and their impact on

fundamental rights.

The College was being called upon that day to decide solely on the registration of the initiative; at this stage, neither the substance of the initiative nor its political expediency were to be assessed.

The conditions for the registration of European citizens' initiatives were laid down in Article 6(3) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the European citizens' initiative.

These conditions included the requirement that none of the parts of the initiative should manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

Ms JOUROVÁ pointed out that, following the assessment of the Legal Service, only the first of the four measures requested by the group of organisers, which would take the form of a legislative initiative, satisfied this requirement, while the other three required the Commission to take non-legislative initiatives, for which it was solely responsible.

She also noted that the proposed citizens' initiative did not, as things stood, fulfil the requirement set out in Article 6(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788, which meant that it could not be registered.

However, with a view to encouraging participatory democracy in the Union via the European citizens' initiative, according to the registration procedure introduced by Regulation (EU) 2019/788, if the above requirement was not met, the Commission should inform the group of organisers of its assessment and of the reasons thereof, so that the group could decide whether to amend the initiative to take into account the Commission's assessment, maintain it, or withdraw it.

The Commission confirmed that, as things stood, the citizens' initiative entitled 'Civil society initiative for a ban on biometric mass surveillance practice' did not meet all of the conditions for registration. It therefore decided, in line with document C(2020) 7869, to inform the initiative's group of organisers of its assessment and of the reasons thereof in accordance with Article 6(4) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788, and authorised Mme JOUROVÁ to sign the corresponding information letter on behalf of the College and to send it to the group of organisers in the authentic language (English).

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The meeting ended at 12.01.