



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2021) 2383 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 20 July 2021

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2383rd meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 23 June 2021

(morning)

PV(2021) 2383 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

EN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Attendance list	4-5
1. AGENDAS (OJ(2021) 2383/FINAL; SEC(2021) 2383/FINAL)	6
2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET (RCC(2021) 2383)	6
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2378 TH , 2379 TH , 2380 TH , 2381 ST AND 2382 ND MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (18 AND 26 MAY, 2, 8 AND 15 JUNE 2021) (PV(2021) 2378; PV(2021) 2379)	6
4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (RCC(2021) 130)	6
5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2021) 32).....	11
6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS.....	11
6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2021) 230 ET SEQ.).....	11
6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2021) 231 ET SEQ.)	11
6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2021) 232 ET SEQ.)	11
6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2021) 233 AND /2)	11
7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2021) 234).....	12
7.1. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS – AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL (AT GRADE AD15/16) AND EXTERNAL (AT GRADE AD15) PUBLICATION OF A DIRECTOR-GENERAL POST (PERS(2021) 55)	12
7.2. JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND TRANSFERS OF OFFICIALS UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS.....	12

7.3. EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE – PROCEDURE RELATING TO THE APPOINTMENT, PROFESSIONAL STATUS, REMUNERATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ATTACHMENT OF THE FUNCTION OF CONTROLLER OF PROCEDURAL GUARANTEES (PERS(2021) 56)	13
7.4. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – COMMISSION DECISION ON POST TERM-OF-OFFICE ACTIVITY OF A FORMER MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION (C(2021) 9012)	14
8. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON BUILDING A JOINT CYBER UNIT (C(2021) 4520 AND /2; RCC(2021) 140)	15
9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – EU STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK 2021-2027 – OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK (COM(2021) 323 AND /2; SWD(2021) 148 AND /2; SWD(2021) 149 AND /2; RCC(2021) 138)	18
10. OTHER BUSINESS	20
10.1. PROPOSALS FOR ADEQUACY DECISIONS TO BE GRANTED TO THE UNITED KINGDOM CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONAL DATA AND THE APPLICATION OF THE LAW	20
10.2. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION IN EUROPE	22

Single sitting: Wednesday 23 June 2021 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.05 with Mr TIMMERMANS in the chair, the PRESIDENT being absent.

Present:

Mr TIMMERMANS	Executive Vice-President
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President
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
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member
Ms McGUINNESS	Member

Absent:

Ms von der LEYEN	President
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President
Mr HAHN	Member
Ms GABRIEL	Member
Mr SCHMIT	Member
Ms SIMSON	Member

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

Mr SERRANO	Chef de cabinet to Mr BORRELL	Item 10
Mr NOCIAR	Chef de cabinet to Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	
Ms JAHNS	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr HAHN	
Ms KIRÁLY	Chef de cabinet to Ms GABRIEL	
Ms SYSAITÉ	Adviser in Mr SCHMIT's Office	
Mr GRASSI	Chef de cabinet to Ms SIMSON	

The following also sat in:

Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr CALLEJA CRESPO	Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Ms SPINANT	Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Mr WHELAN	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Item 8
Ms CABRAL	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Item 9
Ms SCHULTZ	Policy Coordinator in the PRESIDENT's Office	

Secretary: Ms JUHANSONE, Secretary-General, assisted by Ms ALLOUIS-LE LOSTEC, Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2021) 2383/FINAL; SEC(2021) 2383/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(2021) 2383)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 21 June 2021.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2378TH, 2379TH, 2380TH, 2381ST AND 2382ND MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (18 AND 26 MAY, 2, 8 AND 15 JUNE 2021)

(PV(2021) 2378; PV(2021) 2379)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2378th and 2379th meetings and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2380th, 2381st and 2382nd meetings for a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2021) 130)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held by videoconference on Friday 18 June 2021 (RCC(2021) 130).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1367/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 September 2006 on the application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters to Community institutions and bodies (Regulation) – DOLESCHAL report – 2020/0289 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2021) 186/2.

- **Establishment of the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (Council Regulation) – CARVALHO report – 2020/0260 (NLE)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 424.

The Commission approved the lines set out for the following points, for transmission to Parliament:

- **Commission replies to the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its part-session of March II 2021 (Part II)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 409/2.

- **Commission replies to the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its part-session of April 2021 (Part I)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 414/3.

- **Commission replies to the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its part-session of June I 2021 (Part I)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 415.

- **Commission replies to the legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its part-session of May 2021**

Line set out in SP(2021) 437.

The Commission approved the lines set out for the following points, for transmission to the European Economic and Social Committee:

- **Follow-up to opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – Plenary session of February 2021**

Line set out in SC(2021) 21/3.

- **Follow-up to opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – Plenary session of January 2021**

Line set out in SC(2021) 19/2.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – 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)**
- **Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund (Regulation) – COZZOLINO report – 2018/0197 (COD)**
- **Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – Specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the**

**European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments
(Regulation) – ARIMONT report – 2018/0199 (COD)**

Compromise texts in SP(2021) 416, further to COM(2021) 291, which the Commission had already approved on 3 June 2021, in SP(2021) 417, further to COM(2021) 283, which the Commission had already approved on 3 June 2021, and in SP(2021) 418, further to COM(2021) 289, which the Commission had already approved on 1 June 2021.

- **Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – Public sector loan facility under the Just Transition Mechanism (Regulation) – HAHN & VAN OVERTVELDT report – 2020/0100 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2021) 419, further to note SI(2021) 126/2, which the Commission had already approved on 5 May 2021.

- **Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – Participation of the Union in the European Partnership on Metrology jointly undertaken by several Member States (Decision) – CARVALHO report – 2021/0049 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2021) 199.

- **Visa Information System (VIS) – Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008, Regulation (EC) No 810/2009, Regulation (EU) 2017/2226, Regulation (EU) 2016/399, Regulation XX/2018 [Interoperability Regulation] and Decision 2004/512/EC, and repeal of Council Decision 2008/633/JHA (Regulation) – RANGEL report – 2018/0152A (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2021) 420, further to note COM(2021) 303, which the Commission had already approved on 4 June 2021.

- **Visa Information System (VIS): conditions for accessing other EU information systems for VIS purposes – Amendment of Regulation (EC)**

No 767/2008, Regulation (EC) No 810/2009, Regulation (EU) 2017/2226, Regulation (EU) 2016/399, Regulation XX/2018 [Interoperability Regulation], and Decision 2004/512/EC and repeal of Council Decision 2008/633/JHA (Regulation) – RANGEL report – 2018/0152B (COD)

Compromise text in SP(2021) 421, further to note COM(2021) 303, which the Commission had already approved on 4 June 2021.

- **Establishment of the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) (Regulation) – GUTELAND report – 2020/0036 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2021) 422, further to note SI(2021) 125, which the Commission had already approved on 5 May 2021.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2019/833 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 laying down conservation and enforcement measures applicable in the Regulatory Area of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (Regulation) – CARVALHAIS report – 2020/0095 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2021) 423, further to note SI(2021) 111, which the Commission had already approved on 21 April 2021.

- **Latest developments in the G20/OECD-led negotiations on international taxation, also in light of the recent G7 meeting**

Information set out in SPI(2021) 31.

**5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION
(RCC(2021) 32)**

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2021) 32 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held by videoconference on Wednesday 16 June 2021.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

**6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2021) 230 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 14 and 18 June 2021.

**6.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2021) 231 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 14 and 18 June 2021.

**6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2021) 232 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 14 and 18 June 2021 archived in Decide.

**6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2021) 233 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 21 and 25 June 2021.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2021) 234)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2021) 54)

**7.1. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS –
AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND
INTERINSTITUTIONAL (AT GRADE AD15/16) AND EXTERNAL
(AT GRADE AD15) PUBLICATION OF A DIRECTOR-GENERAL POST
(PERS(2021) 55)**

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr VÁRHELYI, the Commission decided to authorise the internal and interinstitutional (at grade AD15/16) and external (at grade AD15) publication of the vacancy notice in PERS(2021) 55 for the post of Director-General of DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.2. JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE – AMENDMENT OF THE
ORGANISATION CHART AND TRANSFERS OF OFFICIALS UNDER
ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS**

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

- to relocate the post of Director of the ‘Competences’ Directorate in Ispra to Brussels;
- to transfer to the post, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Delilah AL KHUDHAIRY, currently Director of the ‘Strategy, Work Programme and Resources’ Directorate in the Joint Research Centre;
- to transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Sabine HENZLER, currently Director of the ‘International and General Affairs’ Directorate in DG Taxation and Customs Union to the ‘Strategy, Work Programme and Resources (Brussels)’ Directorate in the Joint Research Centre.

These decisions would take effect on 1 September 2021.

**7.3. EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE – PROCEDURE RELATING TO THE APPOINTMENT, PROFESSIONAL STATUS, REMUNERATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ATTACHMENT OF THE FUNCTION OF CONTROLLER OF PROCEDURAL GUARANTEES
(PERS(2021) 56)**

The Commission took note of the information in point 3 of PERS(2021) 54 and, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided:

- to authorise the publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* of the call for applications in PERS(2021) 56 for the function of Controller of procedural guarantees;
- to instruct Mr HAHN to set up a selection panel to examine the applications and propose a shortlist of suitably qualified candidates for the post;

- to administratively attach the Controller of procedural guarantees to the Secretariat of the Supervisory Committee;
- to grant him/her the status of special adviser within the meaning of Article 5 of the Conditions of Employment of other servants of the European Union for the duration of the term of office;
- to set the amount of his/her fees per day of service at 1/22 of the basic salary of an official at AD14 (first step) (22 being the average number of working days per month);
- to reimburse his/her travel and subsistence expenses on the basis of the guide to missions for Commission officials.

The decision on the shortlist of candidates, with a view to consultation by Parliament and the Council, would be presented to the College at a later stage.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.4. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – COMMISSION DECISION ON POST TERM-OF-OFFICE ACTIVITY OF A FORMER MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION
(C(2021) 9012)

The Commission adopted the Decision set out in C(2021) 9012.

The Commission specifically decided that the professional activity envisaged by Mr Günther OETTINGER after leaving office as a Member of the Commission was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and with the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, subject to certain specific conditions and obligations, as set out in the Decision.

This decision would take effect immediately.

8. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON BUILDING A JOINT CYBER UNIT

(C(2021) 4520 AND /2; RCC(2021) 140)

Ms VESTAGER briefly presented to the College the proposal for a recommendation on building a Joint Cyber Unit, pointing out that the PRESIDENT had announced this initiative in her political guidelines presented at the beginning of her term of office. To combat the rise in online attacks, the Commission proposed pooling the resources and expertise available to the EU and its Member States in order to prevent and discourage this type of attack and react effectively if necessary.

She explained that the creation of the Joint Cyber Unit would be a gradual process. For the moment, she therefore advised against overselling the benefits that could be expected from it in the short term.

Mr SCHINAS stated that cybersecurity constituted a major new challenge for the EU and a national security issue for its Member States. He pointed out that cyberattacks had occurred with increasing frequency during the pandemic, targeting health care systems and the data held by them in particular. These data had to be protected due to the fact that they constituted sensitive personal information, and the appeal they held for cybercriminals.

Following the revision of the Directive on security of network and information systems (NIS Directive) in November 2020, the EU now had the means to be better prepared to deal with cyberattacks against physical infrastructure, which had increased in recent months.

He recommended maintaining a high level of ambition as regards cybersecurity, as well as an awareness of the sensitivity of Member States wishing to protect their competences in this strategically important area of national security.

The creation of a Joint Cyber Unit was only the tip of the iceberg, since the proposal for a Commission recommendation was one of a series of documents – adopted at the same time by written procedure – by means of which the Commission took stock in its second report of the progress made in recent months as regards the Security Union Strategy; presented the first report on the implementation of the EU's Cybersecurity Strategy, as requested by the European Council; and published the fifth report on the implementation of the 2016 Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats and the 2018 Joint Communication 'increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats. He also mentioned the decision on establishing the office of the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) in Brussels, in accordance with the Cybersecurity Act.

Mr BRETON confirmed that the EU, as a political actor, economic power and security hub, was the target of a growing number of attacks. Whether they were of an economic, political, commercial or military nature, the only goal of those attacks was to destabilise EU systems and infrastructure. He nonetheless noted that, increasingly, it was possible to identify the source of such attacks, which often came from state actors.

Growing levels of connectivity, the increasing number of connected objects and the intensifying use of industrial data meant that the EU's attack surface was increasing.

For this reason, in December 2020 the Commission had presented a new cybersecurity strategy, the European Cyber Shield, which aimed to protect, identify, defend and dissuade. Implementing this strategy would require cutting-edge technologies, secure infrastructure, joint security requirements on the market and operational cooperation.

He explained that, following the proposal for the revision of the Network and Information Security (NIS) Directive and the agreement on the EU-wide cybersecurity research network as well as work on the development of the network of security operations centres (SOC), the Commission, together with the Joint Cyber

Unit, was today proposing that coordinated operational capacity for the EU be established. In this way, it wished to give fresh impetus to the implementation of a joint crisis management tool and the basis for genuine solidarity for European mutual assistance in the event of a major attack.

He noted that, today, too many of those involved in cybersecurity in Europe were working in isolation and in a very poorly integrated way. They were grouped into civil, judicial, diplomatic or defence branches. The Joint Cyber Unit would therefore be a physical and virtual platform for cooperation between all these actors, with the aim of establishing operational and technical coordination in order to deal with large-scale incidents.

Mr BRETON stated that the Joint Cyber Unit would focus on three main strands, namely (i) preparation, based on cooperation protocols tested between actors, national crisis plans and accurate mapping of available capabilities, (ii) surveillance and monitoring of cyberattack detection infrastructure and real-time information exchange, and (iii) a coordinated response enabling it to resist attacks, using European rapid response teams, coordinated attribution and public communication, as well as the mobilisation of the private sector.

It would take just over a year to set up the Unit, because all procedures would need to be harmonised in close cooperation with the Member States.

He concluded his presentation by observing that today, no single state could deal alone with cyber threats which, in an integrated single market, were unchecked by borders and required an appropriate response at EU level in the form of joint operational capacity with resources, both budgetary and in terms of human expertise.

In the course of the brief discussion that followed, the Commission raised the issue of the particular risks posed by cyberattacks targeting food supply systems, particularly where these systems were concentrated in the hands of a few actors.

Following these presentations, the Commission adopted the recommendation in C(2021) 4520/2 and decided to notify it to the addressees and to publish it, for information, in the Official Journal of the European Union.

9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – EU STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK 2021-2027 – OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

(COM(2021) 323 AND /2; SWD(2021) 148 AND /2; SWD(2021) 149 AND /2; RCC(2021) 138)

Mr TIMMERMANS invited Mr DOMBROVSKIS to present the EU strategic framework for 2021-2027 on occupational safety and health (OSH) in a changing world of work.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS noted that this communication was very timely, given that the green and digital transitions and the COVID-19 pandemic were transforming the environment. EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) legislation was vital for protecting the health and safety of almost 170 million workers across the EU. Significant progress had been made in this field in recent decades and the right to a healthy and safe workplace was now enshrined in Principle 10 of the European Pillar of Social Rights. However, there were still too many accidents. Furthermore, over 200 000 workers died from work-related illnesses in the EU each year. Quite apart from the human suffering they caused, work-related accidents and illnesses cost the EU economy over 3.3% of its GDP every year. Maintaining and improving protection standards for workers therefore remained a priority for a European economy that worked for people.

The stakeholders consulted by the Commission had confirmed the need to set shared EU strategic objectives on OSH. The new strategic framework for 2021-2027 laid down the key priorities for the coming years. These were: anticipating and managing change in the new world of work brought about by the green, digital and demographic transitions, improving prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses through such measures as a ‘Vision Zero’ approach to work-related deaths in the EU, and increasing preparedness for any potential future health crises.

To achieve these objectives, action would need to be taken at EU, national, sectoral and company level.

To manage change, the EU intended to modernise the OSH legislative framework to take digitalisation into account. Other change management measures included suggesting limit values for workers’ asbestos and lead exposure and adopting an initiative on mental health at work.

As regards prevention, the communication set out the intention to promote a ‘Vision Zero’ approach to eliminate work-related deaths in the EU. It also outlined plans to amend legislation on carcinogens and mutagens in order to combat cancer.

Finally, to prepare for the future, the Commission proposed developing emergency OSH procedures and guidelines for future health crises and updating the Commission Recommendation on occupational diseases to include COVID-19 by 2022.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS wrapped up his presentation by highlighting that in parallel to the strategic framework he had presented, the Commission would that day launch the second-phase consultation of the social partners, under Article 154 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to chemical agents at work and to asbestos at work.

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

- the College’s support for this initiative, especially the attention paid to the inequalities – made even greater by the pandemic – that affected certain groups of workers, such as people with disabilities and women;
- support for adapting various aspects of the communication to the new environment that now existed in the world of work, and particularly to teleworking;
- the Commission’s intention to present an initiative on preventing and combating gender-based violence, including in the workplace, by the end of this year;
- aspects related to the health and safety of people living on family farms and in rural areas;
- the importance for the EU to ensure that its trading partners applied the same standards of protection for farm workers.

Mr TIMMERMANS wound up the discussion by noting that part of the reform of the common agricultural policy covered social aspects relating to the protection of agricultural workers, especially migrant workers.

Following this presentation, the Commission, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, confirmed that the communication in COM(2021) 323/2 would be formally approved by the finalisation written procedure, the deadline for which was set at 10.00 on Monday 28 June 2021 (PE/2021/4525).

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1. PROPOSALS FOR ADEQUACY DECISIONS TO BE GRANTED TO THE UNITED KINGDOM CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONAL DATA AND THE APPLICATION OF THE LAW

Mr REYNDERS informed the Commission that that day, written procedures relating to two Commission implementing decisions pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council and to Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council, respectively, on the adequate protection of personal data by the United Kingdom (C(2021) 4800 – PE/2021/4806 and COM(2021) 4801 – PE/2021/4807) were being launched with the deadline on 28 June.

These implementing decisions were unilateral measures by the Commission and were not part of the ongoing negotiations with the UK side, but their adoption should allow for a more effective functioning of the UK Withdrawal Agreement.

He stressed that several provisions had been incorporated into those two decisions which provided for ways to avoid, as far as possible, the consequences of any divergences with the United Kingdom in the processing of personal data, in particular a sunset clause activating after four years and the possibility of suspending the adequacy decisions, in whole or in part, or amending them in the event of negative developments.

He stated that these were the first such decisions taken after the Schrems judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union in 2015 (Case C-362/14) and in 2020 (Case C-311/18), and noted that that case had been examined by the Irish High Court of Justice. A judgment of the latter court thus justified the retention of immigration data outside the scope of the new decision.

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

- the support of the College for the adequacy decisions proposed for adoption by written procedure;

- the importance of these decisions, which were essential in particular for trade relations and judicial cooperation;
- the need to be vigilant in monitoring and following up the United Kingdom's implementation of the existing rules on the protection of personal data;
- a mention of the difficulties encountered during the Brexit negotiations and, at the same time, a reminder that trust was a basic principle essential to any partnership.

Mr TIMMERMANS thanked Mr REYNDERS and closed the discussion by stressing the importance of mutual trust between the parties to the Withdrawal Agreement and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, as well as the fact that it was in the United Kingdom's interest to fulfil the commitments made.

The Commission took note of this information.

10.2. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION IN EUROPE

Ms KYRIAKIDES gave a brief overview of the epidemiological situation in Europe. She reported that the number of COVID-19 cases and related mortality rates were steadily decreasing across the EU, with an average of 72 cases per 1 000 citizens. During the previous week, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) had reported that the situation in eight Member States was classified as moderate concern and that in 22 Member States as low concern.

She explained that this good news was mainly due to an increase in vaccination, rising temperatures, and public health measures.

She noted that, currently, the main concern was related to the variants, in particular the Delta variant, which for the time being did not represent a threat

to Europe. However, it was, for example, the cause of 60% of all cases of infection in the Lisbon region of Portugal. There was therefore a risk of an increase in the number of cases due to this variant, particularly in unvaccinated people.

She stressed that, in this context, it was crucial to continue vaccination campaigns and to support partner countries globally.

The Commission took note of this information.

*

* *

The meeting closed at 9.47.

* * *

**The working lunch with Mr António GUTERRES,
Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) began at 12.00**

The PRESIDENT warmly welcomed Mr António GUTERRES, Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN). She thanked him for visiting the College, which was pleased and honoured to receive him.

First of all, she congratulated Mr GUTERRES on his re-election on 18 June for a second term as Secretary-General. In the difficult global context, he would have a great deal of work not only to preserve the rules-based multilateral order but also to continually renew it. She assured him of the full support of the EU, which would stand by him in this endeavour.

She then referred to the major challenges currently facing the world that she proposed to discuss with him, namely (i) the fight against climate change, (ii) help for refugees, (iii) democracy, rule of law principles and human rights, and (iv) the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the discussion, she accepted with enthusiasm and as an honour Mr GUTERRES's proposal to hold regular meetings between the Commission and the UN to take stock of the many missions they had in common.

She thanked Mr GUTERRES warmly once again for his visit to the Commission.

* * *

The working lunch finished at 13.30.

*

* *

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