



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2023) 2464 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 6 September 2023

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2464th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill building)

on Tuesday 11 July 2023

(afternoon)

PV(2023) 2464 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

EN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Attendance list	6–7
1. AGENDAS (OJ(2023) 2464/FINAL; SEC(2023) 2464/FINAL)	8
2. WEEKLY MEETING OF HEADS OF CABINET (RCC(2023) 2464).....	8
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES	8
4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (RCC(2023) 139)	8
5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2023) 28).....	14
6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS.....	14
6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2023) 245 ET SEQ.).....	14
6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2023) 246 ET SEQ.)	14
6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2023) 247 ET SEQ.)	14
6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2023) 248 AND /2)	15
7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2023) 249 TO /3)	15
7.1. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR- GENERAL AT GRADE AD15/16 (PERS(2023) 36 TO /4)	15
7.2. DG REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY – TERMINATION OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR THE POST OF A DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15/16 AND TRANSFER OF AN OFFICIAL AT GRADE AD15 UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS (PERS(2023) 15).....	16
7.3. DG EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE – TRANSFER OF AN OFFICIAL AT GRADE AD15 UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS	16

7.4. DG COMPETITION – APPOINTMENT OF A CHIEF COMPETITION ECONOMIST AT GRADE AD14 (PERS(2023) 25 TO /4)	17
7.5. JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15 (PERS(2023) 66 TO /3)	17
7.6. DG MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES – EXTENSION OF THE SECONDMENT IN THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE, UNDER ARTICLES 37 AND 38 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS, OF AN AD16 OFFICIAL	18
7.7. DG INTERPRETATION – AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD15/16, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD15, OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL POST (PERS(2023) 67)	18
7.8. DG BUDGET – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND INTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A DIRECTOR POST AT GRADE AD14/15 (PERS(2023) 68; SEC(2023) 273)	19
7.9. DG HUMAN RESOURCES – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART, INTERNAL PUBLICATION AT GRADE AD15/16 OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR- GENERAL POST, AS WELL AS INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14/15, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14, OF A PRINCIPAL ADVISER POST (PERS(2023) 69; PERS(2023) 70; SEC(2023) 279)	20
7.10. DG INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14/15, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14, OF TWO PRINCIPAL ADVISER POSTS (PERS(2023) 71; PERS(2023) 72; SEC(2023) 285)	21
7.11. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL ADVISER AT GRADE AD14/15 (PERS(2023) 73 TO /3)	22
7.12. DG BUDGET – COMMISSION DECISION ON THE APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 53 OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT PLANS OF THE COMMISSION, OF THE RESEARCH DIRECT AND INDIRECT ACTIONS IN 2023 (C(2023) 5001)	22
8. OTHER BUSINESS	23

<i>EU-U.S. DATA PRIVACY FRAMEWORK</i>	23
---	----

9. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING DIRECTIVE 2012/29/EU ESTABLISHING MINIMUM STANDARDS ON THE RIGHTS, SUPPORT AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF CRIME, AND REPLACING COUNCIL FRAMEWORK DECISION 2001/220/JHA (COM(2023) 424 AND /2; SWD(2023) 246; SWD(2023) 247; SEC(2023) 270; RCC(2023) 144)	24
10. COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION – COMMISSION’S ACTIVITIES ON ENFORCEMENT OF EU LAW – TAKING STOCK (C(2023) 4769; SWD(2023) 254; RCC(2023) 137)	27
11. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – GREENING FREIGHT TRANSPORT (COM(2023) 440 AND /2; RCC(2023) 145)	28
12. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE ACCOUNTING OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS OF TRANSPORT SERVICES (COM(2023) 441 AND /2; SWD(2023) 440; SWD(2023) 441 AND /2; SWD(2023) 442; SEC(2023) 441; RCC(2023) 145)	28
13. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE USE OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY IN THE SINGLE EUROPEAN RAILWAY AREA, AMENDING DIRECTIVE 2012/34/EU AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) N° 913/2010 (COM(2023) 443	

AND /2; SWD(2023) 443; SWD(2023) 444; SEC(2023) 443; RCC(2023) 145).....	28
14. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 96/53/EC LAYING DOWN FOR CERTAIN ROAD VEHICLES CIRCULATING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY THE MAXIMUM AUTHORISED DIMENSIONS IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC AND THE MAXIMUM AUTHORISED WEIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC (COM(2023) 445 AND /2; SWD(2023) 445 AND /2; SWD(2023) 446; SWD(2023) 447; SEC(2023) 445; RCC(2023) 145).....	28
15. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – AN EU INITIATIVE ON WEB 4.0 AND VIRTUAL WORLDS: A HEAD START IN THE NEXT TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSITION (COM(2023) 442 AND /2; SWD(2023) 250 AND /2; RCC(2023) 148)	35
16. OTHER BUSINESS (CONTINUED).....	39
COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION, PURSUANT TO REGULATION (EU) 2019/788 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'TAXING GREAT WEALTH TO FINANCE THE ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL TRANSITION' (C(2023) 4751).....	39

Single sitting: Tuesday 11 July 2023 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.11 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President	
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Mr SCHMIT	Member	
Mr GENTILONI	Member	
Mr BRETON	Member	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	
Mr REYNDERS	Member	Items 1 to 11/14 (in part)
Ms DALLI	Member	Items 1 to 11/14 (in part), 15 (in part) and 16
Mr LENARČIČ	Member	
Ms VÁLEAN	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	
Ms URPILAINEN	Member	
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member	
Ms McGUINNESS	Member	

Absent:

Mr TIMMERMANS	Executive Vice-President
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member

Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member
Ms JOHANSSON	Member
Ms SIMSON	Member

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

Mr MES	Member of Mr TIMMERMANS's cabinet	
Ms LOSTON LÓPEZ	Policy coordinator in Mr BORRELL's cabinet	
Mr IORDANIS	Policy coordinator in Mr SCHINAS's cabinet	
Mr PINTO ANTUNES	Deputy Head of Cabinet to Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	
Mr POURGOURIDES	Expert in Ms KYRIAKIDES's cabinet	
Ms BUSA	Member of Mr REYNDERS's cabinet	Items 15 and 16
Ms WEBBER	Head of Cabinet to Ms JOHANSSON	
Mr KADARICK	Deputy Head of Cabinet to Ms SIMSON	

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr CALLEJA CRESPO	Director-General, Legal Service
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Director-General, DG Communication
Mr VAN KEMSEKE	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Mr WHELAN	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Ms CABRAL	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Ms SPINANT	Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission

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

1. AGENDAS (OJ(2023) 2464/FINAL; SEC(2023) 2464/FINAL)

The Commission took note of that day's agenda and of the tentative agendas for forthcoming meetings.

**2. WEEKLY MEETING OF HEADS OF CABINET
(RCC(2023) 2464)**

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 10 July 2023.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2460th, 2461st, 2462nd and 2463rd meetings of 13, 20 and 28 June and 5 July 2023 for a later date.

**4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS
(RCC(2023) 139)**

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 7 July 2023 (RCC(2023) 139).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Laying-down of harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products, amendment of Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repeal of Regulation (EU) 305/2011 (Regulation) – DOLESCHAL report – 2022/0094 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 278.

– **Banking package**

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) N° 575/2013 as regards requirements for credit risk, credit valuation adjustment risk, operational risk, market risk and the output floor (Regulation) – FERNÁNDEZ report – 2021/0342 (COD)**
- **Amendment of Directive 2013/36/EU as regards supervisory powers, sanctions, third-country branches, and environmental, social and governance risks, and amendment of Directive 2014/59/EU (Directive) – FERNÁNDEZ report – 2021/0341 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 279.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) N° 909/2014 as regards settlement discipline, cross-border provision of services, supervisory cooperation, provision of banking-type ancillary services and requirements for third-country central securities depositories (Regulation) – VAN OVERTVELDT report – 2022/0074 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 280.

– **Capital Markets Union package:**

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) N° 600/2014 as regards enhancing market data transparency, removing obstacles to the emergence of a consolidated tape, optimising the trading obligations and prohibiting receiving payments for forwarding client orders (Regulation) – HÜBNER report – 2021/0385 (COD)**
- **Amendment of Directive 2014/65/EU on markets in financial instruments (Directive) – HÜBNER report – 2021/0384 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 295.

- **Amendment of Directive 2009/148/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work (Directive) – TRILLET-LENOIR report – 2022/0298 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 268.

- **Definition of criminal offences and penalties for the violation of Union restrictive measures (Directive) – IN ‘T VELD report – 2022/0398 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 281/2.

- **Combating violence against women and domestic violence (Directive) – FITZGERALD report – 2022/0066 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 282.

- **Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence and amendment of Directive (EU) 2019/1937 (Directive) – WOLTERS report – 2022/0051 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 283/2.

- **Digitalisation of judicial cooperation and access to justice in cross-border civil, commercial and criminal matters, and amendment of certain acts in the field of judicial cooperation (Regulation) – RADEV & KALJURAND report – 2021/0394 (COD)**

- **Amendment of Council Directive 2003/8/EC, Council Framework Decisions 2002/465/JHA, 2002/584/JHA, 2003/577/JHA, 2005/214/JHA, 2006/783/JHA, 2008/909/JHA, 2008/947/JHA, 2009/829/JHA and 2009/948/JHA, and Directive 2014/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, as regards digitalisation of judicial cooperation (Directive) – RADEV & KALJURAND report – 2021/0395 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 287.

- **Common procedure for international protection in the Union and repeal of Directive 2013/32/EU (Regulation) – KELLER report – 2016/0224 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 284.

- **Asylum and migration management and amendment of Council Directive (EC) 2003/109 and the proposed Regulation (EU) XXX/XXX [Asylum and Migration Fund] (Regulation) – TOBÉ report – 2020/0279 (COD)**

Line set out in in SI(2023) 285.

- **Fluorinated greenhouse gases, amendment of Directive (EU) 2019/1937 and repeal of Regulation (EU) N° 517/2014 (Regulation) – EICKHOUT report – 2022/0099 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 289/2.

- **Substances that deplete the ozone layer and repeal of Regulation (EC) N° 1005/2009 – POLFJÄRD report – 2022/0100 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 290.

- **Establishment of the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (Regulation) – 2023/0140 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 291.

- **Nature restoration (Regulation) – LUENA report – 2022/0195 (COD)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 340.

- **Fees and charges payable to the European Medicines Agency, amendment of Regulation (EU) 2017/745 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repeal of Council Regulation (EC) N° 297/95 and Regulation (EU) 658/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Regulation) –**

BUŞOI report – 2022/0417 (COD)

Line set out in SP(2023) 353.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards detailed production rules for organic sea salt and other organic salts for food and feed – (C(2023) 2781) – 2023/2676 (DEA)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 367.

- **Amendment of Annex II to Regulation (EC) N° 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the Annex to Commission Regulation (EU) N° 231/2012 as regards the food additives nitrites (E 249-250) and nitrates (E 251-252) – D089496/03 – 2023/2726 (RPS)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 303.

- **Laying-down of rules for the exercise of the Community's rights in the implementation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part (Council Regulation) – 2022/0070 (NLE)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 286.

- **Restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya: amendment of Council Regulation (EU) 2016/44 of 18 January 2016 and Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/1333 of 31 July 2015 – JOIN(2023) 18 and HR(2023) 141**

Line set out in SI(2023) 292.

- **Draft written replies to requests addressed by the Portuguese Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the political guardianship of the management of TAP to Ms VESTAGER and the Director-General of DG COMP, Mr GUERSENT, in relation to the Commission Decision of**

21 December 2021 in case SA.60165 (2021/C) – Portugal – Restructuring aid to TAP SGPS

Line set out in SNP(2023) 10/2.

- **Review of the Protocol on Cooperation between the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions**

Line set out in SR(2023) 18.

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points, for transmission to the European Parliament:

- **Commission replies to the legislative resolutions adopted by the European Parliament at its June 2023 part-session (and list of non-legislative resolutions without formal reply adopted by the European Parliament at its May II and June 2023 part-sessions)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 357.

- **Commission replies to the non-legislative resolutions adopted by the European Parliament at its May I 2023 part-session**

Line set out in SP(2023) 358.

The Commission approved the line proposed for the following point, for transmission to the European Economic and Social Committee:

- **Follow-up to opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – plenary session of March 2023**

Line set out in SC(2023) 21/2.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Establishment of a framework for setting ecodesign requirements for sustainable products and repeal of Directive 2009/125/EC (Regulation) – MORETTI report – 2022/0095 (COD)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 352.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2023) 28)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2023) 28 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 5 July 2023.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2023) 245 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 3 and 9 July 2023.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2023) 246 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 3 and 9 July 2023.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2023) 247 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 3 and 9 July 2023 archived in Decide.

6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2023) 248 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 10 and 14 July 2023, and of the finalisation written procedures.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2023) 249 TO /3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2023) 65 TO /3)

7.1. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15/16

(PERS(2023) 36 TO /4)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director-General of DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2023) 36 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 15 May and 7 July 2023 (PERS(2023) 36/3 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 VĂLEAN, it then decided to appoint Ms Magdalena KOPCZYNSKA to the post.

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

7.2. DG REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY – TERMINATION OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR THE POST OF A DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15/16 AND TRANSFER OF AN OFFICIAL AT GRADE AD15 UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS (PERS(2023) 15)

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

- to terminate with immediate effect the selection procedure for the post of Director-General of DG Regional and Urban Policy, without making an appointment;
- to transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Themis CHRISTOPHIDOU – currently Director-General of DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture – to the post of Director-General of DG Regional and Urban Policy.

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

7.3. DG EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE – TRANSFER OF AN OFFICIAL AT GRADE AD15 UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr SCHINAS, the Commission decided to transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Pia AHRENKILDE HANSEN – currently Director-General of DG Communication – to the post of Director-General of DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

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

**7.4. DG COMPETITION – APPOINTMENT OF A CHIEF COMPETITION ECONOMIST AT GRADE AD14
(PERS(2023) 25 TO /4)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union for the post of Chief Competition Economist in DG Competition (PERS(2023) 25 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 28 June and 6 July 2023 (PERS(2023) 25/3 and /4).

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

- to authorise a derogation from the provisions of Article 12(2)(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union as regards the requirement that individuals must be a national of one of the Member States in order to be recruited as a member of the temporary staff;
- to appoint Ms Fiona Margaret SCOTT MORTON as a temporary staff member to fill the post of Chief Competition Economist in DG Competition for a three-year period, renewable once for up to two years.

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

**7.5. JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 66 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the ‘Digital Transformation and Data’ Directorate at the Joint Research Centre (PERS(2023) 66).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 28 and 29 June 2023 (PERS(2023) 66/2 and /3).

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 VESTAGER, it then decided to appoint Ms Francesca CAMPOLONGO to the post.

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

7.6. *DG MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES – EXTENSION OF THE SECONDMENT IN THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE, UNDER ARTICLES 37 AND 38 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS, OF AN AD16 OFFICIAL*

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr SINKEVIČIUS, the Commission decided to extend the secondment in the interest of the service, under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations, of Mr João AGUIAR MACHADO, to the European External Action Service (EEAS). This extension, for an additional period of one year, would take effect on 1 September 2023 and end on 31 August 2024.

The Commission also confirmed that, during his secondment, all expenses would be covered by the European External Action Service.

This decision would take effect immediately.

7.7. *DG INTERPRETATION – AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD15/16, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD15, OF A DEPUTY*

DIRECTOR-GENERAL POST***(PERS(2023) 67)***

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to authorise the internal and interinstitutional publication, at grade AD15/16, and external publication, at grade AD15, of the vacancy notice in PERS(2023) 67 for the post of Deputy Director-General in charge of Corporate Conference and Meeting Room Management – Responsible for Directorate C in DG Interpretation, 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.

7.8. DG BUDGET – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND INTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A DIRECTOR POST AT GRADE AD14/15***(PERS(2023) 68; SEC(2023) 273)***

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

- to create a temporary post of Principal Adviser (BUDG.PA01) ‘Task Force One Stop Shop - Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (OSS STEP)’; this post would be abolished when the current Multiannual Financial Framework expired;
- to create a temporary post of Principal Adviser (BUDG.PA02) ‘Legal and Financial Issues, Rule of Law, Fraud Prevention and EDES’; this post would be abolished upon the departure of the jobholder;
- to transfer, in the interest of the service, Mr Olivier WAELEBROECK, currently Director of Directorate BUDG.D ‘Central Financial Service’, to the latter post of Principal Adviser (BUDG.PA02);

(11 July 2023)

- to publish, with immediate effect, the vacancy notice for the post of Director of Directorate BUDG.D ‘Central Financial Service’, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations;
- to create a task force, led by the Head of Unit BUDG.04 ‘Task Force One Stop Shop - Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (OSS STEP)’; the task force would report directly to the Director-General and would be abolished when the current Multiannual Financial Framework expired;
- to approve the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2023) 273.

Unless indicated otherwise, these decisions would take effect on 16 July 2023.

7.9. DG HUMAN RESOURCES – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART, INTERNAL PUBLICATION AT GRADE AD15/16 OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL POST, AS WELL AS INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14/15, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14, OF A PRINCIPAL ADVISER POST
(PERS(2023) 69; PERS(2023) 70; SEC(2023) 279)

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

- to create a post of Deputy Director-General HR.DDG2 ‘Security, Workplace and Wellbeing’, who would have direct reporting lines with Directorates HR.D ‘Workplace and Wellbeing’ and HR.DS ‘Security’;
- to publish, with immediate effect, the corresponding vacancy notice in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations;
- to publish with immediate effect the internal and interinstitutional vacancy notice, as well as the external vacancy notice, for the post of Principal Adviser for HR Strategic Foresight and Innovation (HR.PA02)

(11 July 2023)

in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations;

- to amend the direct reporting lines for the post of Deputy Director-General for Operations to encompass the Directorates HR.B ‘Traineeships, Recruitment and Mobility’, HR.C ‘Careers and Staff Development’, HR.E ‘HR for Specific Sites and Services’ and HR.F ‘Finance, Legal and Partnerships’, which would be supervised by the jobholder;
- to approve the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2023) 279.

After the restructuring, the total number of Directorates in DG Human Resources and Security would remain unchanged and the number of units would increase from 38 to 39.

Unless indicated otherwise, these decisions would take effect on 16 September 2023.

7.10. DG INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14/15, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14, OF TWO PRINCIPAL ADVISER POSTS
(PERS(2023) 71; PERS(2023) 72; SEC(2023) 285)

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

- to create a temporary post of ‘Principal Adviser for G7 and G20 Sustainable Development Agendas’ (INTPA.PA03);
- to create a temporary post of ‘Principal Adviser for Emerging Donors’ (INTPA.PA04);

(11 July 2023)

- to publish, with immediate effect, the internal and interinstitutional vacancy notices, as well as the external vacancy notices, for the two posts, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations;
- to approve the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2023) 285.

Unless indicated otherwise, these decisions would take effect on 16 September 2023.

**7.11. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL ADVISER AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 73 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of ‘Principal Adviser - Director of the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)’ in DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2023) 73).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 23 February and 9 June 2023 (PERS(2023) 73 /2 and /3).

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 VĂLEAN, it then decided to appoint Ms Maria De La Paloma ABA GARROTE to the post.

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

**7.12. DG BUDGET – COMMISSION DECISION ON THE APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 53 OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT PLANS OF THE COMMISSION, OF THE RESEARCH DIRECT AND INDIRECT ACTIONS IN 2023
(C(2023) 5001)**

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

- to approve the modification of the establishment plans under the operating budget for 2023, in accordance with the procedure and conditions laid down in Article 53 of the Financial Regulation;
- to instruct the Director-General of DG Budget to inform the budgetary authority of this decision and to ensure that it was enforced.

This decision would take effect immediately.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

EU-U.S. DATA PRIVACY FRAMEWORK

Mr REYNDERS briefly reported on the adoption by written procedure on 10 July of the new Commission Adequacy Decision concerning the data privacy framework for data flows between the European Union and the United States. The decision concluded that the United States ensured an adequate level of protection, comparable to that of the European Union, for personal data transferred from the EU to US companies under the new framework.

Mr REYNDERS said that this new legal framework would rationalise cooperation between the data protection authorities (DPAs) when applying the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in cross-border cases between the two parties, and he briefly outlined the background to it.

The necessary administrative decisions had been taken by the US side and the corresponding rules now met the requirements of the Court of Justice of the European Union, in particular with respect to necessary and proportionate access by intelligence agencies to personal data. A redress mechanism had also been set up,

with the establishment of an independent review court with investigative powers. This court would have the power to take binding decisions or to order the deletion of data if necessary.

Mr REYNDERS reported that the European Data Protection Board had given a favourable opinion on the draft decision. In the context of the committee procedure, 24 Member States had endorsed the draft, and three had abstained. In his view, the Adequacy Decision thus adopted would enable a standard procedure for data transfers to be established between the two parties, while ensuring effective protection of individual rights. The decision constituted a robust legal framework.

He concluded by stressing that the General Data Protection Regulation was in no way affected by the Adequacy Decision, which covered only access by the United States to the data transferred, via the intelligence community. Lastly, in the current context, no agreement with higher safeguards could have been reached, and this agreement would provide effective protection for data at all stages of transmission.

During the brief discussion that followed, the College congratulated Mr REYNDERS on the results obtained, which would ensure maximum protection for the rights of EU citizens and full compliance with the case-law of the Court of Justice.

The PRESIDENT in turn thanked Mr REYNDERS and highlighted the exemplary work that he had tirelessly carried out over a number of years to bring this important and complex issue to a conclusion.

The Commission took note of this information.

9. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING DIRECTIVE 2012/29/EU ESTABLISHING MINIMUM STANDARDS ON THE RIGHTS, SUPPORT AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF CRIME, AND REPLACING COUNCIL FRAMEWORK

DECISION 2001/220/JHA**(COM(2023) 424 AND /2; SWD(2023) 246; SWD(2023) 247; SEC(2023) 270; RCC(2023) 144)**

Ms JOUROVÁ began by saying that this was a very practical and targeted revision of the victims' rights Directive adopted in 2012. That Directive had established minimum standards on certain rights, support and protection measures for victims of all crimes.

The EU strategy on victims' rights adopted by the Commission in 2020 had planned for an assessment to be made of the impact of the 2012 Directive on victims' rights and of whether the Directive required revision. The assessment had confirmed that the Directive had broadly delivered the expected benefits. At the same time, it had also identified shortcomings relating to the lack of clarity and precision with which certain rights were formulated and to differences in how the Member States transposed the Directive.

The proposed revision thus included targeted amendments to improve victims' ability to rely on their rights. It also took into account certain developments in society, such as increased digitalisation, or the particular vulnerability of certain victims, such as children. The new elements in the proposal included the possibility for victims to obtain a decision on financial compensation in the criminal courts, which the State would be required to pay and then seek reimbursement from the offender.

Ms JOUROVÁ concluded by saying that the revised Directive would continue to co-exist with other instruments of a more sectoral nature that provided increased protection for certain categories of victim, such as victims of terrorism or victims of violence against women. Furthermore, in relation to the last point, trilogues would begin that week on the proposal for a Directive to combat violence against women and domestic violence, adopted by the Commission in 2022.

Mr REYNDEERS commented that it was essential that all victims be able to exercise

their rights in full, throughout the EU and irrespective of the circumstances in which the crime was committed. He briefly summarised the main new elements of the proposal for a Directive, in particular, an increased right to information and the establishment of dedicated helplines to provide assistance to victims and inform them of their rights.

The revised Directive would also enable support to be tailored to the specific needs of victims, as assessed on initial contact, whether free psychological support, assistance in connection with subsequent legal proceedings or the possibility of challenging any decision that affected their rights. Other benefits of the proposal related to financial compensation, which could from now on be obtained in the criminal courts, and the potential reduction in the length of proceedings.

Lastly, the proposal had essentially drawn on best practice in certain Member States, which should now be deployed across the EU.

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

- the importance of all victims of crime enjoying rights and being capable of asserting them;
- the need to keep in mind the specific needs of certain categories of victim, and children in particular;
- the value of concluding the ongoing interinstitutional negotiations on the proposal for a Directive to combat violence against women as quickly as possible.

Following this presentation, the Commission agreed, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, that the proposal for a Directive in COM(2023) 424/2 would be formally adopted by the finalisation written procedure, the deadline for which was set on Wednesday 12 July 2023 (PE/2023/4590).

**10. COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION – COMMISSION’S
ACTIVITIES ON ENFORCEMENT OF EU LAW – TAKING STOCK
(C(2023) 4769; SWD(2023) 254; RCC(2023) 137)**

The PRESIDENT reported on the stocktaking exercise on the Commission’s work on enforcing EU law. The Commission had launched the exercise in 2022 to ensure that the right enforcement tools were available and were being used to good effect.

Over the last three years, the current Commission had brought forward a rich legislative programme and 464 legislative proposals had so far been adopted by the co-legislators. Citizens would only benefit from this legislation if the Member States implemented it and the Commission ensured that it was being properly applied.

From the beginning of its term of office, the Commission had adopted a strategic approach to enforcement, which had yielded good results. There had been a rise in the number of infringement cases in certain areas, in particular justice and home affairs, while the number of single market infringement cases had decreased. This drop was due, among other things, to the availability of better mechanisms to assist Member States in implementing EU law, such as the single market enforcement taskforce (SMET). This new tool had been put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve implementation and enforcement of single market freedoms.

The PRESIDENT concluded by stressing the priority that should be given collectively to implementing and applying EU legislation. New legislation proposed by the Commission should thus be monitored closely, as should the some 2 000 infringement cases that were currently open. Lastly, she underlined the particular importance attached by the current Commission to infringements of the rule of law.

Following this presentation, the Commission agreed, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, that the Communication in C(2023) 4769 would be formally adopted by the finalisation written procedure, the deadline for which was set on Friday 14 July 2023 (PE/2023/4799).

- 11. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – GREENING FREIGHT TRANSPORT
(COM(2023) 440 AND /2; RCC(2023) 145)**
- 12. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE ACCOUNTING OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS OF TRANSPORT SERVICES
(COM(2023) 441 AND /2; SWD(2023) 440; SWD(2023) 441 AND /2; SWD(2023) 442; SEC(2023) 441; RCC(2023) 145)**
- 13. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE USE OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY IN THE SINGLE EUROPEAN RAILWAY AREA, AMENDING DIRECTIVE 2012/34/EU AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) N° 913/2010
(COM(2023) 443 AND /2; SWD(2023) 443; SWD(2023) 444; SEC(2023) 443; RCC(2023) 145)**
- 14. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 96/53/EC LAYING DOWN FOR CERTAIN ROAD VEHICLES CIRCULATING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY THE MAXIMUM AUTHORISED DIMENSIONS IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC AND THE MAXIMUM AUTHORISED WEIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC
(COM(2023) 445 AND /2; SWD(2023) 445 AND /2; SWD(2023) 446; SWD(2023) 447; SEC(2023) 445; RCC(2023) 145)**

Ms VĂLEAN presented the proposed package of measures to make freight transport more efficient and sustainable. These measures aimed to encourage the use of low-

emission trucks, provide better information on greenhouse gas emissions from freight transport and improve the management of railway infrastructure.

Ms VĂLEAN said that freight transport was the backbone of the European single market and of trade between the EU and the rest of the world. Freight volumes were expected to increase by 50% by 2050, reflecting the health and competitiveness of the EU economy. However, freight transport accounted for 30% of CO₂ emissions from transport. The aim was therefore to increase efficiency within the sector, helping it to contribute to the target of cutting transport emissions by 90% by 2050, as set out in the European Green Deal, while allowing the EU single market to continue to thrive. In this context, she stressed the absolute need for “greening freight”, a flagship initiative announced by the Commission in 2020 in its Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

She then presented in more detail the three legislative initiatives proposed for adoption that day, starting with the proposal for a revised Directive on maximum weights and dimensions of certain road vehicles.

Currently, 50% of freight was transported by road in the EU. This mode of transport was a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, as it accounted for 6% of all EU emissions. Switching to trucks running on alternative fuel, especially zero-emission trucks, would take time, and electrically chargeable trucks currently accounted for only 0.2% of the fleet. Additional incentives were therefore needed to make them more attractive and to increase their use.

In order to achieve this, the Commission was proposing to allow additional weight for heavy-duty vehicles using zero-emission technologies, to take account of the impact of these technologies on vehicle weight. The currently applicable standard of 40 tonnes would therefore be increased to a maximum of 44 tonnes, and to 48 tonnes for intermodal operations. This increase, applicable only to zero-emission vehicles, would allow hauliers not to reduce their payload. The proposal also included measures to increase charging capacity through the development of lighter

batteries. This would give these zero-emission vehicles a tangible competitive advantage over diesel trucks, which was essential in a sector where most hauliers were small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Ms VĂLEAN stressed that the proposal remained technology neutral and that it also included hydrogen-based solutions, thanks to technical adjustments to accommodate tanks behind the cabin without losing load capacity. She also explained that the revised Directive would put an end to the current patchwork of national rules and bilateral agreements for high-capacity vehicles, which hampered the smooth functioning of the single market. Thus, new provisions would apply to longer and heavier vehicle combinations, known as “mega-trucks”, as well as to 44-tonne standard trucks authorised by some Member States as a derogation from the current standard.

She said that the proposal for a revised Directive did not in any way promote the use of longer or heavier trucks where they were not authorised today. It provided clarity on the use in cross-border traffic, under certain conditions, of heavier and longer vehicles, which were allowed today in some Member States. In particular, it specified that Member States that allowed European Modular Systems (EMS) in their territories would also be able to use them in international operations involving neighbouring Member States, without the need for a bilateral agreement and without being restricted to one border crossing only. This meant that the same volume of cargo could be carried in fewer trips.

Finally, the revised Directive would also make life easier for road operators and important industries, such as renewable technology companies, which currently faced a plethora of national requirements and procedures when transporting outsize loads. Ms VĂLEAN gave the example of the transport of a wind turbine, which could not be divided into small pieces, from Romania to Austria. At least 10 different permits from 10 different local and regional authorities would currently be needed to complete such a journey.

In this regard, she noted that the proposal introduced a one-stop-shop in each Member State which would simplify procedures and significantly reduce red tape. These greening measures would be accompanied by more effective targeted controls to ensure compliance with the rules on the maximum weight of heavy-duty vehicles, which in turn would restrict anti-competitive practices, enhance road safety and protect infrastructure.

Ms VĂLEAN then presented the proposal for a Regulation establishing a framework for accounting for greenhouse gas emissions from transport services – “CountEmissionsEU”. The proposal established a single method for calculating transport service emissions based on a recently adopted UN global ISO/CEN standard that was widely supported by industry. This method would apply to the transport of passengers and goods. It would enable companies to calculate their greenhouse gas emissions if they chose to publish this information or if they were asked to share it for contractual reasons.

Ms VĂLEAN pointed out that economic operators were not required to provide their carbon footprint, but in future, if a market participant decided to calculate its emissions, it would have to follow these common rules. Some transport operators, including certain airlines, already informed their customers of the impact of their journeys in terms of CO₂ emissions without a harmonised calculation method having been put in place. Reliable and comparable data on the carbon footprint of door-to-door operations would enable operators to benchmark their services and allow consumers to make informed choices on transport and delivery options.

In contrast to the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) Directive covering aviation, which required airlines to report only aggregated emissions on an annual basis, Ms VĂLEAN specified that this Regulation would require calculations to be performed per flight and per passenger. In this context, particular attention had also been paid to how best to reduce the administrative burden on the sector, in particular for SMEs, which would be exempted from verification requirements. Like all other companies, SMEs would also benefit from the reduction of the costs and overall

burden achieved through the simplification of emission calculations and the availability of free, ready-to-use data.

Lastly, she presented the proposal for a Regulation on the use of infrastructure capacity in the single European railway area. She explained that this initiative would have a considerable impact on cross-border trains, which were mainly freight trains, half of which crossed borders, but also on night trains, which were highly appreciated by young Europeans, in particular. However, given that in 2021 only 11.9% of all goods transported between EU countries was transported by rail, the first objective remained the facilitation of freight transport.

The current rules on rail capacity management were decided annually, nationally and manually. This fragmented approach led to delays at borders, which in turn hindered the functioning of the single market. Delays due to congestion caused by uncoordinated maintenance work were also common. The proposed Regulation therefore required infrastructure managers to plan the use of available capacity for cross-border rail transport well in advance and to coordinate the planning of cross-border slots.

The Regulation, once implemented, would ensure that infrastructure managers jointly identified cross-border traffic needs, reserved the necessary capacity and jointly allocated it through simplified procedures and interoperable IT tools. Managers would also be required to coordinate maintenance work in order to minimise disruptions on the lines.

Ms VĂLEAN explained that the existing network of infrastructure managers would be strengthened by the establishment of an operational entity with responsibility for coordinating slot and cross-border traffic planning. Infrastructure managers would have to apply the same set of rules and announce national priorities in full transparency. Railway undertakings would be able to request capacity at any time in response to market needs, instead of having to submit applications within the rigid deadlines of an annual process.

Finally, the proposal introduced incentives for both infrastructure managers and railway undertakings to comply with these commitments. Thus, a freight operator that did not use its slots would lose them and would have to pay compensation for unused capacity. In addition, an infrastructure manager who did not make the agreed slot available would have to make every effort to reroute the trains and would be required to compensate the freight operator financially.

Ms VĂLEAN concluded her presentation by stressing that the proposed Regulation would benefit both passengers and freight transport, improving the reliability and punctuality of rail services.

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

- the importance of training some 500 000 truck drivers in the EU in the coming years in order to overcome labour shortages and renew an ageing workforce while offering more attractive working conditions;
- the environmental impact of the steady increase in road freight transport, and in this context, the restrictions that some Member States might wish to put in place on entry into their territory.

Ms VĂLEAN explained that some Member States were already restricting the entry of heavy goods vehicles into their territory and that the Commission had initiated infringement proceedings against them for breaches of the rules on free movement. She noted in this regard that the proposed measures were not intended to increase the number of heavy goods vehicles but to promote clean vehicles and the use in cross-border traffic, under certain conditions, of heavier and longer vehicles which were already authorised today in some Member States.

With regard to the training of road hauliers, she pointed out that the Commission had recently adopted an initiative on driving licences, one of the objectives of which was precisely to increase the number of truck drivers and rejuvenate the workforce.

The PRESIDENT thanked Ms VĂLEAN for the good preparation of this complex package of measures which was fundamental to achieving the EU's climate objectives. She felt that all efforts should be focused on the development of clean technologies, such as electric or hydrogen vehicles, which represented the future of European transport.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2023) 440/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2023) 441/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the staff working document, the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2023) 440, SWD(2023) 441/2, SWD(2023) 442 and SEC(2023) 441, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2023) 443/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2023) 443/2, SWD(2023) 444 and SEC(2023) 443, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Directive in COM(2023) 445/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the staff working document, the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2023) 447,

SWD(2023) 445/2, SWD(2023) 446 and SEC(2023) 445, the contents of which were noted.

**15. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – AN EU INITIATIVE ON WEB 4.0 AND VIRTUAL WORLDS: A HEAD START IN THE NEXT TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSITION
(COM(2023) 442 AND /2; SWD(2023) 250 AND /2; RCC(2023) 148)**

Ms VESTAGER pointed out that the Commission's new strategy on Web 4.0 and virtual worlds, which would help shape Europe's digital future, had been announced by the PRESIDENT in her 2022 State of the Union address. The aim was to underpin the technological transition by developing a trustworthy digital environment for the next generation of the web, blending physical and digital objects and environments. It was, therefore, important to identify the opportunities and risks associated with virtual worlds.

The proposal took on board the objectives for 2030 of the Digital Decade policy programme. The strategy thus aimed to strengthen Europe's ecosystems in three key areas of digital transformation, namely skills, business and government. Ms VESTAGER pointed out that the fourth pillar of the Digital Decade policy programme, which concerned infrastructure, was addressed in the connectivity package adopted by the Commission in February. The strategy proposed that day also included a specific strand on the openness and global governance of virtual worlds and Web 4.0.

In addition, the proposed Communication would help to dispel several myths about the EU's digital strategy and virtual worlds. First, while virtual worlds existed in online gaming and social networks, they were even more important when it came to supporting societal progress and virtual public services. This was particularly true in

areas such as medical research, culture, the green transition and town planning. Ms VESTAGER referred for instance to the digital twin of the human body, which helped to design medical devices and facilitate clinical decision-making, to virtual visits of museums, and to immersive urban environments used for town planning and management.

Second, the Communication showed that the current EU regulatory framework was fit for purpose when it came to addressing the risks arising from the development of virtual worlds and Web 4.0. Ms VESTAGER highlighted the modern, innovative and flexible toolkit developed by the EU to this end. This included the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and EU consumer safety and protection legislation. The Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act established a comprehensive liability system for platform and search engine providers. She went on to underline the relevance of the proposed Artificial Intelligence Act to develop a web 4.0 vision that is consistent with EU values and principles.

Lastly, the EU's digital strategy was all about promoting responsible innovation by investing in core technologies and creating a balanced legal framework. According to Ms VESTAGER, this last aspect would strengthen legal certainty and the trust needed for the take-up of new technologies in the EU, thereby stimulating innovation.

Mr BRETON also emphasised the strengths of the European digital market in driving the transition to Web 4.0 and ensuring that it benefited all citizens and businesses. The EU could play a leading role in this technological transition because of its single market, its innovative start-ups, its wealth of creative content and industrial applications, and its reliable and innovation-friendly legal framework. He therefore welcomed the progress that the proposed strategy represented for the development of a genuine digital internal market, with clear rules applicable to all.

A key condition for the EU's success in this regard would be its connectivity and digital infrastructure. In particular, a significant amount of data was needed to

develop virtual worlds. Following a very data-intensive first set-up, this virtual infrastructure could be reused at a lower cost later on. For instance, virtual hospital rooms, used to train a large number of medical students after their initial training, could then be selectively modified by Application Programming Interfaces (APIs).

It was important that IT networks should be located sufficiently close to where they were being used in order to reduce financial and environmental costs. The Commission had, for instance, organised wide-ranging consultations on the investment and infrastructure needs to ensure broadband connectivity by 2030. Measures had also been proposed in relation to high performance computing, and edge and cloud computing. The strategy proposed that day complemented the infrastructure pillar, adding four strands.

First, it would equip European citizens with the tools and skills to raise awareness and encourage access to trustworthy information. The Commission would thus promote the guiding principles for virtual worlds as formulated by the citizens' panel on virtual worlds, focusing in particular on child protection. Guidance would also be developed for the general public through a 'citizens' toolbox', which would help them manage their identities, digital wallets and data.

Second, under this strategy, a European Web 4.0-based industrial ecosystem would be built. Mr BRETON went on to describe the creation of a new European partnership under Horizon Europe and the matching of virtual world developers with industrial users. This would also involve investing in the uptake and widespread use of the new technologies identified by the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP), and facilitating access to finance for European small and medium-sized enterprises. It would be necessary to develop worldwide standards for an open and interoperable Web 4.0 in order to avoid closed ecosystems dominated by major players.

Third, Mr BRETON said that the strategy would make it possible to support public services and services of general interest in order to take advantage of the

opportunities offered by virtual worlds. An example of this was the Commission's launch of CitiVerse, an immersive environment that would allow towns and cities to improve their town planning and management, spatial planning and services to citizens. This flagship initiative would receive up to EUR 15 million in funding from the Digital Europe Programme.

Finally, the strategy addressed the governance of virtual worlds and Web 4.0 at European and world level. The aim was to devise standards to guarantee the openness and interoperability of these technologies so that they did not become dominated by a few major players. The Commission would engage with internet governance stakeholders around the world and would promote Web 4.0 standards in keeping with the EU's vision and values.

Mr BRETON ended by saying that the strategy had been based on the recommendations by a panel of 140 citizens on virtual worlds, and he thanked Ms ŠUIČA for her commitment in this regard.

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

- the need to take into account the rights of individuals in virtual worlds as in the real world;
- the importance of fostering active engagement by all citizens and maintaining access to public services for all, including those without the digital skills to access online services;
- the crucial contribution made by citizens' panels, in the wake of the successful Conference on the Future of Europe, to the Commission's initiatives on virtual worlds, food waste and educational mobility.

Following these presentations, the Commission approved the Communication in COM(2023) 442/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the

European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the national parliaments, together with the staff working document distributed as SWD(2023) 250/2, the contents of which were noted.

16. OTHER BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION, PURSUANT TO REGULATION (EU) 2019/788 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'TAXING GREAT WEALTH TO FINANCE THE ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL TRANSITION' (C(2023) 4751)

Ms JOUROVÁ presented the implementing Decision submitted to the College for adoption concerning the request for registration of a European citizens' initiative entitled, in the authentic original English language, 'Taxing great wealth to finance the ecological and social transition'.

The aim of this citizens' initiative, submitted on 8 June 2023, was to have a European tax on great wealth introduced which would contribute to the EU's own resources and thus support the European green and social transition and development cooperation policies.

The conditions for registering European citizens' initiatives were set out in Article 6(3) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of 17 April 2019 on the European citizens' initiative. Those conditions included the requirement that no part of the initiative should manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for an EU legal act for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

The request made by the promoters of the European citizens' initiative did not fall outside the Commission's powers to propose legal acts for the purpose of

implementing the Treaties under Article 192(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). If, within a period of twelve months, the proposal garnered the minimum support required, in other words at least one million signatures from EU citizens from at least seven Member States, the Commission would then analyse the substance of the initiative.

Following this presentation, the Commission confirmed that the citizen's initiative on 'Taxing great wealth to finance the ecological and social transition' met the necessary registration requirements. It therefore decided to inform the group of organisers and authorised Ms JOUROVÁ to sign the reply on behalf of the College, in the authentic language (English), to send it to the group of organisers of the initiative and to publish it, for information, in the Official Journal of the European Union.

The Commission took note of this information.

*

* *

The meeting closed at 14.23.