



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2023) 2476 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 31 January 2024

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

**of the 2476th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 6 December 2023
(morning)**

PV(2023) 2476 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

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Single sitting: Wednesday 6 December 2023 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.09 with Mr DOMBROVSKIS in the chair.

Present:

Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Executive Vice-President	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President	
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President	
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Mr SCHMIT	Member	
Mr GENTILONI	Member	
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member	Items 1 to 11/13
Mr BRETON	Member	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member	
Mr REYNDERS	Member	
Ms DALLI	Member	
Ms JOHANSSON	Member	
Mr LENARČIČ	Member	
Ms VÁLEAN	Member	Items 7 to 10 (in part), and 14 to 15
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member	
Ms McGUINNESS	Member	

Absent:

Ms von der LEYEN	President
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President
Ms URPILAINEN	Member

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Ms SIMSON	Member
Ms IVANOVA	Member
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member

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

Mr VILLARINO	Head of Cabinet to Mr BORRELL	
Mr GOLUBIEWSKI	Head of Cabinet to Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Items 14 and 15
Mr KADARIK	Head of Cabinet to Ms SIMSON	
Mr SCHULTE	Head of Cabinet to Ms IVANOVA	
Ms GIPPNER	Member of Mr HOEKSTRA's cabinet	

The following also sat in:

Mr CALLEJA CRESPO	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr MAMER	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Mr BAERT	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Ms CABRAL	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Items 1 to 9/10
Ms PODESTA	Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Mr HAGER	Head of Cabinet to Mr DOMBROVSKIS	
Ms ALLOUIS-LE LOSTEC	Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General	
Mr CHARLES	Secretariat-General	

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2023) 2476/FINAL; SEC(2023) 2476/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) 2476)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 December 2023.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(PV(2023) 2472; PV(2023) 2472, 2ND PART; PV(2023) 2473; PV(2023) 2473, 2ND PART)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2472nd and 2473rd meetings of 8 and 15 November 2023 and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2474th and 2475th meetings of 21 and 29 November 2023 until a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2023) 192)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) held on Friday 1 December 2023 (RCC(2023) 192).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Transparency and targeting of political advertising (Regulation) – GOZI report – 2021/0381 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 481.

- **Amendment of Council Directive 98/24/EC and Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the limit values for lead and its inorganic compounds and diisocyanates (Directive) – VILLUMSEN report - 2023/0033 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 511.

- **Protection of the environment through criminal law and replacement of Directive 2008/99/EC (Directive) – MANDERS report – 2021/0422 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 509.

- **Data collection and sharing relating to short-term accommodation rental services and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 (Regulation) – VAN SPARRENTAK report – 2022/0358 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 485.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EC) N° 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (Regulation) – SPYRAKI report – 2022/0432 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 486.

- **Establishment of a Single Market emergency instrument and repeal of Council Regulation (EC) 2679/98 (Regulation) – SCHWAB report – 2022/0278 (COD)**
- **Amendment of Regulations (EU) 2016/424, (EU) 2016/425, (EU) 2016/426, (EU) 2019/1009 and (EU) N° 305/2011 as regards emergency procedures for the conformity assessment, adoption of common specifications and market surveillance due to a Single Market emergency (Regulation) – SCHWAB report – 2022/0279 (COD)**

- **Amendment of Directives 2000/14/EC, 2006/42/EC, 2010/35/EU, 2013/29/EU, 2014/28/EU, 2014/29/EU, 2014/30/EU, 2014/31/EU, 2014/32/EU, 2014/33/EU, 2014/34/EU, 2014/35/EU, 2014/53/EU and 2014/68/EU as regards emergency procedures for the conformity assessment, adoption of common specifications and market surveillance due to a Single Market emergency – SCHWAB report – 2022/0280 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 510.

- **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 SI(2023) 490.

- **Energy performance of buildings (recast – Directive) – CUFFE report – 2021/0426 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 521.

- **Amendment of Protocol N° 3 on the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union (Regulation) – CICUREL report – 2022/0906 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 516.

- **Proposal for an interinstitutional ethics body – COM(2023) 311**

Line set out in SI(2023) 517.

- **Harmonised rules on artificial intelligence (Artificial Intelligence Act) and amendment of certain Union legislative acts (Regulation) – BENIFEI & TUDORACHE report – 2021/0106 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 523/3.

- **Establishment of the Authority for anti-money laundering and countering**

the financing of terrorism and amendment of Regulations (EU) N° 1093/2010, (EU) N° 1094/2010, (EU) N° 1095/2010 (Regulation) – RADEV report – 2021/0240 (COD)

Line set out in SI(2023) 525.

- **Amendment of Regulations (EU) N° 648/2012, (EU) N° 575/2013 and (EU) 2017/1131 as regards measures to mitigate excessive exposures to third-country central counterparties and improve the efficiency of Union clearing markets (Regulation) – HÜBNER report – 2022/0403 (COD)**
- **Amendment of Directives 2009/65/EU, 2013/36/EU and (EU) 2019/2034 as regards the treatment of concentration risk towards central counterparties and the counterparty risk on centrally cleared derivative transactions (Directive) – HÜBNER report – 2022/0404 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 532.

- **Establishment of ‘Eurodac’ for the comparison of biometric data for the effective application of Regulation (EU) XXX/XXX [Regulation on Asylum and Migration Management] and of Regulation (EU) XXX/XXX [Resettlement Regulation], for identifying an illegally staying third-country national or stateless person and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States’ law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes and amendment of Regulations (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/818 (Regulation) – BUXADÉ VILLALBA report – 2016/0132 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 529.

- **Amendment of Council Decision 2009/917/JHA, as regards its alignment with Union rules on the protection of personal data (Regulation) – ERNST report – 2023/0143 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 530.

- **Amendment and correction of Directive 2005/36/EC as regards the recognition of professional qualifications of nurses responsible for general care trained in Romania (Directive) – BIELAN report – 2023/0307 (COD)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 627.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) N° 910/2014 as regards establishing a framework for a European Digital Identity (Regulation) – JERKOVIĆ report – 2021/0136 (COD)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 646.

- **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) 501.

- **Fixing for 2024, 2025 and 2026 of the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2023/194 on deep-sea fish stocks (Council Regulation) – 2023/0359 (NLE)**

Line set out in SI(2023) 519.

- **Fixing of the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas for 2024 (Council**

Regulation) – 2023/0350 (NLE)

Line set out in SI(2023) 524.

- **Political declaration to be signed by Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, and Commissioner Simson on behalf of the Commission on implementing the synchronisation of the Baltic States' electricity networks with the Continental European Network via Poland**

Line set out in SI(2023) 520.

- **Oral question O-000047/2023 – Improving the strategic approach on the enforcement of EU Law**

Line set out in SP(2023) 634.

- **Sustainable use of plant protection products and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 (Regulation) – WIENER report – 2022/0196 (COD)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 636/2.

- **European Union – United Kingdom relations – Youth Mobility**

Line set out in SI(2023) 482/2.

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 November I 2023 part-session (and list of non-legislative resolutions without formal reply adopted at the October I 2023 part-session)**

Line set out in SP(2023) 632.

- **Commission replies to the non-legislative resolutions adopted by the**

European Parliament at its part-sessions of September and October II 2023

Line set out in SP(2023) 641/2.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Establishment of a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials and amendment of Regulations (EU) 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1724 and (EU) 2019/1020 (Regulation) – BEER report – 2023/0079 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2023) 628, further to note SI(2023) 484, which the Commission had already approved on 29 November 2023.

- **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)**

Compromise text in SP(2023) 630, further to note SI(2023) 369, which the Commission had already approved on 3 October 2023.

- **Authorisation addressed to France to negotiate a bilateral agreement with Algeria on matters related to judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters (Decision) – CICUREL report – 2023/0028 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2023) 629, further to note SI(2023) 266/2, which the Commission had already approved on 5 July 2023.

- **Jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition of decisions and acceptance of authentic instruments in matters of parenthood and on the creation of a European Certificate of Parenthood (Council Regulation) – LEITÃO-MARQUES report – 2022/0402 (CNS)**

Information set out in SP(2023) 631.

- **Plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 (Regulation) – POLFJÄRD report – 2023/0226 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2023) 514.

- **European Health Data Space (Regulation) – SOKOL & TARDINO report – 2022/0140 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2023) 515/2.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2023) 41)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2023) 41 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 29 November 2023.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2023) 385 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 27 November and 3 December 2023.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2023) 386 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 27 November and 3 December 2023.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2023) 387 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 27 November and 3 December 2023 archived in Decide.

6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2023) 388 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 4 and 8 December 2023, and of the finalisation written procedures.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2023) 389/2 AND /3)

During the meeting, Mr HAHN presented two additional proposals for administrative decisions, which were submitted directly to the College for approval.

It was therefore proposed to appoint Mr Hans DAS to the post of Deputy Director-General (in charge of Directorates C and D) of DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, and Mr Herald RUIJTERS to the post of Deputy Director-General (in charge of Directorate B) of DG Mobility and Transport. He highlighted the great skills, outstanding career and recognised expertise of Mr DAS and Mr RUIJTERS in their respective fields and congratulated them on their appointments.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2023) 109/2 AND /3)

7.1. DG EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS (ECHO) – APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15/16

(PERS(2023) 116 TO /3)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General (in charge of Directorates C and D) of DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) (PERS(2023) 116).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 27 September and 30 November 2023 (PERS(2023) 116/2 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 Mr LENARČIČ, it then decided to appoint Mr Hans DAS to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 February 2024.

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

(PERS(2023) 117 TO /3)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General – Coordination of Directorate B – of DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2023) 117).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 27 April and 23 November 2023 (PERS(2023) 117/2 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 VÁLEAN, it then decided to appoint Mr Herald RUIJTERS to the post.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.3. DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY – EXTENSION OF THE
SECONDMENT OF AN AD16 OFFICIAL IN THE INTEREST OF THE
SERVICE UNDER ARTICLES 37 AND 38 OF THE
STAFF REGULATIONS**

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms KYRIAKIDES, the Commission decided to extend until 31 May 2025 the secondment in the interest of the service, under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations, of Mr Ladislav MIKO, to the government of the Czech Republic.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.4. DG BUDGET – CLOSURE OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR A
POST OF DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15 AND TRANSFER OF AN
AD15 OFFICIAL UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS**

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

- to close with immediate effect the selection procedure for the post of Director of the 'Treasury, Accounting and Financial Reporting' Directorate in DG Budget, without making an appointment;
- to transfer to this post, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Maria Beatriz SANZ REDRADO, currently

Director of the ‘Change Management and Resources’ Directorate in DG Digital Services.

The transfer would take effect on a date to be determined.

**7.5. DG BUDGET – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 68 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 of the ‘Central Financial Services’ Directorate in DG Budget (PERS(2023) 68 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 19 October 2023 (PERS(2023) 68/3 and /4).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants’ qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Mr Michael ERHART to the post.

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

**7.6. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR
AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 110 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 ‘Waterborne’ Directorate in DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2023) 110).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 March and 12 October 2023 (PERS(2023) 110/2 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 Michela MATUELLA to the post.

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

**7.7. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS –
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 111 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 ‘Thematic Support, Coordination of Policy and Financial Instruments’ Directorate in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (PERS(2023) 111).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 and 23 March 2023 (PERS(2023) 111/2 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 Mr VÁRHELYI, it then decided to appoint Mr Mathieu BOUSQUET to the post.

This decision would take effect on 16 December 2023.

**7.8. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS –
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 112 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 ‘Southern Neighbourhood and Türkiye’ Directorate in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (PERS(2023) 112).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 and 23 March 2023 (PERS(2023) 112/2 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 Mr VÁRHELYI, it then decided to appoint Mr Francisco GAZTELU MEZQUIRIZ to the post.

This decision would take effect on 16 December 2023.

**7.9. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS –
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 113 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 'Western Balkans' Directorate in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (PERS(2023) 113).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 and 23 March 2023 (PERS(2023) 113/2 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 Mr VÁRHELYI, it then decided to appoint Ms Adrienn KIRALY to the post.

This decision would take effect on 16 December 2023.

**7.10. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS –
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 8 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 of the ‘Ukraine Service’ Directorate in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (PERS(2023) 8 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 and 27 April 2023 (PERS(2023) 8/3 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 Mr VÁRHELYI, it then decided to appoint Ms Anna JAROSZ-FRIIS to the post.

This decision would take effect on 16 December 2023.

**7.11. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS –
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2023) 55 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 ‘Resources’ Directorate in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (PERS(2023) 55).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 3 March and 27 April 2023 (PERS(2023) 55/2 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 Mr VÁRHELYI, it then decided to appoint Ms Maria Victoria GIL CASADO to the post.

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

**7.12. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS –
AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART**

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr VÁRHELYI, the Commission decided to create a temporary post of Principal Adviser for Reconstruction in Gaza, reporting directly to the Director-General. This post would be abolished upon the departure of the jobholder.

This decision would take effect on 16 December 2023.

**7.13. EUROSTAT – CLOSURE OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR A
DIRECTOR POST AT GRADE AD14/15, INTERNAL AND
INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION (GRADE AD14/15) AND
EXTERNAL PUBLICATION (GRADE AD14) OF THE VACANCY
NOTICE FOR A DIRECTOR POST
(PERS(2023) 114; PERS(2023) 41)**

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

- to close the selection procedure for the post of Director of the ‘Government Finance Statistics (GFS)’ Directorate in Eurostat, without making an appointment;
- to authorise the publication, under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), (1)(b) and (2) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice set out in PERS(2023) 114 for the post of Director of the ‘Government Finance Statistics (GFS)’ Directorate in Eurostat.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**7.14. DG HUMAN RESOURCES – APPOINTMENT OF RAPORTEURS FOR
SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSTS
(PERS(2023) 115)**

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and in accordance with Article 7 of the Rules of Procedure for the Consultative Committee on Appointments (Commission Decision C(2007) 380 of 7 February 2007), the Commission decided to appoint new rapporteurs for a term of office of three years and to reappoint the current rapporteurs for a new term of office of three years, as set out in PERS(2023) 115.

These decisions would take effect on 1 January 2024.

**8. JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL – NO PLACE FOR HATE: A EUROPE UNITED AGAINST
HATRED
(JOIN(2023) 51; RCC(2023) 199)**

Mr DOMBROVSKIS pointed out that combating hatred had been a priority for this Commission since the start of its mandate. He reminded the College that, when setting out her political guidelines, the PRESIDENT had said that Europe was a unique aspiration of living in a society where each individual could be who they truly were. He highlighted the work undertaken by the Commission to date to make this aspiration a reality, mentioning in particular the strategies promoting equality and the implementation of anti-discrimination and anti-hate legislation, as well as the efforts made to ensure that EU funds were allocated in line with European values and respect for fundamental rights. He expressed his concern, however, regarding the rise in anti-Semitism and hate crimes, and made clear that anti-Semitism had no place in Europe and that everyone should feel welcome here.

Ms JOUROVÁ confirmed that the Commission had already proposed initiatives in similar contexts, citing the 2015 migration crisis as an example. The current geopolitical context, however, made matters more urgent. Since the Hamas attack against Israel on 7 October, Europe had experienced an unprecedented increase in hate speech and hate crimes, in particular against Jewish communities. This Communication was intended to combat all forms of hate, including the glorification of terrorism and direct threats against individuals and communities. She noted that, while the Hamas terrorist attack had not taken place on European soil, it had nevertheless had direct repercussions in the EU, where Jewish communities were now once again living in fear.

The Communication was intended to raise awareness not only among policy-makers but also among law enforcement officers, teachers, stakeholders in the cultural and sports sectors, influencers and those responsible for online platforms. It was also a call to all European citizens, who had to take action against manifestations of hatred, especially when toxic content was spread on social media. She highlighted the recent uptick in hateful messages posted on online platforms and noted that, despite the criminal nature of these messages, there had been no equivalent increase in criminal proceedings.

Ms JOUROVÁ therefore drew the conclusion that, at present, there were gaps in the application of the existing legislation. It was for this reason that the Commission was proposing special support to online platforms, in particular by making fact-checkers available to them. The Commission was also envisaging strengthening the role of its three coordinators on combating racism, combating anti-Semitism and fostering Jewish life, and combating anti-Muslim hatred. They would be given an explicit mandate and designated as Commission envoys, in order to empower them to identify and understand trends on the ground.

Lastly, she stressed that this Communication was not a one-off, as it required the continued engagement of law enforcement authorities and European society as a whole.

Mr SCHINAS underlined the crucial role played by the Commission in promoting the mobilisation of European society as a whole against manifestations of hatred. He welcomed the balance achieved in the proposed Communication, which dealt with both the increase in anti-Semitism and the rise in anti-Muslim hatred in the public sphere.

As regards law enforcement, he informed the College that the Commission was ready to allocate EUR 30 million in additional funding to guarantee the physical security of places of worship. Of this amount, EUR 5 million would boost the envelope for tackling new threats posed by the rise in anti-Semitism, while EUR 3 million would be allocated to emergency financing. In parallel, the Commission would mobilise the capacities of relevant services, such as Europol and national law enforcement bodies, and encourage them to make use of all the resources made available for this purpose.

Mr SCHINAS then underlined the importance of having the necessary resources to combat online hate. The EU now had the tools to interact effectively with online platforms in this area. He made specific reference to the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online, stressing the need for them to be implemented in full. Lastly, he mentioned the Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online, which would have to be strengthened at the start of 2024.

The Communication covered those sectors focusing on the human aspect of European policies, such as education, culture and sport. It was necessary to step up efforts in this regard, in order to promote diversity and inclusion and tackle discrimination and hate. Concrete examples of such initiatives adopted by the Commission included the Erasmus+ programme and the creation of a prize for preserving Jewish cultural heritage. That day's Communication supported this framework through an inter-faith dialogue and by boosting the role of the three Commission coordinators as envoys.

Lastly, as regards protecting the EU budget, Mr SCHINAS pointed out that, as a result of the amendment to the Financial Regulation, the Commission would be better equipped to identify the beneficiaries of financing who infringed EU rules and exclude them from funding. In this connection, the Commission had already suspended a certain number of projects deemed to be incompatible with European values and had recovered the funding that had been awarded to them. No organisation would receive a single euro from the EU budget if there was any doubt as to whether its aims aligned with European values.

Mr REYNDERS pointed out that the Communication came at a time of growing tensions and a general increase in anti-Semitism and hostility towards Muslims. It was vital to combat all forms of hatred in the same way.

He then went on to discuss four specific instruments that were aimed at protecting common values and fundamental rights in the EU.

First, there was the 2008 Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia. It sought to create a framework in criminal law to ensure that serious manifestations of racism and xenophobia were punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal sanctions across the EU. Major steps had been taken to ensure the full and proper transposition of this Framework Decision, and thirteen infringement proceedings had been launched against Member States. Most of these proceedings had led to the Member States concerned taking concrete actions, although there were still three infringement proceedings ongoing.

The second was the proposal for a Council Decision to include hate speech and hate crimes on the list of EU crimes in the Treaties. The aim of this proposal was to protect society against all forms of hate speech and hate crimes, regardless of the individuals or groups targeted. This proposal, however, required a unanimous decision of the Council and the approval of the European Parliament.

The third instrument was the EU strategy on victims' rights (2020-2025), in which the Commission underlined the need to provide specialist support and protection to

victims of hate crimes. In accordance with the commitments set out in the strategy, the Commission had adopted a proposal to revise the Victims' Rights Directive in July 2023. He hoped that progress on this revision would be made in the Council under the Belgian Presidency.

The fourth and final instrument mentioned by Mr REYNDERS was the Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online, which had been launched by the Commission and several major platforms in 2016. He thought that the Code of Conduct had proven effective, bringing a growing number of companies on board over the years (12 so far). A discussion was under way with participating companies on updating the Code, so that it could bring added value to the DSA provisions. In this way, an enhanced Code of Conduct would be drawn up on the basis of the DSA, to serve as a reference and good practice for voluntary self-regulation in the digital sector. Mr REYNDERS believed that the revised Code of Conduct could be finalised by February 2024.

Ms DALLI pointed out that the Communication took a strong stance against hatred, at a time when anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred were suddenly on the rise. However, hatred, especially online, was also on the rise against other minorities, such as the LGBTIQ community, sometimes instigated by non-EU actors. The Communication also came at a time when extremist parties spreading hateful views had made big gains at the polls.

It was thus important for the Communication to cover all grounds of discrimination and to link directly with the EU's equality strategies, making sure no-one was left behind. In that regard, increased hate attacks similar to those currently experienced by Jewish and Muslim communities had already affected other groups in the past and could do so again in the future. The Communication therefore called on the co-legislators to adopt the proposal to extend the list of EU crimes to include hate speech and hate crime.

The Commission had taken bold steps to ensure safety and promote equality for all. Among these were the adoption of the anti-racism action plan, which had introduced a new anti-racism coordinator, complementing those for anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred. Strengthening the role of those coordinators and organising international days against hate would contribute to combating hatred and discrimination more effectively.

In conclusion, Ms DALLI stressed that the Communication not only presented a list of ongoing and upcoming actions to address hatred, but also called on the Member States to fully implement all related strategies, including national strategies against racism and anti-Semitism.

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

- the College’s full support for the proposed Communication;
- a reminder that hatred fuelled the threat of terrorist attacks;
- the agreement between the Commission and digital platforms to remove online terrorist content within an hour;
- the increase in anti-Semitic incidents on digital platforms, the monitoring of such incidents and dialogue with the platforms already allowed under the Digital Services Act, as well as the possibility of launching infringement procedures from 18 February 2024;
- a reference to the EU Internet Forum, where the Commission, digital platforms and other stakeholders voluntarily addressed the issue of legal but dangerous content, including content disseminated by actors outside the EU aimed at polarising European society;
- the links between the Communication and the EU’s comprehensive approach to mental health, for example as regards the bullying of children in schools because

of their religion or sexual orientation; hence the need for the Commission to direct its action in this area towards not only universities but also schools at all levels;

- the importance of interfaith dialogue to give representatives of different faiths the opportunity to speak publicly about the problem of hate speech and hate crime and to make their voices heard;
- the new wave of anti-Semitism, which was a reminder of the darkest hours of European history, and the need to regulate freedom of expression by guaranteeing the protection of fundamental rights in order to prevent the spread of hatred and violence.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS wound up the debate by thanking all the Commissioners concerned for their work.

Following these presentations, the Commission approved the Joint Communication in JOIN(2023) 51 for transmission to the European Parliament and the Council, and, for information, to the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and national parliaments.

9. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DIRECTIVE AMENDING DIRECTIVE (EU) 2015/637 ON THE COORDINATION AND COOPERATION MEASURES TO FACILITATE CONSULAR PROTECTION FOR UNREPRESENTED CITIZENS OF THE UNION IN THIRD COUNTRIES AND DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/997 ESTABLISHING AN EU EMERGENCY TRAVEL DOCUMENT

(COM(2023) 930 AND /2; SWD(2023) 940; SWD(2023) 941; SWD(2023) 942; SEC(2023) 930; RCC(2023) 198)

10. REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL

**COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS UNDER
ARTICLE 25 TFEU ON PROGRESS TOWARDS EFFECTIVE EU
CITIZENSHIP 2020-2023****(COM(2023) 931 TO /3; RCC(2023) 198)**

By way of introduction, Ms JOUROVÁ stressed that these initiatives came right on time to mark the 30th anniversary of EU citizenship, established by the Maastricht Treaty, and ahead of the upcoming European elections. Strengthening EU citizenship rights followed up on the Commission's previous commitments, the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the European democracy action plan and the Union of Equality strategies.

She then briefly outlined the initiatives proposed for adoption that day, which provided concrete tools to make EU citizenship rights known and more tangible.

She referred first to the revision of the Consular Protection Directive. The proposed revision aimed to strengthen this protection, especially in crisis situations, gave a bigger role to EU delegations and helped Member States provide unrepresented EU citizens with consular protection.

Ms JOUROVÁ then turned to the report on progress towards effective EU citizenship 2020-2023. This was a regular report taking stock of policy initiatives carried out over a given period to strengthen and promote EU citizenship rights, common values and democratic participation.

Mr REYNDERS stressed that European citizenship was a major achievement established under the Maastricht Treaty and one of the more concrete examples of the EU's added value for citizens.

Describing the two initiatives concerned, he began by specifying that the EU citizenship report had to be published every 3 years. He noted that the report was mostly a stocktaking exercise on the main policy and case-law developments concerning the various rights deriving from European citizenship. These included in

particular the right to free movement, the right to vote and stand as a candidate in European and local elections, and non-discrimination between European citizens based on nationality.

Mr REYNDERS then stressed the importance of the proposed revision of the 2015 Consular Protection Directive and of the 2019 Directive establishing an EU emergency travel document. The proposed amendments sought to future-proof the legal framework for EU consular protection established in the Directive. The changes included enhancing legal certainty, strengthening cooperation between Member States and EU delegations in third countries, and improving information exchange on consular protection at national and European level.

He concluded by referring to other Commission initiatives linked to that day's proposals. The revision of the free movement guidance was being adopted by written procedure in parallel. This document, intended for practitioners, clarified how Treaty and secondary law provisions on free movement were to be interpreted, based on the case-law of the European Court of Justice. He also referred to several initiatives aimed at providing guidance and sharing best practices, more specifically the guide on the participation of citizens with disabilities in electoral processes, the compendium on e-voting and, finally, the guide to EU citizenship.

Mr REYNDERS added that the latter document was a communication tool designed to make the rights deriving from EU citizenship more concrete for citizens. The guide would focus in particular on young Europeans and those who had been recently naturalised, so that they were more aware of their rights and what being EU citizens meant in practice.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- adopted the proposal for a Council Directive in COM(2023) 930/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Data Protection Supervisor and, for information, to 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) 940, SWD(2023) 941, SWD(2023) 942 and SEC(2023) 930, the contents of which were noted;

- adopted the report in COM(2023) 931/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the European Data Protection Supervisor and the national parliaments.

11. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION ON THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE 'FUR FREE EUROPE'

(C(2023) 8362 TO /3; RCC(2023) 197)

12. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS DURING TRANSPORT AND RELATED OPERATIONS, AMENDING COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) N° 1255/97 AND REPEALING COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) N° 1/2005

(COM(2023) 770 TO /3; SWD(2023) 399; SWD(2023) 401 AND /2; SWD(2023) 402 AND /2; SEC(2023) 397; RCC(2023) 197)

13. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE WELFARE OF DOGS AND CATS AND THEIR TRACEABILITY

(COM(2023) 769 TO /3; RCC(2023) 197)

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ introduced the proposed initiatives, namely two proposals for Regulations on animal welfare, and the Commission's response to the European citizens' initiative 'Fur Free Europe'.

Of the ten European citizens' initiatives that had successfully reached the required threshold of 1 million signatures collected, six concerned improving animal

protection. According to the latest Eurobarometer survey published in October 2023, more than 80% of citizens surveyed wanted increased protection for animals during transport and more than 70% were in favour of higher welfare standards for cats and dogs.

As Mr ŠEFČOVIČ pointed out, this demonstrated the strong commitment of European citizens to animal welfare. This topic was also the subject of numerous questions and resolutions of the European Parliament and was included in the programmes of European political parties across the political spectrum. In this context, he welcomed the much-awaited initiatives proposed for adoption that day, which ensured a good balance between level of ambition and ease of implementation, and which were supported by sound scientific data.

He explained that the Animal Transport Regulation replaced the current animal transport legislation, which had been drafted 20 years earlier, introducing, inter alia, modern digital solutions. This should reduce the administrative burden for stakeholders and above all improve the conditions of the 1.4 billion animals transported each year by preventing their undue suffering from heat, cold or lengthy journey times.

Both proposals for Regulations also helped to create a level playing field. In particular, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ felt that the Regulation on the welfare of cats and dogs and their traceability would make it possible to dismantle clandestine puppy and kitten farms, both inside and outside the EU, and would reward trustworthy organisations.

Ms JOUROVÁ noted that the European citizens' initiative 'Fur Free Europe' was the tenth citizens' initiative to successfully pass the validation stage, collecting more than 1.5 million signatures in 18 Member States. She explained that the organisers of this initiative were asking the Commission to take measures to prohibit (i) the keeping and slaughter of animals for fur production, and (ii) the placing on the EU market of fur of farmed animals and products containing such fur. The proposed

Communication therefore provided a response detailing the action undertaken by the Commission in this respect, as well as the additional measures planned to follow up the initiative.

Ms KYRIAKIDES said that the initiatives proposed not only represented the largest revision of animal welfare rules for 20 years, but also broadened the scope of those rules. She also welcomed the scientific approach that underpinned the preparation of all Commission decisions on animal welfare.

With regard to the response to the citizens' initiative 'Fur Free Europe', she stressed that the Commission would conduct an in-depth assessment of the necessity and feasibility of a ban on fur farming and the marketing of fur in the EU. On the basis of the scientific advice of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and this in-depth assessment, the Commission would decide whether to propose such a ban, which would in any case be accompanied by a transitional period.

Pending this assessment, she said that the Commission would adopt several measures to improve the conditions of animals and limit the environmental impact of fur farming. An initial assessment of this impact would be conducted in 2024, in particular on the basis of field inspections. The Commission would also prepare a revision of the Textile Labelling Regulation with a view to introducing transparent labelling for consumers on the presence of fur in clothing.

Ms KYRIAKIDES then presented the proposal for a Regulation on the transport of animals, the aim of which was to improve their conditions during transport. To this end, the proposed measures included reducing journey times, increasing the space available for animals during transport and setting stricter temperature limits for long journeys. The proposal would also simplify EU rules to make them less burdensome for suppliers and facilitate enforcement.

The second proposal for a Regulation concerned the welfare of dogs and cats. She stressed that the Regulation would apply to breeders, shelters and pet shops throughout the EU. She welcomed this unprecedented initiative, which established

for the first time specific European standards for dogs and cats, in a context where half of EU households owned a pet.

She highlighted the considerable size of the pet market, with annual sales of dogs and cats in the EU estimated at EUR 1.3 billion, of which 60% were made online. Although there were many trustworthy sellers in the EU, there were also unscrupulous operators benefiting from this booming market, often to the detriment of animal welfare.

In addition, Ms KYRIAKIDES drew attention to the problem of illegal trade in dogs and cats, often from third countries with endemic rabies and weak welfare standards. In view of this situation, she stressed the importance of introducing European rules to ensure effective protection of the welfare of these animals. These rules would also protect the health of European citizens and their rights as consumers, and ensure fair competition for responsible businesses in the Single Market.

The proposals also included minimum standards for the breeding, housing and handling of these animals, so that their basic needs and natural instincts were respected. Mutilations would be banned in the EU, as would inbreeding. Online sales of dogs and cats would be subject to strong checks to ensure compliance with EU traceability rules, and welfare standards would apply equally to imported dogs and cats.

Ms KYRIAKIDES concluded that, in addition to the ethical aspect of animal welfare, the proposal was about recognising the link between human and animal health and well-being, as well as the need for a holistic ‘One Health’ approach.

A brief discussion followed, during which the Commission expressed its full support for the proposed initiatives, stressing the ethical, environmental and health relevance of animal welfare measures and their great importance to Europe’s citizens.

Following this presentation, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr DOMBROVSKIS, confirmed that the Communication and the two proposals for Regulations set out in C(2023) 8362/3, COM(2023) 770/3 and COM(2023) 769/3 would be formally adopted by finalisation written procedure, the deadline for which was set at Thursday 7 December 2023 (PE/2023/8546, PE/2023/8580 and PE/2023/8581).

**14. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION ON THE POSITION TO BE TAKEN ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL ESTABLISHED BY 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, AS REGARDS THE TRANSITIONAL PRODUCT-SPECIFIC RULES FOR ELECTRIC ACCUMULATORS AND ELECTRIFIED VEHICLES
(COM(2023) 950 AND /2; RCC(2023) 200)**

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ presented the proposal for a Council Decision on the European Union position to be adopted in the Partnership Council of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) on rules of origin for batteries and electric vehicles. The draft Decision had already been informally agreed with the United Kingdom in line with standard practice for such decisions.

The aim of these measures was to extend until the end of 2026 the current applicable rules of origin laid down in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, thus skipping the transition period initially planned from 2024 to 2026, and directly applying the strictest rules of origin from January 2027. It would not be possible to substantially change this level again before 2032, which would amount to locking in the rules of origin established for 2027.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ emphasised the fact that the proposal took into account requests from the European automotive and battery industry, many Member States and the United Kingdom. This decision was also underpinned by a commitment by the EU to further strengthen its strategic support for the battery industry.

The Commission intended to introduce a new instrument under the Innovation Fund which would provide up to EUR 3 billion over the next three years to European manufacturers of the most sustainable batteries. This support would create significant spill-over effects for the entire European battery value chain. The eligibility criteria and other terms and conditions of this instrument would be formulated in 2024 before the first call for tenders was organised.

At the same time, the Commission would closely monitor the involvement of the European automotive industry in the development of a European battery ecosystem, constantly assessing the progress made and the readiness of the industry to comply with the permanent rules of origin applicable from 2027 onwards.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ highlighted the complexity of this multidimensional Decision, which covered aspects such as EU-UK relations, the development of a European battery ecosystem, and issues relating to trade and EU competitiveness. The Commission departments had worked intensively over the last few months, weighing the different options in order to find the best possible way forward. The proposed solution was balanced and would support the entire industrial value chain of electric batteries and vehicles.

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

- the technical and yet politically sensitive nature of this proposal;
- a reminder that, in the absence of a decision on 1 January 2024, electric vehicles exported from the European Union to the United Kingdom (and vice versa)

would be subject to customs duties of 10%, a price increase that would be passed on to consumers;

- the risk of increasing the competitiveness of electric vehicle producers in third countries in the short term, which would threaten European industry in the longer term;
- the crucial need to protect jobs in the European automotive and battery industries as well as in the chemical industry, against a background of heightened international competition;
- questions about the existence of alternative options regarding the timing of the proposal, the duration of the proposed extension and the broader implications for the future relationship with the UK;
- the need to closely monitor the involvement of the European automotive industry in the development of a European battery ecosystem.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ thanked the College for this exchange of views, which clearly demonstrated the complexity of the subject. Various alternatives to the approach had been considered, however they presented significant practical challenges. The proposal was limited to an ad hoc extension of the current rules without the possibility of further extensions in the future. An in-depth assessment of industry investments and decisions would ensure good preparation by 2027, while at the same time supporting the European battery industry to the tune of EUR 3 billion.

He finished by stressing that it was important for the Commission to approve the proposal quickly to ensure that the adoption process was completed at both European and UK levels before the end of 2023.

At the invitation of Mr DOMBROVSKIS, the Director-General of the Legal Service further explained that the proposal concerned a Council Decision on the Union position in the EU-UK Partnership Council as regards the transitional period for

accumulators and electric vehicles. The aim of the proposal was to extend the transition period on rules of origin to three years, in line with the agreement negotiated with the United Kingdom. These rules specified how a product could be considered as originating in the EU or in the United Kingdom. Only products from a given country could benefit from preferential rules.

A management council – the Partnership Council – was envisaged under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement which could amend the rules of origin, in accordance with Article 68 of the Agreement. The proposal would therefore extend the transitional period, stipulating that these rules could not be extended again thereafter. This ensured that it was a one-off measure.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS wound up by saying that the earlier forecasts drawn up in 2020 on the capacity of European industry to adapt to stricter requirements from 2024 had been too optimistic. This assessment had been reviewed, in particular in the light of unforeseen events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which had imposed substantial costs on European industry.

Lastly, he stressed the urgent need to adopt the proposal so that electric vehicles exported from the EU to the United Kingdom would not be subject to customs duties from January 2024. The Decision would have to be adopted by the Council by qualified majority, paving the way for a Partnership Council decision to be taken jointly with the UK.

Following these presentations, the Commission approved the proposal for a Council Decision in COM(2023) 950/2, for transmission to the Council and, for information, to the European Parliament and the national parliaments.

15. OTHER BUSINESS***COMMISSION DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION OF A EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'EUROPEAN CANNABIS INITIATIVE'******(C(2023) 8548)***

Ms JOUROVÁ presented to the College the request for registration of the European citizens' initiative entitled, in the authentic language (English), 'European Cannabis Initiative'. The initiative called on the Commission to submit a legislative proposal on the use, possession and cultivation of cannabis, and on fostering access to medical cannabis and funding for research.

The citizens' initiative had four stated objectives, and a preliminary assessment by the Commission concluded that two of these objectives fell outside its remit. As the initiative could not be registered in its current form, the Commission invited the organisers to consider revising it. The organisers had two months to revise the proposal, maintain the request for registration in its current form or withdraw it.

At a second stage, the Commission would decide on the basis of the organisers' reply whether to register the entire initiative or part of it, or to reject it.

Following this presentation, the Commission confirmed that the citizens' initiative 'European Cannabis Initiative' did not meet the conditions for registration at this stage. It therefore decided, in accordance with C(2023) 8548, to inform the organisers of the outcome of its assessment and the underlying reasons for its decision, pursuant to Article 6(4) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788, and authorised Ms JOUROVÁ to sign the reply on behalf of the College, and to send it to the organisers of the initiative.

The Commission took note of this information.

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

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The meeting closed at 11.08.