



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2024) 2480 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 5 March 2024

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2480th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 31 January 2024

(morning)

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PV(2024) 2480 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

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Single sitting: Wednesday 31 January 2024 (morning)

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

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	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	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	Items 8/9 (in part) to 11
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member	
Mr REYNDERS	Member	
Ms JOHANSSON	Member	
Ms VÁLEAN	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	
Ms URPILAINEN	Member	
Ms SIMSON	Member	
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member	
Ms McGUINNESS	Member	
Ms IVANOVA	Member	
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	

Absent:

Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President
Mr BRETON	Member
Ms DALLI	Member
Mr LENARČIČ	Member

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

Ms SOEWARTA	Head of Cabinet to Ms VESTAGER
Mr HAGER	Head of Cabinet to Mr DOMBROVSKIS
Mr VILLARINO	Head of Cabinet to Mr BORRELL
Mr MOUTARLIER	Head of Cabinet to Mr BRETON
Ms GERHARDS	Deputy Head of Cabinet to Ms DALLI
Mr ELING	Deputy Head of Cabinet to Mr LENARČIČ

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr CALLEJA CRESPO	Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms SPINANT	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr MAMER	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Mr VAN KEMSEKE	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Mr BAERT	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Items 8/9
Ms SEMLALI	Policy Assistant in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Ms PODESTA	Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms ALLOUIS-LE LOSTEC	Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General	
Ms BUKA	Secretariat-General	

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2024) 2480/FINAL; SEC(2024) 2480/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(2024) 2480)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 29 January 2024.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(PV(2023) 2475; PV(2023) 2475, 2ND PART; PV(2023) 2476; PV(2023) 2476, 2ND PART; PV(2023) 2477; PV(2023) 2477, 2ND PART)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2475th, 2476th and 2477th meetings of 29 November, and 6 and 12 December 2023, and held over approval of the minutes of its 2478th and 2479th meetings of 10 and 24 January 2024 for a later date.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2024) 56)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) held on Friday 26 January 2024 (RCC(2024) 56).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amendment of Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU)**

**N° 913/2010, and repeal of Regulation (EU) N° 1315/2013 (Regulation) –
THALER & RIQUET report – 2021/0420 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 26.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EC) N° 561/2006 as regards minimum requirements on minimum breaks and daily and weekly rest periods in the occasional passenger transport sector (Regulation) – VIRKKUNEN report – 2023/0155 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 39.

- **Packaging and packaging waste, amendment of Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and Directive (EU) 2019/904, and repeal of Directive 94/62/EC (Regulation) – RIES report – 2022/0396 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 38.

- **Establishment of common rules promoting the repair of goods, and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2017/2394, Directives (EU) 2019/771 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Directive) – REPASI report – 2023/0083 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 40.

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

Line set out in SP(2024) 41.

- **Establishment of the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (‘STEP’) and amendment of Directive 2003/87/EC and of Regulations (EU) 2021/1058, (EU) 2021/1056, (EU) 2021/1057, (EU) N° 1303/2013, (EU) N° 223/2014, (EU) 2021/1060, (EU) 2021/523, (EU) 2021/695, (EU) 2021/697 and (EU) 2021/241 (Regulation) – FERNANDES & EHLER report – 2023/0199 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 45/2.

- **Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Court of Justice, the European Central Bank, the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Proposal for an interinstitutional ethics body – COM(2023) 311 final**

Line set out in SI(2024) 46/2.

- **Establishment of a Single Market emergency instrument and repeal of Council Regulation (EC) N° 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 (Directive) – SCHWAB report –**

2022/0280 (COD)

Line set out in SI(2024) 42.

- **Collection and transfer of advance passenger information (API) for enhancing and facilitating external border controls, amendment of Regulation (EU) 2019/817 and Regulation (EU) 2018/1726, and repeal of Council Directive 2004/82/EC (Regulation) - OETJEN report – 2022/0424 (COD)**
- **Collection and transfer of advance passenger information for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime, and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2019/818 (Regulation) – KANKO report – 2022/0425 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 48.

- **Amendment of Council Directives 2001/110/EC relating to honey, 2001/112/EC relating to fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption, 2001/113/EC relating to fruit jams, jellies and marmalades and sweetened chestnut purée intended for human consumption, and 2001/114/EC relating to certain partly or wholly dehydrated preserved milk for human consumption (Regulation) – BERNHUBER report – 2023/0105 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 49.

- **Improving working conditions in platform work (Directive) – GUALMINI report – 2021/0414 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 50.

- **Empowerment of the French Republic to negotiate, sign and conclude an international agreement on the safety and interoperability requirements within the Channel Fixed Link (Decision) – VITANOV report – 2023/0192 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 43.

- **Val Duchesse Social Partners' Summit declaration**

Line set out in SI(2024) 47.

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

- **Commission replies to the non-legislative resolutions adopted by the European Parliament at its October II 2023 and November II 2023 part-sessions**

Line set out in SP(2024) 45/2.

The Commission approved the line proposed for the following point, for transmission to the Committee of the Regions:

- **Follow-up to opinions of the Committee of the Regions – Plenary session of October 2023**

Line set out in SR(2024) 2.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Union-wide effect of certain driving disqualifications (Directive) – VITANOV report – 2023/0055 (COD)**

Information set out in SP(2024) 37.

- **Amendment of Regulations (EU) N 260/2012 and 2021/1230 as regards**

instant credit transfers in euro (Regulation) – HOOGEVEEN report – 2022/0341 (COD)

Compromise text in SP(2024) 33, further to note SI(2023) 466 already approved by the Commission on 21 November 2023.

- **Amendment of Directives 2011/61/EU and 2009/65/EC as regards delegation arrangements, liquidity risk management, supervisory reporting, provision of depositary and custody services and loan origination by alternative investment funds (Directive) – BENJUMEA BENJUMEA report – 2021/0376 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2024) 40, further to note SI(2023) 327 already approved by the Commission on 6 September 2023.

- **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)**

Compromise text in SP(2024) 34, further to note SI(2023) 511 already approved by the Commission on 6 December 2023.

- **Automated data exchange for police cooperation ('Prüm II') and amendment of Council Decisions 2008/615/JHA and 2008/616/JHA and Regulations (EU) 2018/1726, 2019/817 and 2019/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Regulation) – RANGEL report – 2021/0410 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2024) 36, further to note SI(2023) 497 already approved by the Commission on 29 November 2023.

- **Amendment of Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) (Directive) – ZALEWSKA report – 2023/0025 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2024) 39, further to note SI(2023) 507 already approved by the Commission on 29 November 2023.

- **Establishment of measures for a high level of public sector interoperability across the Union (Interoperable Europe Act) (Regulation) – IJABS report – 2022/0379 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2024) 41, further to note SI(2023) 460 already approved by the Commission on 21 November 2023.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2017/2107 laying down management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Convention area of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and Regulation (EU) .../2022 establishing a multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean (Regulation) – AGUILERA report – 2022/0111 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2024) 42, further to note SI(2023) 442 already approved by the Commission on 21 November 2023.

- **Joint Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EU) N° 833/2014**

Information set out in SP(2024) 52.

- **Results of the European Parliament's January II 2024 part-session**

Information set out in SP(2024) 46.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2024) 6)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2024) 6 of the

meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 24 January 2024.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2024) 15 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 22 and 28 January 2024.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2024) 16 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 22 and 28 January 2024.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2024) 17 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 22 and 28 January 2024 archived in Decide.

6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2024) 18 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 29 January and 2 February 2024.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2024) 19 AND /2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2024) 10 AND /2)

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

It was proposed to appoint Mr Markus PIEPER to the role of EU small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) Envoy. Mr HAHN highlighted Mr PIEPER's skills and merits, as well as his significant expertise in the field, to which he had dedicated his entire career.

It was further proposed to transfer Mr Martin SELMAYR to a newly created temporary post of adviser *hors classe* reporting directly to the Secretary-General, and to second him in the interest of the service to the University of Vienna from 1 February to 31 August 2024. In this connection, Mr HAHN stressed the importance of external mobility for Commission staff and of links with the academic and scientific worlds.

**7.1. DG INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND
SMES – APPOINTMENT OF AN ADVISER HORS CLASSE AT GRADE
AD15**
(PERS(2023) 88 TO /4)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Adviser *hors classe*, EU SME Envoy in DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (PERS(2023) 88 and /2). The successful applicant would be recruited as a temporary staff member in accordance with Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union for an initial period of four years, which could be extended once for a maximum period of two years.

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 23 November and 5 December 2023 (PERS(2023) 88/3 and /4).

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr BRETON, decided to appoint Mr Markus PIEPER to the post.

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

7.2. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART, TRANSFER OF AN AD15 OFFICIAL UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS AND SECONDMENT 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, the Commission decided:

- to create a temporary post of adviser hors classe in the Secretariat-General reporting directly to the Secretary-General;
- to transfer to this newly created post, in the interest of the service under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Martin SELMAYR, currently Head of the European Commission Representation in Vienna, Austria;
- to second Mr Martin SELMAYR, in the interest of the service, under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations, to the University of Vienna from 1 February to 31 August 2024. The Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security was responsible for taking the necessary operational measures in accordance with Commission Decision C(2013) 5555 on Administrative Aspects of External Mobility.

These decisions would take effect on 1 February 2024.

7.3. DG COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND TRANSFER OF AN OFFICIAL AT GRADE AD14 UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS (SEC(2024) 54)

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr BRETON, decided to:

- create a permanent post of Principal Adviser for digital policies enforcement in DG Communication Networks, Content and Technology, reporting to the Deputy Director-General for Directorates B, D, F, G and I;
- transfer in the interest of the service to this newly created post, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Alexander GEMBERG-WIESIKE – currently Director of the Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements;
- approve the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2024) 54.

These decisions would take effect on 1 February 2024.

7.4. OFFICE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND PAYMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ENTITLEMENTS – TRANSFER OF AN OFFICIAL AT GRADE AD15 UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, and in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Christian LEVASSEUR, currently Director of the ‘Traineeships, Recruitment & Mobility’ Directorate in DG Human Resources and Security, to the post of Director of the Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements.

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

**7.5. DG COMPETITION – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND INTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A DIRECTOR POST AT GRADE AD14/15
(SEC(2024) 55; PERS(2024) 11)**

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 3 of PERS(2024) 10, and, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms VESTAGER, decided to:

- create a Directorate for Foreign Subsidies in DG Competition, reporting directly to the Director-General and composed of three units;
- transfer in the interest of the service to the post of Director of this newly created Directorate, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Karl SOUKUP – currently Director of the ‘State Aid – General Scrutiny and Enforcement’ Directorate;
- authorise the internal publication, with immediate effect, of the vacancy notice set out in PERS(2024) 11 for the post of Director of the ‘State Aid – General Scrutiny and Enforcement’ Directorate, at grade AD14/15, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations;
- approve the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2024) 55.

Following the reorganisation, the total number of directorates in the Directorate-General for Competition would increase from 11 to 12 and the number of units would increase from 50 to 52.

Unless otherwise indicated, these decisions would take effect on 1 March 2024.

**7.6. IDEA – INSPIRE, DEBATE, ENGAGE AND ACCELERATE ACTION –
DESIGNATION OF A SPECIAL ADVISER
(PERS(2024) 12)**

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, set out in point 4 of PERS(2024) 10, and, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to:

- appoint Mr Peter STROHSCHNEIDER as Chair of the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture;
- designate Mr Peter STROHSCHNEIDER as a paid special adviser reporting directly to the PRESIDENT and administratively attached to IDEA – Inspire, Debate, Engage and Accelerate Action. His contract would start on the date of closure of the budgetary authority’s notification, running until 30 September 2024, for a maximum of 22 working days per month and a maximum total of 154 working days. In the meantime, as long as the procedure laid down in Article 123(2) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants remained ongoing, an unpaid contract could be concluded;
- make available – throughout his term of office – a dedicated team seconded to IDEA, composed of a senior manager from the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, a national expert seconded in accordance with Commission Decision C(2008) 6866, two assistants, and a maximum of six experts from the Directorates-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Climate Action, Environment, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Health and Food Safety, as well as Trade. Where appropriate, he would also receive the support of other experts from the relevant Commission departments. The team would work closely with the Secretariat-General as well as with all other relevant departments in order to carry out its mission;

- make offices available to Mr Peter STROHSCHNEIDER and his core team, within the space allocated to IDEA;
- instruct the Director-General of DG Budget to immediately inform the budgetary authority of the intention to conclude this special adviser contract;
- authorise Mr HAHN, the Member of the Commission responsible, by derogation from the second paragraph of point 6 of Commission Decision C(2007) 6655, to amend Mr Peter STROHSCHNEIDER's contract in the event of urgent and duly justified needs, subject to the availability of sufficient budgetary resources;
- authorise the Director-General of DG Human Resources and Security to implement this decision by signing the contract on behalf of the authority empowered to conclude contracts of employment.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.7. DG COMMUNICATION – APPOINTMENT OF A HEAD OF A EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATION

The Commission took note of the decision taken by the Appointing Authority to appoint Ms Zrinka UJEVIĆ to the post of Head of the European Commission's Representation in Zagreb, Croatia.

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

8. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON TEMPORARY TRADE-LIBERALISATION MEASURES SUPPLEMENTING TRADE CONCESSIONS APPLICABLE TO UKRANIAN PRODUCTS UNDER THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT

BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE EUROPEAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMUNITY AND THEIR MEMBER STATES, OF THE ONE PART, AND UKRAINE, OF THE OTHER PART

(COM(2024) 50 TO /3; RCC(2024) 63 AND /2)

9. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON TEMPORARY TRADE-LIBERALISATION MEASURES SUPPLEMENTING TRADE CONCESSIONS APPLICABLE TO PRODUCTS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA UNDER THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE EUROPEAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMUNITY AND THEIR MEMBER STATES, OF THE ONE PART, AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, OF THE OTHER PART
(COM(2024) 51 AND /2; RCC(2024) 63 AND /2)

In the absence of Mr DOMBROVSKIS, Mr SCHINAS presented the two proposals for Regulations renewing the autonomous trade measures for Ukraine and Moldova. These measures suspending import duties and quotas on exports to the EU aimed to support the economy of these two countries facing the challenges posed by Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. The right balance had to be struck between the need to continue the temporary liberalisation of products imported from these countries and the concerns expressed by European farmers about the significant increase in imports of some agricultural products in 2022 and 2023.

As regards Ukraine, Mr SCHINAS pointed out that the autonomous trade measures had been in place since June 2022 and were an essential pillar of the EU's unwavering support for Ukraine. The measures had had a positive impact on its economy against the backdrop of war, in particular by generating tax revenue. For that reason, the Commission proposed to extend the measures for a year, from 6 June 2024 to 5 June 2025.

However, the Commission was also taking into account the local impact of the measures in some EU Member States and concerns expressed by civil society. To address those concerns, two specific safeguards were proposed: (1) an enhanced safeguard mechanism for all products originating in Ukraine, guaranteeing swift action if such imports negatively affected the market of one or more Member States, irrespective of the impact on the EU market as a whole; (2) an automatic safeguard clause for the most sensitive products, i.e. sugar, poultry and eggs, restricting import volumes to the average level for 2022 and 2023. If imports of these products exceeded those volumes, customs duties would be reimposed to ensure that import volumes did not significantly exceed those of previous years.

Mr SCHINAS pointed out that the existing legislative framework was thus considerably strengthened. In addition, under the proposed measures, the Member States would be much more involved when the safeguards were triggered. To ensure transparent decisions on autonomous trade measures, the Commission therefore proposed using the ‘advisory procedure’ to adopt measures under the reinforced safeguard mechanism, as part of Member States’ control of the Commission’s implementing powers. This meant that Member States would be consulted before any final decision was taken by the Commission.

In parallel, the Commission proposed to renew for a year the suspension of all remaining duties on imports from Moldova in force since July 2022.

Mr SCHINAS stressed that that day’s proposals also contributed to global food security, given the EU’s role in exporting imported products to developing countries. As a next step, the two proposals would be examined by the European Parliament and the Council. Lastly, he drew the College’s attention to the need for swift adoption by the co-legislators to ensure continuity of the autonomous trade measures by 5 June for Ukraine and by 24 July for Moldova.

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

- support for the balance of the proposals, which sought to extend trade support to Ukraine and Moldova but were accompanied by safeguards to protect the interests of European businesses and farmers;
- the effects of Russia’s war of aggression on the volume of imports from Ukraine into the EU and the impact on farmers in frontline Member States in 2023 and now on farmers across the EU;
- in that context, the relevance of the reference period for calculating the threshold for imports of sugar, poultry and eggs triggering safeguard measures;
- the importance of a clear communication on the overall impact of imports from Ukraine on the EU market, the Member States and third countries of final destination of these products, as well as on the measures taken in favour of European farmers, including the establishment of a special scheme for the most sensitive products;
- the need to find a lasting solution for Ukraine to reroute its exports and regain its share of agricultural product markets in other parts of the world;
- the importance, in that context, of maintaining European aid for the safe transit of Ukrainian products, especially cereals, to their original export markets;
- the impact of these discussions on future negotiations in the context of the EU enlargement process and free trade agreements.

The PRESIDENT wound up the debate by pointing to the origin of these autonomous trade measures, namely Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and the Russian shelling of the port of Odesa and Ukrainian fields and warehouses. While it was in the EU’s interest to support Ukraine’s economy through trade, it also had to protect European producers. Exploring new opportunities on agricultural markets in third countries constituted a strategically advantageous approach for Ukraine and the EU. It would also ensure the viability of Ukraine’s economy with a

view to its gradual integration into the European single market.

Following these presentations, the Commission adopted the two proposals for Regulations in COM(2024) 50/3 and COM(2024) 51/2, for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council and the national parliaments.

10. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON VACCINE-PREVENTABLE CANCERS (COM(2024) 45 AND /2; RCC(2024) 62)

The PRESIDENT invited Mr SCHINAS and Ms KYRIAKIDES to present the proposal for a Council Recommendation aimed at supporting the efforts taken by the Member States to prevent cancer through vaccination.

Mr SCHINAS pointed out, by way of introduction, that the current Recommendation formed part of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, a cornerstone of the European Health Union, which had been presented during the COVID-19 pandemic. This historic action plan, which had mobilised all the Commission's departments, represented the EU's first comprehensive cancer strategy and was testament to the EU's firm commitment to the health and well-being of its citizens. This approach had not lost its relevance since the pandemic; on the contrary, with health systems concentrating on managing the pandemic, detecting and treating cancer had become even more difficult.

With reference to the four pillars of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan – prevention, early detection, treatment and better quality of life for cancer survivors – Mr SCHINAS stated that the proposal for a Council Recommendation focused primarily on prevention. He stressed the role of vaccination in protecting public health, given that 40% of cancers could be prevented in this way.

He concluded by underlining the need to step up communication on the current Commission's success in the field of health, especially the introduction of the

European Health Union, the strengthening of health capacities and the comprehensive review of EU pharmaceutical legislation. These initiatives were paving the way towards a future in which cancer would no longer be a fate to be accepted but rather a challenge to be addressed and overcome.

Ms KYRIAKIDES thanked all the Members of the Commission who had contributed to the video that would be presented on World Cancer Day on 4 February. She reaffirmed the commitment set out in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan to 'working together to close the gap', highlighting the significant disparities in cancer mortality, quality of life and access to healthcare in the EU. With reference to her recent discussions with non-governmental organisations from across Europe, she emphasised that the Member States were far from equal when it came to the challenges posed by this disease.

She also stressed the links between the fight against cancer and other public health issues, reiterating the importance in this respect of each of the six pillars of the European Health Union, including the one on mental health. She explained that the proposal focused on prevention as a key strategy in the fight against cancer, highlighting the importance of vaccinations against human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B. Emphasising the effectiveness and safety of these vaccines, she pointed out that HPV vaccination could prevent up to 90% of cervical cancer cases. The example of Australia, which was on its way to eradicating this cancer through a widespread vaccination campaign, was in stark contrast to the low vaccination rates in certain EU Member States, with the lowest being 1%.

In this connection, Ms KYRIAKIDES stressed the need to address these disparities and give all Member States the means to set up effective vaccination programmes. She also highlighted the importance of including boys in vaccination programmes, since men were also affected by human papillomavirus. She emphasised the need to set measurable objectives and monitoring arrangements, in particular to vaccinate 90% of teenage girls by 2030 and significantly increase vaccination among boys.

Lastly, Ms KYRIAKIDES addressed the specific challenges linked to the situation of refugees and migrants, and the disinformation campaigns concerning the COVID-19 vaccines and the recent measles epidemic. The Member States needed urgent and targeted support to tackle these challenges and clear communication on vaccine effectiveness and safety was paramount.

In conclusion, the PRESIDENT pointed out that, while certain cancers were still difficult to detect and therefore treat, others could be detected early, thus guaranteeing a high survival rate. Other cancers could be prevented through vaccination, as was the case with cancers caused by papillomavirus.

Following these presentations, the Commission adopted the proposal for a Council Recommendation in COM(2024) 45/2 for transmission to the Council and, for information, to the European Parliament, the European Data Protection Supervisor and the national parliaments.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT closed the meeting by taking stock of the major events taking place that week. She was glad that the College was back to full strength thanks to the return of Ms URPILAINEN, to whom she extended her warmest welcome.

She mentioned in particular that day's Val Duchesse Summit on social dialogue, to be followed in the afternoon by a European tribute to Mr Jacques DELORS. She welcomed the confirmed presence of many Heads of State or Government, and the musical accompaniment provided by the Erasmus Orchestra – a symbolic gesture in honour of the eponymous programme initiated by Mr DELORS.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT referred to the decisive importance of the extraordinary meeting of the European Council on 1 February, which would focus on the mid-term review of the EU's long-term budget. The talks would concentrate not only on financial support for Ukraine but also on the financing of other EU priorities, such

as the challenges of migration and solidarity in response to natural disasters. She underlined the importance of reaching a consensus among the 27 Member States, ideally unanimously, as a demonstration of European unity.

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 10.00.