



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2024) 2501 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Strasbourg, 8 October 2024

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2501st meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill building)

on Tuesday 17 September 2024

(afternoon)

PV(2024) 2501 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

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Single sitting: Tuesday 17 September 2024 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.08 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Executive Vice-President	Items 1 to 8
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President	
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Mr SCHMIT	Member	
Mr GENTILONI	Member	
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member	
Mr REYNDERS	Member	
Ms DALLI	Member	
Ms JOHANSSON	Member	
Mr LENARČIČ	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	Items 8 and 9
Ms SIMSON	Member	
Ms McGUINNESS	Member	
Ms IVANOVA	Member	
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	

Absent:

Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President
Ms URPILAINEN	Member

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

Ms DYRSKJØT	Member of Ms VESTAGER's cabinet	Items 1 to 6, 8 and 9
Ms LOTSON LÓPEZ	Member of Mr BORRELL's cabinet	
Mr IORDANIDIS	Policy Assistant in Mr SCHINAS's cabinet	
Ms LEINONEN	Member of Ms URPILAINEN's cabinet	

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
Ms SEMLALI	Policy Assistant in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Ms BUKA	Secretariat-General
Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI	Acting Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2024) 2501/FINAL; SEC(2024) 2501/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) 2501)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 16 September 2024.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2500th meeting of 11 September 2024 for a later date.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2024) 129)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) held on Friday 13 September 2024 (RCC(2024) 129).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Commission Regulation amending Annexes II and III to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for cyproconazole and spirodiclofen in or on certain products – 2024/2759 (RPS) – D091952/05**

Line set out in SP(2024) 421.

- **Commission Regulation amending Annexes II, III and V to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for benomyl, carbendazim and thiophanate-methyl in or on certain products – 2024/2758 (RPS) – D089819/05**

Line set out in SP(2024) 463.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Amendment of Directive 2013/11/EU on alternative dispute resolution for consumer disputes, as well as Directives (EU) 2015/2302, (EU) 2019/2161 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Directive) – BALLARÍN CEREZA report – 2023/0376 (COD)**
- **Repeal of Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 and amendment of Regulations (EU) 2017/2394 and (EU) 2018/1724 with regard to the discontinuation of the European Online Dispute Resolution Platform (Regulation) – BALLARÍN CEREZA report – 2023/0375 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2024) 308.

- **Case pending before the German Constitutional Court concerning the German Act implementing Council Regulation (EU) 2022/1854 of 6 October 2022 on an emergency intervention to address high energy prices**

Information set out in SP(2024) 26.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2024) 33)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2024) 33 of the

meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 11 September 2024.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2024) 209 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 9 and 15 September 2024.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2024) 210 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 9 and 15 September 2024.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2024) 211 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 9 and 15 September 2024 archived in Decide.

6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED (SEC(2024) 212 TO /3)

The Commission took note of the written procedures specifically identified for which the time limit expired between 16 and 20 September 2024.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2024) 213 /2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2024) 55 /2)

7.1. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND TRANSFER OF AN AD14 OFFICIAL UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to amend the organisation chart of the Secretariat-General. The amendments concerned:

- the creation of a temporary post of Principal Adviser responsible for the assessment of pre-enlargement policies and reporting to the Secretary-General; this post would be abolished upon departure of the jobholder;
- the transfer to this post, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, of Mr Michael GREMMINGER, currently Principal Adviser – Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in the Secretariat-General.

These decisions would take effect on 1 October 2024.

7.2. DG MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS – EXTENSION OF THE MANDATE OF A TEMPORARY TASK FORCE

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms JOHANSSON, the Commission decided to extend, for 24 months until 30 September 2026, the mandate of the Migration Management Task Force in DG Migration and Home Affairs. The duration of this extension could be reviewed in 2025.

This decision would take effect on 1 October 2024.

**7.3. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION
AFTER LEAVING OFFICE
(C(2024) 9001)**

The Commission decided that the professional activity envisaged by Ms Margrethe VESTAGER after leaving office as a Member of the Commission was compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and with the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, subject to certain specific conditions and obligations.

The Commission adopted the decision in C(2024) 9001.

**8. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON SMOKE- AND
AEROSOL-FREE ENVIRONMENTS REPLACING COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION 2009/C 296/02
(COM(2024) 55 AND /2; SWD(2024) 55; SWD(2024) 56; RCC(2024) 128)**

Ms KYRIAKIDES presented the proposal to update the Council Recommendation of 30 November 2009 on smoke-free environments, noting that this initiative was the last building block of the Health Union to be adopted under this Commission's mandate.

In this connection, she pointed out that, in her 2019 mission letter, the PRESIDENT had tasked her with presenting a European plan to beat cancer, which had been adopted by the Commission in February 2021. It was one of the most ambitious and well-funded cancer plans in the world, aimed at improving the quality of life of thousands of people affected by cancer and at strengthening the EU's capacity to understand, diagnose, prevent and treat the disease.

Since then, the situation had changed significantly and, after over 20 years of

research and other efforts, new modern, science-based screening guidelines had been adopted, covering cancer types that together accounted for over 50% of all new cases diagnosed in the EU each year.

Ms KYRIAKIDES stressed that prevention was better than cure. Accordingly, the EU had set the goal of creating a ‘tobacco-free generation’ in Europe by 2040. Regrettably, in 2024, around 25% of the EU population still smoked and almost 700 000 lives were lost in the EU each year to tobacco consumption. There had also been a worrying rise in the use of e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products (HTP) and other emerging products, in particular among young people: almost 28% of young people regularly or occasionally used e-cigarettes.

For all of these reasons, the proposal for a Council Recommendation came at a particularly important time, as it was intended to better protect all citizens, especially the young, from the harmful effects of passive smoking. To this end, the proposal recommended expanding smoke- and aerosol-free environments, to cover more areas and more products. In 2021, second-hand smoke had accounted for over 53 000 deaths in the EU, increasing the risk of a whole host of diseases, including lung cancer, strokes and heart attacks.

Ms KYRIAKIDES emphasised that the proposal therefore invited the Member States to extend the coverage of their anti-smoking policies to key outdoor areas, especially places where young people and children were likely to gather, such as playgrounds, amusement parks and swimming pools. The recommendations also applied to the outdoor areas of healthcare establishments, public buildings and services receiving customers, at public transport stops and stations, and at outdoor events.

In addition, the Recommendation sought to ensure that national anti-smoking measures also applied to electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTP), which, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), could also cause serious respiratory and cardiovascular problems. It was therefore essential that these

new and emerging products were covered by national policies, given their rapidly growing market share and the fact that they could – especially for young people – be a pathway to nicotine addiction and even traditional tobacco consumption.

While recognising the very different situations that existed in each Member State, she pointed out that the most recent Eurobarometer survey on tobacco had shown the strong support of two thirds of Europeans for such measures. It was therefore vital to take prompt action for the wellbeing of current and future European generations.

In conclusion, Ms KYRIAKIDES thanked the PRESIDENT and the whole College for the support of this Commission for health initiatives and measures to build a stronger and more resilient European Health Union for the benefit of all.

After this presentation, the Commission adopted the proposal for a Recommendation in COM(2024) 55/2 for transmission to the Council and, for information, to the European Parliament and the national parliaments, together with the staff working documents in SWD(2024) 55 and SWD(2024) 56, the contents of which were noted.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

RECENT DEVASTATING FLOODS IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

The PRESIDENT began by pointing out that the consequences of climate change were now part of everyday life in Europe, causing an alarming increase in forest fires and floods each year. She considered these disasters to be a stark reminder of the urgent need to heavily invest in tackling the climate crisis and in adapting to climate change. She then asked Mr LENARČIČ to report on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe following the recent devastating floods in the region.

Mr LENARČIČ began by explaining that heavy rains and strong winds had had a significant impact on many Central and Eastern European countries, particularly in Poland, Austria, Germany, Czechia, Hungary and Romania. These countries had experienced unprecedented rainfall, exceeding the water levels observed for more than one hundred years and affecting around 1.7 million people. He added that this situation had resulted in the tragic death of more than 10 people to date, while another 4 were missing.

The Copernicus programme's European Flood Awareness System (EFAS) had made it possible to issue alerts as early as 10 September, i.e. a week before the floods reached their peak. The EU had also remained in close contact with the authorities of the affected countries, and was standing ready to provide assistance, including through satellite mapping and the provision of high-capacity pumping equipment.

Mr LENARČIČ stated that, so far, only Poland had expressed its intention to apply for support from the European Solidarity Fund and, in this context, reiterated the importance of complying with the 12-week deadline for submitting applications in order to be eligible for the funds. He also highlighted the increasing financial burden associated with these disasters, with annual costs having doubled since the 1980s, rising from around EUR 8 billion to EUR 16 billion, and currently standing at more than EUR 50 billion per year.

With regard to the ongoing forest fires in Portugal, Mr LENARČIČ noted that the national authorities had declared the highest state of alert and had requested mapping assistance from the Commission. He referred to sending firefighting planes under the Civil Protection Mechanism following a request from Portugal.

He concluded his presentation by stressing the urgent need to adapt to the extreme weather events that had become the new norm, and to invest more in prevention and preparedness measures, ensuring that they were incorporated into all EU-funded programmes.

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

- the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events related to climate change;
- the importance of cooperation between Member States to address these challenges, including through sharing best practices, coordinating response efforts, and working together to find sustainable solutions;
- the importance of being well prepared and setting up effective response mechanisms, in particular through investments in infrastructure, early warning systems and emergency response capabilities, in order to minimise the damage caused by natural disasters and to limit the social consequences;
- the human and material costs of floods, and the paramount importance of protecting human lives and preserving essential infrastructure;
- the risks of disinformation regarding floods and the importance of relying on credible sources to avoid the spread of fake news about these events;
- the impact of floods on agriculture and the importance of supporting farmers and ensuring food security in the affected areas;
- the potential health risks associated with extreme weather events and the need to prioritise public health and ensure access to essential health services in these regions.

In response to some of the points raised during the discussion, the PRESIDENT stressed the need for solidarity and financial support for the affected Member States, reminding the College of the crucial role of the European Solidarity Fund in assisting disaster-stricken regions. However, she stressed the importance of properly managing expectations regarding the scope of this funding, which, in line with the

rules in force, only covered damage to public infrastructure, such as bridges and roads, and not damage to private housing.

She also highlighted the importance of addressing the health implications of climate change, citing the World Health Organization's One Health approach and the growing prevalence of zoonotic diseases in this context. Finally, she announced that she would soon visit Poland to meet leaders of the Member States victims of the floods, demonstrating the EU's commitment to support the affected regions.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The meeting closed at 13.52.