



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2004)1648 final

Strasbourg, 9 March 2004

MINUTES
of the 1648th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Breydel)
on Wednesday 3 March 2004
(morning)

These minutes were approved by the Commission at its 1649th meeting, held in Strasbourg on 9th March 2004.

They contain 31 pages.

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Single sitting: Wednesday 3 March (morning)

The sitting opened at 0930 hours with Mr Prodi, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr PRODI	President
Mr KINNOCK	Vice-President
Ms de PALACIO	Vice-President
Mr MONTI	
Mr FISCHLER	
Mr LIIKANEN	
Mr BOLKESTEIN	Items 13 and 14
Mr NIELSON	
Mr LAMY	
Mr BYRNE	
Mr BARNIER	
Ms REDING	
Ms SCHREYER	
Ms WALLSTRÖM	
Mr VITORINO	

Absent:

Mr BUSQUIN
Mr SOLBES
Mr VERHEUGEN
Mr PATTEN

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission

Mr CAPOUET	Chef de cabinet to Mr Busquin
Mr BEKX	Deputy Chef de Cabinet to Mr Solbes
Mr DANIELSSON	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr Verheugen
Mr CHILD	Chef de cabinet to Mr Patten

The following also sat in

Mr PETITE	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr MANSERVISI	Chef de cabinet to the President	
Mr DE OLIVEIRA E SOUSA	Director-General, Press and Communication	
Mr KEMPPINEN	Commission Spokesman	
Ms GONZALEZ LAYA	Spokeswoman	
Mr GUSSETTI	A member of the President's staff	
Mr CALLEJA	Chef de cabinet to Ms de Palacio	Item 11
Mr SANCHEZ	A member of Ms de Palacio's staff	Item 11
Ms OLIVI	A member of Mr Monti's staff	Item 11
Mr VAN BALLEKOM	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr Bolkestein	
Mr FIELDING	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms Diamantopoulou	
Mr CARVOUNIS	Press and Communication DG	
Mr AZOULAY	Energy and Transport DG	Item 11
Mr DAVILA MURO	Secretariat-General	Items 10 and 14

Secretary: Mr O'SULLIVAN, Secretary-General, assisted by Ms BUGNOT, Director in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS AND QUARTERLY ROLLING PROGRAMME
(OJ(2004)1648/3; SEC(2004)231/2; SEC(2004)241)

The Commission took note of that day's agenda, the tentative agendas for future meetings, and the rolling programme of items to be entered on the agenda from 9 March to 26 May.

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET
(SEC(2004)1648)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 1 March.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 1647th MEETING
(25 February)
(PV(2004)1647; PV(2004)1647, Part II and /2)

The Commission approved the minutes and special minutes of its 1647th meeting.

4. PARLIAMENT

4.1. FEBRUARY II PART-SESSION
(SP(2004)756)

The Commission took note of the information supplied relating to Parliament's part-session held on 25 and 26 February (SP(2004)756).

4.2. ACTION TO BE TAKEN ON PARLIAMENT'S OPINIONS
(SP(2004)706)

The Commission approved the proposed empowerment decisions relating to action to be taken on the amendments presented by Parliament under the codecision and consultation procedures (SP(2004)706).

4.3. PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS GROUP
(SP(2004)810)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Parliamentary Affairs Group held on 26 February (SP(2004)810).

It paid particular attention to the following:

i) Preparations for March I part-session

(point 2.1 of the record)

The Commission, in accordance with the rules in force, authorised the Commission Members responsible, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Ms de PALACIO and any other Members associated, to take a position on Parliament's amendments to its proposals.

It paid particular attention to the following:

2nd reading

- GRÖNER report, Daphne II programme 2004-08,
COM(2003)616 - 03/0025 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)755.

- PRETS report, European youth bodies,
COM(2003)272 - 03/0113 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)790.

- PACK report, Education and training,
COM(2003)273 - 03/0114 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)791.

- IIVARI report, European cultural bodies,
COM(2003)275, 03/0115 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)792.

- CLEGG report - Protection against subsidisation and unfair pricing practices in the supply of airline services from countries not members of the European Community,
COM(2002)110 - 02/0067 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)728.

- NICHOLSON report - Insurance requirements for air carriers and aircraft operators,
COM(2002)521 - 02/0234 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)729.

- LISI report – Limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in decorative paints and varnishes and vehicle refinishing products,
COM(2002)750 - 02/0301 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)760.

1st reading and simple consultation

- PAULSEN report, Official feed and food controls,
COM(2003)52 - 03/0030 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)699/2 and authorised Mr BYRNE to continue contacts with the co-legislators with a view to an agreement at first reading.

- BÖSCH report, Protection of the Communities' financial interests,
COM(2003)278 - 03/0152 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)797.

- Three COLOM i NAVAL - BÖGE reports – Adapting reference amounts to take account of enlargement,
COM(2003)777 – 03/0303-0304-0305 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)793.

- KRONBERGER report - Quality of ambient air,
COM(2003)423 - 03/0164 (COD)

Subject to acceptance in principle of amendments 21 and 22 and the deletion of the request for flexibility as regards the Commission's position mentioned in the justification for amendment 24, the Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)795.

- BERENGUER FUSTER report - Electromagnetic compatibility,
COM(2002)759 - 02/0306 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)223/2, but decided to accept amendment 41.

- LANGE report - Pollutants from engines fuelled with natural gas or liquid petroleum gas for use in vehicles,
COM(2003)522 - 03/0205 (COD)

Having noted that a suitable wording for amendment 10 (of which the version set out in the reference sheet was acceptable only in principle) had been agreed at the trialogue on 26 February, the Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)753.

- DHAENE report, Civil aviation security,
COM(2003)566 - 03/0222 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)763.

- COSTA report – Implementation of the International Safety Management Code within the Community,
COM(2003)767 - 03/0291 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)730.

- GILLIG report – Application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to members of their families moving within the Community,
COM(2003)468 - 03/0184 (COD)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)726.

SØRENSEN report – Short-term residence permit issued to victims of action to facilitate illegal immigration or trafficking in human beings,
COM(2002)71, 02/0043 (CNS)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)731.

- VON BOETTICHER report - European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders, COM(2003)687, 03/0273 (CNS)

The Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)802.

- SCHMIDT report, VAT on services provided in the postal sector, COM(2003)234, 03/0091 (CNS)

Having noted that this proposal risked being rejected in plenary, the Commission adopted the line set out in SP(2004)787, involving the maintenance of the Commission proposal in the event of rejection by Parliament.

Empowerment

Under Article 13 of its Rules of Procedure the Commission empowered the Members concerned, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Ms de PALACIO and any other Members associated, to adopt its opinion on the amendments, together with any amended proposals, on the basis of the line set out in the documents concerned, once Parliament had given its opinion, and transmit them to the Council in accordance with Article 251(2)(c) of the Treaty, for the following:

- GRÖNER report, Daphne II programme 2004-08 (fiche SP(2004)755)
- PRETS report, European youth bodies (fiche SP(2004)790)
- PACK report, Education and training (fiche SP(2004)791)

- IIVARI report, European cultural bodies
(fiche SP(2004)792)
- CLEGG report - Protection against subsidisation and unfair pricing practices in the supply of airline services from countries not members of the European Community
(fiche SP(2004)728)
- NICHOLSON report - Insurance requirements for air carriers and aircraft operators
(fiche SP(2004)729)
- LISI report - Limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in decorative paints and varnishes and vehicle refinishing products
(fiche SP(2004)760)

ii) Action taken on Parliament's opinions and resolutions

(point 5 of the record)

The Commission adopted, for transmission to Parliament, the replies to own-initiative and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament for which the Commission had undertaken to give a reply (SP(2004)716), except that concerning the resolution on the repatriation of mortal remains (CASHMAN report), for which a slightly amended version would be presented at the next GAP meeting.

iii) Hearings of the Commissioners-designate

The Commission noted the very short deadlines for the translation of the replies to Parliament's questionnaires. With reference to the general difficulties arising for translation into the new official languages, the

Commission noted that the Translation DG would prepare a note taking stock of this question.

5. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE

COUNCIL AFFAIRS GROUP (CAG)

(SI(2004)168; SI(2004)185)

The Commission took note of the records of the Council Affairs Group (CAG) meetings held on Friday 27 February (SI(2004)168) and Tuesday 2 March (SI(2004)185).

It paid particular attention to the following:

i) Contribution by the Council (Competitiveness) to the spring European Council

(item 1 of SI(2004)168)

The Commission noted that Mr LIIKANEN would take charge of this item on the agenda for the Council meeting (Competitiveness) on 11 March.

ii) European security strategy

(item 4 and Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of SI(2004)168)

The Commission took note of its informal contribution to the drafting of three follow-up documents relating to the implementation of the European security strategy, as set out in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 to SI(2004)168, which had been sent, slightly amended, to the Council as departmental working papers.

The Commission also took note that it would be kept regularly informed of developments in this sensitive matter via the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet or the CAG.

iii) **Proposal for a Parliament and Council Directive amending Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures (Eurovignette)**
(SI(2004)185; SI(2004)162)

The Commission noted that Ms de PALACIO was not asking for authorisation for the Council meeting (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 9 March and that discussions were still continuing in the relevant group of the Council and Coreper. It took note that, if the Council approved a compromise by qualified majority along the lines set out in SI(2004)185, Ms de PALACIO would accept it only *ad referendum* and that it would be put before the Commission at its meeting of 16 March.

6. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

6.1. STATE AID

(SEC(2004)174; SEC(2004)173)

The Commission adopted the decisions in SEC(2004)174.

**6.2. PRELIMINARY DRAFT COMMISSION REGULATION AMENDING
REGULATION (EC) NO 69/2001 OF 12 JANUARY 2001 ON THE
APPLICATION OF ARTICLES 87 AND 88 OF THE EC TREATY TO DE
MINIMIS AID
(SEC(2004)1701 to /3; SEC(2004)173)**

The Commission adopted, at first reading, the preliminary draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 69/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of the Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to *de minimis* aid, as set out in SEC(2004)1701/3, and authorised Ms de PALACIO to open and continue the procedure laid down in Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 994/1998.

7. WRITTEN PROCEDURES AND EMPOWERMENT

**7.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2004)232 et seq.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 27 February.

**7.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2004)233)**

The Commission took note of written procedures initiated between 23 and 27 February for the adoption of decisions with political implications.

7.3. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2004)234 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 27 February.

7.4. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation procedure between 23 and 27 February, as archived on the "Grefe 2000" (Registry) website.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2004)235/3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2004)35 and /2)

8.1. APC - APPOINTMENT OF SECOND EXTERNAL MEMBER OF THE AUDIT PROGRESS COMMITTEE

The Commission referred to its decision of 9 July 2003 (PV(2003)1620, item 20), based on the second annual report of the audit progress committee (APC), to appoint a second external member to the APC from 2004.

Having noted the procedure followed and on a proposal from Mr KINNOCK, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Ms SCHREYER, Ms REDING and Mr VITORINO, it then decided to appoint Mr Antonie Johannes SPOEL as an external member of the audit progress committee. Mr SPOEL would have the status of paid Special Adviser to the PRESIDENT.

This decision would take effect immediately.

8.2. SCIC - APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 50 PROCEDURE (SECOND STAGE) WITH RESPECT TO AN A2 OFFICIAL

The Commission continued its discussions on this matter, begun on 18 June 2003 (PVS(2003)1617).

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr KINNOCK, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, adopted the decision in PERS(2004)38 to apply the second stage of the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations in respect of Mr Noël MUYLLE, an A2 official, currently Director of Directorate A (Interpretation) in the Interpretation DG.

This decision would take effect on 1 August.

The Commission thanked Mr MUYLLE for his 39 years' work in the Commission's Interpretation Service, where he had also stood in as Head of Service for three years, and for the active contribution he had made to understanding between the peoples of Europe.

8.3. LANGUAGE ARRANGEMENTS APPLICABLE TO RECRUITMENT COMPETITIONS ORGANISED BY EPSO (SEC(2004)254)

The Commission took note of the information note in SEC(2004)254 and of the detailed line proposed concerning the position to be taken by its representative at the EPSO Management Board meeting on 5 March.

**8.4. IMPLEMENTING MEASURES CONCERNING RECRUITMENT OF
SENIOR OFFICIALS**

**8.4.1. Probationary period on entry into service of officials recruited to
posts corresponding to Director-General and Director posts
(SEC(2004)251/2)**

The Commission adopted SEC(2004)251/2, particularly the decision
set out at item 5, with immediate effect.

**8.4.2. Recruitment of senior managers from the new Member States
(SEC(2004)252)**

The Commission adopted SEC(2004)252, particularly the conclusions
set out at item 7, with immediate effect.

**8.5. RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND MIDDLE MANAGERS FROM THE
NEW MEMBER STATES - RECRUITMENT OBJECTIVES BY
DEPARTMENT
(SEC(2004)253/2)**

The Commission adopted SEC(2004)253/2, particularly the conclusions set
out at item 7, with immediate effect.

OTHER MATTERS

**8.6. READINESS OF SERVICES TO BE COMPLIANT WITH INTERNAL
CONTROL BASELINES BY 31 DECEMBER 2003
(SEC(2004)250)**

The Commission took note of the information note SEC(2004)250, which
would be sent to the relevant bodies of Parliament at their request.

**9. AMENDMENT TO THE SAPARD ANNUAL FINANCING AGREEMENTS
2003
(SEC(2004)238)**

The Commission:

- approved the model amendment to the annual financing agreements 2000-03 and the multiannual financing agreement concluded with the ten applicant countries eligible for the SAPARD programme, as set out in SEC(2004)238;
- authorised all necessary legal, linguistic and technical amendments to these draft agreements, subject to prior agreement between the PRESIDENT, Mr FISCHLER and Mr VERHEUGEN;
- authorised Mr FISCHLER or, in his absence, any other Commission Member, on behalf of the Commission, to sign the amendments with each of the ten beneficiary countries, on the understanding that this authorisation would cover the new overall budgetary commitment for amounts in respect of the allocations for the ten countries, as set out in the table in SEC(2004)238.

**10. DESIGN OF THE CANADA-EU TRADE AND INVESTMENT
ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT
(SEC(2004)229 to /4; SI(2004)168)**

The Commission noted:

- the draft design of the future EU-Canada trade and investment enhancement agreement, as set out in SEC(2004)229 and /4, noting that paragraph 12 included geographical indications;

- Mr LAMY's intention of finalising the text, in agreement with the Commission Members directly concerned and in cooperation with the Member States and the Canadian Government, for adoption as an annex to the joint declaration at the EU-Canada summit on 18 March;
- that the document had been sent to the Council.

11. FURTHER INTEGRATION OF THE EUROPEAN RAIL SYSTEM
(COM(2004)140 to /4; SEC(2004)245)

**- PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE AMENDING COUNCIL
DIRECTIVE 91/440/EEC ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
COMMUNITY'S RAILWAYS**

(COM(2004)139 to /4; SEC(2004)236; SEC(2004)245)

**- PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE ON THE CERTIFICATION
OF TRAIN CREWS OPERATING LOCOMOTIVES AND TRAINS ON THE
COMMUNITY'S RAIL NETWORK**

(COM(2004)142 and /2; COM(2004)140/2; SEC(2004)245)

**- PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL REGULATION ON INTERNATIONAL
RAIL PASSENGERS' RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS**

(COM(2004)143 to /3; COM(2004)140/2; SEC(2004)245)

**- PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL REGULATION ON COMPENSATION IN
CASES OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH CONTRACTUAL QUALITY
REQUIREMENTS FOR RAIL FREIGHT SERVICES
(COM(2004)144 to /3; COM(2004)140/2; SEC(2004)245)**

Ms de PALACIO set out the main points of the third railway package before the Commission. It was made up of a communication and four legislative proposals, and supplemented the directives in the first (2001) package, in force since 15 March 2003, and the measures in the second railway package, currently in the process of adoption. The proposed measures sought to complete the reform of the railway sector and to give fresh momentum to this transport mode by means of quality improvements and increased competition. To this end, it was proposed to open international passenger transport up to competition within the Union from 2010, to enhance international passengers' rights, to set up a certification system for train drivers and to improve rail freight quality. After reviewing the specific details of each of the components of the third package and their underlying logic, Ms de PALACIO concluded by emphasising that the proposals were both ambitious and realistic and aimed to strike the right balance between market realities, operator constraints, users' rights and needs, and the goal of sustainable development.

After taking note of this information and endorsing the importance of the proposed reform, the Commission considered its various implications, particularly:

- the balance between public service requirements and the opening-up of the market to new international operators; the relationship between this approach and the amended proposal for a Regulation on action by Member States concerning public service requirements and the award of public service contracts in passenger transport by rail, road and inland waterway;
- the advisability of moving the deadline for the opening-up of international passenger transport services forward to 2008;

- as regards the proposal for a Regulation on the rights and obligations of international passengers, the general balance to be struck between these travellers' rights and the need for competitiveness in the railway industry; the circumstances in which *force majeure* could release railway companies from liability for compensation in the event of delay;
- concerning the proposal for a Regulation on the quality of rail freight services, whether quality standards and reimbursement levels should be defined by regulatory means rather than via a recommendation; the scope of the requirements to be imposed on railway companies, and the possibility of an asymmetric approach differentiating between existing national operators and new entrants.

Following this exchange of views and taking note of additional explanations given by Ms de PALACIO in reply to various questions raised, the Commission:

- adopted the proposed communication in COM(2004)140/4,
- adopted the proposal for a Directive in COM(2004)139/4, subject to the addition of a paragraph calling on Parliament and the Council to continue without delay their consideration of the revised proposal to replace Regulation No 1191/69 and to begin their examination of the present proposal as quickly as possible, given the complementary nature of the two documents;
- adopted the proposal for a Directive in COM(2004)142/2;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2004)143/3;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2004)144/3.

The five texts would be transmitted to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, together with the staff working paper in SEC(2004)236.

12. TRENDS IN THE MEMBER STATES (SEC(2004)257)

Mr VITORINO drew attention to the main subjects covered by the media from the end of January to the end of February, as set out in SEC(2004)257, and referred in particular to their emphasis on the question of migratory flows, particularly from the new Member States. As regards the results of the latest Eurobarometer polls, he commented on those concerning Justice and home affairs, the future Union Constitution, and intention to vote in the forthcoming European elections. Finally, he drew attention to the special report on trends in the Member States as regards the financial perspective and regional policy.

The Commission took note of this information and held an exchange of views on the overall question of its communications policy, particularly:

- the advisability for the Commission of taking stock of its communications policy so far;
- the need for the Commission to improve its communications policy, which should be more integrated and take the interinstitutional dimension into account;
- the importance of wording the Commission's messages in such a way as to meet specific communications needs in the individual Member States;
- the need for questions of particular interest to citizens to be dealt with at Commission level;
- the need for the Commission to have not only an information policy but also a communications strategy;

- the fact that there was no European public opinion as such and the specific nature of the communications activities of the Union's institutions;
- the implications of the entry into force of the new Financial Regulation for conventions signed with the Member States in this field;
- the usefulness of an assessment of all the action taken by the Commission at this stage of its term of office.

Following this exchange of views, the Commission agreed that the group of Commission Members responsible for communication and information would prepare a discussion paper for an in-depth Commission debate on ways and means of strengthening its communications strategy.

13. COUNCIL MEETINGS

13.1. EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE

(BRUSSELS, 26 FEBRUARY)

(SI(2004)160 and /2)

Ms REDING reported briefly on the Council meeting. The Council had welcomed the first joint Council and Commission interim report on the implementation of the detailed programme on the follow-up to the objectives of education and training systems in Europe. The report, *Education and training 2010: The success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms*, confirmed the importance of these subject areas in the Lisbon strategy and the need to speed up reform so that the objectives could be achieved.

Ms REDING also mentioned the wide support in the Council for the Commission proposal concerning a new “Europass”, whose purpose was to

bring together the existing instruments covering the transparency of qualifications and skills.

**13.2. INFORMAL MEETING OF REGIONAL POLICY MINISTERS
(PORTLAOISE, 27 FEBRUARY)**

Mr BARNIER reported on the informal meeting organised by the Irish Presidency in Portlaoise, at which an initial ministerial-level exchange of views had been held on the future of the cohesion policy. The approach proposed by Commission had been broadly welcomed and had been considered as a political basis for discussion. The simplifications proposed for the management instruments of the Structural Funds had also been widely supported. Referring to his personal talks with the Irish Prime Minister, Mr BARNIER also stressed the importance that the Irish Presidency attached to the adoption of the draft European Constitution as soon as possible.

**13.3. ENVIRONMENT
(BRUSSELS, 2 MARCH)
(SI(2004)171)**

Ms WALLSTRÖM reported on the Council meeting, where the main topic for discussion had been the Union's renewed commitment to the objectives of the Kyoto climate change protocol and the wording of a paragraph referring thereto in the conclusions to be put to the spring European Council.

Ms WALLSTRÖM was pleased with the results achieved, and reminded the meeting of the arguments in favour of compliance with the Kyoto commitments.

While expressing agreement as to the ratification of the Kyoto protocol, Mr LIIKANEN felt that the problems raised by the greenhouse gas emission

quotas trading system should not be underestimated and would need to be discussed in depth.

14. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

14.1. THIRD STAGE OF EU-US NEGOTIATIONS ON AVIATION

(WASHINGTON DC, 17-19 FEBRUARY)

(SEC(2004)255/2; SI(2004)185)

The Commission took note of the information note distributed by Ms de PALACIO.

14.2. EU-US NEGOTIATIONS ON SATELLITE NAVIGATION

(GALILEO-GPS)

(BRUSSELS, 24-25 FEBRUARY)

(SEC(2004)266)

The Commission took note of the information note distributed by Ms de PALACIO.

14.3. VISIT BY THE PRESIDENT TO LIBYA AND AFRICAN UNION

SUMMIT, 27 FEBRUARY

The PRESIDENT reported on his visit to Africa, where he had taken part, at the invitation of President Alpha Oumar Konaré, in the opening of the special summit of the African Union. He had accepted this invitation in order to demonstrate the Union's commitment towards Africa and to express a message of support for the consolidation and development of the African Union. Among the subjects raised, he particularly mentioned African security and defence and the creation of a water fund, all initiatives in which the

Union was a key player. The PRESIDENT had invited President Konaré to take part in the near future (24 March) in a seminar organised by the Commission.

The PRESIDENT also reported on his meeting with Colonel Gaddafi, at the latter's request, on 27 February in Syrte on the fringe of the summit. The main subjects at this meeting had been the increased role Libya wished to play as an African country in relations between Africa and the EU and its decision to take a full part in the Euro-Mediterranean Barcelona process by accepting all its rules. The Commission should now provide the appropriate follow-up; two missions were planned for this purpose.

14.4. EU-UN AIDS CONFERENCE **(SEC(2004)265)**

Mr BYRNE reported on the conference *Breaking the Barriers - Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia* organised in Dublin jointly by the Irish Presidency and the United Nations.

The Commission took note of this information and held a brief exchange of views, during which it noted the EU's lack of an internal strategy to combat communicable diseases and the need to improve coordination of the Union's activities in this area. Mr BYRNE intended to invite the future Czech Commission Member to take charge of further study of these questions.

The Commission also took note of the information note distributed by Mr BYRNE.

**14.5. STATE OF PLAY ON TRANSFER OF AIR PASSENGER NAME
RECORD (PNR)**

Mr BOLKESTEIN briefly reminded the meeting of the background to the negotiations with the American authorities on this matter, and gave an update on discussions within Parliament and the Council.

**14.6. DEVELOPMENTS IN HAITI
(SEC(2004)270)**

Mr NIELSON reported on the dramatic situation in Haiti and on the copious and regular humanitarian aid being supplied by the European Union to the Haitian people.

The Commission also took note of the information note distributed by Mr NIELSON.

**14.7. VISIT BY Mr LAMY TO THE UNITED STATES AND ENTRY INTO
FORCE OF FOREIGN SALES CORPORATION SANCTIONS**

Mr LAMY reported on his recent visit to Washington and his contacts with his American counterparts concerning the entry into force on Monday 1 March of the European countermeasures in the dispute over Foreign Sales Corporations. Reminding the meeting of the economic and political complexity of this matter, he referred to the American authorities' efforts to bring the relevant legislation into line with the WTO decision as quickly as possible. In response to questions raised on the possible negative impact of sanctions on the European economy, he emphasised that these had been carefully defined following long consultations with the European economic operators concerned before the list had been approved by the Council.

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The meeting closed at 1215 hours.