



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2006) 1740 final

Brussels, 12 April 2006

MINUTES
of the 1740th meeting of the Commission
held in Strasbourg
(Winston Churchill Building)
on Tuesday 4 April 2006
(afternoon)

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Single sitting: Tuesday 4 April (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 11.48 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Mr FRATTINI	Vice-President	Items 11 to 14
Ms REDING		
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		
Ms HÜBNER		Items 10 to 14
Mr BORG		
Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL'		
Mr KYPRIANOU		
Mr REHN		Items 10 to 14
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms FISCHER BOEL		
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		
Mr McCREEVY		
Mr ŠPIDLA		Items 11 (in part) to 14
Mr MANDELSON		
Mr PIEBALGS		Items 10 (in part), 11 and 14)

Absent:

Mr MICHEL

Ms KROES

Mr LEVIE	A member of Mr Michel's staff
Ms SUTTON	A member of Ms Kroes's staff

Mr VALE DE ALMEIDA	Chef de cabinet to the President	
Mr PETITE	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr CARVOUNIS	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	
Mr MOAVERO-MILANESI	Director-General, Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA)	Items 1 to 11 (in part), 13 (in part) and 14
Mr THEBAULT	Chief Adviser in the President's Office	
Ms MARTINEZ ALBEROLA	Member of the President's Office	
Mr POWER	Chef de cabinet to Mr McCreevy	Items 1 to 11 (in part) and 14
Ms SCHREIBER	Chef de cabinet to Mr Špidla	
Mr DREWES	DG Communication	Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr STOODLEY	Secretariat-General	Items 1 to 11

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1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2006)1740/3; SEC(2006)414/2)

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

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET

(SEC(2006)1740)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 3 April.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 1739TH MEETING (29 MARCH)

(PV(2006)1739)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1739th meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(SEC(2006)419)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Friday 31 March (SEC(2006)419).

It paid particular attention to the following points:

4.1. *LEGISLATIVE MATTERS*

i) Preparations for Council meeting (Fisheries) (25 April)

(point 1.2 of the record)

European Fisheries Fund

The Commission authorised Mr BORG to support a Presidency compromise that would secure a qualified majority at the next Council meeting (Fisheries) along the lines set out in SI(2006)257/2.

4.2. *RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT*

ii) Preparations for April I part-session: non-legislative dossiers

(point 3.1 of the record)

Joint discussion: "Better lawmaking"

- FRASSONI Report – Monitoring the application of Community law (2003) – 2005/2150 (INI)
- DOORN Report – Application of the principle of subsidiarity – 2005/2055 (INI)
- McCARTHY Report – Implementation, consequences and impact of the internal market legislation in force – 2004/2224 (INI)
- GARGANI Report – A strategy for the simplification of the regulatory environment – 2006/2600 (INI)

The Commission took note of SP(2006) 1416 and /4, SP(2006) 1417 and /2, SP(2006) 1418 and /2 and SP(2006) 1419 and /2.

iii) Action to be taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February II part-session

(point 3.5 of the record)

The Commission adopted SP(2006)1347 and /2 on action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its February II part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2006)415 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 27 and 31 March.

5.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2006)416)

The Commission took note of written procedures initiated between 27 and 31 March for the adoption of decisions with political implications.

5.3. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2006)417 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 27 and 31 March.

5.4. EMPOWERMENT CONFERRED

(SEC(2006)448)

As set out in SEC(2006)448, the Commission empowered the Commission Member responsible for competition, in agreement with the PRESIDENT.

5.5. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation procedure between 27 and 31 March, as archived on the "Greffé 2000" (Registry) website.

6. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ON A NEW COMPREHENSIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH GREENLAND IN THE FORM OF A JOINT DECLARATION AND A COUNCIL DECISION BASED ON ARTICLE 187 OF THE EC TREATY

PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ON THE ONE HAND, AND GREENLAND AND THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK ON THE OTHER (COM(2006)142 TO /4; SEC(2006)436)

The Commission:

- approved the communication in COM(2006)142/4 and the joint declaration annexed thereto;
- adopted the proposal set out in the document for a Council Decision on the relations between the European Community on the one hand, and Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark on the other;
- decided to transmit the document to Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the Court of Auditors.

**7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON GUIDANCE ON THE POSTING OF WORKERS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROVISION OF SERVICES
(COM(2006)159 TO /5; SEC(2006)439 TO /3; SEC(2006)452; SEC(2006)440)**

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2006)159/5, subject to the following amendments:

- the last sentence of the first paragraph of point 4 would read as follows:
"Member States must, accordingly, ensure that mechanisms are in place to guarantee compliance with the implementing legislation on the posting of workers.";
- the second sentence of the box in point 4 would read as follows:
"They are asked, in particular, to ensure that there is a mechanism in place to remedy any deficiencies; that appropriate and proportionate monitoring measures are in place; and that service providers who do not comply can be effectively sanctioned.";
- the last paragraph of point 5 would read as follows:
"If, as a result of this monitoring exercise, the Commission comes to the conclusion that compliance with the relevant provisions of Community law and/or cooperation between Member States under Articles 4 and 5 of the Directive have not substantially improved, it will take the necessary steps to rectify this situation."

The Commission decided to transmit this communication to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, together with the report on the implementation of Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services in staff paper SEC(2006)439/3, the contents of which were noted.

The Commission also noted the communication from Mr McCREEVY and Mr ŠPIDLA in SEC(2006)452, which highlighted the link between the amended proposal for a directive on services in the internal market (see item 10 of these minutes) and guidance on the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services.

8. COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN ON THE AMENDED PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE ON SERVICES IN THE INTERNAL MARKET AND GUIDANCE ON THE POSTING OF WORKERS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROVISION OF SERVICES (SEC(2006)451 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the information note on the communication action plan presented by Ms WALLSTRÖM, in agreement with Mr McCREEVY and Mr ŠPIDLA, in SEC(2006)451 and /2.

9. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

9.1. *EIGHTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIODIVERSITY (CURITIBA, 20 TO 31 MARCH 2006)* (SEC(2006)472)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr DIMAS in SEC(2006)472.

9.2. *VISIT TO BULGARIA (SOFIA, 30 AND 31 MARCH)* (SEC(2006)471)

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms GRYBAUSKAITE in SEC(2006)471.

10. AMENDED PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON SERVICES IN THE INTERNAL MARKET
(COM(2006)160 TO /5; SEC(2006)452; SEC(2006)438)

Mr McCREEVY presented the amended proposal for a Parliament and Council directive he was tabling for adoption by the Commission. The text of the proposal was largely based on the legislative opinion adopted by Parliament at first reading. He believed the amended proposal complied with Parliament's wishes, particularly as regards Articles 2 (Scope of application of the directive), 16 (Freedom to provide services) and 17 (Additional derogations from the freedom to provide services), and as regards the exclusion of labour law, temporary work agencies and healthcare services. He thanked the Parliament for its constructive collaboration at this first reading.

Mr McCREEVY also thanked the Commission Members, particularly Mr ŠPIDLA, for their contributions and support for the amended proposal. There was an important link between the current proposal and guidance on the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services.

The PRESIDENT welcomed the excellent work done, for which, on behalf of the Commission, he particularly thanked Mr McCREEVY and the staff of the Directorate-General responsible for the internal market and services. The amended proposal incorporated most of the amendments proposed by Parliament. The amended proposal was a genuine compromise based on a broad consensus, made possible by close cooperation between the institutions.

The Commission held an exchange of views on the amended proposal, covering the following points in particular:

- the crucial contribution the proposed directive made to the internal market in services and to growth and employment in the framework of the Lisbon strategy, which would benefit every citizen and firm of the European Union;
- the relevance of the compromise reached with the amended text of the directive, which accommodated as far as possible all the different concerns;
- the approach towards services of general economic interest, in particular with regard to derogations from the freedom to provide services provided for in Article 17;
- the importance of guidance on the posting of workers and the account taken of other aspects such as education, sport and culture;
- the advantages of clarifying the amended proposal by highlighting all the aspects already mentioned;
- the importance of defining a follow-up strategy to be applied upon adoption of the directive.

Following this discussion, the Commission adopted the amended proposal for a directive set out in COM(2006)160/5 for transmission to the Council and Parliament and, for information, to the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The Commission also noted the communication from Mr McCREEVY and Mr ŠPIDLA in SEC(2006)452, which highlighted the link between the amended proposal for a directive on services in the internal market and guidance on the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services (see item 7 of these minutes).

11. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

11.1. STATE AID - RECAPITULATIVE LIST

(SEC(2006)444 and /2)

The Commission adopted the decisions in the recapitulative list (SEC(2006)444/2).

11.2. INFRINGEMENTS - REPORT B1/2006 – RECAPITULATIVE LIST

(SEC(2006)212; SEC(2006)208)

The Commission adopted the decisions in SEC(2006)212, subject to the following amendments and clarifications:

2005/2072	<i>France</i>
Designation of universal service providers	
<u>Decision:</u>	Reasoned opinion

The Commission held a brief exchange of views on this case, during which the organisation of universal service in France and the high level of competition on the telecommunications market were discussed.

Ms REDING clarified the character and scope of the objections raised and on the obligations in the directive, in particular as regards the need to keep all options open for finding the most economically advantageous solution.

2002/5443	<i>Netherlands</i>
Non-compliance with Article 49 of the Treaty (Hazard Games Act)	
2003/4350	<i>Germany</i>
Obstacles to the freedom to provide services – Sports betting	
2003/4616	<i>Italy</i>
Restriction on organising and collecting bets on sporting events	
2004/4062	<i>Finland</i>
Free movement of services (gambling services)	
2004/4087	<i>Sweden</i>
Non-compliance with Article 49 of the Treaty (The Gaming Act)	
2004/4814	<i>Hungary</i>
Free movement of services (gambling services) – Article 49 of the Treaty	
<u>Decisions:</u>	Letter of formal notice + press release

2003/4765	<i>Denmark</i>
Danish law relating to gambling	
<u>Decision:</u>	Further letter of formal notice + press release

Mr McCREEVY presented the proposals he was tabling. He mentioned Parliament's position, supported by a large majority of Member States, which was to exclude the gambling sector from the scope of application of the directive on services in the internal market. He referred to the Treaty provisions and the case law of the Court of Justice in *Gambelli*, on which the objections were based. He confirmed that only sports betting and not other forms of gambling were concerned and that Member States were free to

enforce restrictions or bans, on condition that they were justified, non-discriminatory and proportionate.

Following this presentation, the Commission held an exchange of views covering in particular:

- the aim of the infringement procedures, which did not mean liberalisation of the sector, but were intended to ensure that the provisions of the Treaty were enforced in a balanced and coherent manner;
- charitable, sporting and social activities financed by the profits from gambling in several Member States;
- the importance of the Commission's readiness to discuss this question with the Member States;
- the importance of giving clear and precise explanations of Commission action in the press release.

The PRESIDENT noted the sensitive nature of this matter. He confirmed that the infringement procedures were intended to secure coherent and uniform application of the Treaty provisions while safeguarding the right of Member States to limit such activities on their territory. Financial resources for public-interest objectives could increase as a result of the opening-up of the markets to competition. It was impossible to exclude global offers for these services on the Internet. Finally, the PRESIDENT pointed out that the Commission had to act in order to ensure compliance with Community law.

2005/2096	<i>Portugal</i>
VAT – Reduced rate on babies' nappies	
2005/2097	<i>Poland</i>
VAT – Reduced rate on babies' nappies	
2005/2104	<i>Malta</i>
VAT – Reduced rate on babies' nappies	
2005/2105	<i>Czech Republic</i>
VAT – Reduced rate on babies' nappies	
2005/2106	<i>Hungary</i>
VAT – Reduced rate on babies' nappies	
<u>Decisions:</u>	Held over

The Commission held an exchange of views on this question. In the light of the supplementary information given by Mr KOVÁCS, it decided to hold the decisions over to a future meeting.

2006/2140	<i>Malta</i>
Nature – Directive 79/409. Non-compliance	
<u>Decision:</u>	Held over

11.3. INFRINGEMENTS - URGENT CASES **(SEC(2006)434)**

The Commission adopted the decisions in SEC(2006)434.

12. TRENDS IN THE MEMBER STATES**(SEC(2006)450 AND /2)**

Ms WALLSTRÖM briefly described the development of opinion trends in the Member States between 1 February and 28 March. She stressed the priority given in the media to energy matters and the problem of services in the internal market.

She referred more particularly to the results of the Eurobarometer on the public's perception of matters relating to the job market and job security, highlighting, in particular, the differences between Member States and age groups.

Following a brief exchange of views on the statistical trend regarding the use of the "Europe Direct" telephone number, in particular as regards the main areas of concern raised by the public, Ms WALLSTRÖM described the factors contributing to this trend.

The Commission took note of this information and of the note by Ms WALLSTRÖM distributed as SEC(2006)450 and /2.

13. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS**(SEC(2006)418/2)****ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS****(PERS(2006)44/2)****13.1. DG AGRI - APPOINTMENT OF A*15/A*16 DEPUTY
DIRECTOR-GENERAL****(PERS(2006)40 TO /5)**

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 the Agriculture and Rural Development DG (PERS(2006)40 and /2).

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The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 15 and 16 March (PERS(2006)40/3 and /5).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms FISCHER BOEL, it then decided to appoint Mr Prosper DE WINNE to the vacant post.

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

13.2. DG COMM – APPOINTMENT OF A*14 DIRECTOR (EU-10)
(PERS(2005)73 to /5)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Strategy Directorate, in the Communication DG, reserved for a national of one of the new Member States (PERS(2005)73 and /2).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 17 November 2005 and 10 and 16 February 2006 (PERS(2005)73/3 and /5).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr WALLSTRÖM, it then decided to appoint Mr Tamas SZUCS to the vacant post.

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

13.3. DG ADMIN – APPOINTMENT OF A*14 DIRECTOR (EU-25)
(PERS(2005)54 to /5)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Security Directorate, in the Personnel and Administration DG in (PERS(2005)54 to /3).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 22 February and 16 March (PERS(2005)54/4 and /5).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Mr Stephen HUTCHINS to the vacant post.

This decision would take effect immediately.

13.4. DG EAC – APPOINTMENT OF A*14 DIRECTOR (EU-10)
(PERS(2005)72 to /6)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Culture and Communication, in the Education and Culture DG, reserved for a national of one of the new Member States (PERS(2005)72 and /3).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 25 November and 15 December 2005 (PERS(2005)72/4 and /6).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr FIGEL', it then decided to appoint Mr Vladimir SUCHA to the vacant post.

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

13.5. DG TREN - AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART
(SEC(2006)447)

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, Mr BARROT and Mr PIEBALGS, the Commission decided:

- to create a new directorate, "Resources";

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- to create a new Chief Adviser post for a limited period of some three months;
- to create a new unit, "Planning and coordination, interinstitutional relations";
- to approve the organisation chart set out in SEC(2006)447.

These decisions would take effect on 16 April.

**13.6. DG FISH - APPLICATION OF THE ARTICLE 50 PROCEDURE
(SECOND STAGE) WITH RESPECT TO AN A*15 OFFICIAL
(PERS(2006)45)**

The Commission continued its discussions on this matter, begun on 1 March (PV(2006)1735).

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr BORG, adopted the decision in PERS(2006)45 to apply the second stage of the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations with respect to Ms Lea VERSTRAETE, an A*15 official, currently Director, Structural policy, in the Fisheries and Maritime Affairs DG.

This decision would take effect on 1 October.

**13.7. SG - APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 50 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS
(SECOND STAGE) WITH RESPECT TO AN A*15 OFFICIAL
(PERS(2006)46)**

The Commission continued its discussions on this matter, begun on 22 February (PV(2006)1734).

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, adopted the decision in PERS(2006)46 to apply the second stage of the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations with respect to Ms Giuseppe MASSANGIOLI, an A*15 official, currently

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Director, Relations with the European Parliament, the European Ombudsman, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and National Parliaments in the Secretariat-General.

This decision would take effect on 16 July.

13.8. DG COMP – EXTERNAL PUBLICATION OF VACANCY NOTICE FOR A*15 DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL (EU-25) (PERS(2006)50)

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 8 of PERS(2006) 44/2.

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms KROES, the Commission authorised the republication, this time under Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice for the post of Deputy Director-General in the Competition DG in PERS(2006)60.

This decision would take effect immediately.

13.9. DGT – PUBLICATION OF EXTERNAL VACANCY NOTICES FOR TWO GRADE A*14 DIRECTORS (EU-10) (PERS(2006)47; PERS(2006)48)

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 9 of PERS(2006) 44/2.

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr FIGEL', the Commission authorised the publication under Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations of vacancy notices for two posts of Director in the Translation DG (Director, Translation and Director Horizontal linguistic services), reserved for two nationals of the new Member States (PERS(2006)48).

This decision would take effect immediately.

**13.10. JRC – PUBLICATION OF AN EXTERNAL VACANCY NOTICE FOR
GRADE A*14 DIRECTOR (EU-10)
(PERS(2006)49)**

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 10 of PERS(2006) 44/2.

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr POTOČNIK, the Commission authorised the publication under Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations of a vacancy notice for the post of Director, Institutional and Scientific Relations at the Joint Research Centre, reserved for a national of one of the new Member States (PERS(2006)49)

This decision would take effect immediately.

**13.11. JRC – TERMINATION OF CONTRACT OF A TEMPORARY
MEMBER OF STAFF - DIRECTOR**

Having taken note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 11 of PERS(2006) 44/2, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr POTOČNIK, decided to initiate the procedure for terminating the contract of Mr Kari TOERROENEN, Director at the Energy Institute of the Joint Research Centre, with 10 months' notice.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**13.12. DG ADMIN – RECRUITMENT AT THE COMMISSION OF
OFFICIALS AND TEMPORARY STAFF FROM THE NEW
MEMBER STATES (EU-10) SITUATION AND OUTLOOK FOR 2006
(SEC(2006)453)**

Mr KALLAS described the situation as regards recruitment at the Commission of officials and temporary staff from the new Member States (EU-10) as at 15 January 2006. For managerial posts, he noted that

recruitment objectives had been fully attained as regards senior management but not yet as regards middle management.

The Commission held a brief exchange of views, during which it highlighted the importance of merit as a selection criterion, but pointing out that geographical and gender balance should also be borne in mind.

The Commission took note of this information and of the communication from Mr KALLAS in SEC(2006) 453 on the situation and outlook for recruitment by the Commission of officials and temporary staff from the new Member States (EU-10).

14. OTHER BUSINESS

14.1. RESULTS OF THE SECTOR INQUIRY ON PAYMENT CARDS IN THE FIELD OF COMPETITION (SEC(2006)449)

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms KROES in SEC(2006)449.

14.2. METHODS FOR DETECTING THE GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM BT10 IN MAIZE-BASED PRODUCTS

Mr KYPRIANOU informed the Commission that on 31 March the Joint Research Centre had told him it had doubts about the reliability of the method for detecting the genetically modified organism Bt10 in maize-based products. It had pointed out the lack of cooperation by the firm Syngenta, which had not supplied clear and complete information on the structure of Bt10 and had not given the reference laboratory samples of sufficient purity to test the method. It could not therefore rule out the possibility of false negative results.

Mr KYPRIANOU said he had immediately written to Syngenta's directors to ask them to cooperate with the Joint Research Centre so as to be able to guarantee the method's reliability as quickly as possible. Should the firm refuse to cooperate properly, he was ready to take further action.

The Commission took note of this information and agreed to take it into consideration in the policy debate on GMO matters to be held at its 1741st meeting.

14.3. FLOODS IN SEVERAL MEMBER STATES

Mr ŠPIDLA described the serious consequences of recent floods in several Member States, notably the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland.

Mr DIMAS reported on the information and requests for aid already received by his departments and described the likely developments.

The Commission took note of this information, expressed its solidarity with those affected and stressed the importance of closely monitoring the situation in Central Europe.

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The meeting closed at 14.16