



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2006)1755 final

Strasbourg, 5 September 2006

MINUTES

of the 1755th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 30 August 2006

(morning)

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PV(2006)1755 final

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Single sitting: Wednesday 30 August (morning)

The sitting opened at 09.06 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Mr FRATTINI	Vice-President	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Ms REDING		Items 1 to 9
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Ms HÜBNER		Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr BORG		
Ms GRYBAUSKAIT		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr KYPRIANOU		
Mr REHN		
Mr MICHEL		Items 1 to 10
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms FISCHER BOEL		
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr ŠPIDLA		
Mr MANDELSON		Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr PIEBALGS		

Absent:

Mr FIGEL'

Ms KROES

Mr McCREEVY

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission

Ms GAMEIRO	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr Figel'	
Mr SMULDERS	Chef de cabinet to Ms Kroes	Items 1 to 10
Mr POWER	Chef de cabinet to Mr McCreevy	

The following also sat in

Mr VALE DE ALMEIDA	Chef de cabinet to the President	
Ms DURAND	Deputy Director-General of the Legal Service	
Mr SØRENSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr THEBAULT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the President	Items 8 (in part) to 10
Mr ELLIS	Adviser in the President's Office	Items 8 (in part) and 9
Mr LE BRET	Chef de cabinet to Mr Barrot	Items 8 (in part) to 11 (in part)
Mr SCHWAIGER	Deputy Chef de Cabinet to Ms Ferrero-Waldner	Items 8 (in part) to 11
Ms AHRENKILDE	DG Communication	Items 10 and 11
Mr ITALIANER	Deputy Secretary-General	Item 10
Mr LEARDINI	Secretariat-General	Item 10 (in part)

Secretary: Ms DAY, Secretary-General, assisted by Mr AYET PUIGARNAU, Director in the Secretariat-General.

(30 August 2006)

The PRESIDENT regretted to have to inform the Commission of the death on 26 August of Mr François LAMOUREUX, former Director-General for energy and transport.

In his work at the Commission Mr LAMOUREUX, who was a distinguished lawyer and a devoted public servant, had made an important contribution to European integration and, most recently, to the development of transport and energy policies. The PRESIDENT praised his personal and professional qualities and his exemplary intelligence, vision and tenacity.

On behalf of the Commission, the PRESIDENT extended his condolences and sympathy to the family and friends of Mr François LAMOUREUX.

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1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2006)1755/3; SEC(2006)1012/2)

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)1755)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 28 August.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 1754TH MEETING (19 JULY)
(PV(2006)1754; PV(2006)1754, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1754th meeting.

4. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

***INFRINGEMENTS - CASES POSTPONED BECAUSE OF UNAVAILABILITY
OF DOCUMENTS - REGULARISATION
(SEC(2006)1038)***

The Commission adopted the decision in SEC(2006)1038.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

***5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2006)1013 et seq.)***

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 17 July and 25 August.

***5.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2006)1014/2)***

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 28 August and 1 September.

5.3. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2006)1015 et seq.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 17 July and 25 August.

5.4. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation procedure between 17 July and 25 August, as archived on the "Greffé 2000" (Registry) website.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2006)1016/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2006)114/2)

**6.1. DG EAC – TERMINATION OF THE EXTERNAL SELECTION
PROCEDURE TO APPOINT A GRADE AD15 DEPUTY
DIRECTOR-GENERAL (EU-10)**

(PERS(2006)100 to /4)

Having noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 1 of PERS(2006) 114/2, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr FIGEL', decided to authorise the termination of the selection procedure COM/2006/10018 without appointing anyone to the post.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.2. DG RTD – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR

(PERS(2006)104 to /4)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Resources Directorate in the Research DG (PERS(2006) 104 and /3).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 3 and 20 July (PERS(2006)104/2 and /4).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr POTOČNIK, it then decided to appoint Mr Franco BISCONTIN to the vacant post.

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

6.3. JRC – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR

(PERS(2006)89 to /3)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Programme and Resources Management Directorate at the Joint Research Centre (PERS(2006)89).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 and 29 June 2006 (PERS(2006)89/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr POTOČNIK, it then decided to appoint Ms Margaret Megan RICHARDS to the vacant post.

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

6.4. DG ADMIN – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR

(PERS(2002)157 to /3)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director, Staff Regulations: policy, management and advice in the Personnel and Administration DG (PERS(2002) 157).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 10 December 2002 and 9 January 2003 (PERS(2002)157/2 and /3).

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 4 of PERS(2006) 114/2.

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Mr Daniel JACOB to the post.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**6.5. DG ADMIN - APPLICATION OF THE ARTICLE 50 PROCEDURE
(SECOND STAGE) WITH RESPECT TO AN AD15 OFFICIAL**

(PERS(2006)117)

The Commission continued its discussions on this matter, begun on 7 June (PV(2006)1748).

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, adopted the decision in PERS(2006)117 to apply the second stage of the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations with respect to Ms Gabrielle CLOTUCHE, an AD15 official, currently Chief Adviser in the Personnel and Administration DG.

This decision would take effect on 30 September 2006.

6.6. OLAF - APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 50 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS (SECOND STAGE) WITH RESPECT TO AN AD15 OFFICIAL

(PERS(2006)118)

The Commission continued its discussions on this matter, begun on 22 June (PV(2006)1750).

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, adopted the decision in PERS(2006)118 to apply the second stage of the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations with respect to Mr Claude LECOUC, an AD15 official, currently Director of the Policy, Legislation and Legal Affairs Directorate of the European Anti-Fraud Office.

This decision would take effect on 30 September 2007.

6.7. OLAF - AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART

(SEC(2006)1085)

On the basis of the proposal from the Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KALLAS, the Commission endorsed:

- the creation of a post of Chief Adviser;
- the transfer of Mr Claude LECOUC to this post;
- the abolition of this post on the date of departure of its holder;
- the creation of a new unit called the Supervisory Committee Secretariat;
- an increase in the number of posts of adviser in the European Anti-Fraud Office from three to four;
- the organisation chart set out in SEC(2006)1085.

These decisions would take effect on 1 September.

**6.8. OLAF – INTERNAL, INTERINSTITUTIONAL AND EXTERNAL
PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR A GRADE AD14/15
DIRECTOR (EU-25)
(PERS(2006)111)**

On the basis of the proposal from the Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KALLAS, the Commission endorsed the publication under Article 29(1) and (2) of the Staff Regulations of the vacancy notice in PERS(2006) 111 for the post of Director, Investigations and Operations II in the European Anti-Fraud Office.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**6.9. OLAF – INTERNAL, INTERINSTITUTIONAL AND EXTERNAL
PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR A GRADE AD14/15
DIRECTOR (EU-25)
(PERS(2006)112)**

On the basis of the proposal from the Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KALLAS, the Commission endorsed the publication under Article 29(1) and (2) of the Staff Regulations of the vacancy notice in PERS(2006) 112 for the post of Director, Operational and Policy Support in the European Anti-Fraud Office.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**6.10. DG SANCO – TERMINATION OF THE INTERNAL SELECTION
PROCEDURE TO APPOINT A GRADE AD14/15 CHIEF ADVISER

(PERS(2006)97 and /2)**

Having noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 10 of PERS(2006) 114/2, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in

agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KYPRIANOU, decided to authorise the termination of the selection procedure COM/2006/1539.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**6.11. AUDIT PROGRESS COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF AN
EXTERNAL MEMBER**

The Commission, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with Ms WALLSTRÖM, Ms FISCHER BOEL, Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ and Ms FERRERO-WALDNER, Members of the Audit Progress Committee, decided to appoint Mr Jean-Jacques PICARD as External Member of the Audit Progress Committee with the status of paid Special Adviser, replacing Mr Alain MARCILHACY.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL,
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE
OF THE REGIONS – GOVERNANCE IN THE EUROPEAN CONSENSUS
ON DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS A HARMONIZED APPROACH WITHIN
THE EUROPEAN UNION
(COM(2006)421 TO /4; SEC(2006)1020 TO /3; SEC(2006)1021; SEC(2006)1022;
SEC(2006)1039)**

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2006)421/4 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, together with the technical annexes, the impact assessment and its summary in staff papers SEC(2006)1020/3, SEC(2006)1021 and SEC(2006)1022 respectively, the contents of which were noted.

8. AGENDAS (CONTINUED FROM ITEM 1)

The Commission examined the main issues and developments since its last meeting before the summer break.

8.1. *ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION INTO CERTAIN EU COUNTRIES*

Mr FRATTINI briefly described the action taken by the Commission and certain Member States to give effective and unified support to the Member States most affected by illegal migration from Africa. The efforts to help these Member States, notably Spain, Italy and Malta, were a concrete example of European solidarity. However, these efforts must be continued and increased, and Mr FRATTINI therefore invited other Member States to get involved. He pointed out that from January 2007 a new solidarity fund would be added to the instruments available at Community level.

The Commission held an exchange of views covering the following questions in particular:

- the absolute need to adopt a global approach to the problem of illegal immigration and to find a solution on humanitarian grounds and in the interests of both the illegal immigrants' countries of origin and the European Union as a whole;
- the quantitative importance of the phenomenon, the degree of concentration and potential, and the internal and external consequences, particularly those of a political nature;
- the vital importance of solidarity between the 25 Member States of the Union;
- the need to reach a political consensus within the Union in order both to develop a global and integrated strategy at European level and to make available the financial resources required to implement that strategy;

- the fact that the present division of responsibilities between European and national levels did not correspond to the urgent need for improved coordination within the Union in order to combat illegal immigration and its causes effectively;
- the importance of dealing with all aspects of the problem and of strengthening cooperation with the African States, but also of combating illegal employment in the Member States.

The PRESIDENT wound up the discussion by reiterating the Commission's unified support for the Member States most concerned, i.e. Spain, Italy and Malta. However, he reminded the meeting that Europe's powers in this area were still very limited. A global approach to this phenomenon should be defined, one which combined, in particular, security, diplomacy and development aid aspects.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT asked Mr FRATTINI to convene and chair a temporary working group of the Commission Members most concerned to draw up a draft integrated plan for combating illegal immigration.

The Commission took note of this information.

8.2. *FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND AVIATION SECURITY*

Following the meeting in London on 16 August of Home Office Ministers of the United Kingdom, the current Union Presidency, the four next Presidencies (Germany, Portugal, Slovenia and France), the European coordinator for the fight against terrorism and himself, Mr FRATTINI said that he would prepare an initiative on the fight against terrorism ahead of the informal Council meeting (Justice and Internal Affairs) in September in Tampere. He briefly outlined the main elements of the initiative:

- preventing the violent radicalisation of young people and their recruitment by terrorist organisations;

- combating the financing of terrorism and radical organisations;
- improving explosive-detection technology;
- harmonising criminal law in the 25 Member States as regards the definition of terrorism and making it a punishable offence to upload Internet sites which encourage acts of terrorism;
- possible creation of European teams of counter-terrorism experts.

Mr BARROT summarised the most recent developments as regards aviation security. He thought that Member States could make better use of the instruments introduced after the 2001 attacks, while recognising that they could still be improved, and stressed the importance of reinforcing cooperation between Member States.

The Commission took note of this information.

8.3. *SITUATION IN LEBANON* ***(SEC(2006)1097; SI(2006)741)***

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER and Mr MICHEL briefed the Commission on the actions and measures taken by the EU during the armed conflict in Lebanon and after the cessation of hostilities.

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER described in particular her visit to the region, the Rome conference and the results of the extraordinary Council meeting (General Affairs and External Relations) of Friday 25 August. She mentioned the evacuation of nationals of the EU Member States and other third countries and welcomed the excellent collaboration with the Cypriot authorities. There would be a conference on 31 August in Stockholm to prepare and coordinate reconstruction in Lebanon. She was optimistic as about improved coordination between the Member States, stressing that one of the Commission's priorities must be to support the reconstruction of Lebanese

institutions in order to restore their complete sovereignty. Lastly, she pointed out the importance of not forgetting the Palestinians, notably as regards aid.

With regard to the humanitarian dimension of the conflict in Lebanon, Mr MICHEL then described the results of his visit there and to Israel. The humanitarian crisis in Lebanon combined massive population movements (900 000 people) to escape the fighting and destruction and restrictions on humanitarian intervention. On this last point, he stressed the importance of lifting the Israeli blockade of Lebanon so that EU humanitarian aid and support for reconstruction could be made more effective. There would still be a need for significant humanitarian intervention in the weeks or even months ahead. The two decisions taken in July, each representing €10 million, had covered immediate needs and emergency aid; a third decision concerning a total of €30 million was being finalised and would help finance the return and resettlement of displaced persons and emergency rehabilitation. The Lebanese Government should be the main agent of reconstruction, but the municipal authorities, who could play a very important role, should not be excluded.

During a brief exchange of views, the following points in particular were raised:

- the possibilities created by the present crisis for finding a durable solution to the conflict in the Middle East;
- the need for a global and international solution which took account of all the countries in the region as well as the international players;
- the fact that the Commission and its departments had reacted very well to events and had coordinated humanitarian aid very efficiently;
- the merits of better strategic coordination between the 25 Member States as regards humanitarian aid, and also their capacity to prevent crises and react to conflicts;

(30 August 2006)

- the environmental problems stemming from the armed conflict in Lebanon, in particular maritime pollution, raised by Mr DIMAS.

On behalf of the Commission, the PRESIDENT thanked Mr DIMAS, Mr MICHEL and Ms FERRERO-WALDNER and their departments for the efficiency with which they had implemented both the evacuation of those who wished to leave Lebanon and the decisions on humanitarian aid.

The Commission took note of these observations and of Ms FERRERO-WALDNER's briefing note in SEC(2006)1097.

8.4. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mr MICHEL described the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He agreed with the international observers that the first round of the Presidential election had gone smoothly and gave an assessment of the results. There had been some violence after the first round. Nonetheless, he believed that the situation was under control and was optimistic about the second round in October, which should take place with full guarantees of security and transparency. Lastly he mentioned the importance of the EU's contribution to the electoral process and to the development of democratic structures in the Democratic Republic of Congo and said that he would be raising certain questions about the implementation of aid for organising elections – and particularly the financial aspects - with those in charge of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Commission took note of this information.

8.5. GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (IMPORTS OF RICE-BASED PRODUCTS FROM THE UNITED STATES) AND BLUETONGUE VIRUS

Mr KYPRIANOU informed the Commission of the latest developments as regards imports from the United States of rice-based products contaminated by genetically modified rice. The United States authorities had informed the

Commission in August that a certain amount of these rice-based products had been exported to the EU. He stressed that the Commission had taken emergency measures at Community level to safeguard public and animal health and the environment, while pointing out that, according to the analyses carried out, the products in question posed no threat to human health. He had asked for further details from the US authorities. Lastly, Mr KYPRIANOU highlighted the importance of international cooperation to improve the monitoring and control of genetically modified organisms.

On the subject of bluetongue virus, Mr KYPRIANOU said that this animal disease, which cannot be transmitted to humans, had been found in several Member States in which it had previously been unknown. Transmitted by insects and fatal to several species of animal, the disease posed a threat to both sheep and cattle farms. He outlined the emergency measures the Commission had taken on the basis of existing Community legislation; he considered these measures to be adequate for dealing with the problem.

The Commission took note of this information.

8.6. *SUSPENSION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA*

Mr MANDELSON and Ms FISCHER BOEL related the circumstances which had led to the failure this summer of the negotiations on the Doha development agenda.

Mr MANDELSON believed that the main reason for failure was the United States' refusal to reduce the real amount of their agricultural subsidies, even though others, including the EU, had been ready to make significant concessions. This failure could have serious and lasting consequences for the international system: the Doha development agenda was the only project aiming to establish real multilateral governance. He thought it might still be possible to reach agreement before the spring of 2007, but such an agreement

would require intensive negotiations and greater flexibility, particularly on the part of the United States.

Ms FISCHER BOEL drew attention to the considerable agricultural concessions offered by the EU within the limits fixed by the Council, but with no reciprocal gesture on the part of the United States. She thought that subjects other than agriculture - particularly services - should be at the centre of future negotiations.

The PRESIDENT thanked Ms FISCHER BOEL and Mr MANDELSON for their important and constructive contributions during the negotiations. The EU had shown great flexibility, and the negotiations' failure was due to things other than the EU position. Lastly, with a view to the probable renewal of negotiations, he stressed the Commission's continued willingness to contribute to a constructive and lasting solution.

The Commission took note of this information.

**9. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION IMPOSING A DEFINITIVE ANTI-DUMPING DUTY AND COLLECTING DEFINITELY THE PROVISIONAL DUTY IMPOSED ON IMPORTS OF CERTAIN FOOTWEAR WITH UPPERS OF LEATHER ORIGINATING IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND VIETNAM
(COM(2006)472 TO /4; SEC(2006)1081)**

Mr MANDELSON briefly presented the proposal and thanked the Commission Members for their support during the preparatory work. This was a sensitive and difficult proposal, not only because of its importance for the economy of certain Member States and the interest it had provoked amongst the public and the media because it concerned a very visible everyday product, but also because of the proposed decision's important repercussions on relations between the EU and China and on the development of the Vietnamese economy. He recalled that the

Commission had collected irrefutable proof during its investigation of dumping by both countries. It therefore had a legal obligation to react by imposing a provisional anti-dumping duty on the imports in question and by proposing a definitive anti-dumping duty to the Council, since the dumping had seriously harmed European producers.

Mr MANDELSON thought that this proposal as far as possible reconciled the various and sometimes conflicting interests concerned: those of European producers, including those who had relocated production to China or Vietnam, those of consumers and those of retailers. Differing positions had been taken by Member States at the meetings of the Anti-dumping Committee on 19, 20 and 27 July. He would keep the Commission informed as regards the Council negotiations. Lastly, he intended to draw up a Green Paper before the end of the year on the implementation of Community anti-dumping instruments and their possible review.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr MANDELSON for his explanations. He noted the Commission's unanimous support for the proposal presented. He stressed that it took equitable account of the interests of producers, retailers and consumers, and also of European trade interests and the repercussions on relations between the EU and China. The proposal was justified by the need to defend the interests of European producers where rules were not adhered to within the framework of a general policy of support for free trade. He was optimistic about the results of the Council negotiations.

The Commission adopted the proposal for a Council Regulation in COM(2006) 472 for transmission to the Council.

**10. COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION CONCERNING THE
MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE COMMISSION LEGISLATIVE AND WORK
PROGRAMME 2006**

(SEC(2006)1052 TO /3)

The PRESIDENT introduced the communication he was tabling in agreement with Ms WALLSTRÖM. The time had come to update the 2006 programme in order to take account of the development of the general situation and of the political calendar since its adoption last October. He stressed the political nature of the exercise and the need to respect the undertakings given, particularly as regards Parliament and the public.

He was concerned by the relatively slow start to putting the work programme into action and by the fact that the rate of implementation was less than the projected rate of 54%. Nevertheless, he accepted that there were probably good reasons for some of the delay, such as the full application in 2006 of the guidelines on impact assessments adopted in June 2005, which had lengthened the preparation process for proposals, the need for the Commission to deal with certain important ongoing dossiers in order to bring them to a close, such as the Directive on services or the REACH proposal, and the time spent on developing initiatives necessitated by the political situation which were not provided for in the 2006 programme, such as the communication of 10 May “A Citizens’ Agenda – Delivering results for Europe”.

Recalling the political importance of the legislative and work programme, the PRESIDENT said he was preparing a letter addressed to each Commission Member asking them to personally ensure that the implementation rate of the revised programme was as near as possible to 100%. The letter would also address the insufficient implementation of the legislation simplification process and would appeal to all Commission Members to ensure that the necessary resources were used in their areas of responsibility to make this political priority a success. His letter would also refer to the problem of under-implementation of the present budget exercise.

Ms WALLSTRÖM reiterated the reactions which could be provoked in Parliament by the implementation rate of the work programme. The structured dialogue between the two institutions was important, and she thanked all the Commission Members who were participating in this, stressing that it could, in particular, be used to help explain more effectively the reasons for the programme delays mentioned by the PRESIDENT.

Mr VERHEUGEN pointed out the importance of addressing the simplification of Community law as part of the better regulation initiative, which was one of this Commission's major political priorities and an area where expectations were high. He also mentioned that the future German Presidency intended to give priority to this during the first half of 2007. He strongly urged Commission Members to ask their directorates-general to unblock the situation and apply the simplification process to all Community policies.

The Commission also noted the importance of highlighting in its record the activities carried out in response to current developments, and its duty to react to emergencies and not confine itself to planned legislative initiatives. However, she accepted that undertakings given should be respected and delays made up.

In conclusion, the PRESIDENT mentioned the post-holiday Commission seminar on 19 September, which he hoped all Members would be able to attend, and a preparatory seminar for Chefs de cabinet on 8 September. The priorities guiding future work had not changed – prosperity, solidarity, security and the EU's role in the world – and the ambitious programme presented in the communication of 10 May (re-examination of the internal market, social situation, security, improvement of European competitiveness) plus the general budget revision for 2008/09. He mentioned the more favourable economic context and the political challenges to be met and said that the seminar would aim to examine how to respond realistically to the various expectations. He concluded by saying that, now that the dossiers inherited from the previous Commission had been dealt with, the present Commission must choose what contribution it intended to make during the

coming years. He asked the Members to communicate to him their ideas on how to organise discussions at the seminar.

The Commission noted the implementation rate of the 2006 legislative and work programme at the halfway point and approved the communication in SEC(2006) 1052/3, particularly its Annex II, which contained a series of changes to the list of priority initiatives for 2006. It agreed to make every necessary effort to implement the amended work programme effectively and asked Ms WALLSTRÖM to transmit the communication and its annexes in letter form to Parliament and the Council, and to inform the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

11. TRENDS IN THE MEMBER STATES (SEC(2006)1087)

Firstly, Ms WALLSTRÖM mentioned the need to further improve Commission Members' information during the summer break by more regular updates.

She then presented her information note on the period from 6 July to 23 August. She mentioned in particular media coverage of the war in Lebanon and the severe criticism in the press of the EU's role in this crisis (the period did not include the decision to send European troops), which she put down to insufficient media emphasis on action taken at European level. On the other hand, she underlined the positive response to the Commission's initiative on mobile roaming charges and the EU mission to the Congo. The reactions to the immigration situation had been mixed.

As regards Eurobarometer, Ms WALLSTRÖM pointed out that support for enlargement had fallen, according to a recent study carried out specifically on this subject. Support for continued enlargement was stronger in the new Member States than in the old and varied considerably according to which candidate country was being discussed.

Discussion following this presentation highlighted the following:

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- among the summer's positive developments, the importance of the agreement reached on stem cells;
- the need to raise people's awareness of measures taken by the Commission which were directly useful to them;
- the lack of information among members of the European public about enlargement and the candidate countries and the paradox that the countries that were least in favour of enlargement were those which would benefit most from European integration; the role played by information and the responsibility of national governments in this respect was particularly emphasised.

The Commission took note of this information and of Ms WALLSTRÖM's briefing note in SEC(2006) 1087.

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The meeting closed at 12.39.