



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2007)1802 final

Brussels, 3rd October 2007

MINUTES

of the 1802nd meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill Building)

on Tuesday 25 September 2007

(afternoon)

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Single sitting: Tuesday 25 September (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.05 hours. It was chaired by Ms WALLSTRÖM in the absence of President BARROSO.

Present:

Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President
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Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President
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Mr BARROT	Vice-President
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Mr KALLAS	Vice-President
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Mr FRATTINI	Vice-President
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Mr DIMAS

Mr ALMUNIA

Mr BORG

Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ

Mr POTOČNIK

Mr FIGEL'

Mr KYPRIANOU

Mr KOVÁCS

Ms FISCHER BOEL

Item 10

Mr McCREEVY

Mr ŠPIDLA

Mr PIEBALGS

Ms KUNEVA

Mr ORBAN

Absent:

Mr BARROSO

President

Ms REDING

Ms HÜBNER

Mr REHN

Mr MICHEL

Ms KROES

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER

Mr MANDELSON

The following sat in to represent absent Members of the Commission

Mr PRONK	A member of Ms REDING's staff
Ms ÅSENIUS	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr Rehn
Ms SUTTON	A member of Ms Kroes's staff

The following also sat in

Mr VALE DE ALMEIDA	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms DURAND	Deputy Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr SØRENSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	
Ms CARVALHO	Bureau of European Policy Advisers	

Secretary: Ms DAY, Secretary-General, assisted by Mr KERSTING, Unit Head in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2007)1802/3; SEC(2007)1214/2)

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(2007)1802.

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 24 September.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 1801ST MEETING
(19 SEPTEMBER)**

(PV(2007)1801; PV(2007)1801, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1801st meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (SEC(2007)1212)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 21 September (SEC(2007)1212).

It paid particular attention to the following:

4.1. *LEGISLATIVE MATTERS*

Preparation for the September II 2007 part-session of Parliament

(point 1.2 of the IRG record)

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

It paid particular attention to the following:

- Detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals (Directive) – DUFF report – 2006/0277 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2007)4753 and /3.

ii) Preparations for the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Brussels, 1 and 2 October)

(point 1.3 of the IRG record)

- Completion of the single market in postal services (Directive) – FERBER report – 2006/0196 (COD)

In order to facilitate an agreement by qualified majority, the Commission authorised Mr McCREEVY to accept a Council Presidency compromise following the line set out in SI(2007)810, and to make a statement recalling the need to insert in the Directive the reference to the concordance tables between the legislation and transposition measures to be prepared by the Member States, in accordance with the point 34 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on the "better lawmaking" initiative of 16 December 2003.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

iii) Programming of Council business (SI(2007)819)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2007)819 on the Council meetings between 20 September and 3 October.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

iv) Preparation for September II part-session of Parliament – consideration of non-legislative matters (point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Towards a common European foreign policy on energy – SARIUSZ-WOLSKI report – 2007/2000 (INI)

The Commission took note of SP(2007)5054 and /2.

5. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

5.1. STATE AID – INDIVIDUAL CASES – RECAPITULATIVE LIST (SEC(2007)1232 AND /2)

The Commission adopted the decisions in the recapitulative list SEC(2007)1232/2.

5.2. INFRINGEMENTS – URGENT CASES – RECAPITULATIVE LIST
(SEC(2007)1224; SEC(2007)1223)

The Commission adopted the decisions in the recapitulative list SEC(2007)1224.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2007)1215 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 17 and 21 September.

6.2. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2007)1216)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 24 and 28 September.

6.3. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2007)1215 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 17 and 21 September.

6.4. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 17 and 21 September, as archived in "Grefte 2000".

7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – INQUIRY INTO COMPETITION IN THE EUROPEAN GAS AND ELECTRICITY SECTORS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 17 OF REGULATION (EC) NO 1/2003 ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY RULES (FINAL REPORT) (COM(2007)556 TO /3; SEC(2007)1231 AND /2; SEC(2007)1230)

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2007)556/3 subject to deletion of the last sentence of paragraph 16 on page 5 of the English-language version of that document, for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments, together with the final report in the staff paper distributed as SEC(2007)1231/2, the contents of which were noted.

8. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

**8.1. VISIT TO CHINA (BEIJING, 17 TO 18 SEPTEMBER 2007)
(SEC(2007)1258)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr ALMUNIA in SEC(2007)1258.

**8.2. EURO-MEDITERRANEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING OF MINISTERS OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS (OPORTO, 15 SEPTEMBER 2007)
(SEC(2007)1259)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr ALMUNIA in SEC(2007)1259.

**8.3. 11TH EU-UKRAINE SUMMIT (KIEV, 14 SEPTEMBER 2007)
(SEC(2007)1260)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Ms FERRERO-WALDNER in SEC(2007)1260.

**9. GREEN PAPER - TOWARDS A NEW CULTURE FOR URBAN MOBILITY
(COM(2007)551 TO /4; SEC(2007)1209; SEC(2007)1229)**

Mr BARROT briefly presented the Green Paper he was tabling for approval. He highlighted the importance of urban transport in the EU and the relevant context, particularly the relationship with environmental protection. He pointed out that private and public transport of persons and goods, in European towns and cities was responsible for 40% of CO₂ emissions and 70% of the other forms of pollution generated by road transport in Europe. He felt that urban mobility should now be one of the Union's priorities, and that the Commission's role, in partnership with all stakeholders, would be to draw attention to the matter and to identify the obstacles to urban mobility and how to eliminate them, but without imposing central solutions not suited to local circumstances.

He referred to the results of an initial consultation of the European institutions, the representatives of European cities, other interested parties and the general public on their experience with existing urban transport models and their expectations as regards urban mobility. He explained that the Green Paper was based on the results of this consultation and was designed to serve as a basis for a more far-reaching consultation of citizens, governments and the business world on the future of urban transport, that would be closed on 15 March 2008, the results of which would be followed by an action plan. His intention was to submit this action plan to the Commission in autumn 2008.

Mr BARROT finally listed the five main objectives in the Green Paper designed to improve urban mobility:

- make traffic more fluid and modes of transport other than private cars safer and more attractive, in order to relieve congestion in towns;
- reduce pollution in towns by improving energy efficiency and developing the use of less polluting fuels and, if necessary, by imposing restrictions on town-centre traffic, and promoting green zones and urban charging systems, subject to the improvement of public transport infrastructure;
- promote smart mobility that takes account of the considerable increase in demand for the transport of goods and persons, and the limited capacity for expanding infrastructure, by developing intelligent transport systems and traffic-monitoring devices, including satellite navigation, and by avoiding empty journeys;
- improve accessibility to urban public transport for all, and particularly for persons with reduced mobility and families with young children, by developing innovative solutions that increase the quality of collective transport;
- make transport safer in order to reduce the large proportion of road accidents, including fatal accidents, occurring in urban areas, by seeking greater safety in behaviour, vehicles and infrastructure.

After this presentation, the Commission held a brief exchange of views during which the following points were raised:

- the place of urban transport in the quality of life of European citizens;
- the importance of urban mobility for environmental protection strategy;
- the positive contribution of initiatives such as "car-free days" organised across Europe, initiatives which draw public attention to the importance of sustainable urban mobility.

The Commission then approved the Green Paper in COM(2007)551/4, for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments, accompanied by the staff paper distributed as SEC(2007)1209, the contents of which were noted.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

MULTILINGUALISM AND EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES (26 SEPTEMBER 2007)

Mr ORBAN reminded the meeting that Wednesday 26 September would be the European Day of Languages, an annual event since 2001. He took this opportunity to inform the Commission of the development of the multilingualism portfolio he had been handling since the beginning of the year; he emphasised its political importance, complexity and very high degree of sensitivity.

He reported on certain promising initiatives taken in the course of the year, in particular the organisation the previous week of a major European Conference entitled "Languages mean business", to consider the interaction between business, languages and intercultural competence, which had aroused keen interest in a wide public. Mr ORBAN announced that the results of this conference would enable him to put forward a series of ideas which he planned to look at in the near future with the Commission Members most directly concerned.

He also mentioned the group of high-level advisers on languages and intercultural dialogue he had set up to assist him in preparing the contribution of multilingualism to the Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. The group had already looked into the promotion of language skills for migrants living in the EU.

On the question of multilingualism in Community institutions and bodies, Mr ORBAN also reported on the ongoing work to ensure the sustainability of the

present language arrangements. He felt that measures would have to be taken, in the short term and in the longer term, to prevent the system breaking down. One of these measures would undoubtedly be increased use of modern technologies in everyday linguistic work.

Mr ORBAN finally mentioned the role of education in promoting multilingualism and thanked particularly his two predecessors, Ms REDING and Mr FIGEL', for the initiatives they had taken while in charge of the portfolio. It was on this basis, he said, that the Commission had just approved by written procedure a report on the implementation of the 2004 action plan on promoting language learning and linguistic diversity. He emphasised that the conclusions of this report were very encouraging but that a great deal still remained to be done to stimulate language learning in certain categories of persons – generally adults – no longer enrolled in a training programme. In this connection, Mr ORBAN drew attention to the risk represented by the lack of language skills, not only for individual career prospects, but also for Europe's competitiveness in general.

In conclusion he thanked the PRESIDENT and all the Commission Members for their constant support and for the possibility he had been given of making multilingualism a genuine cross-cutting policy. He mentioned the key role of multilingualism in the Commission's communication policy, given that around half of Europeans speak only their native language. It was therefore very important that all Community languages be used in communication actions; in this connection, since there were 21 interpreters booths in the Berlaymont press room, Mr ORBAN asked all Members to speak in their mother tongue at press conferences.

During a brief exchange of views, the Commission warmly congratulated Mr ORBAN for the work done on multilingualism during the last nine months and addressed the following questions:

- the high degree of sensitivity of matters relating to the use of languages for most Member States and in a wide variety of areas, and the hope that the multilingualism policy applied might reduce this sensitivity;

- multilingualism as the expression of the diversity and of the unity that are features of Europe, and the case for making use of the cultural, societal, economic and institutional dimensions of the linguistic diversity to promote a genuine policy of inclusion;
- the role of multilingualism for competitiveness and implementation of the Lisbon Strategy;
- the importance of language learning for the success of the European strategy on migration;
- the link between multilingualism and consumer protection, for instance in connection with electronic commerce or mobility in cities, where efforts would have to be made to have road signs in a number of languages;
- the need to allocate the resources required for the policy of multilingualism so that the objectives pursued would be attained;
- the usefulness for Commission Members to use their mother tongue often as possible at press conferences and during plenary sessions of Parliament, and to avoid the use of arcane Community jargon.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The meeting closed at 13.50 hours.