



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2008)1830 final

Brussels, 20 May 2008

MINUTES

of the 1830th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 14 May 2008

(morning)

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Single sitting: Wednesday 14 May 2008 (morning)

The sitting was opened at 09.36 hours by Ms WALLSTRÖM, President BARROSO being absent.

Present:

Ms WALLSTRÖM Vice-President

Mr VERHEUGEN Vice-President

Mr BARROT Vice-President

Mr KALLAS Vice-President

Ms REDING

Mr DIMAS

Ms HÜBNER

Mr BORG

Mr FIGEL'

Mr KOVÁCS

Ms KROES

Ms FISCHER BOEL

Mr McCREEVY

Items 1 to 6

Mr ŠPIDLA

Ms KUNEVA

Mr ORBAN

Ms VASSILIOU

Mr TAJANI

Absent:

Mr BARROSO

President

Mr ALMUNIA

Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ

Mr POTOČNIK

Mr REHN

Mr MICHEL

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER

Mr MANDELSON

Mr PIEBALGS

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

Mr QUERO MUSSOT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr ALMUNIA
Mr QUEST	Chef de cabinet to Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ
Mr VANDENBERGHE	Chef de cabinet to Mr POTOČNIK
Mr PESONEN	Chef de cabinet to Mr REHN
Mr STUCKENS	A member of Mr MICHEL's staff
Mr KUEHNEL	A member of Ms FERRERO-WALDNER's staff
Ms WENDT	A member of Mr MANDELSON's staff
Ms RASA	A member of Mr PIEBALGS's staff

The following also sat in:

Mr THEBAULT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr SANTAOLALLA	Legal Service	
Mr SØRENSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr LAITENBERGER	Commission Spokesman	
Mr GASPAR	Acting Director-General, Bureau of European Policy Advisers	
Ms MARTINHO	Chief adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 6
Mr KERSTENS	A member of Mr McCREEVY's staff	Items 7 to 10
Mr PRETO	Chef de cabinet to Mr TAJANI	

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

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Ms WALLSTRÖM welcomed Mr Antonio TAJANI, the new Member of the Commission appointed to replace Mr FRATTINI, who had been made Foreign Minister of Italy.

In introducing Mr TAJANI, Ms WALLSTRÖM referred in particular to his experience of European affairs built up within the European Parliament. She felt certain that Mr TAJANI would make an effective contribution to achieving the objectives of the present Commission.

Ms WALLSTRÖM wished Mr TAJANI every success in the performance of his new functions.

Mr TAJANI thanked Ms WALLSTRÖM and the other Commission Members for their confidence in him and for the warm welcome he had received. He said that he was determined to contribute actively to the work of the Commission.

* * *

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2008)1830/3; SEC(2008)1858/2)

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(2008)1830)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Thursday 8 May.

3. MINUTES OF 1829TH MEETING (7 MAY)
(PV(2008)1829)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1829th meeting.

4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

4.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2008)1859 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 5 and 8 May.

4.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2008)1860 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 5 and 8 May.

4.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2008)1861 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation procedure between 5 and 8 May, as archived in e-Greffe.

4.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2008)1862 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expires between 13 and 16 May and of the "finalisation" written procedure initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 8 May.

5. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING UNDER ARTICLE 8(1) OF COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) 139/2004 ON THE CONTROL OF CONCENTRATIONS BETWEEN UNDERTAKINGS AND ARTICLE 57 OF THE EEA AGREEMENT (CASE COMP/M.4854 – TOMTOM/TELE ATLAS) (C(2008)1859 TO /5)

The Commission:

- took note of the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Concentrations of 6 May 2008 in C(2008)1859/3;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 6 May 2008 in C(2008)1859/4;
- adopted, in the authentic language (English), the decision in C(2008)1859/5, declaring the notified operation to be compatible with the common market and the agreement on the European Economic Area;
- decided to notify the decision set out in C(2008)1859/5 to the firm concerned, together with the final report of the Hearing Officer and the opinion of the Advisory Committee;
- decided that the most important parts of the decision and the opinion of the Advisory Committee and the report of the Hearing Officer would be published in the official languages in the Official Journal of the European Union (with business secrets removed);
- decided to publish the decision (with business secrets removed) on the Internet.

6. TRENDS IN THE MEMBER STATES

The Commission briefly reviewed the progress of the Lisbon Treaty ratification process in Ireland. She mentioned in particular the results of the latest opinion polls, and the determination of the new Irish Prime Minister and his Government to work for a positive outcome in the upcoming referendum.

The Commission took note of this information.

7. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING COHESION POLICY STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2007-2013 (COM(2008)301 TO /4; SEC(2008)1873)

Ms HÜBNER presented the communication, which was designed to give an overview of how the negotiations had been conducted on the cohesion policy programmes for the period 2007-2013 and what results had been achieved. She began by stressing the contribution they made to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment. She pointed out in this connection that implementation of the programmes should improve competitiveness in the Member States and the regions, and also bring the Lisbon objectives closer to the public.

She also highlighted the synergies between cohesion policy and the other European Union policies, as well as the importance of the regional approach at European level as a complement to the Member States' national strategies.

She drew attention to the concentration of resources on regions covered by the convergence objective (81%, totalling 283 billion euros), then on those under the regional competitiveness and employment objective (16%, totalling 55 billion euros) and finally those under the territorial cooperation objective (3%, totalling

9 billion euros). She specified that convergence regions were not all to be found in the twelve new Member States, 39% of the resources distributed under this head (111 billion euros) going to regions in the fifteen older Member States.

The communication presented the investments that respond to the challenges of globalisation and structural change, and showed how cohesion policy promotes good governance, institutional capacities and ownership by stakeholders of the measures and their purpose.

Ms HÜBNER noted that these negotiations had also opened minds, promoted the debate within the Member States and enhanced the quality of the programmes proposed compared with those of the previous period. On the question of governance, the regional and local players had been involved in the negotiations, as had the non-governmental players concerned, thus giving all stakeholders the opportunity to assume ownership of the strategy.

Ms HÜBNER felt that the results of this opening were already tangible and that cohesion policy was now in a position to respond to the following major challenges:

- improving accessibility (82 billion euros), in particular with projects in the context of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) and sustainable transport projects (38 and 35 billion euros respectively);
- research and development, and innovation (86 billion euros);
- combating climate change (48 billion euros) and investment in energy efficiency and renewables (9 billion euros);
- general improvement of the environment and implementation of the *acquis* in this area (105 billion euros);
- developing knowledge-based service economies by investing in education and training in the information and communication technologies (15 billion euros);

- aid to the private sector, in particular small businesses, with a view to developing their competitiveness and preparing them for global competition (27 billion euros).

Lastly she emphasised that the large number of players involved in these negotiations was a guarantee of success for the cohesion policy, as were the transparency of the process and the adoption of reliable and accurate indicators that would facilitate future work and follow-up.

Ms HÜBNER's conclusion was that the framework established would enable the Commission to work effectively in the years ahead towards achieving the goals of the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment, and she thanked the Commission Members and departments that had played an active part in the negotiations.

Mr ŠPIDLA then stressed the importance of social development, which would be supported by the cohesion policy funds, and he thanked the other Commission Members and departments who had contributed to the success of the exercise.

He said that the European Social Fund, the main instrument promoting employment and development of human capital, would contribute 76 billion euros for the period 2007-2013. He felt that the balance between human capital and infrastructure, that was so hard to find, had been achieved by the end of the negotiations.

Over the full period the European Social Fund would be investing 41 billion euros to enhance quality and accessibility to education and to continuing training systems, and to strengthen the ability of companies and people to adapt to change, and 29 billion euros to contribute to removing obstacles to employment and facilitating social inclusion. Finally the European Social Fund would provide 2 billion euros in the convergence objective regions to strengthen the effectiveness of public policies, to facilitate structural adjustments, growth and employment, and to strengthen the capacity of public administrations and services.

The Commission then held a brief exchange of views, during which the following points were highlighted:

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- the importance of the balance between the main components of the cohesion strategy, such as transport infrastructure, training and the new approach for small businesses;
- the need for well-considered communication on these issues, which are close to the public and on which the Commission has worked successfully for many years.

Ms WALLSTRÖM closed the exchange of views by thanking Ms HÜBNER and Mr ŠPIDLA for the work they had done on this important matter. Cohesion policy had been given fresh stimulus, through the better quality of the operational programmes, improved governance and greater transparency.

Following these presentations, the Commission approved the communication in COM(2008)301/4 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments.

8. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(SEC(2008)584)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Wednesday 7 May (SEC(2006)584).

It paid particular attention to the following:

8.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Action to be taken on Parliament's legislative opinions

(SP(2008)2888)

The Commission decided to empower the Commission Members responsible for the sectors in question, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms WALLSTRÖM and, if necessary, with the other Members concerned, to

adopt the amended proposals for transmission to Parliament and the Council, as set out in SP(2007)2888, drawn up following the May I part-session of Parliament, the contents of which were noted.

ii) Preparation for the May II 2008 part-session of Parliament
(point 1.3 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:

Codecision, 2nd reading

- Banning of exports and the safe storage of metallic mercury (Regulation)
- PAPADIMOULIS report – 2006/0206 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2759 and /2.

Empowerment

- Banning of exports and the safe storage of metallic mercury (Regulation)
- PAPADIMOULIS report – 2006/0206 (COD)

The Commission empowered Mr DIMAS, under Article 13 of its Rules of Procedure, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms WALLSTRÖM and any associated Members, to adopt and transmit to the Council its opinion on the amendments, in accordance with Article 251(2)(c) of the Treaty, once Parliament had acted, and if necessary to attach to its opinion an amended proposal, on the basis of the line set out in SP(2008)2759 and /2.

Codecision, 1st reading

- Meat and livestock statistics (Regulation) – GRAEFE ZU BARINGDORF report – 2007/0051 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2760 and /2.

- Farm structure surveys and the survey on agricultural production methods (Regulation) – HARANGOZÓ report – 2007/0084 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2761 and /2.

- Common rules on the conditions to be complied with to pursue the occupation of road transport operator (Regulation) – Common rules for access to the international road haulage market (Recast – Regulation) – Common rules for access to the market for coach and bus services (Recast – Regulation) – TICĂU report and GROSCH reports – 2007/0098 (COD) – 2007/0099 (COD) – 2007/0097 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2057 and /2 and authorised the member of the Commission to continue contacts with Parliament and the Council with a view to securing agreement at first reading.

- European Training Foundation (Recast – Regulation) – LEHIDEUX report – 2007/0163 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2762 and authorised Mr FIGEL' to continue contacts with Parliament and the Council with a view to securing agreement at first reading.

- Protection of the environment through criminal law (Directive) – NASSAUER report – 2007/0022 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2763 and /2.

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Consultation

- Transfer of tobacco aid to the Community Tobacco Fund for the years 2008 and 2009 and financing of the Community Tobacco Fund (Regulation) – BERLATO report – 2008/0020 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2764.

- Setting up the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (Regulation) – LOCATELLI report – 2007/0211 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2765.

- Integrated guidelines for growth and employment (2008-2010) (Decision)
– VAN LANCKER report – 2007/0300 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)2766.

iii) Preparations for Council meeting (Agriculture and Fisheries)
Agriculture session (Brussels, 19 and 20 May)
(point 1.4 of the IRG record)

- Placing on the market of plant protection products (Regulation) – BREYER report – 2006/0136 (COD) – Preparation of political agreement

The Commission authorised Ms VASSILIOU, at the Council meeting (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 19 and 20 May, to follow the line set out in SI(2008)278/3.

iv) Proposal for a Council decision concerning the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement – 2007/0285 (CNS)
(point 1.5 of the IRG record)

The Commission authorised Mr BORG to accept that the Council decision be taken on the basis of the assent of the European Parliament, in accordance

with the second paragraph of Article 300(3) of the Treaty, following the line set out in SI(2008)280/3.

8.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

v) Programming of Council business

(SI(2008)1001)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2008)1001 on the Council meetings between 8 and 21 May.

vi) Preparations for Council meeting (Environment) (Luxembourg, 5 June)

(point 2.4 of the IRG record)

- Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the position to be adopted on behalf of the Community at the meetings of the International Whaling Commission

The Commission authorised Mr DIMAS, at the Council meeting (Environment) on 5 June, to accept a Council Presidency compromise, following the line set out in SI(2008)279/2.

vii) Results of the informal meeting of Ministers of Transport (Brdo, 5 and 6 May)

(SEC(2008)1887; SI(2008)1018)

- Progress report on trans-European transport network priority projects

Mr BARROT reported briefly on the informal meeting of Transport Ministers held in Brdo on 5 and 6 May. He noted with satisfaction the significant progress achieved in the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T), seven of the fourteen priority projects identified in 1996 having already been fully or over 85% completed. He felt that the chosen approach of European coordinators had proved its worth, as had the programming method.

But he felt that the Member States should continue their efforts and regular meetings should be scheduled to check that the projects were in fact making progress. He emphasised the importance of mobilising private-sector funding as well, and referred to the essential role that public-private partnerships could play.

He also mentioned the preparations for the series of measures on "green transport" that would be tabled for the Commission in the near future, in particular the initiative on the internalisation of external transport costs. He felt that these measures would also contribute to funding and hence to establishing the major European transport corridors and to combating climate change.

Lastly, Mr BARROT wished Mr TAJANI every success, referring to the good progress made on transport, but also the challenges that would be facing his successor as the Commission Member responsible for transport.

Ms WALLSTRÖM thanked Mr BARROT for his presentation. She welcomed the progress made, particularly as regards the development of rail transport and highlighted the importance of continuing the trans-European approach in the coming years.

The Commission took note of this information and of Mr BARROT's note in SEC(2008)1887.

8.3. *RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT*

viii) Results of Parliament's May I part-session

The Commission took note of the information on Parliament's part-session on 7 and 8 May in Brussels, set out in SP(2008)2825.

9. MEMORANDUM TO THE COMMISSION ON THE TARGETS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN TO MANAGEMENT AND OTHER AD POSTS AT THE COMMISSION FOR 2008 (SEC(2008)1864 TO /3; SEC(2008)1872)

The Commission held a brief exchange of views on the memorandum tabled by Mr KALLAS for its approval. The following points in particular were raised:

- the case for setting ambitious longer-term targets for the recruitment and appointment of women at the Commission;
- the need to continue efforts to promote the development of women's careers, in particular with a view to filling middle and senior management posts;
- the case for adopting specific measures to promote women's careers;
- the composition of internal selection and recruitment panels.

In reply Mr KALLAS referred to the progress already made and the bright prospects for the coming year, not only as regards recruitment and appointment but also in connection with the appraisal and promotion system and through the training and positive action programmes. He pointed out that all that was being done on this front had to comply with the Staff Regulations and must also strike a certain geographical balance.

Ms WALLSTRÖM concluded by emphasising the present Commission's commitment to ambitious targets for recruitment and promotion of women and the importance of not letting up the efforts being made, as regards both political direction and implementation in each Directorate-General and service.

After this exchange of views, the Commission approved the memorandum in SEC(2008)1864/3.

10. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

10.1. EU-RUSSIA ENERGY DIALOGUE (MOSCOW, 4 MAY)

(SEC(2008)1869)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr PIEBALGS in SEC(2008)1869.

10.2. VISIT TO THE COMMISSION OF MR MOHAMED ELBARADEI, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (7 MAY)

(SEC(2008)1888)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr PIEBALGS in SEC(2008)1888.

10.3. THE SITUATION IN THE CHINESE PROVINCE OF SICHUAN AFTER THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE

The Commission discussed briefly the situation in the province of Sichuan following the violent earthquake that struck central and south-west China, killing at least ten thousand people with very many more missing and injured, and causing very extensive material damage. It confirmed that it was prepared to supply any assistance and aid necessary to the Chinese partners.

The Commission took note of this information and agreed to review the situation at its next meeting on the basis of a briefing note.

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The meeting closed at 10.40 hours.