



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2008) 1852 final

Brussels, 26 November 2008

MINUTES
of the 1852nd meeting of the Commission
held in Strasbourg
(Winston Churchill)
on Wednesday 18 November 2008
(afternoon)

PV(2008)1852 final

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Single sitting: Tuesday 18 November (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.10 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Ms WALLSTRÖM	Vice-President	Items 8 to 12
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	Items 8 to 12
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		Items 8 (in part) to 12
Ms GRYBAUSKAITĖ		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL'		
Mr REHN		
Mr MICHEL		Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Mr McCREEVY		
Mr ŠPIDLA		
Ms KUNEVA		Items 11 (in part) and 12
Mr ORBAN		
Ms VASSILIOU		Items 1 to 11 (in part)
Baroness ASHTON		Items 1 to 8, 11 and 12

Absent:

Mr TAJANI	Vice-President
Ms REDING	
Ms HÜBNER	
Mr BORG	
Ms KROES	
Ms FISCHER BOEL	
Mr PIEBALGS	

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

Mr PRETO	Chef de cabinet to Mr TAJANI
Mr PRONK	Adviser in Ms REDING's office
Ms MAHOVSKY	A member of Ms HÜBNER's staff
Mr KOEHLER	Chef de cabinet to Mr BORG
Mr FRIIS	A member of Ms FISCHER BOEL's staff
Ms SOEWARTA	A member of Mr PIEBALGS's staff

The following also sat in:

Mr THEBAULT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms DURAND	Acting Director-General, 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 11 (in part)
Ms PALOTAI	A member of Mr McCREEVY's staff	Items 1 to 8
Ms SCHREIBER	Chef de cabinet to Mr ŠPIDLA	Items 1 to 8
Ms NIKOLAY	A member of Baroness ASHTON's staff	Items 9 and 10

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2008)1852/3; SEC(2008)2823/2)

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)1852)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 17 November.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 1851ST MEETING
(12 NOVEMBER)**

(PV(2008)1851 AND /2; PV(2008)1851, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1851st meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(SEC(2008)2830)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Friday 14 November (SEC(2008)2830).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Codecision procedure

(point 1.2 of the IRG record)

1st reading – Progress report

- Laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS) (Directive) – KLINZ report – 2008/0153 (COD)

The Commission authorised Mr McCREEVY to pursue contacts with Parliament and the Council in order to reach agreement at first reading following the line set out in SPI(2008)94/3.

- Simplifying terms and conditions of transfers of defence-related products within the Community (Directive) – RÜHLE report – 2007/0279 (COD)

The Commission authorised Mr VERHEUGEN to pursue contacts with Parliament and the Council in order to reach agreement at first reading following the line set out in SPI(2008)95.

ii) Preparation of Parliament's November part-session

(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 considered the following in particular:

Codecision

- Publication and translation obligations of certain types of companies (Directive) – KAUPPI report – 2008/0083 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)6477 and /4.

Consultation

- Conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment (Council Directive) – KLAMT report – 2007/0228 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)6618 and /2.

- Single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State (Council Directive) – GAUBERT report – 2007/0229 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)6619 and /2.

iii) Preparation of Council meeting (Competitiveness) (Brussels, 1-2 December)

(point 1.4 of the IRG record)

- Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure (ERI) (Council Regulation) – RIERA MADURELL report – 2008/0148 (CNS)

The Commission took note of the state of play in this dossier with a view to the discussion that would take place at the Competitiveness Council on 1 and 2 December and authorised Mr POTOČNIK to promote an agreement, while reserving the Commission's formal position until Parliament had given its opinion in the consultation procedure, following the line set out in SI(2008)1371.

iv) Preparation of Council meeting (Justice and Home Affairs) (Brussels, 27-28 November)

(point 1.5 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 as regards the use of the Visa Information System (VIS) under the Schengen Borders Code (Regulation) – BREJC report – 2008/0041 (COD)

The Commission authorised Mr BARROT to approve, on its behalf, the joint declaration by the Commission and the Council following the line set out in SI(2008)1374.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

- v) Programming of Council business**
(SI(2008)1373)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2008)1373 on the Council meetings between 13 and 26 November.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

- vi) Preparation of the November part-session – Oral questions**
(point 3.4 of the IRG record)

H-0795/08, H-0797/08, H-0799/08, H-0800/08, H-0802/08, H-0804/08, H-0805/08, H-0809/08, H-0810/08, H-0811/08, H-08014/08, H-0816/08, H-0818/08, H-0820/08, H-0821/08, H-0823/08, H-0825/08, H-0827/08, H-0829/08, H-0831/08, H-0833/08, H-0835/08, H-0837/08, H-0838/08, H-0841/08, H-0843/08, H-0844/08, H-0846/08, H-0847/08, H-0848/08, H-0849/08, H-0850/08, H-0852/08, H-0853/08, H-0854/08, H-0856/08, H-0858/08, H-0859/08, H-0861/08, H-0862/08, H-0863/08, H-0864/08, H-0866/08, H-0868/08, H-0869/08, H-0870/08, H-0871/08, H-0876/08, H-0877/08 and H-0878/08

The Commission approved the draft answers set out in SP(2008)6627 and /2, following the agreement reached between the Chefs de cabinet on revisions to some of these draft answers, and certain draft supplementary answers, revisions to answers and draft answers as set out in SP(2008)6627/3 *et seq.*

vii) Action taken on Parliament's non-legislative resolutions

(point 3.5.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved documents SP(2008)6487 and /3 on the action taken on Parliament's non-legislative resolutions adopted at its September II part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

viii) Action taken on Parliament's legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions

(point 3.5.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SP(2008)6664 on the action taken on Parliament's legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted at its October I and II part-sessions, for transmission to Parliament.

ix) Parliament resolution of 23 October 2008 on the impact of aviation security measures and body scanners

(point 3.5.3 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2008)6678/2.

x) Participation by Members of Parliament in international conferences

(point 3.8 of the IRG record)

- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) (Marrakech, 17-24 November)

The Commission decided to approve the request from Mr PÖTTERING, President of Parliament, to the PRESIDENT concerning the participation of two Members of the European Parliament at the above meeting.

- Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (Doha, 29 November to 2 December)

The Commission decided to approve the request from Mr PÖTTERING, President of Parliament, to the PRESIDENT concerning the participation of seven Members of the European Parliament at the above meeting.

5. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

INFRINGEMENTS – MEMORANDUM TO THE COMMISSION IN CONNECTION WITH CASE C-568/07 (COMMISSION v GREECE) (SEC(2008)2874)

The Commission took note of the memorandum from Mr McCREEVY in SEC(2008)2874.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2008)2826 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 10 and 14 November.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2008)2827 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 10 and 14 November.

6.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2008)2828 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 10 and 14 November, as archived in e-Greffe.

6.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2008)2829 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 17 and 21 November and of the "finalisation" written procedures initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 17 November.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2008)2825/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2008)144/2)

**7.1. DG RESEARCH – APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF THE FUEL CELL AND HYDROGEN JOINT
UNDERTAKING**

The Commission took note of the information in point 1 of PERS(2008)144/2 and, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr POTOČNIK,

- decided to assign Mr Philippe VANNSON, AD12 official and currently head of the task force responsible for establishing the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen joint undertaking in the Directorate-General for Research to the post of Interim Executive Director of the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen joint undertaking until the Executive Director took up office;

- instructed the Director-General for Research to assign staff, for the same duration, to support the interim Executive Director in establishing the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen joint undertaking.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**7.2. DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES – ADOPTION OF A LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY
(PERS(2008)145/2)**

The Commission noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 2 of PERS(2008)144/2 and, on a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr ŠPIDLA, decided:

- to approve the list of two candidates set out in point 2 of PERS(2008)144/2;
- to consider this list as the Commission proposal under Article 12 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006;
- to ask Mr ŠPIDLA to communicate this list to the Management Board of the European Institute for Gender Equality.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.3. INITIAL COMMUNICATION UNDER ARTICLE 50 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

The Commission decided to initiate the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations with respect to an AD15 official.

7.4. INITIAL COMMUNICATION UNDER ARTICLE 50 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

The Commission decided to initiate the procedure laid down in Article 50 of the Staff Regulations with respect to an AD15 official.

**7.5. DRAFT REVISED COMMISSION DECISION ON THE RULES FOR
THE APPRAISAL AND PROMOTION OF STAFF IN THE
COMMISSION'S EXTERNAL SERVICE
(C(2008)7060)**

On a proposal from Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms FERRERO-WALDNER, the Commission took note of the draft decision in C(2008)7060, and authorised M. KALLAS:

- to consult the Staff Regulations Committee and the Central Staff Committee on the draft decision;
- if necessary, to introduce minor changes following these consultations;
- to adopt the decision, including any amendments, on behalf of the Commission;
- to communicate the final version of the above decision to the Commission.

This decision would take effect on 1 January 2009.

**8. REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON
THE IMPACT OF FREE MOVEMENT OF WORKERS IN THE CONTEXT
OF EU ENLARGEMENT
(COM(2008)765 TO /4; SEC(2008)2844)**

Mr ŠPIDLA presented the report he was laying before the Commission which, he pointed out, was a response to the requirements of the two Accession Treaties of 2005 and 2003 and covered the first transitional period for Bulgaria and Romania and the second transitional period for eight of the ten Member States which joined

in 2004. He reminded the meeting of the procedure governing the transitional periods and reported that eight Member States had taken up the possibility of requesting a further review of the transitional arrangements applied to their workers. He explained that the report was based on objective data and presented a factual analysis of mobility between Member States.

He mentioned the conclusions of the report which gave a measure of the EU's success in the free movement of workers, a principle which contributed significantly to economic growth without causing serious disruption in labour markets. Migratory flows had generally been moderate compared with the periods before enlargement and were determined by general labour supply and demand. There was now an observable increase in return migration. Finally, Mr Špidla noted the report's conclusion that the restrictions were unjustified and said that, because of the slowdown in economic growth following the financial crisis, the possible drop in labour demand might in any event reduce migratory flows within the Union.

In the light of these conclusions, he considered that any requests to maintain the transitional measures should be examined very thoroughly and would have to be fully justified in relation to the Accession Treaties. It was up to the Commission to ensure that these conditions were met, on the basis of the objective information set out in the report.

The Commission then held a brief exchange of views, covering the following points among others:

- the very broad support for the report being presented, which stressed the importance of the free movement of workers as one of the fundamental principles of the European Union and one of the greatest successes for Europe and its citizens, and the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties;
- the relevance of the objective data and factual analysis presented in the report for correcting certain preconceived notions about enlargement, and the importance of highlighting both the positive effects of workers' mobility in the Union and the negative effects of restrictive measures on the Member States that

applied them;

- the different impact of workers' mobility in the old and new Member States, as the latter were increasingly confronted with a labour shortfall and compelled to recruit workers from outside the EU, and recognition of certain types of discrimination in the labour market arising from the current restrictions;
- the importance, in the context of the economic crisis, of avoiding any form of protectionism;
- the possible case for pursuing more vigorously the aim of lifting all restrictions on the free movement of workers; but also a reminder that the transitional arrangements had played a crucial role in getting the enlargement process accepted and making it a success, and the need to respect the possibility for Member States to extend these measures if they deemed it necessary;
- the importance of taking into account the specific consequences of the mobility of workers in certain cross-border urban areas and on certain sectors of the economy, given the prospect of an economic slowdown;
- the politically sensitive nature of this issue in certain Member States, particularly with elections on the horizon;
- the importance of the report with a view to further enlargement and a reminder that the method of transitional arrangements could also be envisaged for some of the current candidate countries;
- the fact that this report should tie in with and be consistent with discussions on introducing a "blue card" allowing highly-qualified migrant workers to work in the EU, and the need to consider developing appropriate infrastructure in national education systems;
- concern at the possibility of envisaging a further extension of the transitional arrangements after the end of the final transitional period.

Winding up the exchange of views, the PRESIDENT stressed the importance of the

report which, given its sensitive nature, had to be factual, balanced and based on objective statistical data and a factual analysis, while remaining consistent with the report published in 2006 and avoiding an overly prescriptive tone.

He also mentioned the need to respect the legal conditions laid down in the Accession Treaties which allowed Member States to apply further transitional periods if they so wished, but required them to present a clear justification, citing serious disturbances on their labour markets or a threat thereof. He noted that the text of the report, in particular its conclusion, highlighted the political importance of enforcing the fundamental principles of the Union and that, overall, it was balanced in nature. He acknowledged the importance of reiterating the terms of the Treaty and stressed that in any event the transitional measures mentioned could not be extended beyond the total period of seven years.

Finally, he said he was convinced that implementing the free movement of workers was one of the EU's great successes and that in terms of communication it was important to give full prominence to the information contained in the report. He pointed out that it was the Commission's role to dispel any fears that might persist on this issue.

Mr ŠPIDLA thanked the Commission Members and departments involved for their excellent cooperation in drafting the report. Given the sensitive nature of this issue, which touched on one of the Union's fundamental principles, it was necessary to present a clear message, explaining that restrictions to this principle must be exceptional and fully justified. This message should not be watered down in the text of the report. He also noted that the Member States which had already waived the transitional periods had not experienced any negative impact and pointed out that in any event the measures in question could not be extended beyond the total seven-year period laid down by the 2003 and 2005 Accession Treaties.

The Commission approved the report in COM(2008)765/4, for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments.

- 9. 25th ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION ON MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW (2007)
(COM(2008)777 TO /4; SEC(2008)2854; SEC(2008)2855; SEC(2008)2857)**
- 10. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON IMPLEMENTING EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
(COM(2008)773 TO /4; SEC(2008)2876; SEC(2008)2851; SEC(2008)2852; SEC(2008)2877; SEC(2008)2857)**

The PRESIDENT presented the 25th annual report from the Commission on monitoring the application of Community law, relating it directly to the efforts by the current Commission to improve not only the drafting of Community legislation but also its actual implementation in the Member States (the objective of Better Regulation). He felt the time had come to evaluate the progress made, particularly in terms of preventing infringements of Community law, problem-solving, improving the way infringements were handled and improving working relations with the Member States and the other institutions.

As regards prevention, the PRESIDENT mentioned the Commission's pledge to carry out a more thorough feasibility study of the implementation of legislative proposals before they were presented and referred in this connection to the ongoing work to revise the guidelines on impact assessments and the other measures taken to make laws more enforceable, for example by developing informal networks with the Member States. He also mentioned the correlation tables giving an overview of the state of transposition of Community legislation, which required cooperation with the national authorities.

In the area of problem-solving, he pointed to the launch of a pilot project involving 15 Member States aimed at answering the public's complaints and sorting out problems in various areas of Community policy in order to prevent matters going to

court. He stressed the system's potential and urged all Members of the Commission to encourage their departments to use it.

The PRESIDENT also reviewed the handling of infringements, emphasising the monthly cycle as a result of which cases were now handled more efficiently and better information was available on which to take decisions. He recognised, however, that further efforts were needed to establish priorities and fast-track certain dossiers.

Finally, turning to relations with the other institutions and the Member States, he pointed to the new approach adopted by the report which, in the interests of transparency, not only gave the statistics for infringements and complaints but also analysed the causes of the difficulties in implementation, suggested possible improvements and identified priorities. He felt that this approach should help to improve the quality of the dialogue with the Council and the European Parliament on questions of implementation and, in particular, increase the level of Parliament's involvement.

He concluded by reiterating the report's conclusions, which highlighted the need to tackle the problem of late transposition of directives, to improve preparation of new legislative acts so as to address the implementation aspects at an earlier stage, to respond better and faster to problems identified by the public and to improve priority-setting and handling of infringements, working more closely with the Member States.

Mr DIMAS then took the floor and spoke of the particular difficulties encountered in the application of Community environmental law, which formed the subject of a separate communication. This was the second communication on this subject, the first dating back to 1996, and its aim was to incorporate fully the present Commission's new approach to the application of Community law and apply it specifically to environmental law.

He explained the four main elements of this policy: (i) preventing infringements of environmental law by improving the drafting and preparation of new legal texts,

using consultative documents and cooperating more closely with the national authorities; (ii) providing quick and effective solutions to citizens' complaints by introducing specific problem-solving mechanisms and by progressively seconding experts to the Commission's representations in the national capitals; (iii) improving priority-setting in the area of infringements; (iv) promoting dialogue with the European Parliament and the general public, which was essential to the success of the policies.

He concluded by stressing the need for determination, efficiency and pragmatism in monitoring the application of environmental law, focusing efforts more specifically on the most serious cases and trying to anticipate infringements or remove the causes of such infringements as quickly as possible, in an atmosphere of constructive cooperation with the Member States.

After these presentations, the Commission:

- adopted the report in COM(2008)777/4 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments, accompanied by the report on the situation in the various sectors and the five statistical annexes in the staff papers distributed as SEC(2008)2854 and SEC(2008)2855 (volumes 1 to 4) respectively, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the communication in COM(2008)773/4 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments, accompanied by the description of the methods and challenges relating to the application of Community environmental law, the impact assessment and its summary in the staff papers distributed as SEC(2008)2876, SEC(2008)2851 and SEC(2008)2852 respectively, the contents of which were noted;
- also noted the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the above-mentioned communication, contained in SEC(2008)2877.

11. RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

11.1. G20 SUMMIT (WASHINGTON, 15 NOVEMBER)

The PRESIDENT reported on the results of the summit of representatives of the G20 countries, held in Washington on 15 November, and stressed its historic significance, both as a demonstration of unity and determination to act and in terms of the change it signalled in the approach to the regulation of the financial markets. The declaration adopted at the end of the summit was accompanied by a detailed action plan to be implemented at ministerial level, and he expressed his satisfaction that the results had been substantive and had even exceeded expectations.

He then reviewed the main elements of these conclusions: (i) the adoption of an action plan for reforming the financial markets and the consensus reached on the principles of a new form of global economic governance that was more open to emerging and developing countries, in particular via the International Monetary Fund and the Financial Stability Forum; (ii) the agreement on the need for coordinated action to stimulate the world economy and on the role of exceptional fiscal measures for this purpose, with due regard for the objective of sustainability; (iii) the reaffirmed commitment to an open economy and rejection of protectionism and the determination to bring the negotiations in the Doha Round to a successful conclusion; (iv) the commitment to development and the Millennium Goals and the references to the other important global challenges, such as climate change and energy, as a reminder that the financial crisis could not be tackled in isolation from the other serious problems facing the world.

The PRESIDENT referred briefly to the problems that had arisen in the course of the preparations for the summit, in particular the refusal to refer in the declaration to certain "global imbalances", the question of using fiscal policy, the format and location of the follow-up to the summit and how this fitted in with the Doha Round negotiations. He welcomed the fact that the differences over these various questions had finally been resolved and it had

been possible to reach firm conclusions.

He also stressed how important it was that the Commission had been able, for the first time, to take part in a G20 summit and said that in due course the European Union would need to have proper representation in such international bodies.

He felt that the EU's objectives had essentially been achieved. Its job now was to continue to play its part to the full in the months before the next summit, which would take place in April 2009.

During a brief exchange of views the following points were also mentioned:

- the importance of the inclusion of the developing countries in the conclusions and the need to involve them in the process;
- the gap between the commitments made to development aid, particularly in the context of the Millennium Goals, and the efforts the Member States had actually made;
- the concerns about the international conference on financing for development, to be held in Doha at the end of November, and the risk of polarisation between the industrialised and developing countries at this forum;
- the benefits of the summit, which had been strongly supported by the European Union, in terms of the visibility and credibility of the European institutions;
- the sensitive issue of the EU's representation at the summit and the importance which those Member States that were not represented in the G20 attached to the Commission's presence in such bodies;
- the pressure which fiscal policy plans put on the Stability and Growth Pact, and the need for the Commission to hold an open debate on this issue as soon as possible, given the importance of the Pact for the health

of the euro;

- the trade implications of the Doha Round negotiations and the importance of laying down agreed procedures before the end of the year, as a result of the impetus given by the Washington summit.

The Commission took note of this information.

**11.2. EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT (NICE, 14 NOVEMBER)
(SEC(2008)2891)**

The Commission took note of the information note from the PRESIDENT and Ms FERRERO-WALDNER in SEC(2008)2891.

**11.3. VISIT TO INDIA (NEW DELHI, 10-12 NOVEMBER)
(SEC(2008)2889)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr FIGEL' in SEC(2008)2889.

**11.4. FIRST EURO-MEDITERRANEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON
EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR, AND VISIT TO MOROCCO
(MARRAKECH, 9 AND 10 NOVEMBER)
(SEC(2008)2890 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr ŠPIDLA in SEC(2008)2890/2.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

**CONSEQUENCES IN EUROPE OF THE SITUATION OF GENERAL
MOTORS**

Mr VERHEUGEN spoke briefly about the situation in the car industry and in particular the difficulties faced by the American manufacturer General Motors in the

United States because of the economic crisis. He drew attention to the possible consequences for its European subsidiaries, in particular Opel and Saab, and the potential impact of this situation on other car manufacturers across the EU. He said that discussions should be held very soon on the policy responses to this situation.

The PRESIDENT pointed out that this issue would be discussed in connection with the presentation of the European economic recovery plan for growth and jobs, which was planned for the Commission meeting on 26 November.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The Commission's other discussions on certain agenda items are recorded in the special minutes.

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The meeting closed at 14.50.