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MINUTES

of the 1888th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 30 September 2009

(morning)

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Single sitting: Wednesday 30 September 2009 (morning)

The sitting opened at 10.01 in the Jean Monnet room with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Mr VERHEUGEN	Vice-President	
Mr BARROT	Vice-President	
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Mr TAJANI	Vice-President	Items 1 to 10
Ms REDING		
Mr DIMAS		
Mr ALMUNIA		
Mr BORG		
Mr POTOČNIK		
Mr FIGEL'		
Mr REHN		
Mr KOVÁCS		
Ms KROES		
Ms FERRERO-WALDNER		Items 1 to 12
Mr McCREEVY		Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr ŠPIDLA		Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr PIEBALGS		
Ms KUNEVA		
Mr ORBAN		
Ms VASSILIOU		Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr ŠEMETA		
Mr SAMECKI		
Mr DE GUCHT		Items 1 to 11 (in part)

Absent:

Ms WALLSTRÖM

Vice-President

Ms FISCHER BOEL

Baroness ASHTON

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

Ms BERGENFELT	Adviser in Ms WALLSTRÖM's office
Ms NAESAGER	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms FISCHER BOEL
Mr PETERS	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Baroness ASHTON

The following also sat in:

Mr VALE DE ALMEIDA	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr CARVOUNIS	Deputy Director-General, DG Communication	
Ms AHRENKILDE	DG Communication – Commission Spokesman's Service	Items 1 to 11
Mr GRAY	DG Communication – Commission Spokesman's Service	Items 12 and 13
Mr GASPAR	Acting Director-General, Bureau of European Policy Advisers	
Mr THEBAULT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	Items 1 to 9
Mr CABRAL	Adviser hors classe in the PRESIDENT's office	Items 10 to 12
Mr KLAUS	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	
Mr SCHMIDT	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr KALLAS	Items 1 to 8
Mr CANGA FANO	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr TAJANI	Items 1 to 10
Ms BARTOLINI	A member of Mr TAJANI's staff	Items 1 to 9
Mr BENGTTSSON	A member of Ms KROES's staff	Items 1 to 10
Mr CHILD	Chef de cabinet to Ms FERRERO- WALDNER	Item 13
Mr UEBE	A member of Mr ŠPIDLA's staff	Item 13
Ms VITCHEVA	DG Regional Policy	

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

The PRESIDENT paid tribute to Mr FIGEL' on his departure from the Commission. He praised his loyalty and commitment as a Member of the Commission and his contribution to the institution's work, particularly in the fields of education, training, culture and youth. On behalf of all the Members of the Commission the PRESIDENT wished him every success in his new position.

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1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2009)1888/3; SEC(2009)1244/2)

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(2009)1888)

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

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 1887TH MEETING
(23 SEPTEMBER)**

(PV(2009)1887; PV(2009)1887, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1887th meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

Programming of Council business

(SI(2009)224)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2009)224 on the Council meetings between 1 and 14 October.

5. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW

STATE AID – INDIVIDUAL CASES – RECAPITULATIVE LIST

(SEC(2009)1261 AND /2)

The Commission adopted the decisions in SEC(2009)1261/2.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2009)1246 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 21 and 25 September.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2009)1247 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 21 and 25 September.

6.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2009)1248 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 21 and 25 September, as archived in e-Greffe.

6.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2009)1249 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 28 September and 2 October and of the "finalisation" written procedure initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 28 September.

6.5. EMPOWERMENT IN THE FIELD OF PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE
ESTABLISHED BY COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) NO 1085/2006 (IPA)
(SEC(2009)1290 AND /2)

The Commission granted the general empowerment as set out in SEC(2009)1290 to the Members of the Commission responsible for enlargement, regional policy, employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, and agriculture and rural development to adopt certain decisions relating to pre-accession assistance in areas for which they had been appointed lead Members according to the subject matter.

7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS - PREPARING FOR OUR FUTURE: DEVELOPING A COMMON STRATEGY FOR KEY ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
(COM(2009)512 TO /4; SEC(2009)1257; SEC(2009)1258)

The Commission approved the Communication in COM(2009)512/4, for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to the national parliaments, together with the staff paper distributed as SEC(2009)1257, the contents of which were noted.

8. COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION ON THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2008
(SEC(2009)1259 TO /3; SEC(2009)1260)

Mr KALLAS briefly presented the communication, referring to a historical table which was distributed to the members. He stressed that this was the last Court of Auditors' Report that would be published during the mandate of the present Commission and thanked all the departments involved for their continued efforts, thanks to which the DAS was likely to be the most positive to date. This was undoubtedly one of this Commission's main achievements; there were more and more "green" sectors representing an error rate of under 2%. In any case, the Commission's accounts had been judged fully compliant for the second year running. Concerning the follow-up to the procedure, he referred in particular to the meeting with the European Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee to be held on 3 November.

The PRESIDENT made some general observations on the Court of Auditors' annual report for 2008, reiterating in his turn that this report would be the last one received

by this Commission and that it was probably the best so far. In view of this result, he felt that the Commission had been right to make a positive DAS one of its key objectives. This had enabled it to better focus its energies and send a clear message that the Commission was fully committed to its task of ensuring sound management of the Community budget funds entrusted to it.

He noted that there had been significant improvements in the quality of management. In particular, there had been a substantial reduction in the proportion of expenditure for which the error rate was still over 5%; whole sections of the budget had been subjected to more rigorous management; good relations had been established with the Court of Auditors; and ambitious action plans had been adopted in the areas of research and structural funds. The positive results of these plans were beginning to come through.

However, he pointed out that while the Commission could be satisfied with this result, it would not do to be complacent. It should continue its efforts, particularly in this period of economic crisis, right up to the last day of this Commission's mandate so as to ensure that the budget as a whole was managed as rigorously as possible. Departments should keep up these efforts and continue to fulfil their undertakings towards the Court of Auditors and the European Parliament.

He noted with satisfaction the progress made towards obtaining a positive DAS. While acknowledging that the last stages of the process would doubtless be the most difficult, he was convinced that it was essential to persevere in the efforts in this area. The issue was one of great political importance given that certain areas, such as research, the structural funds and external aid, still needed to be monitored very carefully. The next Commission should also make sound financial management one of its priorities.

The PRESIDENT wound up by thanking Mr KALLAS and his departments, as well as the other Commission members and departments involved in this operation over the last five years. Without this coordinated joint effort and the necessary political momentum, this achievement would not have been possible. He was satisfied with the present Commission's achievements in this field.

The Commission then held a discussion, during which the following points were raised:

- the key issue of simplification of the rules of financial management, which should be included in the future proposals concerning the budgetary review;
- the good results achieved in the area of research, including the fields of innovation and enterprise, the information society, transport and energy, but also the tensions between, on the one hand, the conformity checks required on the use of Community funds, the rigorous nature of the audits and the strict interpretation of the rules and, on the other, the onerous administrative procedures imposed by these rules, in particular for small structures, and the sometimes contradictory demands of these two opposing requirements; the need to discuss ways of resolving these contradictions and, while vigorously pursuing infringements, to remove administrative barriers to the development of research and innovation;
- the need for proper training of the staff responsible for financial management, especially in the area of external relations and development, in particular with a view to the administrative adjustments that would be required if the Lisbon Treaty were implemented;
- the significance of the positive results achieved from a historical viewpoint and recognition of the progress made in, along with other fields, education and citizenship, and the further improvements expected once the new cohesion policy programmes came into force in 2010.

Mr KALLAS agreed that certain tensions were caused by pursuing Community policy objectives while at the same time having to meet the requirements of good governance of these policies. The next Commission should continue its simplification efforts and its work on the concept of tolerable risk of error. The existence of certain riskier projects and the utility of these projects should be acknowledged, particularly in the areas of external relations and humanitarian aid, research and development. The Commission should also consider the issue of

centralised or shared management of Community funds.

The PRESIDENT concluded by endorsing the comments on the need to work towards a more efficient and targeted methodology of Community fund management, in particular in the area of scientific research. In the future he hoped to lead a strategic discussion on this issue with the European Parliament.

Following this exchange of views, Commission noted the contents of the communication and the annex thereto set out in SEC(2009)1259/3 and /2.

**9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – ACTION PLAN ON URBAN MOBILITY
(COM(2009)490 TO /5; SEC(2009)1211; SEC(2009)1212; SEC(2009)1213; SEC(2009)1220)**

Mr TAJANI presented the action plan he was tabling for approval. He reviewed the process that had begun with the Green Paper on urban mobility adopted on 25 September 2007 – with the public consultation having shown a broad consensus among stakeholders regarding the added value of action at European level – and stressed the priority attached to this initiative by the European Parliament.

He spoke of the links with climate change and with measures aimed at improving energy efficiency, developing renewable energies and fostering economic and social cohesion. He stressed that the proposed measures would be voluntary and that the initiative did not in any way encroach on the urban transport responsibilities of towns, cities, regions and Member States, as what the action plan envisaged were not legislative measures but additional instruments to be made available to local, regional and national authorities to support efforts to make urban mobility more sustainable and better tailored to people's needs.

Mr TAJANI felt that the initiative would help mobilise extra resources, develop

innovative solutions, expand and step up the exchange of information on good practice, improve the effectiveness of existing measures and investment in the field of urban transport, optimise transport systems and improve travellers' safety. He also noted that both the action plan and implementation of the measures proposed were to be reviewed in 2012.

He concluded his introduction by thanking the Members of the Commission and all the departments involved for their close cooperation in preparing the action plan.

The Commission then held an exchange of views in which it focused in particular on the importance of complying with the principle of subsidiarity in pursuing this initiative, the non-legislative and voluntary nature of the measures proposed, the added value of the exchange of information and good practices between towns, cities and regions and of the 'toolbox' they would be provided with, the links with climate change and the contribution more sustainable urban transport would make to the Copenhagen objectives.

Winding up the exchange of views, the PRESIDENT noted that the Commission supported the Communication and agreed to make the following amendments to the English language version of COM(2009)490/5:

- in Chapter 2, "*What role for the EU?*", the fourth, fifth and sixth paragraphs, on page 4, should read as follows:

"The EU can also help authorities to find solutions that are interoperable and facilitate smoother functioning of the Single Market. Compatible rules, schemes and technologies facilitate implementation and enforcement. Agreeing standards for the whole of the Single Market enables larger volume production, lowering the cost for the customer.

Urban areas are becoming laboratories for technological and organisational innovation, changing patterns of mobility and new funding solutions. The EU has an interest in sharing innovative solutions of local policies for the benefit of transport operators and citizens alike and to ensure the efficiency of the European transport system through effective integration, interoperability and

interconnection. In this context, industry has a key contribution to make to the solution of the future challenges.

Finally, sustainable urban mobility is of growing importance for the relationships with our neighbours and for the global society, which is becoming increasingly concentrated in urban agglomerations. Successful action under this Action Plan can help all actors in the EU and its industry to actively shape a future global society focused on citizens' needs, harmonious living, quality of life and sustainability."

- in Chapter 3, "A programme of actions to support sustainable urban mobility", under "Theme 1 — Promoting integrated policies", the second paragraph of action 1, and the title and sole paragraph of action 2, on page 5, should read as follows:

"Whenever possible, the Commission will encourage Member States to provide platforms for mutual learning and sharing of experiences and best practices that would foster the development of sustainable urban mobility policies. The Commission will also introduce an urban mobility dimension in the Covenant of Mayors [footnote] in order to promote an integrated approach linking energy and climate change with transport. It will encourage the incorporation of transport and mobility issues in the Sustainable Energy Action Plans to be prepared by the cities participating in the Covenant.

Action 2 — Sustainable urban mobility and regional policy

To increase awareness of the funding available from the Structural and Cohesion Funds and the European Investment Bank, the Commission envisages issuing information on the link between sustainable urban mobility measures and regional policy objectives under the current Community and national framework conditions. It will address the wider framework for sustainable urban development as well as the link between urban transport and the trans-European transport network. The Commission will also list funding opportunities and explain the application of State aid and public procurement

rules.”

- under “*Theme 2 — Focussing on citizens*”, on pages 5 and 6, the first paragraph should read as follows:

“High quality and affordable public transport is the backbone of a sustainable urban transport system. Reliability, information, safety and ease of access are vital for attractive bus, metro, tram and trolleybus services, rail or ships. Community legislation already regulates large parts of public transport investment and operations [footnote]. Transparent contracts have widespread benefits and can stimulate innovation in services and technology. Ensuring a high level of protection of passenger rights, including of passengers with reduced mobility, is also high on the Commission’s agenda. Legislation is in place for rail services [footnote] and has recently been proposed for bus and coach services [footnote] as well as for maritime and inland waterway services [footnote].”

- also under “*Theme 2 — Focussing on citizens*”, the sole paragraph of action 4, on page 6, should read as follows:

“Action 4 — Platform on passenger rights in urban public transport

The Commission will moderate a dialogue with stakeholders, including organisations representing operators, authorities, employees and user groups, in order to identify EU-wide best practices and conditions for strengthening passenger rights in urban public transport. Building on sectoral initiatives and complementing the Commission’s regulatory approach, the aim is to put a set of ambitious voluntary commitments in place, including quality indicators, commitments to protect the rights of travellers and of persons with reduced mobility as well as commonly agreed complaint procedures, and reporting mechanisms.”

- still under “*Theme 2 — Focussing on citizens*”, the sole paragraph of action 6, on page 6, should read as follows:

“Action 6 — Improving travel information

The Commission will work with public transport operators and authorities on facilitating the provision of travel information through different media, including information addressing the needs of disabled persons. It will also support the development of national and regional multimodal journey planners, and links between existing planners, with the ultimate aim of providing users with a public transport travel portal at EU level on the internet. There will be a particular focus on the main nodes in the TEN-T network and their local and regional connections.”

- also under “Theme 2 — Focussing on citizens”, the sole paragraph of action 9, on page 7, should read as follows:

“Action 9 — Energy-efficient driving as part of driving education

Energy-efficient driving is already a mandatory part of the training and testing of professional drivers. The Commission will discuss with Member States, within the regulatory committee on driving licences, if and how energy-efficient driving could be included in driving tests for private drivers, and will consider follow-up actions and give respective support. This topic will also be addressed in the next Road Safety Action Programme.”

- under “Theme 3 — Greening urban transport”, on pages 7 and 8, the second paragraph of action 10, “Research and demonstration projects for lower and zero emission vehicles”, should read as follows:

“In the framework of the European Economic Recovery Plan, the Commission has launched the European Green Cars Initiative [footnote]. In 2009, the Commission will fund new projects related to electric vehicles, which will cover batteries, electric power trains and auxiliaries, information and communication technologies and an "electromobility" demonstration project. This project will focus on electric vehicles and related infrastructure in urban areas and it will integrate national initiatives and support the standardisation of recharging infrastructure.”

- still under “*Theme 3 — Greening urban transport*”, the sole paragraphs of actions 12 and 13, on page 8, should read as follows:

“*Action 12 — Study on urban aspects of the internalisation of external costs*”

Once the EU framework for internalisation of external costs is established, and taking into account the conclusions of the debate launched by the Communication on a sustainable future for transport, the Commission will launch a methodological study on the urban aspects of the internalisation. The study will look at the effectiveness and efficiency of various pricing solutions, including implementation issues such as public acceptability, social consequences, cost recovery, availability of ITS (intelligent transport systems) tools and how urban pricing policies and other green zone arrangements can be effectively combined.

“*Action 13 — Information exchange on urban pricing schemes*”

The Commission will facilitate information exchange among experts and policy-makers on urban pricing schemes in the EU. This will use input from existing initiatives [footnote] and include information on consultation processes, scheme design, information provision to citizens, public acceptance, operating costs and revenue, technological aspects and the impact on the environment. The conclusions will feed into the Commission’s work on the internalisation of external costs.”

- under “*Theme 5 — Sharing experience and knowledge*”, on pages 9 and 10, the first paragraph, and the sole paragraph of action 16, should read as follows:

“*Theme 5 — Sharing experience and knowledge*”

The Commission will help stakeholders capitalise on existing experience and support the exchange of information, in particular on model schemes developed through Community programmes. Action at EU level can be decisive in ensuring the collection, sharing and comparison of data, statistics and information. These are currently missing but are necessary for the proper design of policies, for

example on the procurement of public transport services, internalisation of external costs or integrated transport and land use planning. It can also help cities with less experience, knowledge and financial resources to capitalise on the practices developed by cities that are more advanced in the area of sustainable urban mobility, for example in areas such as pedestrian and cyclist safety where an exchange of best practice can help improve the safety of vulnerable road users in urban areas.

Action 16 — Upgrading data and statistics

To address the lack of data and statistics, the Commission will launch a study on how to improve data collection for urban transport and mobility. Synergies with existing Commission activities will be explored.”

- still under “Theme 5 — Sharing experience and knowledge”, the sole paragraph of action 18, on page 11, should read as follows:

“Action 18 — Contributing to international dialogue and information exchange

Local and regional authorities across the world are confronted with similar mobility challenges. Tackling climate change, facilitating international trade, addressing the security of energy supplies, securing seamless transport flows and ensuring social equity are issues of global relevance. Using existing platforms and financial mechanisms, the Commission will facilitate dialogue, city-twinning, and information exchange on urban mobility with neighbouring regions and global partners. As a first step, the Commission will open the CIVITAS Forum network to cities from the Eastern neighbourhood, Mediterranean and African regions [footnote]. For the longer term, the Commission will include this dimension in the development of CIVITAS FUTURA and consider further dedicated activities under FP7.”

- under “Theme 6 — Optimising urban mobility”, on pages 11 and 12, the first paragraph, and the sole paragraphs of actions 19 and 20, should read as follows:

“Theme 6 — Optimising urban mobility

Effective integration, interoperability and interconnection between different transport networks are key features of an efficient transport system. This can facilitate modal shift towards more environmentally friendly modes of transport and efficient freight logistics. Affordable and family-friendly public transport solutions are key to encourage citizens to become less car-dependent, use public transport, walk and cycle more, and explore new forms of mobility, for example in the form of car-sharing, carpooling and bike-sharing. Alternative means of transport such as electric bicycles, scooters and motorbikes as well as taxis can also play a role. Company mobility management can influence travel behaviour by drawing the employee's attention towards sustainable transport options. Employers and public administrations can provide support through financial incentives and parking regulations.

Action 19 — Urban freight transport

The Commission intends to provide help on how to optimise urban logistics efficiency, including on improving the links between long-distance, inter-urban and urban freight transport, aiming to ensure efficient 'last mile' delivery. It will focus on how to better incorporate freight transport in local policies and plans and how to better manage and monitor transport flows. As part of its preparations, the Commission will organise a conference on urban freight transport in 2010. At the conference, the implementation of the urban initiatives in the Freight Logistics Action Plan [footnote] will also be assessed.

Action 20 — Intelligent transport systems (ITS) for urban mobility

The Commission envisages offering assistance on ITS applications for urban mobility to complement the ITS Action Plan [footnote]. It will look at, for example, electronic ticketing and payment, traffic management, travel information, access regulation and demand management, and address the opportunities opened up by the European Galileo GNSS system. As a start, the Commission will launch a study on improving the interoperability of ticketing and payment systems across services and transport modes, including the use of smart cards in urban transport with a focus on major European destinations

(airports, rail stations).”

Subject to inclusion of the above amendments and to a final, general clean-up of the text, the Commission approved the Communication set out in COM(2009)490/5, 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, together with the impact assessment and the summary thereof contained in the staff papers distributed as SEC(2009)1211 and SEC(2009)1212 respectively, the contents of which were noted.

It also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the above communication, as set out in SEC(2009)1213.

**10. COMMISSION DECISION ON A PROCEEDING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 65(1) OF THE ECSC TREATY (CASE COMP/37.956 – REINFORCING BARS, READOPTION)
(C(2009)7492 TO /4)**

The Commission:

- took note of the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Restrictive Practices and Dominant Positions of 18 September in C(2009)7492/3;
- took note of the final report of the Hearing Officer of 22 September in C(2009)7492/4;
- adopted, in the authentic language (Italian), the decision set out in C(2009)7492, noting that the companies to whom the decision was addressed had infringed Article 65(1) of the ECSC Treaty and imposing on these companies fines totalling €83 250 000;
- decided that the decision in C(2009)7492 would be notified to the companies concerned, together with the final report of the Hearing Officer;

- decided that the key parts of the Decision, together with the Advisory Committee's opinion and the Hearing Officer's final report, would be published in the official languages of the Union in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (with business secrets and other confidential information removed);
- decided also to publish the decision on the internet (with business secrets and other confidential information removed).

On this occasion the Commission agreed that a meeting would be held soon to explain, on the basis of information to be presented by Ms KROES, the rules and criteria applicable in determining the level of fines in cases where Community competition law was applied.

**11. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – THE EUROPEAN UNION AND LATIN AMERICA: GLOBAL PLAYERS IN PARTNERSHIP
(COM(2009)495 TO /4; SEC (2009)1227/3; SEC(2009)1229)**

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER introduced the Communication on the Strategic Partnership between the European Union and Latin America and thanked all the Commission Members for their cooperation. She observed that the Communication, which marked ten years of this partnership, provided an opportunity to take stock and learn lessons for the future against the background of a changing world, full of new challenges and opportunities. The Communication was also intended to contribute to the forthcoming summit between the European Union and Latin America to be held in May 2010 during the Spanish Council Presidency, and coincided with the mid-term review of the regional and country strategy documents for the period 2007-2013.

Ms FERRERO-WALDNER explained that the Communication dealt primarily with the four main areas of the strategic partnership – bi-regional dialogue, regional integration and interconnectivity, bi-regional relations, and cooperation programmes

– and made recommendations in each of these areas with a view to shaping the Union's future strategy in the region.

She mentioned in particular: (1) stepping up political and strategic dialogue in a number of priority areas such as macro-economic and financial questions, the environment, climate change and energy, employment and social affairs, science, technology and development, and migration; such dialogue must be effective and lead to tangible results, the summits must be more action-focussed, and the whole of civil society must be involved, with the support in particular of the EU-LAC Foundation; (2) the aim of strengthening regional integration and interconnectivity; it was important here to reiterate the EU's commitment to pursuing the present trade negotiations with the various sub-regions and to back up institutional support with investment in infrastructure projects – especially in the fields of energy, the environment, climate change, transport, communications and social networks between the different Latin American countries – by means in particular of a new Latin America Investment Facility (LAIF) whose grants would have a leverage effect to mobilise resources from other financial institutions; (3) strengthening bilateral relations with certain States in the region to complement the regional integration policy; and lastly (4) adapting cooperation and development programmes.

In conclusion, Ms FERRERO-WALDNER considered that such concerted action by the two partners would enhance their ability to face up to the new challenges ahead.

The Commission then held a brief discussion, during which it mentioned in particular the strengthening and deepening of these relations, which were based on common values, such as democracy, and strong historical, economic and cultural links, while at the same time facing such problems as the lack of progress on regional integration and the rise of populist movements in certain countries. The Commission also spoke of the need to adopt a cautious approach to some of the financial instruments proposed.

The PRESIDENT for his part stressed the importance of this communication for the success of the Madrid Summit in May 2010, especially in view of the significance

attached to this summit by the forthcoming Spanish Presidency of the Council.

Following this debate, the Commission approved the communication set out in COM(2009)495/4 for transmission to Parliament and the Council, and to the national parliaments, together with the staff paper SEC(2009)1227/3, the contents of which were noted.

12. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

12.1. G20 SUMMIT (PITTSBURGH, 24 AND 25 SEPTEMBER 2009) (SEC(2009)1301)

The PRESIDENT reported on the outcome of the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh on 24 and 25 September, emphasising first the fact that the G20 had now been designated the premier forum for international economic cooperation – a new development in world governance – and announced that two summits were scheduled for Canada and Korea in 2010, and a further summit would be held in France in 2011.

Turning to the state of the world economy, the PRESIDENT said that the Summit has taken stock of recent improvements, noting that the coordinated measures taken after the London Summit had prevented the crisis from spreading further. It had also recognised, however, that the crisis was not yet over, unemployment was still rising and the conditions for the recovery of private demand were still not present. It had agreed that the fiscal stimulus should be sustained until the recovery had taken hold and that a start should be made on preparing coordinated exit strategies.

A decision had been taken to forge a new framework for growth to regularly assess global consistency of the fiscal, monetary, trade and structural policies of the G20 members and to restore a balance to worldwide growth, building on International Monetary Fund supervision.

The PRESIDENT said that the summit had given new impetus to international financial regulation with a view to a comprehensive reform that would include substantial strengthening of prudential rules on capital, strict international standards on compensation, procedures for solving cross-border issues for large undertakings, and increased resilience and transparency on derivatives markets. However he deplored the fact that it had not been possible at the Pittsburgh Summit to reach agreement on an accelerated convergence process that would lead to a single set of high-quality accounting standards.

The PRESIDENT also informed the Commission members of the decision to increase the representation of the emerging markets and developing countries in international financial institutions.

However, the results on trade and combating climate change did not match expectations.

In conclusion, he considered that the objectives of the EU had largely been achieved. Although the Summit had underlined the effectiveness of the efforts made, he warned against complacency. The emphasis had been placed on employment and on better integration of the developing countries. Lastly he referred to the outlook for developing the G20 once the crisis was over, welcoming the fact that the Commission had managed in one year to consolidate its position as a fully-fledged member of this body, at every level. It would be important in future to keep a watchful eye on the question of representation within the G20 and in international institutions.

He ended by pointing to the high level of consensus that had emerged at the summit and the radical changes observed in world governance, in particular as regards the balance of power between the participants. It was extremely important in this context to present a united European front within the G20.

Mr ALMUNIA also referred to the role of the European Union within the G20. In relation to international financial institutions, he was concerned at the fact that EU Member States which were also members of the International

Monetary Fund did not have a coordinated approach there, and this was undermining any possibility of building on Europe's financial contributions to the IMF.

Turning to financial regulation, he underlined the European Union's internal powers and its role as a driving force at international level, but drew attention to the convergence of different developments in this domain. He referred to the growth framework launched by the summit, underlining its interconnections with economic supervision of the EU and the euro zone.

As for the economic situation and the exit strategy, Mr ALMUNIA stressed that fiscal stimuli would have to be continued until recovery set in. The positive signals being sent out by the economy showed that it was time to define an exit strategy that would restore confidence fully.

The PRESIDENT noted the sensitive nature of establishing an interconnection between European and global supervision, and underlined the need for the Commission to continue playing its role of fiscal supervision, which should be seen as providing assistance to Member States. He confirmed the decision not to withdraw fiscal stimuli for the moment, but to devise an exit strategy.

The Commission took note of this information and of the note from the PRESIDENT set out in SEC(2009)1301.

12.2. UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE (NEW YORK, 22 SEPTEMBER)

The PRESIDENT briefly described the talks held at the United Nations Summit on climate change, recalling the difficult background to the negotiations to prepare the Copenhagen conference.

He regretted the fact that the summit had not managed to get the stalled negotiations moving again and that American climate legislation, which would be decisive in this context, was itself blocked by the Senate, so that US President Barack Obama had little to offer developing countries to get them to

move forward in turn. The question of financing the fight against climate change had not been included in the final communiqué because some emerging countries had objected to this.

The PRESIDENT said that the other objective of the climate change summit, namely obtaining a substantial commitment by leaders, had been fully achieved, sending out a strong signal to the Copenhagen negotiators. However, he was concerned about the outcome of the conference, in particular given the absence of new American legislation, although Mr Obama had announced his intention to hold talks with the Heads of State again before Copenhagen, perhaps by video conference.

Mr DIMAS briefly underlined the need to uphold the EU's objectives for Copenhagen, and he congratulated the PRESIDENT on his excellent work on this dossier.

The Commission took note of this information.

12.3. VISIT TO RUSSIA (MOSCOW, 20-22 SEPTEMBER)
(SEC(2009)1294)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr KOVÁCS set out in SEC(2009)1294.

12.4. VISIT TO CHINA (BEIJING AND SHANGHAI, 22-26 SEPTEMBER)
(SEC(2009)1307)

The Commission took note of the information note from Mme VASSILIOU, set out in SEC(2009)1307.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

13.1. COMMISSION BUSINESS – FORTHCOMING INSTITUTIONAL EVENTS

The PRESIDENT briefly recalled the vote in the European Parliament approving by an absolute majority the President of the next Commission, and mentioned the key role played in this connection by the policy guidelines he had presented to the political groups. He thanked the Members of the Commission warmly for their support over recent weeks and felt that the result of this vote represented a solid foundation and source of stability in readiness for the setting-up of the next Commission and a clear recognition of what had been achieved not only by himself but also by the whole College.

He set out the priorities that should guide the Commission's actions in the time remaining until the end of its term of office. First of all, he stressed the need to carry through the initiatives laid down in the legislative and work programme for the year while at the same time being selective, ensuring that standards were high and avoiding undermining the principle of collective responsibility.

He also mentioned the preparations for the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty should there be a successful outcome in the Irish referendum on 2 October. He went on to talk about the work to be done in connection with the next Commission taking up office, including preparations for the hearings of the Members-designate by the European Parliament and the drafting of the Commission's work programme for 2010. He also stressed the importance, especially in the period before and after the end of the Commission's term of office, of rigorous compliance with the Code of Conduct for Commissioners.

Lastly, he said that he would make a statement on behalf of the Commission following the official publication of the results of the referendum in Ireland on the Lisbon Treaty.

The Commission took note of this information.

**13.2. OPEN DAYS 2009 - EUROPEAN WEEK OF REGIONS AND CITIES
(BRUSSELS, 5-8 OCTOBER)
(SEC(2009)1303)**

The Commission took note of the information note from Mr SAMECKI distributed as SEC(2009)1303.

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The meeting closed at 12.33.