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MINUTES
of the 1962nd meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 1 June 2011
(morning)

PV(2011)1962 final

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Single sitting: Wednesday 1st June 2011 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.06 hours with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Baroness ASHTON	High Representative/ Vice-President	
Ms REDING	Vice-President	
Mr ALMUNIA	Vice-President	
Mr KALLAS	Vice- President	Items 12 (in part) and 13
Mr TAJANI	Vice- President	Items 11 to 13
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice- President	Item 13
Mr POTOČNIK	Member	Items 12 (in part) and 13
Mr PIEBALGS	Member	
Mr BARNIER	Member	Items 11 to 13
Ms VASSILIOU	Member	
Mr ŠEMETA	Member	
Mr DALLI	Member	Items 1 to 11
Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN	Member	
Mr LEWANDOWSKI	Member	Items 1 to 13 (in part)
Ms DAMANAKI	Member	
Mrs GEORGIEVA	Member	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	
Mr HAHN	Member	Items 12 (in part) and 13
Ms HEDEGAARD	Member	
Mr FÜLE	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr CIOLOŞ	Member	

Absent:

Ms KROES

Vice-President

Mr REHN

Member

Mr DE GUCHT

Member

Mr ANDOR

Member

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

Mr WHELAN	Chef de cabinet to Ms KROES	Items 12 and 13
Mr PESONEN	Chef de cabinet to Mr REHN	
Mr VANHEUKELEN	Chef de cabinet to Mr DE GUCHT	
Ms GAGO	Chef de cabinet to Mr ANDOR	

The following also sat in:

Mr LAITENBERGER	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr SØRENSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Commission Spokeswoman	
Mr THEBAULT	Head of the Bureau of European Policy Advisers	Items 12 (in part) and 13
Ms OEN	A member of Mr KALLAS's staff	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Mr SADAUSKAS	Chef de cabinet to Mr ŠEMETA	Items 1 to 12

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2011)1962/3; SEC(2011)653/2)

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(2011)1962)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 30 May.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 1960TH MEETING AND OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 1961ST MEETING (18 AND 24 MAY)

(PV(2011)1960; PV(2011)1961; PV(2011)1961, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 1960th and 1961st meetings.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (SEC(2011)666)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Friday 27 May (SEC(2011)666).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. *LEGISLATIVE MATTERS*

i) Ordinary legislative procedure

(point 1.2 of the IRG record)

Dossiers at Parliament first reading

- Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (Regulation) – COELHO report – 2009/0089 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2011)189/2.

- Access to the public regulated service offered by the global navigation satellite system established under the Galileo programme (Decision) – GLANTE report – 2010/0282 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2011)177/2.

- Over-the-counter derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories (Regulation) – LANGEN report – 2010/0250 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2011)171.

Dossiers at Council first reading

- EU guarantee to the European Investment Bank against losses under loans and guarantees for projects outside the European Union (Decision) – KALFIN report – 2010/0101 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2011)172.

ii) Preparations for Parliament's June I part-session

(point 1.3 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – Codecision – second reading

- Charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructure – (Directive) – EL KHADRAOUI report – 2008/0147 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)4672 and /3.

Empowerment

- Charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructure – (Directive) – EL KHADRAOUI report – 2008/0147 (COD)

Under Article 13 of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission empowered Mr KALLAS, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr ŠEFČOVIČ and any other members associated, to adopt its opinion on the amendments together with any amended proposals, on the basis of the line set out in SP(2011) 4672 and /3, once Parliament had given its opinion, and transmit them to the Council in accordance with Article 294(7)(c) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Ordinary legislative procedure – Codecision – first reading

- Air quality – provisions for engines placed on the market under the flexibility scheme (Directive) – PIETIKÄINEN report – 2010/0195 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)4675.

- Proof of origin for certain textile products falling within Section XI of the Combined Nomenclature and released for free circulation in the Community, the conditions for the acceptance of such proof, and common rules for imports of certain textile products from third countries – ZAHRADIL report – 2010/0272 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)4676.

- European environmental economic accounts (Regulation) – LEINEN report – 2010/0073 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)4681 and /2.

Non-legislative procedure

- Full application of the provisions of the Schengen acquis in Romania and Bulgaria (Council Decision) – COELHO report – 2010/0820 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)4682 and /5.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2011)188)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2011)188 on the Council meetings between 2 and 15 June.

iv) Latest developments at the Council

(point 2.2 of the IRG record)

- Accession of the European Union to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

The Commission took note of SI(2011)179.

v) Preparation of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Telecommunications session) (Brussels, 27 May)

(point 2.3.1 of the IRG record)

- Protection of critical information infrastructure – Achievements and next steps: towards global cyber-security

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2011)182.

vi) Preparation of the COREPER I meeting of 8 June

(point 2.3.4 of the IRG record)

- Fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks (Council Regulation) – 2011/0101 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2011)174.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

vii) Preparation of June I part-session – Non-legislative matter

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Proposal for a modification of the Act concerning the election of the Members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage of 20 September 1976 – DUFF report – 2009/2134 (INI)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)4726.

viii) Action taken on legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its April part-session

(point 3.5.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SP(2010)4619 on the action taken on the legislative opinions and non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its April part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

ix) Latest developments at Parliament

(point 3.6 of the IRG record)

- Framework agreement on Parliament's access to evaluation reports concerning partnership agreements in fisheries (APP)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)4728.

x) Participation by Members of the European Parliament in international conferences

(point 3.7.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2011)4894.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2011)654 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 27 May.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2011)655 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 27 May.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2011)656 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 23 and 27 May, as archived in e-Greffe.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES**(SEC(2011)657)**

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 30 May and 1 June.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS**(SEC(2011)658/3)****ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS****(PERS(2011)56/3)****6.1. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF DELEGATION****(PERS(2011)57)**

Having noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 1 of PERS(2011)56/3, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to approve the list of candidates for the post of Head of the EU Delegation to the United Nations in New York in PERS(2011)57, which would serve as a basis for the competent authority of the European External Action Service to make a final appointment.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.2. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF DELEGATION**(PERS(2011)58)**

Having noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 2 of PERS(2011)56/3, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to approve the list of candidates for the post of Head of the EU Delegation in Burkina Faso in PERS(2011)58, which would serve as a basis for the competent authority of the European

External Action Service to make a final appointment.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.3. *DG CLIMATE ACTION – INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL (GRADE AD14/15) AND EXTERNAL (GRADE AD14 – EU-27) PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR A DIRECTOR (PERS(2011)59)*

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms HEDEGAARD, the Commission decided to authorise the publication, under Articles 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), 29(1)(b) and 29(2) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice in PERS(2011) 59 for a post of Director in DG Climate Action.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.4. *HIGH-LEVEL TASK FORCE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE EU RESPONSE TO THE NUCLEAR ACCIDENT IN JAPAN (SEC(2011)706)*

The Commission took note of the PRESIDENT's decision to set up, under Article 22 of its Rules of Procedure, a high-level task force with responsibility for following up the European Union's response to the nuclear accident in Japan, and of the briefing note in SEC(2011)706, by which the PRESIDENT gave notice of the remit of the task force.

7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE – A STRATEGIC VISION FOR EUROPEAN STANDARDS – MOVING FORWARD TO ENHANCE AND ACCELERATE THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMY BY 2020 (COM(2011)311 TO /3; SEC(2011)669; SEC(2011)674/2)

The Commission approved the Communication set out in COM(2011)311/2 and /3, for transmission to Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee, and, for information, to the national parliaments.

8. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON EUROPEAN STANDARDISATION AND AMENDING COUNCIL DIRECTIVES 89/686/EEC AND 93/15/EEC AND DIRECTIVES 94/9/EC, 94/25/EC, 95/16/EC, 97/23/EC, 98/34/EC, 2004/22/EC, 2007/23/EC, 2009/105/EC AND 2009/23/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL (COM(2011)315 TO /3; SEC(2011)671; SEC(2011)672; SEC(2011)673; SEC(2011)669; SEC(2011)674/2)

The Commission adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2011)315/2 and /3, for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and to the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment and the summary thereof in staff working papers SEC(2011)671 and SEC(2011)672, the contents of which were noted.

It also took note of the opinion of the Impact Assessment Board on the above proposal for a Regulation, as set out in SEC(2011)673.

9. AMENDED PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON COMMON PROCEDURES FOR GRANTING AND WITHDRAWING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS (RECAST)

(COM(2011)319 TO /4; SEC(2011)675)

10. AMENDED PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL LAYING DOWN STANDARDS FOR THE RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS (RECAST)

(COM(2011)320 TO /4; SEC(2011)675)

The Commission adopted the amended proposals for Directives in COM(2011)319, /3 and /4, and COM(2011)320, /3 and /4 respectively, for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the national parliaments.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

HEALTH ALERT IN EUROPE FOLLOWING CONTAMINATION BY THE E.COLI BACTERIUM

Mr DALLI briefly presented the latest information and data available on the ongoing health crisis caused by the *E. coli* bacterium. Studies and analyses were continuing in order to identify the exact source of the contamination.

Mr CIOLOŞ reported on the discussions on this issue at the informal meeting of agriculture ministers in Debrecen on 31 May. He mentioned in particular the impact of the outbreak not only on consumers but also on European vegetable producers, who were faced with a serious loss of earnings. On this last point he stressed that the scope for action and intervention at European level was currently being examined.

The Commission took note of this information.

12. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS – SYNTHESIS OF THE COMMISSION'S MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2010
(COM(2011)323 TO /3; SEC(2011)625; SEC(2011)748; SEC(2011)749)

The PRESIDENT said that, by adopting the synthesis of its management achievements in 2010, the Commission was assuming political responsibility for the management carried out by its Directors-General and Heads of Service, on the basis of the Annual Activity Reports and declarations they had issued. He pointed out that the communication of this synthesis marked the start of the discharge procedure for 2010, and underlined that it was important for the Commission to present a transparent, balanced and convincing view of its achievements.

The Annual Activity Reports were a key element in the Commission's internal governance, forming the basis on which the Commission undertook to manage its resources and achieve its objectives.

He reminded the meeting of the current working procedures which involved discussion of the draft annual activity reports and reservations between the Commission Member and Director General concerned before they were signed by the latter. It was also important for each Commission Member to take a proactive approach to monitoring the implementation of the action plans drawn up to remedy the shortcomings identified in the reservations expressed by the Director-General or Head of Service.

Lastly, he referred to the seventeen reservations expressed by the Directors-General in Annual Activity Reports for 2010, mainly concerning the complexity of the eligibility rules for grant beneficiaries and the application of the provisions on public procurement which often gave rise to errors in relation to cohesion policy. There was a high number of recurrent reservations – fifteen out of seventeen – and everything possible should be done to find appropriate solutions to lift them once

and for all.

Mr ŠEMETA took the floor to underline the commitment which the Commission must show in order to remedy the shortcomings identified by the Court of Auditors and the discharge authority in relation to 2009, and to deal with the main management failures pinpointed in the Court of Auditors' annual report for 2010. He highlighted in particular the error rates identified in relation to the implementation of cohesion policy and of the 7th research framework programme, the shortcomings noted in the implementation of the Integrated Administration and Control System in agriculture, and the risks arising, in the field of external relations, from the gradual introduction of the European External Action Service.

With a view to proposals on the future multiannual financial framework, Mr ŠEMETA emphasised the need to obtain a strong commitment from Member States, particularly on shared management, so that they could fully assume their share of responsibility in budgetary management and control of European funds pursuant to Article 317 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. He also referred to the methods and instruments for payment suspension, financial corrections and recoveries, and the Commission's efforts with regard to the Member States showing most weaknesses.

The Commission then held an exchange of views, covering the following points in particular:

- the need for all Commission Members to take ownership of the entire exercise and its results, and to commit themselves personally to engaging in dialogue with the services and to monitoring the implementation of the action plans;
- as regards the multiannual programmes, the possibility of taking account of a final overall error rate rather than annual rates;
- the most visible shortcomings on the part of Member States and the corrective measures taken by the Commission in 2010 to deal with them, in particular payment interruptions and suspensions;

- the error rate identified in relation to the application of public procurement rules, the methods used by the Commission to provide support and expertise to the national authorities in this respect, and the forthcoming modernisation and simplification of these rules.

The PRESIDENT wound up the exchange of views by underlining the importance for the Commission of complying with the rules in force and the guidelines issued by the Court of Auditors, and the need for each Commission Member to take a proactive approach to contacts with the auditors and the discharge authority. The annual meeting between the Court of Auditors and the Commission would be held on 15 June. The PRESIDENT hoped that as many Members as possible would take part.

Following this exchange of views, the Commission decided to:

- adopt the Communication on the Synthesis of the Commission's management achievements in 2010 as set out in COM(2011)323/3, and to transmit it to the European Parliament, the Council and the Court of Auditors, and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- inform the European Parliament, the Council, the Court of Auditors, and the national parliaments about the website http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/aar/index_en.htm where the Annual Activity Reports and declarations by the Directors-General and Heads of Service could be found;
- take note of the fact that the Commission Members have been made aware of the Annual Activity Reports and declarations submitted by their respective Directors-General and Heads of Service, and that a reference to this dialogue has now been entered in each Annual Activity Report;
- take note of the fact that the declarations of assurance contained in the Annual Activity Reports do not cover the Cabinets and their expenses;
- take note of the Overall Audit Opinion from the Internal Auditor for 2010 as set

out in SEC(2011)749;

- take note of Annual Internal Audit Report from the Internal Auditor for 2010 set out in SEC(2011)748;
- take note of the annual report of the Audit Progress Committee for 2010 set out in SEC(2011)625;
- instruct the services to implement the specific action plans laid down to remedy the weaknesses identified in the Annual Activity Reports, and also to carry out the actions and initiatives indicated in the Synthesis for their areas of competence;
- remind the Commission Members of their responsibility as regards monitoring the implementation of the above remedial actions in the services in their portfolios;
- instruct the Directors-General who are making recurrent reservations or who are in charge of budget areas in which the Court of Auditors identified weaknesses to regularly inform their Commissioner(s) of the latest developments or progress made; the Commission underlined the fact that a regular dialogue between Commissioners and Directors-General on management issues was an important element in the accountability chain;
- authorise the Commissioner responsible for audits and combating fraud to present the 2010 Synthesis to the discharge authority and to the competent bodies of the European Parliament, in particular the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Budgetary Control;
- authorise the Commission Member responsible for audits and combating fraud to provide the discharge rapporteur in the European Parliament with a copy of the minutes of the Commission meeting during which the Synthesis Report was approved.

13. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

13.1. G8 SUMMIT (DEAUVILLE, 26 AND 27 MAY)

(SEC(2011)704)

The PRESIDENT began by highlighting the success of the Deauville summit, which had revitalised discussions in the G8 and marked a milestone in international cooperation which the EU must now build on.

After mentioning the public declaration issued at the end of the summit, as reproduced in SEC(2011)704, he went on to outline the main features of the summit.

The euro area had been at the centre of the discussions on the global economy. Mr Herman Van Rompuy and himself had taken the opportunity to point out that the problems encountered were linked not to the euro but to one of the euro-area countries and that the safety mechanisms were working properly. They had also advised caution in public pronouncements on these issues, given the extreme sensitivity of the markets.

The summit had launched the "Deauville partnership" aimed at providing general support to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa in their transition towards free and democratic societies. This initiative drew heavily on the communication recently presented by the Commission on a partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the southern Mediterranean – a fact that had been explicitly acknowledged at the summit. The PRESIDENT also noted that the Commission's approval of a communication putting forward its ideas for reviewing the European neighbourhood policy a few days before the Deauville summit had been particularly apt.

At the summit he had pointed to the EU's quick response to events in the Arab world, and its initiatives to support reforms through political and economic aid, including from the European Investment Bank. He said that the EU's role here was now recognised by the United States. In this context he mentioned the frank discussions on the Middle East peace process held over dinner on Thursday.

He asked Baroness ASHTON, Mr REHN and Mr FÜLE to continue work on this "Deauville partnership", particularly in the context of the Foreign Affairs Council and the Economic and Financial Affairs Council. He felt emphasis should continue to be placed on the EU's key role in the development of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

The PRESIDENT also noted that the political commitments made on nuclear safety had been translated into real action and that there was agreement on higher safety standards. He asked Mr OETTINGER to follow up these issues in the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency. On the question of assessing nuclear safety, he said the EU must now press ahead with conducting the agreed stress tests.

The PRESIDENT was also pleased that the G8's partnership with Africa had been strengthened by the adoption of the first joint declaration on the mutual monitoring of commitments, which he felt was a major step forward. He mentioned too the agreement reached on promoting greater transparency in payments by mining companies to the governments of the countries in which they carried out their extraction activities. This issue, which had long been important for the EU, was being examined under the authority of Mr BARNIER, who would present a legislative proposal in the autumn aimed at imposing certain legal obligations on transparency on European companies in this sector.

He also welcomed the initiative by the French Presidency of the G8 to put the Internet on the agenda of the summit. Industry representatives had taken part in the discussions, which had clearly shown the need for worldwide

cooperation on these issues.

The PRESIDENT mentioned the informal discussions on major issues such as international trade and the fight against climate change. As regards trade, he alluded to the positions of the various players regarding the Doha Round negotiations and said that he had conveyed the Commission's wish for those negotiations to culminate in an agreement covering a maximum number of areas, if possible before the end of 2012, and for discussions on the other areas to continue. He asked Mr DE GUCHT to work on these issues with the French G20 Presidency ahead of the Cannes summit in order to unearth fresh ideas.

On climate change, he noted that the main greenhouse-gas emitting countries, in particular the United States, were not prepared to sign up to a final agreement at the Durban conference, while the French proposal to prolong the Kyoto protocol had received scarcely any support. He therefore felt that the EU should prepare its position for that conference very carefully.

He wanted the EU to be able to put forward solid and credible alternative proposals in these multilateral negotiations, particularly with a view to the G20 summit in Cannes.

The PRESIDENT concluded by highlighting once again the quality of the debates, the outstanding preparation and organisation of the summit by the French Presidency, and the excellent cooperation between himself and the President of the European Council.

The brief discussion that followed highlighted the undeniable success of the Deauville summit – which had been genuinely open to the world – and the political and economic importance of the weeks ahead as major microeconomic and macroeconomic developments unfolded.

The Commission took note of these observations and of the briefing note SEC(2011)704.

13.2. 20TH EU-JAPAN SUMMIT (BRUSSELS, 28 MAY)

The PRESIDENT briefly touched on the 20th EU-Japan Summit held in Brussels on Saturday 28 May, which had produced very satisfactory and balanced results.

The Summit had laid the foundations for a partnership based on two solid pillars, one political and the other economic, with the possibility of a future free-trade agreement linked to a political framework agreement on global, sectoral and regional cooperation. He thanked Baroness ASHTON and Mr DE GUCHT, and their departments, for the excellent preparation of the political and economic issues discussed at the Summit, which had been done in close cooperation with his cabinet.

Agreement had been reached not on the launching of negotiations per se, rather on a process that promised fruitful future negotiations on a free-trade agreement and an economic partnership agreement, which would take into account the concerns and interests of both parties.

In this context, he stressed that there had been agreement on the strategic objectives and asked Mr DE GUCHT to follow very closely the discussions that would soon begin on the most difficult point, the scope of application. Were the negotiations to succeed, the agreement would be between two major economic blocs, and the European Union would have to make full use of the ensuing economic opportunities. He also noted the personal commitment of the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Naoto Kan, to such an agreement.

The PRESIDENT next highlighted the agreement reached in the field of bilateral and multilateral nuclear cooperation. European concerns about nuclear safety were shared by Japan and Mr Kan had warmly welcomed all the proposals in this field. He also noted Japan's commitment to a new policy on renewable energy and its desire for cooperation with the Union in relation to thermal energy and solar energy, and called on Mr OETTINGER to

examine further the opportunities that this opened up for the energy sector in Europe.

Moreover, Japan had accepted new areas of cooperation, for example on satellites, natural-disaster management and humanitarian aid, including the negotiation of an administrative arrangement for civil protection. He thanked Ms GEORGIEVA for her visit to Japan soon after the terrible ordeals that the country had recently undergone.

He also mentioned the positive and broadly convergent discussions on a number of important issues, in particular international trade, climate change, and the Rio+ and Durban conferences. He asked Ms HEDEGAARD to assess with the Japanese authorities certain ideas recently put forward by Japan with a view to reducing carbon emissions.

With regard to foreign policy, beyond a convergence of views in relation to the situation in the Middle East and North Africa, the PRESIDENT highlighted Japan's principal concerns, in particular about North Korea and its nuclear programme. Lastly, he noted that Japan seemed open to the European Union participating as an observer in the East Asia Summit, and felt that this question should be given all the attention it deserved.

A brief discussion revealed certain concerns relating to a possible free-trade agreement with Japan, for example those of the European automobile industry.

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 10.14 hours.