



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2013) 2058 final

Brussels, 18 September 2013

MINUTES
of the 2058th meeting of the Commission
held in Strasbourg
(Winston Churchill building)
on Tuesday 10 September 2013
(afternoon)

PV(2013) 2058 final

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Attendance list	5-7
1. AGENDAS (OJ(2013) 2058/FINAL; SEC(2013) 459/2)	8
2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET (RCC(2013) 2058).....	8
3. MINUTES OF 2057TH MEETING (4 SEPTEMBER)	8
4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (RCC(2013) 116)	8
4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS	8
4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL	11
4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT	11
4.4. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN AND NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS.....	11
5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS.....	12
5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2013) 460 ET SEQ.).....	12
5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2013) 461 ET SEQ.)	12
5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2013) 462 ET SEQ.).....	12
5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2013) 463)	12
6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2013) 464)	13
6.1. DG ENLARGEMENT – CLOSURE OF A SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR AN AD14/15 DIRECTOR POST AND APPOINTMENT OF AN AD14 DIRECTOR (PERS(2013) 54 TO /3).....	13
6.2. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK EXECUTIVE AGENCY	13

6.3.	<i>DG ENERGY – EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EXECUTIVE AGENCY FOR COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION.....</i>	<i>14</i>
6.4.	<i>DG COMMUNICATION – INTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR AN AD15/16 DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL (PERS(2013) 114).....</i>	<i>15</i>
6.5.	<i>DG COMPETITION – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART AND APPOINTMENT OF AN AD15 PRINCIPAL ADVISER.....</i>	<i>15</i>
6.6.	<i>DG COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART AND APPOINTMENT OF AN AD15 PRINCIPAL ADVISER</i>	<i>16</i>
6.7.	<i>DG HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION (ECHO) – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART</i>	<i>16</i>
6.8.	<i>EUROPEAN PERSONNEL SELECTION OFFICE – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART.....</i>	<i>17</i>
7.	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SINGLE MARKET (COM(2013) 634 TO /3; RCC(2013) 114; RCC(2013) 117).....	17
8.	PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL LAYING DOWN MEASURES CONCERNING THE EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND TO ACHIEVE A CONNECTED CONTINENT, AND AMENDING DIRECTIVES 2002/20/EC, 2002/21/EC AND 2002/22/EC AND REGULATIONS (EC) 1211/2009 AND (EU) 531/2012 (COM(2013) 627 TO /3; SWD(2013) 331 AND /2; SWD(2013) 332; SEC(2013) 468; RCC(2013) 114; RCC(2013) 117)	17
9.	COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON CONSISTENT NON-DISCRIMINATION OBLIGATIONS AND COSTING METHODOLOGIES TO PROMOTE COMPETITION AND ENHANCE	

THE BROADBAND INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT (C(2013) 5761 AND /2; SWD(2013) 329; SWD(2013) 330; SEC(2013) 467; RCC(2013) 114; RCC(2013) 117)	18
10. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES.....	24
10.1. OUTCOME OF THE G20 SUMMIT (SAINT PETERSBURG, 5 AND 6 SEPTEMBER) (INFO(2013) 79)	24
10.2. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN FOREIGN POLICY – SYRIA.....	27

Single sitting: Tuesday 10 September 2013 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.12 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	Items 7 to 10
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President	
Ms KROES	Vice-President	
Mr TAJANI	Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	Items 7 to 10
Mr POTOČNIK	Member	
Mr PIEBALGS	Member	Items 1 to 9
Mr BARNIER	Member	Items 7 to 10
Mr ŠEMETA	Member	
Mr DE GUCHT	Member	Items 1 to 9
Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN	Member	
Mr LEWANDOWSKI	Member	Items 1 to 9
Ms DAMANAKI	Member	
Ms GEORGIEVA	Member	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Ms HEDEGAARD	Member	
Mr FÜLE	Member	
Mr ANDOR	Member	Items 1 to 9
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr BORG	Member	Items 7 to 10
Mr MIMICA	Member	

Absent:

Mr REHN	Vice-President
Ms VASSILIOU	Member
Mr HAHN	Member
Mr CIOLOŞ	Member

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

Ms JERN	A member of Mr REHN's staff
Mr HILL	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms VASSILIOU
Mr MOISA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr CIOLOŞ

The following also sat in:

Mr LAITENBERGER	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr PAULGER	Director-General, DG Communication	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr DOENS	Head of the Commission Spokesperson Service	
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Commission Spokeswoman	
Mr THEBAULT	Head of the Bureau of European Policy Advisers	
Mr SOBRAL	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	Items 7/8/9 (in part) and 10
Ms SUTTON	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	
Mr O'DONOHUE	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms KROES	Items 1 to 9
Mr WHELAN	DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology	Items 1 to 9

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2013) 2058/FINAL; SEC(2013) 459/2)

The Commission took note of that day's agenda and of the tentative agendas for forthcoming meetings.

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET

(RCC(2013) 2058)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 9 September.

3. MINUTES OF 2057TH MEETING (4 SEPTEMBER)

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2057th meeting for the following week.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2013) 116)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group held on Friday 6 September (RCC(2013) 116).

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

- Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 – Implementation and exploitation of European satellite navigation systems (Regulation) – MARINESCU report – 2011/0392 (COD)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2013) 457.

- Amendment of certain legislative acts in the domain of agricultural and fishery statistics (Regulation) – DE CASTRO report – 2012/0343 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2013) 456.

ii) Preparation of Parliament's September part-session
(point 1.3 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – 1st reading

- Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) 1100/2007 establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel (Regulation) – LÖVIN report – 2012/0201 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2013) 544.

- Credit agreements relating to residential property (Directive) – SÁNCHEZ PRESEDO report – 2011/0062 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2013) 545.

- Insider dealing and market manipulation (market abuse) (Regulation) – McCARTHY report – 2011/0295 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2013) 546 and /2.

- Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (Regulation) – DÍAZ DE MERA GARCÍA-CONSUEGRA

report – 2011/0138 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2012) 547 and /2.

- Establishment of the Union Customs Code (Regulation – recast) – LE GRIP report – 2012/0027 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2013) 548, further to note SI(2013) 201/2, which it had already approved on 24 April.

- Amendment to Council Regulation (EC) 1217/2009 setting up a network for the collection of accountancy data on the incomes and business operation of agricultural holdings in the European Community (Regulation) – SCOTTÀ report – 2011/0416 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2013) 549, further to note SI(2012) 547/2, which it had already approved on 5 December.

- Amendment of Directives 1999/4/EC, 2000/36/EC, 2001/111/EC, 2001/113/EC and 2001/114/EC as regards the powers to be conferred on the Commission (Regulation) – GROOTE report – 2012/0075 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2013) 550, further to the Commission's initial proposal COM(2012) 150, which it had already approved on 30 March 2012.

- Amendment of Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (Directive) – ZANONI report – 2012/0297 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2013) 569.

- Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization in the Union (Regulation) – BÉLIER report – 2012/0278 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2013) 570 and /2.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2013) 460)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2013) 460 on the Council meetings between 12 and 25 September.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

iv) Participation of Members of Parliament in international conferences

(point 3.6 of the IRG record)

- United Nations special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (New York, 25 September 2013)

The Commission, further to the agreement already given on 11 June, replied favourably to the request made by the President of the European Parliament, Mr Martin Schulz, to the PRESIDENT on attendance of an additional Member of the European Parliament at the above-mentioned meeting as an observer in the EU delegation, with a reminder about the procedure to be followed.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN AND NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

v) Transmission of Commission documents to national Parliaments – Draft Reply to the letter of Mr Yiannakis Omirou, President of the Cypriot Parliament, of 14 May 2013

(SNP(2013) 6)

The Commission approved the favourable reply to the request made by the President of the Cypriot Parliament, Mr Yiannakis Omirou, to the PRESIDENT, on transmission of Commission documents to national Parliaments, as set out in SNP(2013) 6.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2013) 460 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 2 and 6 September.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2013) 461 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 2 and 6 September.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2013) 462 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 2 and 6 September, as archived in e-Greffe.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2013) 463)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 9 and 13 September.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2013) 464)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2013) 113)

**6.1. DG ENLARGEMENT – CLOSURE OF A SELECTION PROCEDURE
FOR AN AD14/15 DIRECTOR POST AND APPOINTMENT OF AN
AD14 DIRECTOR**
(PERS(2013) 54 TO /3)

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr FÜLE, the Commission decided:

- to close the internal selection procedure COM/2013/572 for the post of Director, ‘Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo’, in DG Enlargement, without making an appointment; this decision would take effect immediately;
- to fill that post by transferring in the interest of the service under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Jean-Eric PAQUET, an AD14 official and currently Director, Directorate ‘European Mobility Network’ in DG Mobility and Transport. This decision would take effect on 1 November 2013.

**6.2. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE TRANS-
EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK EXECUTIVE AGENCY**

Having noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 2 of PERS(2013) 113, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KALLAS, decided:

- to extend, for a period of five years from 1 January 2014, the term of office of Mr Dirk BECKERS in the post of Executive Director of the Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency (TEN-T EA), in Brussels, subject to the extension of the Agency's mandate beyond 31 December 2015;
- to second Mr BECKERS in the interests of the service under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations to the Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency (TEN-T EA) in Brussels for the duration of the appointment, with a view to exercising these duties as a member of the temporary staff.

This decision would take effect on 1 January 2014.

6.3. *DG ENERGY – EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EXECUTIVE AGENCY FOR COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION*

Having noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 3 of PERS(2013) 113, the Commission, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr OETTINGER, decided:

- to extend, for a period of five years from 1 January 2014, the term of office of Mr Patrick LAMBERT in the post of Executive Director of the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) in Brussels subject to the extension of the Agency's mandate beyond 31 December 2015 and the adoption by the appointing authority of a decision, following the entry into force of the rules amending the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union, allowing Mr Patrick LAMBERT to continue to carry out these duties beyond the age of 65 if justified in the interests of the service;
- to second Mr LAMBERT in the interests of the service under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations to the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) in Brussels for the duration of the

appointment, with a view to exercising these duties as a member of the temporary staff.

This decision would take effect on 1 January 2014.

6.4. DG COMMUNICATION – INTERNAL PUBLICATION OF A VACANCY NOTICE FOR AN AD15/16 DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL (PERS(2013) 114)

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms REDING, the Commission decided to authorise the publication, under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notice in PERS(2013) 114 for the post of Deputy Director-General of DG Communication.

This decision would take effect immediately.

6.5. DG COMPETITION – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART AND APPOINTMENT OF AN AD15 PRINCIPAL ADVISER

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr ALMUNIA, the Commission decided:

- to approve the creation of a temporary post of principal adviser in the Directorate-General for Competition; this post would be abolished upon departure of the job holder;
- to transfer to that post in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Fabienne ILZKOVITZ, currently Director, Directorate 'Markets and Cases V: Transport, Post and other Services' in DG Competition.

This decision would take effect on 16 September 2013.

6.6. DG COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART AND APPOINTMENT OF AN AD15 PRINCIPAL ADVISER

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms KROES, the Commission decided:

- to approve the creation of a temporary post of principal adviser in the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology; this post would be abolished upon departure of the job holder;
- to transfer to that post in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Megan RICHARDS, currently Director, Directorate 'Coordination' in DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology.

This decision would take effect on 1 October 2013.

6.7. DG HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION (ECHO) – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Ms GEORGIEVA, the Commission decided:

- to temporarily increase by one the number of non-structural adviser posts in the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection DG (ECHO) to allow the secondment of an official to the task force for Greece;
- to abolish this temporary post of non-structural adviser following the departure of the job holder.

This decision would take effect on 16 October 2013.

Following the reorganisation, the total number of adviser posts in the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection DG (ECHO) would increase temporarily from 2 to 3.

6.8. EUROPEAN PERSONNEL SELECTION OFFICE – AMENDMENT OF ORGANISATION CHART

On a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided:

- to temporarily increase by one the number of non-structural adviser posts at the European Personnel Selection Office;
- to abolish this temporary post of non-structural adviser following the departure of the job holder.

This decision would take effect immediately.

Following the reorganisation, the total number of adviser posts at the European Personnel Selection Office would increase from 3 to 4.

**7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SINGLE MARKET
(COM(2013) 634 TO /3; RCC(2013) 114; RCC(2013) 117)**

**8. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL LAYING DOWN MEASURES CONCERNING THE EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND TO ACHIEVE A CONNECTED CONTINENT, AND AMENDING DIRECTIVES 2002/20/EC, 2002/21/EC AND 2002/22/EC AND REGULATIONS (EC) 1211/2009 AND (EU) 531/2012
(COM(2013) 627 TO /3; SWD(2013) 331 AND /2; SWD(2013) 332; SEC(2013) 468; RCC(2013) 114; RCC(2013) 117)**

9. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON CONSISTENT NON-DISCRIMINATION OBLIGATIONS AND COSTING METHODOLOGIES TO PROMOTE COMPETITION AND ENHANCE THE BROADBAND INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT

(C(2013) 5761 AND /2; SWD(2013) 329; SWD(2013) 330; SEC(2013) 467; RCC(2013) 114; RCC(2013) 117)

The PRESIDENT opened the debate on Ms KROES's proposals on the telecommunications single market by saying that renewed economic growth within a reasonable period was a priority for the Union and the telecommunications market should be an essential driver of such a recovery. This sector would contribute to the emergence of new technologies ensuring efficiency gains and innovations that would benefit the entire economy. The Commission's efforts over the past 20 years had already made it possible to offer more choice and reduce prices for consumers and businesses, while encouraging new market entrants and the emergence of new services. He regretted, however, that despite this progress there remained many obstacles to the achievement of a genuine single market in this sector.

He referred to the policy debate which the Commission had held on this subject in June, which had concluded with an agreement that the Commission would map out a strategy for the telecommunications sector ahead of the European Council in October, which would discuss digital strategy, innovation and the development of a single telecoms market. The Commission had also agreed that Ms KROES would present legislative proposals aimed at removing the obstacles to the emergence of a single market in this sector, while remaining realistic about the level of ambition of this proposed regulation and the timetable for its adoption by the co-legislators before the European Parliament elections in June 2014.

He thanked Ms KROES for her efforts over the summer to produce the proposal for a regulation to very tight deadlines. He was pleased to note that the general communication placed these initiatives in context and located them in a long-term vision once again, retracing their origins and looking ahead to the future development of the single telecoms market.

The PRESIDENT said that at this stage of the decision-making process the only element that still had to be discussed that day was net neutrality. This was a sensitive issue, and any move by the Commission to regulate in this area would provoke opposition from various interested parties. Net neutrality was a subject which divided public opinion and even political parties, because it touched on notions of equality, social freedom, democracy and pluralism of the media. However, he did not believe the Commission should refrain from discussing an issue because of its sensitivity. There was a genuine issue at stake here, because the internet must, by definition, be an open platform that was easily accessible to final users and suppliers of content and services alike. The internet was now experiencing congestion as a result of the volume of data traffic, while innovative services such as video-on-demand, video conferencing techniques and online health services all required high-quality internet connections. Several Member States were now introducing initiatives in this area, which threatened to fragment the telecommunications market further. For this reason he stressed the need to calibrate carefully the political impact of the proposal the Commission planned to present and to measure the consequences for the adoption of the legislative package as a whole.

The PRESIDENT concluded by saying that judicious, effective and well-coordinated communication on this aspect would be vitally important. Before handing the floor to Ms KROES he referred again to the recommendation to Member States on consistent non-discrimination obligations and costing methodologies to promote competition and enhance the broadband investment environment, which also formed part of the legislative package.

Ms KROES reiterated the need for action in the telecoms sector and described how the initiatives under consideration that day fitted into the wider political context. She mentioned, in particular, the importance of replying to the call by the European Council in March 2013 for the Commission to propose specific measures to put in place a genuine single market in information and communication technologies. In her view, this contribution from the Commission would enrich the debates among the heads of state and government on the enormous benefit which connectivity and broadband would bring to growth and jobs in all sectors of the European economy.

However, the current ICT market in Europe was not sufficiently dynamic and was hampered by numerous obstacles caused by the lack of a real internal market, such as the fragmentation of the regulatory framework resulting from the maintenance of national markets, and conditions that were not conducive to broadband investment.

Citing the broad consensus on the need for urgent action to remedy the situation, she referred to the positions adopted by the Commission at its policy debate in June in favour of presenting an ambitious package of proposals concerning the single telecoms market, costing methodologies and internet neutrality, while bearing in mind the legislative timetable. She therefore praised the constructive cooperation of the stakeholders which had made it possible to produce the series of solid, balanced proposals which she was now presenting to the Commission for approval.

Ms KROES then explained the key features of the package, starting with the simplification and harmonisation of the regulatory framework in the Union, notably by a single European approval and closer coordination between Member States of the use of radio frequencies to encourage operators to offer the same services throughout Europe. Support for this objective would come from harmonising access products and providing a stable and transparent framework of rules on calculating the costs of access to new generation networks, aimed at boosting investment and competition.

On the subject of roaming charges, on which considerable progress had been made in recent years, thanks to Community regulation, she said that the provisions of the proposal on this subject were intended to supplement the existing arrangements by encouraging the development of services allowing consumers to benefit from the same rates in another Member State as in their home Member State ('roam like at home'). She outlined the measures taken to encourage operators to switch to such a system, which would gradually eliminate roaming charges while promoting growth, investment and jobs, and make the arrangement widely available throughout the Union.

Ms KROES also described the common rules on net neutrality being proposed and explained that they aimed above all at improving the quality of e-services by

guaranteeing users open access, greater choice and more transparency, while still allowing the innovation that was essential to the development of the sector. Although she was well aware of the controversy surrounding this issue, she believed there was an urgent need to address the current regulatory shortcomings, given that electronic communications played an ever-increasing part in the daily lives of individuals and businesses. She therefore felt that the package being presented that day struck the right balance by creating a framework that allowed for the prohibition of certain discriminatory practices, such as blocking or restricting internet traffic, that avoided discrimination in favour of specialised services, to the detriment of ordinary services (best effort services), and strengthened surveillance mechanisms. She reminded the Members once again of Parliament's expectations on this point and the undertakings given by the Commission, which would in her view have to demonstrate political courage.

The Commission then held an in-depth discussion in which the following main points were raised:

General matters

- the broad support for this set of initiatives, which was aimed at moving forward towards the creation of a genuine single market in telecommunications and was a good example of the added value that the Union could provide to Europeans;
- the need to develop the regulatory framework to encourage the emergence of a European industrial policy in the telecommunications sector and enhance consumer rights;
- similarly, the need for action and a paradigm change given the situation and outlook of the European telecommunications groups, which were failing to attract investment or break into third-country markets; the importance of addressing market fragmentation and the barriers created by Member States and by the incumbent operators, while taking pains to maintain an appropriate competitive environment;
- in this context, the need to emphasise that the package submitted was a step

forward towards a real single market in telecommunications and that key matters such as setting up a single regulatory authority would come later;

- with regard to roaming charges, the importance of stressing that the proposed measures should, in time, lead to the abolition of costs that no longer reflected the current technological situation, and that this evolution was closely linked to achieving the single market and to the presence of genuine pan-European networks;

As regards net neutrality

- the Commission proposals must set the framework for the debate on net neutrality, since this debate would take place whatever the nature of these proposals, and lay the foundations for the protection of the rights of end users;
- the satisfaction of most of the Commission Members as regards the balance of this point of the proposal; the need to maintain free access by consumers to internet services and applications, but also to encourage and reward innovation and provision of specialised services; the need to clarify the legal framework for specialised services benefiting from better network quality, although this improved quality must not be delivered to the detriment of end consumers;
- the importance of ensuring an open Internet framework in which access to scientific information could be encouraged, in particular the development of data mining techniques;
- doubts as to whether it was justified or timely to propose legislative measures on internet neutrality; questions concerning the possible reactions of the various stakeholders; a reminder of the risk that this aspect would be exploited to the detriment of the rest of the package; the need to ensure that this aspect of the proposal was not interpreted as prioritising specialised service contracts rather than access to the Internet for everyone;
- the suggestion by some that the provisions of the regulation on net neutrality should be removed and that time should be allowed to analyse this issue in still

more depth, possibly even during the next legislature; on the other hand, the risk that without such a framework, the rights of end users would be flouted more and more systematically and that the current absence of clarity was slowing down the achievement of the single market;

- questions concerning the impact analysis of this proposal;
- a general reminder of the need to explain better, in the introductory communication, the benefits of regulating Net Neutrality issues.

Responding to these comments, Ms KROES thanked the participants for their contributions, which demonstrated the Commission's consensual vision of the importance for Europe of playing a full role in the rapid evolution of digital technologies. She agreed with the opinions expressed on the importance of allowing all sectors of the telecommunications industry to harness the potential of the digital revolution for growth and employment.

While recognising that an even more ambitious approach could have been envisaged, she was nevertheless convinced that the set of proposals submitted paved the way for addressing the challenges in the short and medium term. In particular, the aim of these proposals was to guarantee the level playing field necessary for reviving competitiveness in the telecommunications sector as part of the gradual move towards a real European single market.

As regards the debate on net neutrality, Ms KROES highlighted two key issues: prohibiting discriminatory practices such as blocking or restricting internet traffic, and protecting the rights of consumers, start-ups and innovators, in particular. To further the objective of digital access for all, it was also important to guarantee that quality products were on offer in an open internet. The Commission must tackle this subject decisively and launch a dialogue at the highest political level so as to move forward transparently towards increased legal clarity and certainty.

The PRESIDENT thanked the Commission Members for this enthusiastic and lively debate. He noted that the Commission agreed that measures must be taken to remove barriers to the creation of a genuine single market in telecommunications

and to release the potential of this market for the benefit of five hundred million Europeans. He noted the Commission's overall support for the package presented by Ms KROES and remarked on the balance that had been achieved between ambition and realism, without neglecting the issue of the timetable for adoption.

With regard to net neutrality, he stressed the 'cost of inaction' and said that a very large majority of Commission Members wanted the Commission to use its right of initiative, demonstrate political will and define the main points of the public debate. In this connection, he mentioned the close monitoring of the legislative process and invited Ms KROES to inform the Commission regularly of its progress and provide the Members with sound arguments with a view to ensuring a good communication strategy.

He suggested explaining the measures proposed by the Commission as regards net neutrality more clearly in the general communication and highlighting the reasons why action was necessary at European level to avoid the risk of fragmentation.

At the end of this debate, the Commission, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, agreed that the general communication, the proposal for a Regulation and the Commission Recommendation set out in COM(2013) 634/3, COM(2013) 627/3 and C(2013) 5761/2 (items 7, 8 and 9 of these minutes, respectively) would be formally adopted by finalisation written procedure, the time limit for which was set at 18.00 hours on Wednesday 11 September (PE/2013/6092, PE/2013/6009 and PE/2013/5991, respectively).

10. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

10.1. OUTCOME OF THE G20 SUMMIT (SAINT PETERSBURG, 5 AND 6 SEPTEMBER) (INFO(2013) 79)

The PRESIDENT reported on the main results of the G20 summit held in Saint Petersburg on 5 and 6 September; a briefing note on this subject had

also been circulated that day. Discussions at the summit had focused mainly on the situation in Syria. This was in fact the first time that the G20 leaders had discussed foreign policy issues, although, as was to be expected, the debate had not succeeded in lessening divisions or led to any joint conclusions.

He outlined the positions that had been taken at the meeting: the United States and its allies had called for military intervention, while the group of new emerging powers, led by Brazil, India and China, had joined with others in calling for prudence and for a vote in the UN Security Council to provide a mandate for any intervention.

Nevertheless, on the sidelines of the summit, a small group of G20 leaders, including himself, had agreed on a number of priority measures to be taken in response to the humanitarian emergency in Syria and neighbouring countries. Lastly, he mentioned the statement on Syria signed by the United States and ten other G20 members calling for a strong reaction to the violation of international law, without specifically addressing the question of military intervention.

The PRESIDENT went through the other items on the agenda of the G20 summit, starting with discussions on the economy. These talks had been constructive and he hoped they would inspire confidence in the global recovery that was beginning to emerge, albeit at different rates in different countries. He noted that growth was forecast to increase in certain industrialised economies, but was faltering in some emerging countries; this slowdown was causing concern for their partners in the G20 against a background of unease about the solidity of their financial sectors.

He was pleased to report that not only had the euro area not been the centre of attention in the economic discussions, as had been the case several times in recent years, but the G20 members had even praised the progress it had made, while encouraging it to stick to the path of reform, particularly as regards banking union, and to speed up its work on assessing the quality of balance

sheets, stress tests, bank balance sheet repair and the single resolution mechanism.

He then turned to fiscal policy, where the G20 had agreed on a new approach which sought to combine support for demand, where feasible, and continued sustainable fiscal adjustment.

Following a major discussion on the repercussions of the quantitative easing programme implemented by the Federal Reserve, the G20 members had called for coordination in order to manage the impact of domestic policies on the economies of other countries.

The PRESIDENT then highlighted a major breakthrough achieved at the summit – an agreement on tax transparency. The most significant progress was that the members of the G20 had agreed to start automatically exchanging information on tax matters by the end of 2015. He was pleased that, for the first time, a deadline had been specifically mentioned in this context.

On the question of financial regulation, he noted that the G20 had agreed on a new line in favour of pursuing the reform of financial markets and on a roadmap for regulating the shadow banking system, accompanied by clearly defined measures and timetables.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT touched on the trade aspects of the discussions at the G20 meeting, noting with satisfaction that the results were very much in line with the positions supported by the European Union, particularly in the run-up to the ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation from 3 to 6 December in Bali.

He concluded by pointing out that measures to combat unemployment, in particular long-term and youth unemployment, were still a major international concern.

The Commission took note of these observations and of the PRESIDENT's briefing note in INFO(2013) 79.

10.2. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN FOREIGN POLICY – SYRIA

Baroness ASHTON briefed the Members of the Commission on the latest developments concerning Syria and in particular the recent intensification of international diplomatic and political initiatives following the use of chemical weapons against civilians near Damascus on 21 August.

Referring to the positions of the various players involved in managing this crisis, including the United States and Russia, she began by expressing satisfaction at the common position that had emerged at the informal Gymnich meeting of foreign ministers held in Vilnius on 7 September, on which a statement had been made the same day. Pending the results of the preliminary report by UN investigators on the chemical weapons attack, she explained the content of this position, which was to insist on the need for a response to this unacceptable act, to back initiatives aimed at seeking a political solution to the Syrian crisis through the UN, and to provide EU support for all the efforts being made to that end, including humanitarian aid, the need for which was increasingly urgent.

She then discussed the follow-up to the proposal by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, on 9 September that Syria place its stock of chemical weapons under international control for decommissioning. She stressed that any agreement on this initiative would require a great deal of work in order to ensure that implementing it was politically and technically feasible. In this context she called on the international community to build on the current momentum to relaunch a process that would lead rapidly to a second Geneva peace conference on Syria, as proposed by the United States and Russia.

Baroness ASHTON ended her presentation by thanking Mr FÜLE, Ms GEORGIEVA and Mr BARNIER for their contributions to the discussions at the informal meeting in Vilnius.

Ms GEORGIEVA took the floor to stress the importance of encouraging the international community to step up its firm commitment to fund the

humanitarian aid that was desperately needed by the two million Syrian refugees and their host countries. She called for the European Union to take action on this, although she was well aware of the political and budgetary constraints.

Winding up the discussion, the PRESIDENT said that he had raised this matter with EU leaders and the main G20 donors on the margins of the Saint Petersburg summit on 5 and 6 September. He thanked Baroness ASHTON for her work on this difficult issue and was pleased to note that the European Union had adopted a common position on Syria which gave it real diplomatic influence.

The Commission took note of this information.

*

* *

The meeting closed at 15.22.