



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2014) 2078 final

- English language version of the French text which is authentic -

Brussels, 19 March 2014

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2078th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill building)

on Tuesday 11 March 2014

(afternoon)

PV(2014) 2078 final

- English language version of the French text which is authentic -

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Single sitting: Tuesday 11 March 2014 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.09 with Mr BARROSO, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr BARROSO	President	
Ms REDING	Vice-President	
Mr ALMUNIA	Vice-President	
Ms KROES	Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Mr POTOČNIK	Member	
Mr PIEBALGS	Member	
Mr DE GUCHT	Member	
Mr LEWANDOWSKI	Member	
Ms DAMANAKI	Member	Item 14 (in part)
Ms GEORGIEVA	Member	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Ms HEDEGAARD	Member	
Mr FÜLE	Member	
Mr ANDOR	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr CIOLOŞ	Member	
Mr BORG	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	

Absent:

Baroness ASHTON	High Representative/ Vice-President
Mr KALLAS	Vice-President
Mr TAJANI	Vice-President
Mr REHN	Vice-President
Mr BARNIER	Member
Ms VASSILIOU	Member
Mr ŠEMETA	Member
Ms GEOGHEGAN-QUINN	Member
Mr OETTINGER	Member

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

Ms CASTAGNOLI	Adviser in Baroness ASHTON's Office
Ms BENINI	A member of Mr TAJANI's staff
Mr RIEKELES	A member of Mr BARNIER's staff
Mr SEVERIS	A member of Ms VASSILIOU's staff
Mr BAUDRU	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr ŠEMETA
Mr HARMON	A member of Ms GEOGHEGAN - QUINN's staff

The following also sat in:

Mr LAITENBERGER	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Commission Spokeswoman
Ms BENÍTEZ SALAS	Bureau of European Policy Advisers
Mr SOBRAL	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office
Mr KLAUS	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2014) 2078/FINAL; SEC(2014) 187/2)

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(2014) 2078)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 10 March.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF 2077TH MEETING
(5 MARCH)**

(PV(2014) 2077; PV(2014) 2077, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2077th meeting.

4. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

STATE AID – INDIVIDUAL CASES

(SEC(2014) 206/2)

The Commission adopted the decisions in SEC(2014) 206/2.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2014) 188 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 3 and 7 March.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2014) 189 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 3 and 7 March.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2014) 190 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 3 and 7 March, as archived in e-Greffe.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2014) 191 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 10 and 14 March and of the 'finalisation' written procedure initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on Monday 10 March.

5.5. AD HOC EMPOWERMENT FOR SIGNING, ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION, ITSELF ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN STABILITY MECHANISM, AN AMENDMENT TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CYPRUS (C(2014) 1499)

The Commission decided to empower Mr REHN, Member of the Commission responsible for economic and monetary affairs and the euro, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, to sign on its behalf and under its responsibility, after approval by the Board of Governors of the European Stability Mechanism, the limited-scope revisions to the Memorandum of Understanding setting the detailed economic policy conditions attached to the financial assistance to Cyprus, as set out in C(2014) 1499.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2014) 192/2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (PERS(2014) 44/2)

6.1. DG HEALTH AND CONSUMERS – LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE AD14 POST OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY (PERS(2013) 151 TO /4)

The Commission noted the procedure followed, as set out in point 1 of PERS(2014) 44/2, and, on a proposal from Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr BORG, decided:

- to approve the alphabetical list of four candidates laid before it in point 1 of PERS(2014) 44/2 for the post of Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority in Parma;
- to take note of the assessment carried out by the Commission departments of the declarations of interest made by the four pre-selected candidates and set out in the annex to PERS(2013) 151/4;
- to ask Mr BORG to communicate this decision, and the assessment carried out by the Commission departments of the declarations of interest made by the four candidates to the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6.2. EUROSTAT – APPOINTMENT OF TWO DIRECTORS, INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL (AT GRADE AD14/15) AS WELL AS EXTERNAL (AT GRADE AD14 – EU/28) PUBLICATION OF THE VACANCY NOTICES FOR A POST OF DIRECTOR, AND INTERNAL PUBLICATION AT GRADE AD14/15 OF TWO DIRECTOR POSTS (PERS(2014) 47; PERS(2014) 48; PERS(2014) 49)

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

- to fill the post of Director of the ‘Sectoral and regional statistics’ Directorate in Eurostat, by transferring in the interest of the service pursuant to Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Marcel JORTAY, an AD15 official and currently Director of the ‘Infrastructure Services Provisions’ Directorate in the Informatics Directorate-General, with effect from 1 July 2014;

- to fill the post of Director of the ‘Government finance statistics (GFS) and quality’ Directorate in Eurostat, by transferring in the interest of the service pursuant to Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Eduardo BARREDO CAPELOT, an AD14 official and currently Director of the ‘Social statistics’ Directorate also in Eurostat, with effect from 1 July 2014;
- to authorise the internal and interinstitutional (at grade AD14/15) and external (at grade AD14 – EU/28) publication under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and (2) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notices in PERS(2014) 47 for the post of Director of the ‘Methodology; corporate statistical and IT services’ Directorate in Eurostat;
- to authorise the internal publication (at grade AD14/15) under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations, of the vacancy notices in PERS(2014) 48 and PERS(2014) 49 for the posts of Director of the ‘National accounts, prices and key indicators’ Directorate and Director of the ‘Social statistics’ Directorate in Eurostat.

Unless otherwise stated, these decisions would take effect immediately.

**7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – A NEW EU FRAMEWORK TO STRENGTHEN THE RULE OF LAW
(COM(2014) 158 TO /4; RCC(2014) 27)**

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2014) 158/4 for transmission to the European Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the

national parliaments.

**8. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – THE EU JUSTICE AGENDA FOR 2020 – STRENGTHENING TRUST, MOBILITY AND GROWTH WITHIN THE UNION
(COM(2014) 144 AND /2; RCC(2014) 27)**

The Commission approved the Communication in COM(2014) 144/2 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments.

**9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – AN OPEN AND SECURE EUROPE: MAKING IT HAPPEN
(COM(2014) 154 AND /2; SWD(2014) 63 AND /2; RCC(2014) 27)**

The Commission approved the Communication in COM(2014) 154/2 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments.

It also took note of the staff working document distributed as SWD(2014) 63/2.

10. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF CUSTOMS DUTIES ON GOODS ORIGINATING IN UKRAINE (COM(2014) 166)

The Commission adopted the proposal for a Regulation set out in COM(2014) 166 for transmission to Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the national parliaments.

11. COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) .../... OF 11 MARCH 2014 SUPPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 1306/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL WITH REGARD TO THE INTEGRATED ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL SYSTEM, AND CONDITIONS FOR REFUSAL OR WITHDRAWAL OF PAYMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES APPLICABLE TO DIRECT PAYMENTS, RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT AND CROSS COMPLIANCE (C(2014) 1459 AND /2; RCC(2014) 25)

12. COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) .../... OF 11 MARCH 2014 SUPPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 1305/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON SUPPORT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT BY THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (EAFRD) AND INTRODUCING

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

(C(2014) 1460 AND /2; RCC(2014) 25)

13. COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) .../... OF 11 MARCH 2014 SUPPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 1307/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING RULES FOR DIRECT PAYMENTS TO FARMERS UNDER SUPPORT SCHEMES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND AMENDING ANNEX X TO THAT REGULATION

(C(2014) 1476 TO /3; RCC(2014) 25)

The Commission adopted the delegated regulations in C(2014) 1459/2, C(2014) 1460/2 and C(2014) 1476/3, respectively, for transmission to Parliament and the Council.

14. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2014) 24)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 7 March (RCC(2014) 24).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

14.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Ordinary legislative procedure

(point 1.2 of the IRG record)

Dossiers at Parliament first reading

- Deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure (Directive) – FIDANZA report – 2013/0012 (COD)

The Commission held over approval of a line concerning this dossier.

- Deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall (Decision) – DE BACKER report – 2013/0166 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 127 .

- Uniform rules and a uniform procedure for the resolution of credit institutions and certain investment firms in the framework of a Single Resolution Mechanism and a Single Bank Resolution Fund and amendment of Regulation (EU) 1093/2010 (Regulation) – FERREIRA report – 2013/0253 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 120.

- Comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features (Directive) – KLUTE report – 2013/0139 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 122/3.

- Amendment of Regulation (EU) 525/2013 as regards the technical implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Regulation) – URUTCHEV report – 2013/0377 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 118/2.

- Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) 577/98 on the organisation of a labour force sample survey in the Community (Regulation) – ŽDANOKA report – 2013/0084 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 115/2.

ii) Preparation of Parliament's March part-session

(point 1.3 of the IRG record)

Ordinary legislative procedure – First reading

- Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 – Copernicus Programme and repeal of Regulation (EU) 911/2010 (Regulation) – PRODI report – 2013/0164 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 220 and took note of the compromise text in the annex thereto.

- Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 – Amendment of Regulation (EU) 912/2010 setting up the European GNSS Agency (Regulation) – SARTORI report – 2013/0022 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 221, further to note SI(2013) 622, which it had already approved on 27 November 2013.

- Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 – General provisions on the Asylum and Migration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management (Regulation) – FONTANA report – 2011/0367 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 222, further to note SI(2013) 681, which it had already approved on 18 December 2013.

- Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 – Establishment of the Asylum and Migration Fund (Regulation) – GUILLAUME report – 2011/0366 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 223, further to note SI(2013) 682, which it had already approved on 18 December 2013.

- Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 – Establishment, as part of the Internal Security Fund, of the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management (Regulation) – IACOLINO report – 2011/0368 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 224, further to note SI(2013) 653, which it had already approved on 10 December 2013.

- Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 – Establishment, as part of the Internal Security Fund, of the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa (Regulation) – MARINESCU report – 2011/0365 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 225, further to note SI(2013) 658, which it had already approved on 10 December 2013.

- Implementation of the Single European Sky (Regulation – recast) – MARINESCU report – 2013/0186 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 226, /3 and /4.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 216/2008 in the field of aerodromes, air traffic management and air navigation services (Regulation) – SASSOLI report – 2013/0187 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 227 and /2.

- Information accompanying transfers of funds (Regulation) – KLEVA KEKUŠ & KIRKHOPE report – 2013/0024 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 228 and /4.

- Prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing (Directive) – KARINŠ & SARGENTINI report – 2013/0025 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 229 and /2.

- Grant of an EU guarantee to the European Investment Bank against losses under financing operations supporting investment projects outside the Union (Decision) – KALFIN report – 2013/0152 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 230 and /2 and took note of the compromise text in the annex to SP(2014) 230.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 1365/2006 on statistics of goods transport by inland waterways as regards conferring of delegated and implementing powers upon the Commission for the adoption of certain measures (Regulation) – LICHTENBERGER report – 2013/0226 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 231.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 91/2003 on rail transport statistics, as regards the collection of data on goods, passengers and accidents (Regulation) – CRAMER report – 2013/0297 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 232.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 1166/2008 on farm structure surveys and the survey on agricultural production methods, as regards the financial framework for the period 2014-2018 (Regulation) – DE CASTRO report – 2013/0367 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 233.

- Provision and quality of statistics for the macroeconomic imbalances procedure (Regulation) – EPPINK report – 2013/0181 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 234, /2 and /3.

- Data protection package – Protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and the free movement of such data (Directive) / Protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data (Regulation) – DROUTSAS / ALBRECHT reports – 2012/0010 (COD) / 2012/0011 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 235 and /4.

- Package travel and assisted travel arrangements, amendment of Regulation (EC) 2006/2004 and Directive 2011/83/EU and repeal of Council Directive 90/314/EEC (Directive) – MAYER report – 2013/0246 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 236 and /3.

- Amendment of Regulation (EC) 471/2009 on Community statistics relating to external trade with non-member countries as regards conferring of delegated and implementing powers upon the Commission for the adoption of certain measures (Regulation) – MOREIRA report – 2013/0279 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 237.

- Measures to ensure a high common level of network and information security across the Union (Directive) – SCHWAB report – 2013/0027 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 238 and /2.

- Adjustment, with effect from 1 July 2011, of the remuneration and pension of the officials and other servants of the European Union and the correction coefficients applied thereto (Regulation) / Adjustment, with effect from 1 July 2012, of the remuneration and pensions of the officials and other servants of the European Union and the correction coefficients applied thereto (Regulation) – ROTH-BEHRENDT reports – 2013/0438 (COD) / 2013/0439 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 202/2.

- Amendment of Directives 2003/71/EC and 2009/138/EC in respect of the powers of the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority and the European Securities and Markets Authority (Directive) – BALZ report – 2011/0006 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 240, further to notes SI(2013) 611 and /2, which it had already approved on 27 November 2013.

- 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 took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 241, further to note SI(2013) 612/2, which it had already approved on 27 November 2013.

- Periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers and repealing Directive 2009/40/EC (Regulation) – KUHN report – 2012/0184 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 242, further to note SI(2013) 689/2, which it had already approved on 18 December 2013.

- Council Directive 1999/37/EC on the registration documents for vehicles (Directive) – SAVISAAR-TOOMAST report – 2012/0185 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 243, further to note SI(2013) 689/2, which it had already approved on 18 December 2013.

- Technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles circulating in the Union and repeal of Directive 2000/30/EC (Regulation) – SEHNALOVÁ report – 2012/0186 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 244, further to note SI(2013) 689/2, which it had already approved on 18 December 2013.

- Electronic invoicing in public procurement (Directive) – COLLIN-LANGEN report – 2013/0213 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 245, further to note SI(2014) 18/2, which it had already approved on 22 January 2014.

- Trade arrangements applicable to certain goods resulting from the processing of agricultural products (Regulation) – DE CASTRO report – 2013/0063 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 246, further to note SI(2013) 617, which it had already approved on 27 November 2013.

- Harmonisation of the laws of Member States relating to the making available on the market of radio equipment (Directive) – WEILER report – 2012/0283 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 247, further to the line it had approved on 14 January, in accordance with item 6.1.i) of the minutes in PV(2014) 2071 final.

- Fluorinated greenhouse gases (Regulation) – EICKHOUT report – 2012/0305 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 248, further to note SI(2013) 614/2, which it had already approved on 27 November 2013.

- Measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers (Directive) – BAUER report – 2013/0124 (COD)

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 249, further to note SI(2013) 688, which it had already approved on 18 December 2013.

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

The Commission took note of the compromise text in SP(2014) 250, further to note SI(2013) 676/2, which it had already approved on 10 December 2013.

- Production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material (Regulation) – SILVESTRIS report – 2013/0137 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2014) 252 and /2.

Ordinary legislative procedure – 2nd reading – Empowerment

- Procedures for applying the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Serbia, of the other part, and for applying the Interim Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Republic of Serbia, of the other part (Regulation) – WINKLER report – 2011/0465 (COD)

Under Article 13 of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission empowered Mr FÜLE, 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 communication

COM(2014) 58 final as approved by the Commission on 31 January, 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.

14.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2014) 131)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2014) 131 on the Council meetings between 20 March and 2 April.

iv) Outcome of the extraordinary meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the European Union on Ukraine (Brussels, 6 March 2014)

(SI(2014) 126)

Before presenting the outcome of the extraordinary meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the European Union on Ukraine held on 6 March, the PRESIDENT briefly summarised the situation in the country, one week after the Commission had adopted, on 5 March, a package of assistance measures for Ukraine amounting to some 11 billion euros. He regretted that there did not appear to be a political solution to bring the current crisis to an end. Indeed, the announcement of a referendum on Crimea becoming part of Russia, to be held on Sunday and in breach of the Ukrainian constitution and international law, was only serving to stoke tensions between the opposing camps.

Moving on to the extraordinary meeting proper, he stressed that part of the meeting had been attended by the interim Ukrainian Prime Minister, Arseniy

Yatseniuk, whom the Heads of State or Government felt to be a moderate and reasonable politician who firmly defended his country's interests. Before the plenary meeting, the PRESIDENT had met Mr Yatseniuk with Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and Baroness ASHTON, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. That conversation had been intended to welcome his measured reaction to current events and to encourage him to maintain this attitude, but also to prompt him to form a government of national unity and to reach out to the Ukrainian population as a whole.

The PRESIDENT welcomed the two important decisions taken by the Heads of State or Government of the Union at the extraordinary meeting. The first decision laid down a graduated strategy on sanctions against Russia in three stages: (i) the suspension of the bilateral talks on visas, of the discussion on a new agreement and of the preparations for the G8 summit in Sochi in June, (ii) if the first stage did not produce any results, a new series of measures ranging from bans on travel to Union territory, through asset freezes, to the cancellation of the summit between the European Union and the Russian Federation, and (iii), where necessary, if the situation continued to deteriorate, stricter sanctions, in particular economic sanctions. He stressed that it was for the Member States to decide on moving from one stage to the next.

The second important political decision related to the signing of the political chapters of the association agreement with Ukraine before the elections on 25 May in order to seal this important part of the bilateral relationship; the decision reserved the signing of the chapters on the free trade area until the period after the elections.

The PRESIDENT then reported on the ongoing political contacts and discussions, in particular to implement the assistance measures presented by the Commission less than a week ago, the rapidity and contents of this initiative having been welcomed by the Heads of State or Government of the Union. He was happy to see that the first of these proposals (see item 10 of these minutes) had been adopted that day. He called on Mr DE GUCHT to present the salient points.

In this context he also referred to the state of play in the discussions on the second package of macro-financial assistance measures of one billion euros that Mr REHN should be in a position to table for adoption at next week's Commission meeting, not to mention the new budgetary support programme ('State Building Contract') for 300 million euros that Mr FÜLE was finalising and would soon present to the Ukrainian authorities.

The PRESIDENT concluded his comments by highlighting the complexity of the current situation, its political and military implications, and the continuing potential for conflict, even though both sides appeared for the time being to have dismissed the idea of provoking a direct confrontation. He appealed for the Commission to be firm but also cautious in its handling of this crisis, while encouraging it to play a full role in the efforts undertaken to stabilise the situation and promote a political settlement in Ukraine.

Mr FÜLE expressed his full support for all the measures proposed by Mr DE GUCHT that day, which would lead to major savings for Ukrainian importers, especially in the industrial and agricultural products sectors. He then turned to the initial findings of an evaluation mission carried out by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which confirmed the deterioration of the macro-economic situation in Ukraine during the last quarter of 2013, a trend

that had continued in the first quarter of 2014. Estimates put Ukraine's total financing needs at between five and ten billion dollars over the next three to four months. The conclusions of this evaluation, to which a Commission mission to Kiev was contributing, were expected the following week, so that it should be possible to put forward shortly a proposal to phase in the second tranche of micro-financial assistance amounting to one billion euros for the current year.

Mr FÜLE said that the international platform of donors to Ukraine should be established in the course of the month. He insisted that the Ukrainian Government should be encouraged to assume a general coordination role so that it could take ownership of this assistance process.

As regards other action already taken by the Commission in support of Ukraine, he referred to a number of exceptional measures agreed internally in order to speed up payments under existing programmes and to prepare a new programme ('State Building Contract'). He also raised the possibility of examining, in agreement with Mr ŠEMETA, how the European Union could help Ukraine step up its efforts to combat corruption and fraud, including possible support from the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) on the exchange of good practice.

Coming back to the conclusions of the extraordinary meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the Union of 6 March regarding Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, Mr FÜLE stressed his determination to do everything possible to ensure that the association agreements initialled in Vilnius in November 2013 were signed by the end of August 2014 at the latest. At the same time he stressed the importance of keeping both politicians and public

opinion in these countries well informed of all the issues at stake in these agreements.

Mr DE GUCHT welcomed the positive signal the European Union had sent Ukraine. He explained the unilateral trade measure being proposed by the Commission that day, which consisted of reducing or even eliminating customs duties on EU imports of products originating in Ukraine (see item 10 of these minutes). This important gesture would allow Ukraine to draw extensively and immediately on the benefits of the free trade area even before it had been signed and would save exporters nearly 500 million euros a year. Of this amount, nearly 400 million euros would be in the agricultural sector. The European Union would grant immediate and unlimited preferences for 82.2% of Ukrainian agricultural exports, while duty-free tariff quotas would be granted for other products such as cereals, pork, beef and poultry. The EU customs duties currently imposed on industrial goods imported from Ukraine would either be abolished immediately (for 94.7% of such goods) or reduced (for the remainder). Lastly, he noted that this unilateral system of trade preferences would apply up until 1 November 2014, as the deep and comprehensive free trade agreement should have been concluded by then.

For the measures proposed by the Commission to have the desired effect – i.e. to support the Ukrainian economy – as soon as possible, Mr DE GUCHT hoped that Parliament and the Council would approve them by emergency procedure so that the system could be in place by June. In Parliament's case this meant that the proposal for a Regulation would have to be approved at its next part-session in April, as this would be the last opportunity before the end of the current legislature. Although the legislative instrument itself did not pose a problem, the annexes, which ran to several thousand pages, had to be available in all the official languages of the Union in order to be adopted. This

was not yet the case. Finally, he raised another legal question which he felt should be examined from a political perspective, namely whether or not it was necessary to ask for a derogation from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for this proposal to grant tariff preferences to Ukraine outside a WTO agreement.

During the brief discussion which followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- the desire for the swift implementation of the proposal for a regulation tabled that day concerning the reduction or elimination of customs duties on goods originating in Ukraine, as a follow-up to the conclusions of the extraordinary meeting on 6 March and the proposals presented by the Commission on that occasion;
- similarly, support for the approach set out in that proposal as regards the different proportions applied in reducing or simply eliminating customs duties depending on the import sector; highlighting of the particular treatment reserved for agricultural products, a sector in which a number of tariff quotas would be applied in proportion to the scale and capacity of Ukraine's production capacity. This treatment would be maintained throughout the current year;
- the need to provide fuller information to Ukrainians on all aspects of the deep and comprehensive free trade agreement beyond purely political or economic matters; the need, in particular, to emphasise the importance of bringing national rules into line with certain European rules so that Ukrainian importers could take full advantage of the more favourable import conditions;

- the reiterated commitment to signing the agreements with Georgia and the Republic of Moldova by the end of August 2014, and the possibility of bringing this deadline forward if the conditions were right; the need to ensure fuller appropriation by Georgian and Moldovan politicians and public opinion on all aspects of these agreements; the proposal to extend the work already under way to this end in the agricultural sector to other key political areas; the desirability of supporting, at the same time, the implementation of certain supplementary programmes in these two countries and ensuring the visibility of their results;
- with regard to the EU's relations with Russia, questions concerning the approach to be adopted for the participation of Commission Members and representatives at a number of meetings, including meetings at ministerial level, already scheduled with Russia in the coming weeks.

On this last point, the PRESIDENT reminded the meeting, firstly, of the position very clearly expressed by the extraordinary meeting on the proposed strategy of gradually introducing sanctions against Russia. As regards participation by Commission Members at meetings with Russian partners, he had asked his cabinet to set up a task force which, with the Secretariat-General and the European External Action Service (EEAS), would coordinate the authorisation of any participation about which questions might be raised. He drew a distinction between meetings of a technical nature, which could if necessary still be held, and meetings on sensitive issues, which might be exploited by Russia. Concerning the latter, he asked the Commission Members to use their political judgement. He stressed that at this stage, in line with the recommendations of the extraordinary meeting, meetings to do with the economic dialogue with Russia should still be held, including the dialogue

on the consequences for Russia of the conclusion of association agreement between European Union and Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.

The PRESIDENT wound up the discussion by pointing out that, if the agreement proposed to Ukraine were concluded in two phases, in line with a formula being worked out by the Commission's Legal Service, this would reflect the Commission's wish to send an immediate signal to the Ukrainian people to demonstrate its support and encouragement in the country's current difficulties. He was proud of the speed and scope of the Commission's contribution to calming down a situation that remained very worrying.

The Commission took note of this information.

v) Preparation for the Council meeting (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy – Transport session) (Brussels, 14 March)

(point 2.3.4 of the IRG record)

- Establishment of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking (Council Regulation) – ANDRÉS BAREA report – 2013/0445 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 130.

14.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

vi) Preparation of Parliament's March part-session

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

Non-legislative dossiers

- Oral question O-000005/2014 – European Business Centres in Asia

The Commission took note of document SP(2014) 254/2.

- Enquiry report on the role and operations of the Troika (ECB, Commission and IMF) with regard to the euro area programme countries
- KARAS & HOANG NGOC report – 2013/2277 (INI)

The Commission took note of the information in SP(2014) 259 and /3.

- Employment and social aspects of the role and operations of the Troika (ECB, Commission and IMF) with regard to euro area programme countries – CERCAS report – 2014/2007 (INI)

The Commission took note of the information in SP(2014) 261 and /2.

vii) Action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its December part-session

(point 3.5.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved, for transmission to Parliament, documents SP(2014) 260 and /2 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its December part-session.

viii) Participation of Members of Parliament in international conferences

(SP(2014) 279 and /2)

- 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 10-21 March)

The Commission agreed to the request to the PRESIDENT from Mr Martin Schulz, President of Parliament, concerning the attendance of two Members of the European Parliament at the above-mentioned meeting as observers in the EU delegation, with a reminder about the procedure to be followed.

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

- ix) Relations with the European Economic and Social Committee –
Programming of work for 2014 – List of optional opinions**
(point 4.4 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the line set out in SC(2014) 9 and /2 and decided to send the list annexed to that document to the European Economic and Social Committee.

14.5. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- x) Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on an agreement between the European Union and Myanmar/Burma on investment protection**
(point 5.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2014) 116.

14.6. MISCELLANEOUS

The PRESIDENT warmly thanked Mr BORG for agreeing at very short notice to stand in that same morning, at a debate in Parliament, for another Member of the Commission who was unable to take part due to an engagement that had been announced late. He took the opportunity of reminding all the Members of the Commission of the need to arrange in good time, where necessary, for someone to stand in for them at the Parliamentary debates where they were expected and to attend the meetings of the Commission, both in Brussels and Strasbourg, in order to ensure the quorum

required to adopt decisions.

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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 13.54.