



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2015) 2136 final

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

Strasbourg, 8 September 2015

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2136th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 22 July 2015

(morning)

PV(2015) 2136 final

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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Attendance list	4-6
1. AGENDAS (OJ(2015) 2136/FINAL; SEC(2015) 326/2).....	8
2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET (RCC(2015) 2136).....	8
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 2135 TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (15 JULY 2015) (PV(2015) 2135 AND /2; PV(2015) 2135, PART II AND /2)	8
4. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW	9
<i>INFRINGEMENTS – INDIVIDUAL CASE</i>	<i>9</i>
5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS.....	10
<i>5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2015) 327 ET SEQ.)</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>5.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2015) 328 ET SEQ.)</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2015) 329 ET SEQ.).....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES (SEC(2015) 330 AND /2)</i>	<i>10</i>
6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2015) 331).....	11
<i>6.1. DG ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS – APPOINTMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMISSION IN THE STEERING BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>6.2. DG ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS – APPOINTMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMISSION IN THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT ADVISORY HUB</i>	<i>12</i>

6.3.	<i>DG MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS – LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE AD14 POST OF DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION (EMCDDA) (PERS(2015) 20 TO /4)</i>	12
7.	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – WORKING TOGETHER FOR JOBS AND GROWTH: THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PROMOTIONAL BANKS (NPBS) IN SUPPORTING THE INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE (COM(2015) 361 TO /3; RCC(2015) 62).....	13
8.	OTHER BUSINESS.....	14
8.1.	<i>ORGANISATION OF THE COMMISSION'S STAND-BY ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUMMER 2015 (SEC(2015) 346/3)</i>	14
8.2.	<i>ECONOMIC SITUATION IN GREECE</i>	15
8.3.	<i>PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION AMENDING REGULATION (EC) 866/2004 ON A REGIME UNDER ARTICLE 2 OF PROTOCOL 10 TO THE ACT OF ACCESSION AS REGARDS GOODS COVERED BY QUALITY SCHEMES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND FOODSTUFFS – GREEN LINE REGULATION – REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS (COM(2015) 380 AND /2)</i>	16
9.	INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (RCC(2015) 63)	17
9.1.	<i>HORIZONTAL ITEM</i>	17
9.2.	<i>RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL</i>	18
9.3.	<i>RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT</i>	24
9.4.	<i>RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN AND NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS</i>	25
10.	RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES.....	26

Single sitting: Wednesday 22 July 2015 (morning)

The sitting opened at 10.19 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	First Vice-President	
Ms MOGHERINI	High Representative / Vice-President	
Ms GEORGIEVA	Vice-President	
Mr ANSIP	Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Vice-President	
Mr KATAINEN	Vice-President	
Mr OETTINGER	Member	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	
Ms THYSSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Lord HILL	Member	
Ms BULC	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	
Ms CREȚU	Member	
Ms VESTAGER	Member	
Mr MOEDAS	Member	

Absent:

Mr VELLA

Member

Ms BIENKOWSKA

Member

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

Mr COSTELLO	Chef de cabinet to Mr VELLA
Mr HUSAK	Chef de cabinet to Ms BIENKOWSKA

The following also sat in:

Mr SELMAYR	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Mr PESONEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr SCHINAS	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms METTLER	Head of the European Political Strategy Centre	
Mr THOLONIAT	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Ms DEJMEK-HACK	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Mr BALTAZAR	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	
Mr SZOSTAK	A member of the PRESIDENT's staff	Item 10
Mr RENTSCHLER	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI	Items 8 (in part) to 10
Ms ÅSENIUS	Chef de cabinet to Ms MALMSTRÖM	Items 8 (in part) to 10
Mr DE MENDOZA ASENSI	A member of Mr ARIAS CAÑETE's staff	Items 8 (in part) to 10
Ms SCHMITT	Chef de cabinet to Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Items 1 to 9
Mr BAILLY	Chef de cabinet to Mr MOSCOVICI	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service	
Mr DEMARTY	Director-General, DG Trade	Items 8 (in part) to 10
Mr ITALIANER	Director-General, DG Competition	

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

The PRESIDENT warmly thanked Ms Catherine DAY, who was about to retire, pointing out that this was the last of the 400 or so Commission meetings she had attended in her capacity as Secretary-General. Speaking on his own behalf and for the Commission as a whole, the PRESIDENT wished Ms DAY all the best for the new chapter of her life that she was beginning outside the Commission after 36 years' good and loyal service. He praised the excellence and dedication of her work throughout her brilliant career. On a personal note, the PRESIDENT thanked her for the valuable support she had provided to him and the whole of the current Commission when he took up office. She would be missed for her outstanding personal and professional qualities.

Ms DAY extended sincere thanks to the PRESIDENT and the other Commissioners for their tribute. Her long career serving the Commission had been an extraordinary experience. It was an institution she believed in profoundly and it had been a privilege to be able to contribute to its work. She wished the current Commission every success, in the knowledge that it had the support of a team of outstanding officials to work to achieve its political objectives. It had been a great satisfaction and a pleasure to be able to work with the new Commission during its first year in office. She added that she would continue to follow European affairs and that her years at the Commission would remain, for her, unforgettable ones.

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1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2015) 2136/FINAL; SEC(2015) 326/2)

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(2015) 2136)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 20 July.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE
2135TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (15 JULY 2015)**

(PV(2015) 2135 AND /2; PV(2015) 2135, PART II AND /2)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2135th meeting.

4. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

INFRINGEMENTS – INDIVIDUAL CASE

**Draft reasoned opinion of the Commission addressed to the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic under Article 259 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – Greek tax legislation
(C(2015) 5213)**

The Commission:

- adopted in principle the draft reasoned opinion in C(2015) 5213;
- empowered Mr MOSCOVICI, the Member of the Commission responsible for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr DOMBROVSKIS, on behalf of the Commission and under its responsibility, to formally adopt the reasoned opinion in the authentic languages (Bulgarian and Greek) as set out in C(2015) 5213;
- asked the departments to communicate the reasoned opinion adopted to the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2015) 327 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 13 and 17 July.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2015) 328 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 13 and 17 July.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2015) 329 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 13 and 17 July, as archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2015) 330 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 20 and 24 July.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2015) 331)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2015) 71)

6.1. DG ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS – APPOINTMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMISSION IN THE STEERING BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS

The Commission took note of the information in point 1 of PERS(2015) 71 and, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KATAINEN, and having consulted the Directorate General for Human Resources and Security, the Directorate General for the Budget, the Secretariat-General and the Legal Service, decided:

- to appoint for a period of three years, without prejudice to a subsequent decision of the Commission, Mr Maarten VERWEY, Mr Gerassimos THOMAS and Ms Irmfried SCHWIMANN as representatives of the Commission in the Steering Board of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI);
- to appoint for a period of three years, without prejudice to a subsequent decision of the Commission, Mr Benjamin ANGEL, Mr Nicolas MARTYN and Mr Robert-Jan SMITS as their respective alternates.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

6.2. DG ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS – APPOINTMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMISSION IN THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT ADVISORY HUB

The Commission took note of the information in point 2 of PERS(2015) 71 and, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and Mr KATAINEN, and having consulted the Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security, the Directorate-General for the Budget, the Secretariat-General and the Legal Service, decided:

- to appoint for a period of three years, without prejudice to a subsequent decision of the Commission, Mr Giorgio CHIARION-CASONI (Chairman) and Mr Stefan APPEL as representatives of the Commission in the Coordination Committee of the European Investment Advisory Hub;
- to appoint for a period of three years, without prejudice to a subsequent decision of the Commission, Mr Stéphane OUAKI and Ms Anna KRZYZANOWSKA as their respective alternates.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**6.3. DG MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS – LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE AD14 POST OF DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION (EMCDDA)
(PERS(2015) 20 TO /4)**

On a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr AVRAMOPOULOS and Mr TIMMERMANS, the Commission decided:

- to approve the list of three candidates, presented in alphabetical order, set out in point 3 of PERS(2015) 71, for the post of Director of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), and to consider this list as the Commission proposal;
- to ask Mr AVRAMOPOULOS, the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, to communicate this decision and the list of candidates to the Management Board of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – WORKING TOGETHER FOR JOBS AND GROWTH: THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PROMOTIONAL BANKS (NPBs) IN SUPPORTING THE INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE (COM(2015) 361 TO /3; RCC(2015) 62)

The Commission approved the communication in COM(2015) 361/3 for transmission to Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank and the national parliaments.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1. ORGANISATION OF THE COMMISSION'S STAND-BY ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUMMER 2015 (SEC(2015) 346/3)

At the PRESIDENT's request, the Secretary-General described the arrangements made to ensure that during the summer of 2015 the Commission could take valid decisions and comply with all its obligations. With regard to arrangements for the Members of the Commission, Ms JOUROVÁ and Ms BIENKOWSKA would be on stand-by duty until the end of July, and Ms MALMSTRÖM, Mr MIMICA, Mr ARIAS CAÑETE and Mr HOGAN, in turn, in August. She drew the Members' attention to note SEC(2015) 346/3, distributed under the authority of the PRESIDENT, which contained details of the cabinet members and the persons in charge in the Secretariat General and Spokesperson's Service who would be available in that period.

She told the meeting that the cabinet members on stand-by would meet regularly and that they had been informed of all the arrangements put in place to ensure that the Commission could exercise its decision-making and communication functions.

With regard to relations with the press, the Chief Spokesperson of the Commission, at the PRESIDENT's request, said that sufficient teams would be present in the Spokesperson's Service during the stand-by period. These teams would be in contact with the stand-by Members of the Commission and the midday press briefings would be continued. The Commission Members on stand-by would take part in the midday briefings on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Commission took note of this information and of the note distributed

under the authority of the PRESIDENT as SEC(2015) 346/3.

8.2. ECONOMIC SITUATION IN GREECE

The Commission discussed the developments in the economic situation in Greece since the previous Commission meeting on 15 July, and the arrangements made to ensure continuity of service during the end of July and in August.

On a proposal from the PRESIDENT, the Commission noted the recommendations made during the meeting by the Director-General of the Legal Service concerning certain decisions, necessary for the proper conduct and conclusion of the negotiations on the third financial assistance programme for Greece, which must or might be taken at the end of July or in August 2015 by written procedure pursuant to Article 12(5) of the Rules of Procedure.

On a proposal from the PRESIDENT, the Commission agreed that for other decisions that might also be necessary in this context – reservation of lenders' rights should Greece fall into arrears in payments to its creditors, or notification to the European Central Bank (ECB) if Greece repaid the whole of the EFSF loan –, an ad hoc empowerment would be granted to Mr MOSCOVICI, the Member of the Commission responsible for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and, if appropriate, Mr DOMBROVSKIS, for the period up to 31 August 2015. This empowerment would be formally adopted by the finalisation written procedure at 12.00 on 23 July 2015 (PE/2015/5263 – C(2015) 5289).

**8.3. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION AMENDING
REGULATION (EC) 866/2004 ON A REGIME UNDER ARTICLE 2 OF
PROTOCOL 10 TO THE ACT OF ACCESSION AS REGARDS GOODS
COVERED BY QUALITY SCHEMES FOR AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTS AND FOODSTUFFS – GREEN LINE REGULATION –
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
(COM(2015) 380 AND /2)**

The PRESIDENT reported to the Commission on his official visit to Cyprus the previous week, at which he had brought together the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr Mustafa Akinci. The aim of the meeting was to facilitate an agreement, among other matters, on the issue of registration of the cheese *Halloumi/Hellim* as a Protected Designation of Origin under EU law, which had long been a source of tension. He pointed out that the Cypriot authorities had requested this designation in 2014 and that this had led to protests by Turkish Cypriot producers, who were worried about the effects this measure would have on their exports.

He welcomed the agreement finally reached. In addition to its economic dimension, he stressed the highly symbolic implications of this compromise and confirmed the wish of both parties to cooperate with the Commission with a view to restoring relations of mutual trust.

In the brief discussion that ensued, the Commissioners highlighted the PRESIDENT's action in Cyprus and the agreement he had helped to bring about on this highly sensitive issue, and the contribution made to this achievement by the Commission teams and cabinet members involved. The Commissioners also referred to issues relating to implementation and, more generally, the consequences that this agreement might have on the political process of the reunification of Cyprus.

At the end of this discussion, the Commission:

- adopted in principle the proposal for a Council Regulation in COM(2015) 380/2;
- empowered Ms CREȚU, the Commissioner for regional policy, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, to formally adopt this proposal for a legislative act, on behalf of the Commission and under its responsibility, subject to, and on the date of, publication of the single document on registration, as a Protected Designation of Origin, of *Halloumi/Hellim* (CY-PDO-005-01243) in the *Official Journal of the European Union*, pursuant to Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

9. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2015) 63)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 17 July (RCC(2015) 63).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

9.1. HORIZONTAL ITEM

- i) Inter-Institutional Working Group on resources of decentralised agencies: state of play and contributions from the Commission to the next meeting**

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 295.

9.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

ii) Non-legislative dossiers

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled (Council Decision) – ANDERSSON report – 2013/0444 (NLE) / 2014/0297 (NLE).

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 297/3.

- Position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union, with regard to the draft Rules of Procedure at the Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) (Council Decision – 2015/0154 (NLE))

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 302.

iii) Preparations for Council meeting (Justice and Home Affairs) (Brussels, 20 July)

(point 4.2.2 of the IRG record)

- Provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece (relocation) (Council Decision) – KELLER report – 2015/0125 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 298 and /2.

iv) Results of Council meeting (Justice and Home Affairs) (Brussels, 20 July)

Mr TIMMERMANS reported on the results of the extraordinary meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 20 July on migration issues, more specifically the effective implementation of the EU Member States'

commitments concerning the relocation and resettlement of persons in clear need of international protection.

He considered that the results obtained, which envisaged the resettlement or relocation of a total of 54 760 persons as part of the European approach proposed by the Commission, could provide a good starting point and even represented, in some respects, a historic step forward. Nevertheless, he did not deny the scale of the challenges still faced. Although certain Member States had clearly demonstrated their support for the principle of European solidarity, others had been much more reluctant. In particular, he regretted that certain Member States sought to evade their responsibilities under the pretext of national policy considerations.

While the ambitious approach proposed by the Commission was a valid one, it was necessary to put all the aspects of the European Agenda on Migration into perspective. The objectives were: reinforced cooperation with the frontline Member States; the need to give more attention to the external dimension and underlying causes of migration; more effective management of the EU's borders; and better implementation of decisions to return migrants.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS returned more specifically to the results of the Council meeting in terms of the relocation of migrants arriving in Italy and Greece. While certain Member States (Germany, France and the Netherlands) had adhered to the distribution proposed by the Commission to achieve 40 000 places, as agreed at the European Council of 25 and 26 June, he regretted the low level of the undertakings made by other Member States (Spain and Poland) and the decision of two countries (Hungary and Austria) not to offer any places at all. There were therefore practical difficulties posed by the voluntary approach favoured by a majority of the Member States. However, he welcomed the willingness of the Luxembourg presidency to do everything possible to achieve the target of 40 000 persons by the end of the year. He pointed out that in any case the agreement already secured, which

involved most of the Member States and provided the impetus for the start of a genuinely European approach, was unprecedented, as was the general resettlement commitment confirmed for the Union (22 504 refugees in 2 years).

With regard to the other aspects of the European Agenda on Migration raised by Mr TIMMERMANS, he reviewed the main points addressed by the Council conclusions. The detailed proposals concerning reception and first reception facilities (hotspots) in the frontline Member States had been favourably received, and the first facility of this type was already operational in Sicily. The Member States had also given their agreement to the objective of enhancing the concept of safe country of origin, to broadening the activities of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) with regard to the return of irregular migrants, and to the guidelines for the administrative steps to be carried out by the frontline Member States, including fingerprinting.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS called for implementation of the relocation scheme to begin as quickly as possible, which in his view would help to restore a climate of confidence between the Member States. He welcomed the fact that the conclusions envisaged the immediate implementation of the resettlement scheme. He confirmed that the Commission would continue to support the most exposed Member States, Italy and Greece, but also Hungary, and the Member States which were participating in such schemes for the first time.

More broadly, he also called for general mobilisation of the Member States and hoped that some of them would be able to rid themselves of populist discourse. He felt that it was by encouraging convergence along these lines that the Commission would be able to continue to shoulder its responsibility to ensure both European cohesion and smooth cooperation with the EU's international partners.

To conclude, he drew attention to the substantial increase in the number of migrants arriving in the Member States located in the east of the Mediterranean basin in the first half of 2015, referring in particular to the desirability of strengthened dialogue in this regard with Turkey.

The PRESIDENT returned to the merits of the mandatory approach that the Commission had initially proposed; he regretted that the Member States had not wanted to commit to anything beyond a voluntary scheme. Although there had been some progress towards a European migration policy, he pointed out none the less that the contribution envisaged by the Union to resolving the current migration crisis was very modest. He praised the efforts of the Luxembourg Presidency and hoped that the European solidarity needed to reach the threshold of 40 000 relocation places, in particular, could materialise by the end of the year, and that the other aspects of the European Migration Agenda would continue to win the gradual support of the Member States.

For her part, Ms MOGHERINI observed that, although the target set for resettlement had been exceeded by the firm commitments by the Member States, the work still to be done on relocation reflected greater reluctance in terms of internal solidarity. She therefore took the view that the agreement that week could be no more than a first step towards a better allocation of joint responsibilities among the Member States.

She dwelled in particular on the direct impact of the decisions taken on the external dimension of migration policy, referring to a number of exchanges that had taken place at the Foreign Affairs Council, which was also held on 20 July. She proposed a number of avenues to be explored on the EU's readmission policy, including the possibility of a two-step approach, which could improve cooperation with third countries.

With regard to the main migration routes towards Europe, she noted the increased importance of the Balkans route and the change in the profile of

migrants who had been using that route in recent months - the majority now came from Syria or Afghanistan. Since the nationals of these countries were theoretically eligible for refugee status, she took the view that it was more important than ever to show European solidarity, as advocated by the Commission, all the more so since the tensions could increase in that region in coming months. Furthermore, she stressed the need for interplay between solidarity and responsibility, which every Member State had to show.

Lastly, in view of a number of forthcoming political deadlines, she called for good preparation and coordination, in particular in the run-up to the summit between the European Union and the African Union, which would be held in Malta in November, and a conference on the Western Balkans migration route which was to take place in the autumn.

In the course of the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- the need to put into perspective the still modest level of the contributions made by the EU to an unprecedented migration crisis, which today affected some 20 million refugees and persons in need of international protection in the immediate neighbourhood of the Union;
- the need to better anticipate possible displacements of populations and to better prepare the reception and integration of people fleeing deadly conflict zones;
- the reminder that migration policy was a major concern of European citizens, who were expecting a medium-term vision for tackling the root causes of migration on a sustainable basis; on this point, the suggestion to enhance practical cooperation with the African Union;
- the case for highlighting the global approach of the European Agenda on Migration proposed by the Commission; the advisability of improving

communication by specific examples of measures taken under each of its pillars, in particular (i) practical cooperation with third countries; (ii) expanding the role of the Frontex agency in supporting the Member States most exposed to migratory pressures, and (iii) effective implementation of return decisions and prosecution of people traffickers;

- the emphasis on equal solidarity with the EU regions currently on the front line, whether in the south or the east of the Mediterranean basin, on the Balkans route, or in the neighbourhood of Ukraine, with the displacement of populations provoked by the political instability in the east and south of the country, which had already resulted in the arrival of some 100 000 Ukrainian refugees in Poland; the case for taking account of the specific geographic and structural features of each Member State concerned and for designing appropriate support mechanisms;
- the advisability of taking into account the consequences, for both the Union and third countries, of increasing migratory pressure on the countries in the EU's immediate neighbourhood, in particular along the Balkan route; support for the avenues to be explored put forward by Ms MOGHERINI on the arrangements concerning the readmission agreements with third countries;
- a reminder of the need to stress, to the Finance Ministers of the Member States in particular, the need to provide the EU with financial resources commensurate with the expectations placed on it to respond to the concerns of European citizens; reference to a number of bottlenecks that have already been identified in relation to the 2016 financial year.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS replied to some of these comments by referring to the Balkan route in particular. He reiterated the need to strengthen cooperation with Turkey, while stressing the complexity of that migration corridor. He referred to a number of actions already taken which had enabled,

for example, the situation in Kosovo to be stabilised. He announced that the reception and first reception facilities for migrants in Greece would soon be operational. As for cooperation with Hungary, he noted that the preparation of the conference planned in Budapest was continuing and would address, in general, the questions linked to the Balkan route. He pointed out that the summit between the European Union and the African Union in Malta in November would address the latest developments in migration policy in general, including the Khartoum process.

He concluded by reaffirming his determination to continue working towards greater solidarity, which was the central pillar of the European Union and had to underpin the medium-term strategy that the EU needed in order to cope with the future challenges in this field. He thanked the PRESIDENT in particular for his support for the establishment of a genuine migration policy at European level.

The Commission took note of this information.

9.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

- v) Action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its April II part-session**
(point 5.6.2 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SP(2015) 461 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its April II part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

vi) Action taken on non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its May I part-session

(point 5.6.3 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SP(2015) 470 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its May I part-session, for transmission to Parliament.

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

vii) Relations with national parliaments

(point 6.1 of the IRG record)

- Statement of Mr Marco BUTI, Director-General of DG Economic and Financial Affairs, to the Irish Parliament's Joint Committee of Inquiry (Dublin, 10 September 2015)

The Commission authorised Mr Marco BUTI, Director-General of DG Economic and Financial Affairs, to make a statement to the Irish Parliament's Joint Committee of Inquiry, following the line set out in document SNP(2015) 37.

viii) Action taken on opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – February and March 2015 Plenary Sessions

(point 6.3.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SC(2015) 27 on the action taken by the Commission on the opinions adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee during the February and March 2015 sessions, for transmission to that Committee.

ix) Action taken on opinions of the Committee of the Regions – Sixty-third report – February 2015 plenary session
(point 6.4.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved the replies to the opinions adopted by the Committee of the Regions during the February 2015 plenary session, contained in the document distributed as SR(2015) 17/3, for transmission to the Committee of the Regions.

10. RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

STATE OF PLAY OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EU AND THE US (TTIP)

Ms MALMSTRÖM reported on progress in the negotiations between the European Union and the United States on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), given the likely intensification of talks over the coming weeks following the support for finalisation of the agreement expressed by G7 at its meeting on 7 and 8 June and the political support of Parliament, which voted for the resolution by a large majority.

While she touched on the persistent misgivings of public opinion with regard to the TTIP in certain Member States, she, nonetheless, took the view that reviewing the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism was likely to enhance citizens' perception of the future Transatlantic agreement.

She explained that all the points were up for discussion and could now be treated in parallel following the tenth round of talks. She held that progress needed to be made at this stage in particular on all the market access issues, which would require concessions by the European Union on tariff barriers in exchange for concessions by

the US authorities on opening up public procurement to European businesses.

She pointed to the progress made on financial services, which, although limited in scale, was tangible, and expected some tough talks on geographical indications. She also referred to the substantial progress made in the areas of health and plant health, on which a work programme was being drawn up in cooperation with the US government, and the advances in talks on cooperation in terms of regulations, for which the 'Better Regulation' package adopted by the Commission on 19 May was particularly useful.

Ms MALMSTRÖM emphasised the importance of the review of the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism towards a more transparent system, with, *inter alia*, preselected judges and the right of appeal. The latest blueprint was therefore far removed from private arbitration models.

Nonetheless, she was of the opinion that, in the longer term, thought should be given to establishing a multilateral mechanism for settling disputes between investors and States, in view of the increasing number of bilateral agreements signed by the Union. Although this was a long-term objective, she advocated a comprehensive and consistent change of approach with respect to mechanisms for settling trade disputes.

In the course of the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- the need to breathe new life into and to step up the talks on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, while securing, at the end, a fair and balanced agreement;
- the desirability of drawing up a roadmap with the US authorities in order to structure and plan negotiations more effectively;
- the importance of making progress in the talks on geographical indications,

given the perceived reluctance of the US on this key issue for a large number of Member States;

- the need to remove the even more numerous obstacles to access to the US market for the Union's businesses and, against that backdrop, the importance of Member States adopting a stronger stance within the Council in order to enable negotiations on an equal footing with the US;
- the steady progress made in the areas of health and plant health thanks to the drawing up of an action plan identifying all the issues giving rise to trade problems.

Ms MALMSTRÖM concluded the discussions by thanking the Members of the Commission for their exemplary cooperation in these sensitive and vital negotiations and by asking them to maintain their efforts in informing the general public of the benefits of the TTIP.

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 11.59.