



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2015) 2147 final

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

Brussels, 2 December 2015

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2147th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill building)

on Tuesday 24 November 2015

(afternoon)

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Single sitting: Tuesday 24 November 2015 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.12 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	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr OETTINGER	Member	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Mr HAHN	Member	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Ms MALMSTRÖM	Member	
Mr MIMICA	Member	
Mr ARIAS CAÑETE	Member	
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Member	
Ms THYSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	Items 1 to 9
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Lord HILL	Member	Items 1 to 9 (in part)
Ms BULC	Member	
Ms BIEŃKOWSKA	Member	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Member	

Ms CREȚU

Member

Ms VESTAGER

Member

Mr MOEDAS

Member

Absent:

Mr NAVRACSICS

Member

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

Mr BALLESTER	A member of Mr NAVRACSICS's staff
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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 MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms DEJMEK-HACK	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 9 (in part)
Ms SUTTON	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr TIMMERMANS	Items 9 and 10 (in part)
Ms WERNER	Chef de cabinet to Ms GEORGIEVA	Items 9 and 10
Mr KUCK	A member of Lord HILL's staff	Items 1 to 9 (in part)
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service	

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2015) 2147/FINAL; SEC(2015) 452/FINAL)

The Commission took note of that day's agenda and of the tentative agendas for forthcoming meetings. It also took note of the addition of item 6.5 (on an administrative decision) to that day's agenda.

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF CHEFS DE CABINET

(RCC(2015) 2147)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 23 November.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE 2145TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (11 NOVEMBER), AND THE MINUTES OF THE 2146TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (18 NOVEMBER)

(PV(2015) 2145; PV(2015) 2145, PART II)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2145th meeting, and decided to hold over for one week approval of the minutes of its 2146th meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (RCC(2015) 102)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 20 November (RCC(2015) 102).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. HORIZONTAL ITEM

- Council Regulation (EC) 920/2005 of 13 June 2005 amending Regulation No 1 (EEC and EAEC) of 15 April 1958 – Extension of the derogation concerning the Irish language

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 455.

4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Trilogue meetings

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Indices used as benchmarks in financial instruments and financial contracts (Regulation) – VAN NIEUWENHUYZEN report – 2013/0314 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 458.

- European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol) and repeal of Decisions 2009/371/JHA and 2005/681/JHA (Regulation) – DÍAZ DE MERA GARCÍA CONSUEGRA report – 2013/0091 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 464.

ii) European Parliament dossier – November II part-session

(point 3.2 of the IRG record)

Implementing Act

- *Objection pursuant to Rule 106 (implementing decision) – Granting an authorisation under REACH for uses of bis (2-ethylhexhyl) phthalate (DEHP)*

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2015) 722/2.

iii) Council dossiers

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing (Directive – recast) – WIKSTRÖM report – 2013/0081 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 461.

- Improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures (Directive) – REGNER & GABRIEL report– 2012/0299 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 468/2.

- Establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (Council Regulation) – MATTERA report – 2013/0255 (APP)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 467.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iv) Programming of Council business

(SI(2015) 473)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2015) 473 on the Council meetings between 26 November and 9 December.

v) Non-legislative dossiers

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and 11th Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (Paris, 30 November to 11 December) – Environment Council Conclusions (Brussels, 18 September)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 459.

- Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 460.

vi) Preparation of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council –

'Culture and sport' meeting (Brussels, 23 and 24 November)

(point 4.2.2 of the IRG record)

- Signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on the manipulation of sports competitions with regard to matters not related to substantive criminal law and judicial cooperation in criminal matters / Signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on the manipulation of sports competitions with regard to matters related to substantive criminal law

and judicial cooperation in criminal matters (Council Decisions) –
2015/0042 (NLE) / 2015/0043 (NLE)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2015) 475.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

vii) Non-legislative dossiers

(point 5.1 of the IRG record)

- Prevention of radicalisation and recruitment of European citizens by terrorist organisations – DATI report – 2015/2063 (INI)

The Commission took note of the line set out in SP(2015) 702 and /2.

- Tax rulings and other measures similar in nature or effect – FERREIRA & THEURER report – 2015/2066 (INI)

The Commission took note of the line set out in SP(2015) 703.

viii) Participation by Members of Parliament in international conferences

(point 5.7 of the IRG record)

- Tenth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (Nairobi, 15 to 18 December 2015)

The Commission agreed to the request to the PRESIDENT from Mr Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, concerning the attendance of ten 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, in accordance with SP(2015) 697.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2015) 453 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 16 and 20 November.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2015) 454 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 16 and 20 November.

5.3. DELEGATION AND SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2015) 455 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 16 and 20 November, as archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2015) 456 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 23 and 27 November and of the finalisation written procedures initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on 23 November.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2015) 457 TO /3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2015) 110 TO /3)

6.1. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR

(PERS(2015) 54 TO /3)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the ‘Neighbourhood East’ Directorate in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement (PERS(2015) 54).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 2 and 29 October (PERS(2015) 54/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants’ qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr HAHN and also Ms MOGHERINI, it decided to appoint Mr Lawrence MEREDITH to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 December 2015.

6.2. DG NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15 DIRECTOR

(PERS(2015) 45 TO /6)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Head of the ‘Support Group for Ukraine’ in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement (PERS(2015) 45, /2 and /4).

The Commission took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 6 and 29 October (PERS(2015) 45/3, /5 and /6).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr HAHN and also Ms MOGHERINI, it decided to appoint Mr Peter WAGNER to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 December 2015.

**6.3. DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY – APPOINTMENT OF AD14/15
DIRECTOR
(PERS(2015) 25 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the 'Safety of the food chain' Directorate in DG Health and Food Safety (PERS(2015) 25).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 12 June and 17 September (PERS(2015) 25/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. It also considered their ability, efficiency and conduct in the service. On a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr ANDRIUKAITIS and also Mr KATAINEN, it decided to appoint Ms Sabine JUELICHER to the post.

This decision would take effect on a date to be determined.

**6.4. DG COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY
– LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE AD14 POST OF EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF THE JOINT UNDERTAKING ‘ELECTRONIC
COMPONENTS AND SYSTEMS FOR EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP’
(ECSEL)
(PERS(2015) 43 TO /4)**

The Commission, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr OETTINGER and also Mr ANSIP and Mr KATAINEN, decided:

- to approve the list consisting of a single candidate set out in point 1 of PERS(2015) 110/2 for the post of Executive Director of the Joint Undertaking 'Electronic Components and Systems for European Leadership' (ECSEL), and to consider this list as the Commission proposal;
- to instruct Mr OETTINGER, the Member of the Commission in charge of the Digital Economy and Society, to communicate this decision to the Steering Committee of the Joint Undertaking 'Electronic Components and Systems for European Leadership' (ECSEL).

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**6.5. DG EDUCATION AND CULTURE – AMENDMENT OF THE
ORGANISATION CHART AND APPOINTMENT OF AN AD15
PRINCIPAL ADVISER**

The Commission, on a proposal from Ms GEORGIEVA, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr NAVRACSICS and also Mr ANSIP, Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Mr KATAINEN, decided:

- to approve the creation of a temporary post of principal adviser in

DG Education and Culture, directly attached to the Director-General; this post would be abolished upon departure of the job holder;

- to fill this post by transferring in the interest of the service under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations Mr Tamas SZUCS, currently Head of the Commission Representation Office in Hungary.

These decisions would take effect on 1 December 2015.

7. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS CONCERNING THE MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO COMPLETE THE BANKING UNION

(COM(2015) 587 TO /4; RCC(2015) 101)

8. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING REGULATION (EU) 806/2014 IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A EUROPEAN DEPOSIT INSURANCE SCHEME

(COM(2015) 586 TO /3; RCC(2015) 101)

Lord Hill presented the Communication and the proposal for a regulation aimed at creating a European Deposit Insurance Scheme (EDIS), which was part of a wider range of measures recommended in the June 2015 Five Presidents' Report concerning the completion of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) (report by the Presidents of the Commission, the European Parliament, the Euro Summit, the Eurogroup and the European Central Bank). He pointed out that the *raison d'être* of the initiative was the protection of bank deposits made by European citizens and, more generally, the stability of the European banking system.

He explained that in addition to creating the EDIS, that day's proposals also provided for a series of measures aimed at reducing the risks faced by the banking system, thereby making it possible to put forward a solution that struck a balance between sharing and reducing risks.

In particular, he indicated that a series of robust safeguards were provided for to prevent the scheme being used unjustifiably and creating a 'moral hazard', in order to give incentives to national schemes to manage their potential risks prudently. He also stated that a national scheme would only be able to use the EDIS if it fully complied with relevant Union law.

He pointed out that a European system would make it possible in the long term to better protect the banks should there be a significant local crisis and that it formed part of the overall rationale of the European Supervision and Resolution systems, which this measure would complete.

More specifically he mentioned the case of savings banks, which are covered by the proposal for a regulation, since according to the text, banks whose operations are considered to be less risky would make a smaller contribution to the EDIS.

Lord Hill thanked the Members of the Commission for the excellent team work that had made it possible to draft these ambitious proposals, which would strengthen the banking sector and protect savers, and at the same time diminish the link between banks and sovereign debt.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS then highlighted the balance achieved between reducing and sharing the risks in the proposals aimed at creating the EDIS. He explained that the future European system would be developed on the basis of national deposit guarantee schemes in order to be fully operational from 2024 after a re-insurance phase of three years, followed by a co-insurance phase during which EDIS contributions would gradually increase. He added that, in this context, the banks considered to be the most at risk would make a greater contribution to the EDIS. He

also said that the Communication put the emphasis on the different methods of reducing the risks incurred by the banks without jeopardising the stability of the banking system.

Lastly he mentioned savings banks, whose specific features had been taken into account following broad consultation with the main stakeholders.

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

- the need to take account of the reduced risk taken by some players in the banking system, in particular savings banks;
- the important role of explanation and communication in allaying the concerns that the creation of a European Deposit Insurance Scheme could awaken in some areas of the banking system;
- the advantage of such an approach in terms of obtaining broad political support for the EDIS;
- the balanced nature of the proposals, which took account of the specific interests of different actors in the banking sector.

In closing the discussion the PRESIDENT highlighted the major significance of the proposals adopted that day. He reiterated the need to carry out explanatory work in order to promote the EDIS, which must be considered as one of the cornerstones of the banking union. He recommended that Members of the Commission remain circumspect in their communications concerning this issue in order to avoid feeding a debate that might reveal entrenched positions.

The Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2015) 587/4 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic

and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the national parliaments.

- adopted the proposal for a regulation in COM(2015) 586/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the national parliaments and, for information, to the Committee of the Regions.

9. COMMISSION DECISION ON THE COORDINATION OF THE ACTIONS OF THE UNION AND OF THE MEMBER STATES THROUGH A COORDINATION MECHANISM – THE REFUGEE FACILITY FOR TURKEY

(C(2015) 9500 TO /4; SEC(2015) 500; RCC(2015) 104)

Mr TIMMERMANS opened the discussion on the Union's proposal to create a refugee facility for Turkey by placing it in the context of the negotiations he had been conducting over recent weeks with the Turkish authorities, specifically in order to cooperate on finding solutions to the current migration crisis. These negotiations had already led to an ad referendum agreement between the EU and Turkey on a joint action plan to coordinate assistance for some two million Syrians currently under temporary protection on Turkish territory.

Beyond this priority issue, he explained that the purpose of the discussions between the EU and Turkey involved the nature and evolution of the bilateral relationship in the broad sense. He felt that the EU should demonstrate its political will to develop this relationship in the current context, in particular by revitalising the process of Turkey's accession to the EU. He noted that Turkey, for its part, wanted to be recognised as a leading regional player, while at the same time securing tangible results for its citizens, e.g. visa liberalisation, from its relations with the EU.

In any event, Mr TIMMERMANS emphasised that the joint action plan for refugees was the most urgent priority for the EU. He therefore saw it as essential to implement it without delay, notably by ensuring that Turkey protected its borders more effectively and aligned its visa policy with that of the EU.

He also stated that the refugee relocation mechanism could take on a more global dimension that would possibly allow Turkish involvement.

Finally, he mentioned preparations for the Summit with Turkey on 29 November in Brussels convened by the President of the European Council, Mr Donald TUSK.

Mr HAHN returned to the subject of the refugee facility for Turkey, which he described as strategic. This legal framework came in response to the commitment made by the EU in the joint action plan, and reiterated at the informal meeting of the European Council on 12 November in Valletta, to provide Turkey with immediate humanitarian aid and a substantial financial contribution to support Syrian refugees and host organisations. He stated that the facility would coordinate total funding of EUR 3 billion, through the most flexible and rapid procedures possible, and would award subsidies and grants from 1 January 2016.

Ms GEORGIEVA explained that the facility's financial structure required an Intergovernmental Agreement and therefore the unanimous agreement of the Member States, who had until 21 December to disclose the timetable for their financial contributions to this facility.

She highlighted the expectations that this instrument could trigger in Jordan and Lebanon, two countries which were also severely affected by a massive influx of refugees and in need of EU funding.

Ms MOGHERINI also supported the idea of increasing aid to Jordan and Lebanon. As regards Turkey, she pointed out that the newly appointed government intended to invest in the country's relationship with the EU and that the EU Foreign Affairs Ministers favoured the idea of a bilateral relationship based on a holistic approach.

She also referred to the incidents in recent days between Turkey and Russia and their possible impact in the current context.

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

- the sensitive nature of the current global political situation, against a background of geopolitical tensions, the refugee crisis and an escalation of terrorist attacks;
- the role and the major political and geo-strategic influence of Turkey, which expected the EU to adopt a clear position with regard to it;
- the general interest of seeing Turkey stabilised and the influx of refugees brought to an end;
- the consequent need to push forward simultaneously with work on implementing the joint action plan between the Union and Turkey, including the refugee facility, and with political dialogue;
- the importance of guaranteeing that funding for the facility would directly benefit refugees by concentrating aid in the areas of education, health and accommodation;
- support for an approach that was multi-dimensional, but not naïve, in the Union's relations with Turkey, including through the accession negotiations;
- the potential benefits for the Union and its citizens of closer cooperation with Turkey, in particular in terms of trade and agricultural and rural development; a mention of the ongoing work on customs union;
- in parallel with the refugee facility for Turkey, the support of some for increased assistance for Jordan and Lebanon, whose contribution to receiving refugees was highlighted; for others, the need to remember what the Union was already doing for these two countries, in particular through the Regional Trust Fund in

response to the Syrian crisis;

- the announcement of a possible breakthrough concerning the readmission policy with Pakistan.

Mr TIMMERMANS emphasised the fact that the resources allocated to the facility would be strictly intended to meet the humanitarian needs of the refugees on Turkish territory and would therefore be exclusively used for the provision of services in the fields of education, health and accommodation, basic services and support for means of subsistence. In response to a comment, he felt that this was also an indirect way of preventing radicalisation amongst the refugees.

Mr HAHN added that the EUR 3 billion for the facility would directly contribute to helping refugees on Turkish territory and to funding local infrastructure, and therefore did not constitute direct budgetary support for the Turkish authorities. He explained that this local support had two main objectives: ensuring that refugees remained as close as possible to their country of origin to enable them to return there once the domestic situation allowed, and investing resources where they would be most effective. With regard to staffing costs, the rules applicable to general expenses made provision for some flexibility.

Above and beyond management of this crisis, he was convinced of the need to consider the relationship with Turkey in a global perspective.

Moreover, for their part, Jordan and Lebanon continued to receive significant assistance from the Union. He added that a Syria Donors Conference would take place in February 2016 in London at the initiative of the UK, Germany, Norway, Kuwait and the UN.

The PRESIDENT also highlighted the substantial assistance granted to Jordan and Lebanon. With regard to Turkey, he reported on the meetings he had recently had, alongside the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, with the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on the joint action plan for refugees in particular.

He mentioned the difficulties that were still to be overcome, but also the positive signs arising from the relationship between the Union and Turkey. He hoped that the summit between the EU leaders and Turkey on 29 November would enable further progress to be made.

The Commission adopted the decision set out in C(2015) 9500/4, decided to forward it, for information, to the European Parliament, the Council and the national parliaments, and authorised its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. It also took note of SEC(2015) 500.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1. REGISTRATION OF THE CITIZENS' INITIATIVE 'WAKE UP EUROPE'

Mr TIMMERMANS asked the College to decide whether the proposed Citizens' Initiative entitled 'Wake Up Europe' was admissible and whether the Commission should therefore proceed to register it.

After a debate, the Commission concluded, in accordance with Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative, that the citizens' initiative 'Wake Up Europe' satisfied the conditions of admissibility and decided accordingly to register it. It authorised the Secretariat-General to inform the organisers, by 30 November at the latest, that their initiative had been registered.

10.2. THE REFUGEE CRISIS

The PRESIDENT asked Mr ANDRIUKAITIS to share with the Commission the information he had sent the PRESIDENT in a letter of 23 November, the day after his visit to the coast of the Greek island of Lesbos, a few kilometres

from Moria where the support team for managing the reception and registration of refugees (hotspot) was located.

Mr ANDRIUKAITIS described the critical situation he had found on the spot, both in terms of the means available to the actors on the ground, who were struggling to cope, and the dire living conditions of the refugees. He referred to the lack of water, electricity, equipment, blankets, ambulances, basic healthcare and qualified staff. These refugees included many young children, whom he considered to be in danger of dying, and many of the thousands of people landing daily in Lesbos fell ill or were in an extremely weakened condition, particularly now that the weather was becoming very cold.

Added to this situation, which he described as unacceptable, was the lack of visibility of the Union despite the Commission's tireless efforts for weeks to support the Member States and third countries most affected by the massive inflow of refugees, to assess needs and to marshal all the possible European resources to finance shelters and reception centres. He stressed the urgent need for coordination to provide material support on the spot to the Greek authorities as soon as possible, without waiting to assess their needs. It was essential to do the same for the Member States most affected by the current crisis.

During the exchange of views which followed, the Commission referred mainly to (i) the possibilities available to the beneficiary Member States to redeploy certain resources within the framework of the European Structural Funds and to allocate them to the refugees' health and education needs, (ii) the need for increased operational coordination in the frontline Member States, whose infrastructure and capabilities were overwhelmed, (iii) the issue of easing certain bureaucratic constraints and (iv) the proposal to revise the rules on civil protection swiftly to enable the funds to be assigned to purchases of emergency supplies, and also to amend the rules on humanitarian aid in order

to accelerate assistance by better monitoring of beneficiaries.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS confirmed the situation described by Mr ANDRIUKAITIS in Greece and also in the Member States and countries on the Western Balkans route. However, he pointed out that the task of the support teams for managing reception and registration was not to provide medical aid to the refugees, which was a matter for the national authorities in the host country. He pointed out, too, that these authorities were also responsible for coordinating the operational measures deployed for the reception of refugees, although he acknowledged the unprecedented scale of the current crisis. The Commission had been working intensively for months to provide a framework for action, channel funds and support the Member States, including by sending support groups where necessary, as was the case in Greece.

The PRESIDENT said that he took to heart the information provided by Mr ANDRIUKAITIS on the seriousness of the humanitarian situation faced by some of the refugees and the disarray of the authorities in certain frontline Member States. He called on everyone to do whatever they could to contribute to solutions that could ease the difficulties being experienced both by the refugees and the Member States concerned.

The Commission took note of this information.

10.3. SECURITY OF COMMISSION STAFF AND BUILDINGS

Ms GEORGIEVA reported on the measures taken in recent days to strengthen the Commission's internal security measures, in response to the Belgian authorities' decision to raise the terror alert level in the Brussels Region from 3 to 4.

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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 15.40.