



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2019) 2303 final

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

Brussels, 4 September 2019

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2303rd meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 10 July 2019

(morning)

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Single sitting: Wednesday 10 July 2019 (morning)

The sitting opened at 10.35 with Mr JUNCKER, President, in the chair.

Present:

Mr JUNCKER	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	First 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	
Mr VELLA	Member	
Mr ANDRIUKAITIS	Member	
Ms THYSSEN	Member	
Mr MOSCOVICI	Member	Items 1 to 7 (in part)
Mr STYLIANIDES	Member	
Mr HOGAN	Member	
Ms BULC	Member	
Ms BIENKOWSKA	Member	
Mr NAVRACSICS	Member	Items 6 (in part) and 7
Ms VESTAGER	Member	
Mr MOEDAS	Member	
Sir Julian KING	Member	
Ms GABRIEL	Member	

Absent:

Ms MOGHERINI

High Representative /
Vice-President

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS

Member

Ms JOUROVÁ

Member

(10 July 2019)

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

Mr GRASSI	Chef de cabinet to Ms MOGHERINI	Items 1 to 5, and 7
Ms SCHMITT	Chef de cabinet to Mr AVRAMOPOULOS	Items 1 to 5, and 7
Mr BRAUN	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms JOUROVÁ	Items 1 to 5, and 7

The following also sat in:

Ms MARTÍNEZ ALBEROLA	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	Items 1 to 5, and 7
Mr SCHINAS	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms METTLER	Head of the European Political Strategy Centre	Items 1 to 5, and 7
Mr LEARDINI	Deputy Secretary-General	Items 1 to 5, and 7
Mr SZOSTAK	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	Items 1 to 5, and 7
Mr THOLONIAT	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Item 7 (in part)
Mr REMY	PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 5, and 7
Mr HAENICKE	A member of Mr OETTINGER's staff	Item 6
Mr SNELS	Secretariat-General	Items 1 to 5, and 7
Ms ANDREEVA	Commission Spokesperson's Service	Items 1 to 5, and 7

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2019) 2303/FINAL; SEC(2019) 2303)

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(2019) 2303)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 8 July 2019.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2300TH, 2301ST AND 2302ND MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (18 AND 25 JUNE, AND 3 JULY 2019)

(PV(2019) 2300; PV(2019) 2300, 2ND PART; PV(2019) 2301; PV(2019) 2301, 2ND PART)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2300th and 2301st meetings and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2302nd meeting for a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2019) 78)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 5 July 2019 (RCC(2019) 78).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

i) Council dossier

(point 3.3 of the IRG record)

- Amendment of Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax as regards the special scheme for small enterprises (Council Directive) – VANDENKEN-DELAERE report – 2018/0006 (CNS)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 468/2.

4.2. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

ii) Programming of Council business

(SI(2019) 518)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2019) 518 on the Council meetings between 11 and 24 July 2019.

iii) Non-legislative dossiers

(point 4.1 of the IRG record)

- Authorisation to open negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the conclusion of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and a protocol with the Republic of Seychelles (Council decision)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 512.

- European Union relations with South East Asia – Draft EU-ASEAN Ministerial Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation to be adopted at the EU-ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Bangkok on 1 August 2019 / Draft ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism to be adopted at the ARF Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok on 2 August 2019

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 513.

- Authorisation to enter into negotiations on the modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty (Council decision)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2019) 514.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

iv) Results of Parliament's July I 2019 part-session

(point 5.8.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission took note of the information on the proceedings of the part-session of Parliament held in Strasbourg from 2 to 4 July 2019, as set out in SP(2019) 400.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS, THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

v) Follow-up to opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee – Plenary session of February 2019

(point 6.3.1 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved document SC(2019) 23/2 on the follow-up by the Commission to the opinions adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee during the February 2019 session, for transmission to that Committee.

5. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

5.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2019) 269 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 1 and 5 July 2019.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2019) 270 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 1 and 5 July 2019.

5.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2019) 271 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 1 and 5 July 2019, as archived in Decide.

5.4. SENSITIVE WRITTEN PROCEDURES
(SEC(2019) 272 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the sensitive written procedures for which the time limit expired between 8 and 12 July 2019.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2019) 273)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2019) 62)

OFFICE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS - BRUSSELS –
DECISION ON THE AWARD OF PRIZES FOR THE 'LOI 130'
INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION
(SEC(2019) 282)

At the invitation of the PRESIDENT, Mr OETTINGER submitted for the approval

(10 July 2019)

of the College the report on the award of the prizes for the ‘Loi 130’ architectural competition, which was launched in March 2018 to identify the best proposals for replacing part of the Commission’s ageing premises in the European quarter, in particular on the site of 130 rue de la Loi in Brussels and the surrounding area, in cooperation with the Brussels-Capital Region.

Mr OETTINGER reminded the meeting of the stages that had preceded this announcement and the selection process that had been put in place. The competition had been endorsed by the International Union of Architects, a non-governmental organisation recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Teams of architects, landscape architects, and construction and public works engineers from around the world were invited, in spring 2018, to present their vision for the future ‘Loi 130’ project. The jury, which he had chaired jointly with Monica von Schmalensee, was composed of internationally renowned architects and engineers, as well as representatives of the Commission and the Brussels-Capital Region. The projects submitted to the jury were anonymous and the procedure followed was strictly equitable.

Out of the 76 projects submitted, 30 had been selected to take part in the competition on the basis of technical criteria. In the first phase, 28 of these 30 projects had been put before the jury, which had then selected 9 of them. The authors of these 9 projects then had until April 2019 to refine their proposals. After this second phase, at the end of June, the jury had proposed the winners of the first, second and third prizes.

Mr OETTINGER said that the jury proposed awarding the first prize in the competition to a consortium of five companies that provided architectural and engineering services: AVA ARQUITECTURA TECNICA Y GESTION, S.L. (official name) / RAFAEL DE LA-HOZ ARQUITECTOS (trade name), Spain (team leader); Perkins & Will UK Limited, UK; Latz + Partner Landscape Architecture Urban Planning, Germany; TECNICA Y PROYECTOS S.A., Spain; and MC2 ESTUDIO DE INGENIERIA S.L.U., Spain.

It was proposed to award the second prize to 2PORTZAMPARC, France (team leader); Florence Mercier Paysagiste, France; and ARTELIA Bâtiment & Industrie, France.

Lastly, it was proposed to award the third prize to BURO II & ARCHI+I (official name) / B2Ai (trade name), Belgium (team leader); C.F. Møller Danmark A/S, Denmark; DELVA Landscape Architects, Netherlands; and VK Engineering, Belgium.

These first three prize-winners fulfilled the tender specifications, namely to propose forward-looking, innovative, sustainable and cost-efficient architectural solutions to replace the old Commission premises at 130 rue de la Loi, as part of the development plan for the European quarter adopted by the Brussels-Capital region in 2018 (*Projet Urbain Loi*).

Once completed, the new complex would host offices for around 5,250 officials and other staff, two childcare centres, a visitors' centre with capacity to welcome 345,000 people per year, 3,000 m² of restaurants and shops, and green areas accessible by the public. The complex would generate 50% less CO₂ emissions and consume 70% less energy compared to the Commission's existing buildings.

The jury had chosen the winner of the first prize because the project's extensive green spaces open to the public integrated the development in its urban environment, both for the occupants of the future offices and for the residents of the neighbourhood and passers-by.

With regard to the next steps, Mr OETTINGER said that preparatory work on the project would now start, namely negotiating the service contract with the winner of the first prize, developing the design in detail and obtaining the necessary building permits. He would present an initial version of the project in the autumn to the budgetary authority (the European Parliament and the Council). He drew attention to the fact that despite the ambition of the winning project, the budget required to construct the buildings was estimated at between EUR 400 and EUR 500 million

over ten years. He stressed that by concentrating staff and services in modern and more efficient buildings, the Commission would make long-term savings in comparison with the option to renovate old buildings or to rent more suitable premises in the European quarter.

The first phase of the works, in chaussée d'Etterbeek, was expected to start in 2025. Once it was finalised, the second phase, in rue de Spa, would begin and should be finished by 2035.

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

- a question, for information, about the current annual cost for the EU budget of maintenance and renovation of the buildings of the European institutions;
- a question, too, about the financing that would remain for maintenance of the other buildings owned by the Commission once construction of the 'Loi 130' complex was underway;
- requests for clarification on the next steps in the negotiations between the Commission and the winning consortium concerning the estimation of the costs of the works and the launch of the calls for tenders.

Replying to these different points, Mr OETTINGER confirmed that the current stage, concerning the project design, consisted of announcing the decision of the competition jury. In a second stage, in the autumn, he personally would present the winning project to the budgetary authority – the European Parliament and the Council – before the start of the estimation of the cost of works for the first construction phase, from 2025 to 2030.

He emphasised the fact that some of the buildings currently occupied by the Commission were in a state which required significant work with varying degrees of urgency, particularly as regards maintenance, modernisation and adapting the buildings to energy efficiency standards. The EU earmarked between

EUR 1.5 million and EUR 2 million each year for maintaining the current building at 130 rue de la Loi. The construction of the new complex would therefore come within the planned budgetary allocation and leave sufficient financing for maintenance of buildings other than the future ‘Loi 130’ complex. He remarked in passing that maintenance of the buildings of the European Schools was not the responsibility of the Union, but of the Belgian State.

He also pointed out that the project responded to the desire of the Brussels-Capital Region to make the European quarter more attractive and that the Commission had been discussing this matter for around ten years.

Finally, he reiterated that re-concentrating staff and buildings would enable the Commission to make long-term savings.

In conclusion, Mr OETTINGER asked the Members of the Commission to consult the detailed designs submitted for the architectural competition in the brochure that had been distributed to them during the meeting.

Winding up the discussion, the PRESIDENT thanked Mr OETTINGER for his detailed explanations and noted the Commission’s agreement to approve the choice of the jury of the architectural competition for the ‘Loi 130’ project. He pointed out that Mr OETTINGER, who had chaired the jury, would take no part in the Commission’s decision.

Following this discussion, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, and without the participation of Mr OETTINGER, the Commission decided:

- to approve the report on the award of the prizes and the annexes thereto in SEC(2019) 282, providing the information that it required, as authorising officer, to adopt the award decision in accordance with the Financial Regulation;
- to award the prizes in the international architectural competition for the ‘Loi 130’ project as follows:

- The **1st prize** was awarded to:

AVA ARQUITECTURA TECNICA Y GESTION, S.L. (official name) / RAFAEL DE LA-HOZ ARQUITECTOS (trade name), Spain
(team leader)

Perkins & Will UK Limited, UK

LATZ + Partner Landscape Architecture Urban Planning, Germany

TECNICA Y PROYECTOS S.A., Spain

MC2 ESTUDIO DE INGENIERIA S.L.U., Spain.

- The **2nd prize** was awarded to:

2PORTZAMPARC, France (team leader)

Florence Mercier Paysagiste, France

ARTELIA Bâtiment & Industrie, France

- The **3rd prize** was awarded to:

BURO II & ARCHI+I (official name) / B2Ai (trade name), Belgium
(team leader)

C.F. Møller Danmark A/S, Denmark

DELVA Landscape Architects, Netherlands;

VK Engineering, Belgium

- to instruct the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics (OIB) to notify the participants of the result of the competition and take all the necessary steps for the implementation of the budget with regard to the award of the prizes;
- to exhibit publicly, in September 2019, the 28 projects that had participated in this architectural competition;
- to instruct the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics (OIB) to inform the budgetary authority, in accordance with Article 266(2) of the Financial

Regulation, of the result of the architectural competition and of the Commission's intention to implement the 'Loi 130' project by starting negotiations with the winner of the first prize;

- to continue to cooperate with the Brussels Capital Region to implement the result of the 'Loi 130' architectural competition.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1. INTERIM ECONOMIC FORECAST

Mr MOSCOVICI presented to the College the summer economic forecast, pointing out that this was an interim forecast limited to growth and inflation for the period 2019 and 2020 in all the Member States. The next full forecast, which would also cover deficits, debt levels and employment figures, would be published at the beginning of November. He outlined the four main messages to be taken from the present forecast.

First, Mr MOSCOVICI stressed that the European economy was experiencing its seventh consecutive year of growth and continued to withstand a less favourable external environment, with demand supported by a vigorous labour market. In the euro area, however, growth was expected to slow to 1.2% this year and 1.4% in 2020. Compared to the spring forecast, this projection was unchanged for 2019 and very slightly lower for 2020. For the Union as a whole, the growth forecasts remained unchanged at 1.4% in 2019 and 1.6% in 2020. Domestic demand was expected to remain the engine of growth in 2019 and 2020, thanks to accommodative monetary conditions, an expansionary fiscal policy in some Member States and a robust labour market. He also stressed that employment had reached a record high and that unemployment was at its lowest level in ten years.

Second, while there had been a positive growth surprise in the first quarter, growth was likely to weaken during the rest of the year. The external and manufacturing sectors were expected to continue to have an adverse effect on the short-term outlook.

Third, he reminded the meeting that the forecast for inflation in the euro area had been slightly revised downwards, to 1.3% in 2019 and 2020, on the assumption of a fall in the price of oil and a time-lag in the effect of wage rises on underlying inflation.

Fourth and last, he pointed out that in a climate of global uncertainty and growing trade tensions, these economic forecasts were subject to significant risks. Any further escalation on these different fronts could prolong the downturn in world trade and the manufacturing sector, leading to an increase in the global risk premium. In particular, he mentioned the geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the possibility of a disorderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union.

In conclusion, he highlighted the fact that while growth prospects had changed very little compared to the spring, the downside risks had increased further. He reminded the meeting that the Commission's forecasts were based on a technical assumption of status quo in terms of EU-UK trade relations and that, due to the numerous risks referred to, more efforts would be needed to further strengthen the resilience of the European economies and of the euro area as a whole.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS took the floor and said that all the EU economies were expected to continue to grow this year and next year, even if the strong growth in Central and Eastern Europe was in contrast to the downturn in Germany and Italy. In conclusion, he referred to the need for the Member States to take advantage of positive economic cycles in order to consolidate, rather than relax, the implementation of structural reforms.

The Commission took note of this information.

7.2. RELATIONS WITH TURKEY AND MAIN RESULTS OF THE SUMMIT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND UKRAINE (KIEV, 8 JULY 2019)

Mr HAHN began by informing the College of the latest developments in **relations between the European Union and Turkey**. He mentioned in particular the ‘Non-paper on options for possible measures in response to Turkey’s drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean’, distributed as SI(2019) 520/2, and agreed at the meeting of Chefs de cabinet; this document had already been sent to the Council, as it had requested, ahead of the meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) on Wednesday 10 July.

He presented the options set out in the ‘non-paper’, which were being proposed to the Member States in response to Turkey’s drilling activities in Cypriot territorial waters. For several weeks, the Turkish government had been dispatching exploratory vessels into Cyprus’ territorial waters, an unacceptable violation of the country’s territorial integrity. In this context, the Cypriot government was calling on the Union to show solidarity, and the Union would have to reflect on appropriate measures to take against Turkey.

Mr HAHN emphasised that the balanced measures proposed by the Commission were a judicious, effective and evolving approach towards the Turkish authorities, without, however, jeopardising the Union’s political and financial interests. It was up to the Council to choose which of these measures would be implemented.

Mr HAHN also presented the principal measures proposed to the Member States, namely (i) the suspension of strategic dialogues, both at ministerial level and that of Heads of State and Government, directly affecting the political dialogue and sectoral dialogues in areas such as energy,

economic policy, transport and agriculture, (ii) adaptation (already proposed) of the pre-accession assistance for Turkey for 2020, and maintenance of this assistance at the current level for 2019, as decided by the European Parliament and the Council, given that this assistance had already been reduced and could not be further reduced without risking undermining measures relating to the rule of law and the Erasmus programme, (iii) the invitation to the European Investment Bank to review Turkey's considerable external exposure, i.e. €16 billion in loans, and (iv) suspension of negotiations on the aviation agreement with Turkey on the one hand, and of the meeting of the EU-Turkey Association Committee planned for November on the other.

The Commission was deliberately not proposing any change with regard to the joint statement by the EU and Turkey on migration, which covered in particular European financing for the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, or to the accession negotiations, which were frozen in the Council, or the modernisation of the customs union, whose mandate was held up in the Council.

At this stage no targeted measure equivalent to sanctions was being proposed, although this option could be considered at the appropriate moment. In conclusion, the measures proposed demonstrated the Union's solidarity with Cyprus without, however, giving in to the provocation of Turkey's drilling activities in Cypriot territorial waters, in order to prevent any escalation of tensions.

Mr HAHN went on to report on the **21st summit between the European Union and Ukraine**, which had taken place in Kiev on 8 July. The leaders of both parties had reaffirmed the strength of the political and economic ties between the Union and Ukraine, and discussed the implementation of the Association Agreement and the way ahead. A joint statement had been published at the end of the summit, with particular reference to the Union's continued support for the process of reform in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian President, Mr Wolodymyr Zelenskyy, had taken initiatives that seemed to be moving in the direction of macro-economic stability, but corruption remained a substantial problem in the country. With regard to the energy sector, the separation of the activities of Naftogaz by the end of the year remained an important objective, and Ukraine would soon have to renegotiate the gas transit agreements with Russia.

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

- the categorical imperative of the Union’s solidarity with Cyprus, which had been exposed to aggressive action by the Turkish government;
- the difficulties that the interruption of cooperation in the field of aviation could create, while numerous projects were ongoing and risked being jeopardised in future;
- the importance of maintaining the financing for humanitarian aid to refugees in Turkey;
- the need to remain open to dialogue, particularly at the technical level, at the risk of seeing relations with Turkey worsen.

Mr HAHN explained that following an animated discussion on this issue during the ‘General Affairs’ Council on 18 June, the Union had to prioritise a balanced approach without undermining its commitments, particularly with regard to managing migration. Moreover, if the conditions were met, the deadlock in the work on the modernisation of the customs union could be resolved rapidly, which would help to improve relations with Turkey. He also confirmed that the financial assistance allocated to the implementation of projects with Turkish civil society would be maintained, with the aim of promoting the Union’s values.

The PRESIDENT closed the discussion with a hope that, in order to show

their solidarity with Cyprus, the Member States would not decide to continue high-level dialogue with Turkey bilaterally while the Commission was proposing to them that such dialogue be suspended at Union level. Several meetings of ministers from the Member States were already scheduled with the Turkish authorities in the months to come; it was important that the Member States' position should be consistent with that adopted by the Union as a whole.

The Commission took note of this information and approved the line set out in SI(2019) 520/2.

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The meeting closed at 11.30.