



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2020) 2321 final

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

Strasbourg, 11 February 2020

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

**of the 2321st meeting of the Commission
held in Strasbourg
(Winston Churchill building)
on Tuesday 14 January 2020
(afternoon)**

PV(2020) 2321 final

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

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Single sitting: Tuesday 14 January 2020 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.10 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	Executive Vice-President	Items 1 to 9/11 (in part)
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President	Items 1 to 14 (in part)
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President	Items 1 to 9/11 (in part)
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative/ Vice-President	Items 7 (in part) to 14
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President	
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President	
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Ms GABRIEL	Member	
Mr SCHMIT	Member	
Mr GENTILONI	Member	
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member	
Mr BRETON	Member	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member	
Mr REYNDERS	Member	Items 1 to 9/11 (in part)
Ms DALLI	Member	
Ms JOHANSSON	Member	
Ms LENARČIČ	Member	
Ms VÁLEAN	Member	
Ms URPILAINEN	Member	Items 1 to 11
Ms SIMSON	Member	
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member	Items 9 to 14

Absent:

Mr HOGAN

Member

Ms VÁRHELYI

Member

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

Mr RYAN	A member of Mr HOGAN's staff	Items 1 to 11
Mr KRISTÓFFY	Chef de cabinet to Mr VÁRHELYI	Items 1 to 11

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr ROMERO REQUENA	Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms AHRENKILDE HANSEN	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr MAMER	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms RISO	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr VANDENBERGHE	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 13
Mr USTUBS	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Item 14
Ms CABRAL	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Ms VILA NUÑEZ	PRESIDENT's Office	
Ms VEGNERE	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Items 9 to 14 (in part)
Ms CONSTANTIN	A member of Ms JOUROVÁ's staff	Items 1 to 8
Mr CHARALAMBOUS	A member of Mr HAHN's staff	Items 1 to 14 (in part)
Mr KASEL	Chef de cabinet to Mr SCHMIT	Items 1 to 13
Mr SOBRAL	Chef de cabinet to Ms FERREIRA	Items 1 to 11
Mr GRASSI	Chef de cabinet to Ms SIMSON	Items 1 to 11
Mr VALERO LADRÓN	Secretariat-General	
Ms LOONELA	Commission Spokesperson's Service	
Mr LEMAÎTRE	Director-General, DG Regional and Urban Policy	Items 1 to 11

Ms SCHMID

Secretary General, European External Action
Service (EEAS)

Item 14

Secretary (except for item 7): Ms JUHANSONE, Acting Secretary-General, assisted by
Mr AYET PUIGARNAU, Director in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2020) 2321/FINAL; SEC(2020) 2321/FINAL)

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(2020) 2321)

The Commission considered the Acting Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 13 January 2020.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2318TH, 2319TH AND 2320TH MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (11 AND 17 DECEMBER 2019, AND 8 JANUARY 2020)

(PV(2019) 2318)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2318th meeting and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2319th and 2320th meetings for a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2020) 1)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 10 January 2020 (RCC(2020) 1).

It paid particular attention to the following points.

4.1. HORIZONTAL ITEM

i) 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – Trilogue

(point 1.1.1 of the IRG record)

- Establishment, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, of the instrument for financial support for customs control equipment (Regulation) – POSPÍŠIL report – 2018/0258 (COD)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2020) 2.

4.2. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

ii) Trilogues

(point 3.1 of the IRG record)

- Quality of water intended for human consumption (Directive – recast) – HANSEN report – 2017/0332 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 4.

- Establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (Regulation) – PIETIKÄINEN & EICKHOUT report – 2018/0178 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 5/2.

- European Crowdfunding Service Providers (ECSP) for Business (Regulation) – JURZYCA report – 2018/0048 (COD) / Amendment of Directive 2014/65/EU on markets in financial instruments (Directive) – NAGTEGAAL report – 2018/0047 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 6/2.

- Representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers, and repeal of Directive 2009/22/EC (Directive) – DIDIER

report – 2018/0089 (COD)

The Commission approved the line set out in SI(2020) 7/2.

iii) European Parliament dossiers – January I 2020 part-session
(point 3.2 of the IRG record)

Special legislative procedure

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

The Commission approved the line set out in SP(2020) 12.

4.3. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL

iv) Programming of Council business
(SI(2020) 14)

The Commission took note of the information in SI(2020) 14 on the Council meetings between 16 and 29 January 2020.

4.4. RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

v) Action to be taken on Parliament's legislative resolutions and other resolutions of a legal nature
(SP(2019) 702)

The Commission decided to empower the Members of the Commission responsible for the sectors in question, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and, if necessary, with the other Members concerned, to adopt the amended proposals for transmission to Parliament and the Council, as set out in SP(2019) 702, drawn up following the December II 2019 part-session of Parliament, the contents of which were noted.

vi) Action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its November I 2019 part-session

(point 5.6.3 of the IRG record)

The Commission approved, for transmission to Parliament, document SP(2020) 7 on the action taken on the non-legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its November I 2019 part-session.

vii) Results of Parliament's December II 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 16 to 19 December 2019, as set out in SP(2019) 695.

**5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS
(RCC(2020) 7)**

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2020) 7 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 8 January 2020.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

**6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2019) 443 ET SEQ.; SEC(2020) 36 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 16 December 2019 and 10 January 2020.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2019) 444 ET SEQ.; SEC(2020) 37 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 16 December 2019 and 10 January 2020.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2019) 445 ET SEQ.; SEC(2020) 38 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 16 December 2019 and 10 January 2020 archived in Decide.

6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2020) 39 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 13 and 17 January 2020.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

(SEC(2020) 40 AND /2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2020) 1 AND /2)

During the meeting, Mr HAHN announced a proposal for an additional decision.

A proposal was made to appoint Ms Ilze JUHANSONE, the current Deputy Secretary-General, to the post of Secretary-General of the Commission with immediate effect.

The PRESIDENT explained that, since her appointment in the summer of 2019, she had found Ilze JUHANSONE to be both highly competent and well informed, and she had been fully committed to ensuring that the institutional transition went

smoothly. She considered that, thanks to her extensive experience in the Commission, leadership and management skills, as well as her excellent relations with the Member States and the other EU institutions, Ms JUHANSONE would play a key role in implementing the current Commission's priorities.

Mr HAHN pointed out that, in his view, Ms JUHANSONE had demonstrated that she had the strong knowledge base, personal qualities and professional experience necessary to take on the challenges that would come with her new role in the Commission.

**7.1. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – APPOINTMENT OF AD15/16
SECRETARY-GENERAL**

(C(2019) 8847; PERS(2020) 2 TO /3)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Secretary-General (PERS(2020) 2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 8 and 9 January 2020 (PERS(2020) 2/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it decided to appoint Ms Ilze JUHANSONE to the post.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.2. DG FINANCIAL STABILITY, FINANCIAL SERVICES AND CAPITAL
MARKETS UNION – PROPOSAL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE
VICE-CHAIR AND DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING THE
CORPORATE SERVICES OF THE SINGLE RESOLUTION BOARD
AND FOR SUPERVISING THE SINGLE RESOLUTION FUND**

(PERS(2019) 93 TO /3)

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 1 of PERS(2020) 1, and, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr DOMBROVSKIS, decided:

- to propose the appointment of Mr Jan Reinder DE CARPENTIER to the post of Vice-Chair and Director responsible for managing the corporate services of the Single Resolution Board and for supervising the Single Resolution Fund;
- to ask Mr DOMBROVSKIS, the Executive Vice-President of the Commission responsible, to communicate this decision to the European Parliament and to inform the Council.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**7.3. DG FINANCIAL STABILITY, FINANCIAL SERVICES AND CAPITAL MARKETS UNION – PROPOSAL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF TWO MEMBERS OF THE SINGLE RESOLUTION BOARD/DIRECTOR OF RESOLUTION PLANNING AND DECISIONS
(PERS(2019) 69 TO /3)**

The Commission took note of the procedure followed, as set out in point 2 of PERS(2020) 1, and, on a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr DOMBROVSKIS, decided:

- to propose the appointments of Mr Pedro MACHADO and Mr Jesús SAURINA SALAS to the posts of Member of the Single Resolution Board/Director of Resolution Planning and Decisions;
- to ask Mr DOMBROVSKIS, the Executive Vice-President of the Commission responsible, to communicate this decision to the European Parliament and to inform the Council.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.4. DG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION – RESIGNATION OF AN AD15 OFFICIAL UNDER ARTICLE 48 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Ms GABRIEL, the Commission decided to accept the resignation tendered, under Article 48 of the Staff Regulations, by Ms Ruxandra DRAGHIA-AKLI, who was currently on leave on personal grounds in accordance with Article 40 of the Staff Regulations and was formerly Deputy Director-General of DG Research and Innovation. This decision would take effect as of 6 January 2020.

7.5. DG BUDGET/DG ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS – COMMISSION DECISION ON BASIC IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENTS DERIVING FROM THE TRANSFER OF THE ‘TREASURY AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS’ DIRECTORATE (C(2020) 193)

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission adopted the decision in C(2020) 193 on the basic implementing arrangements deriving from its decision of 4 December 2019 (PV(2019) 2317) to transfer the ‘Treasury and Financial Operations’ Directorate (with the exception of one team) from DG Economic and Financial Affairs to DG Budget.

8. MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

**INFRINGEMENTS – URGENT INDIVIDUAL CASE
(SEC(2020) 50)**

At the PRESIDENT’s invitation, Ms JOUROVÁ and Mr REYNDERS briefed the Commission on the latest developments in Poland concerning the rule of law. They raised in particular the question of the independence of the disciplinary chamber of

the Polish Supreme Court following the preliminary ruling handed down by the Court of Justice of the European Union (Grand Chamber) on 19 November 2019 in Case A.K. (Joined Cases C-585/18, C-624/18 and C-625/18) and the follow-up judgment given by the Polish Supreme Court on 5 December 2019.

Following a discussion, the Commission decided to apply to the Court of Justice of the European Union for interim measures to suspend the activity of the disciplinary chamber in question, pending the decision by the Court of Justice on matters of substance concerning the wider issue of the new disciplinary regime for Polish court judges, in the case for failure to fulfil Treaty obligations brought by the Commission on 25 October 2019 (Case C 791/19).

The Commission adopted the decision in SEC(2020) 50.

- 9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – SUSTAINABLE EUROPE INVESTMENT PLAN – EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL INVESTMENT PLAN
(COM(2020) 21 TO /3; RCC(2020) 3)**
- 10. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE JUST TRANSITION FUND
(COM(2020) 22 TO /3; RCC(2020) 3)**
- 11. AMENDED PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL LAYING DOWN COMMON PROVISIONS ON THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND, THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PLUS, THE COHESION FUND AND THE EUROPEAN MARITIME AND FISHERIES FUND AND FINANCIAL RULES FOR THOSE AND FOR THE ASYLUM AND MIGRATION FUND, THE INTERNAL SECURITY FUND AND THE BORDER MANAGEMENT AND**

VISA INSTRUMENT**(COM(2020) 23 TO /3; RCC(2020) 3)**

The PRESIDENT asked the Members of the Commission responsible to present the three initiatives on the investment part of the European Green Deal, which were the first concrete steps in implementing that very ambitious project put forward by the Commission the previous month.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS pointed out that this first package of proposals helped to meet the significant financing needs arising from the unprecedented level of ambition of the European Green Deal, while ensuring that no one was left behind.

He explained that the aim of the **European Green Deal Investment Plan** was to mobilise both public and private funds at European and national level, amounting to €1 trillion over ten years. If these investments were to contribute effectively to climate neutrality, the planned support was an important factor in encouraging the emergence of sound and sustainable projects that would attract investors.

He drew particular attention to the Just Transition Mechanism proposed in the investment plan to provide targeted support to the regions most affected by the green transition and to promote the necessary investments in those areas.

Mr GENTILONI added that, given the considerable amounts of investment that would be needed to reach the Union's climate objectives – and the difficulties in putting an exact figure on those amounts – the proposed investment plan would create an enabling framework for private investors and the public sector.

In this context he stressed the importance of including long-term environmental viability as a factor in the country reports drawn up under the European Semester, in the forthcoming review of State aid rules to support the green transition, and in the discussions that would be launched on the possible implementation of the taxonomy for classifying environmentally sustainable activities to the public sector, and on the Stability and Growth Pact.

He then referred to the vital technical assistance that would have to be provided to government departments and project promoters to ensure that the investment plan was implemented effectively.

Mr HAHN concentrated in particular on the **Just Transition Mechanism**, which was intended to mobilise at least €100 billion over seven years and would be based on three pillars to support and finance the regions most affected by the challenges of the green transition.

He explained that the **first pillar** would consist of the Just Transition Fund. The package tabled that day included a legislative proposal to set up this Fund, which would require amendments to the Regulation laying down common provisions, hence the second legislative proposal in the package.

The Just Transition Fund would be implemented mainly through grants and would have €7.5 billion in new resources. He stressed that this sum would come on top of the allocations proposed in the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework but would not require any amendment of the corresponding Commission proposals.

The **second pillar** of the Just Transition Mechanism would take the form of a dedicated scheme under InvestEU, aimed at attracting private investment, while the **third pillar** would be a public sector loan facility in association with the European Investment Bank; a proposal on this would be put forward in the coming months.

Lastly, he stressed the importance of other instruments to boost the impact of the investment plan, in particular the regulatory framework for State aid, the taxonomy for classifying environmentally sustainable activities, and a sound multiannual financial framework.

Ms FERREIRA then described the method for allocating resources under the **Just Transition Fund**. Each Member State's financial allocation would be determined on the basis of a combination of economic and social criteria reflecting the dependence of its economy on carbon, but also its capacity to meet the challenges of

the climate transition.

She said that the Just Transition Fund would have an overall funding capacity of between €30 to €50 billion as a result of, on the one hand, a mechanism for the specific and definitive transfer of resources from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), which would supplement the Fund's budget, and, on the other, national co-financing.

She explained that the support from the Just Transition Fund would be based on the territorial just transition plans to be drawn up by the Member States, with the Commission's assistance, in line with the national energy and climate plans, and with the transition towards a climate-neutral economy.

The territories receiving support from the Just Transition Fund would also benefit from a specific technical assistance facility.

Ms SIMSON noted that the investment plan being proposed that day was a sound one that matched the ambitions of the European Green Deal. She welcomed in particular the level of ambition in the proposal for a Just Transition Fund, which reflected the speeding-up of the transition at Union level and was rightly based on the experience gained through the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition.

To ensure that the plan was effective, she too felt that it was important to support regions that had weaker administrative capacity so that funding could be found for strong projects.

She ended by drawing attention to the importance of communication, including in the Member States, and warned of the dangers of raising false expectations of this investment plan, which could not fund the entire transition to climate neutrality and, moreover, did not set out to do so.

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

On the investment plan as a whole

- broad support for the proposed investment plan, which made it possible to quickly provide a concrete, strong and credible early response to the question of how to implement the very ambitious European Green Deal and which, through the Just Transition Mechanism for the most vulnerable regions, put people at the heart of the process;
- a call for vigilance in implementing the patchwork of different financing methods proposed under the Just Transition Mechanism;
- the opportunities that this package presented for the Union’s competitiveness and its image on the international scene;
- the spirit of openness and cooperation which had prevailed in the process of drawing up this investment plan and which, combined with the extensive work by Commission departments, had made it possible to present the plan only one month after the approval of the European Green Deal;
- a reminder of the high expectations that would be raised by this first tangible step in implementing the Green Deal and hence the need for clear, targeted communication on the key messages and on the rationale behind the plan;
- with this in mind, questions about the advisability of having two names for the investment plan, namely the ‘Sustainable Europe Investment Plan’ and the ‘European Green Deal Investment Plan.

On the Just Transition Fund

- a discussion on the criteria used to determine the financial allocation for each Member State, in particular:
 - the suggestion that energy poverty should be included among the criteria;
 - for some, the possible case for taking into account the fiscal space of each Member State in order to assess its ability to address the socio-

economic difficulties caused by the green transition;

- questions about how to take into account the difference between the gross national income per inhabitant of the Member State concerned, on the one hand, and, on the other, the average GNI at EU level, in order to determine more accurately the investment capacity of the different Member States;
- for others, a call not to modify the criteria set out in the proposal, since any change, however minor, might upset the careful balance achieved;
- questions about the difference in treatment between regions that had been making the necessary efforts to initiate the transition for several years and those which were only preparing to embark on it and would be able to benefit more widely from the Fund;
- with regard to the projects eligible for support under the Fund, the observation that infrastructure used up to now to transport fossil fuels could now also be used to transport greener energies;
- a reminder of the importance of the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period from 2021 to 2027;
- a question about whether to place the €7.5 billion allocated to the Just Transition Fund under heading 3 of the Multiannual Financial Framework;
- the need for this discussion to be put into perspective in the light of the small amounts concerned;
- nevertheless, a call to pre-empt the distorted perception that the public might have of the Fund and the incorrect messages which might be conveyed about it, hence the importance of communication;
- a question about what would happen to the amounts allocated to Member States under the Fund that were ultimately not spent by them;

- a reminder of the key role of technical assistance in order to ensure the efficiency of investments and support regions on the basis of their particular difficulties, while ensuring that the projects did not suffer from reduced administrative capacity;
- the importance of the territorial just transition plans to be established by the Member States and of the Member States' absorption capacity;
- a call to defend, under the legislative procedure, the rationale of distributive justice underpinning the proposal on this Fund.

Mr HAHN pointed out that the €7.5 billion earmarked for the Just Transition Fund was 'fresh money' which, by definition, did not involve any budgetary cuts, whatever the heading under which this amount was placed. He added that the cross-cutting nature of the Fund meant that although it had a link with numerous different headings, Heading 3, natural resources and the environment, was the most appropriate.

The technical assistance proposed would help Member States that had difficulties in absorbing the allocations.

Ms FERREIRA confirmed that the territorial just transition plans would be drawn up in line with a bottom-up approach.

The PRESIDENT warmly thanked the Members of the Commission, their cabinets and the departments involved in this set of initiatives for their efficiency and dedication, without which the Commission would not have been able to present the first effective steps to implement the European Green Deal barely a month after it had been approved. She praised this rapid pace, which demonstrated with credibility that the Commission's political will to move forward as quickly as possible on climate neutrality was commensurate with the urgency of the challenges faced.

She also welcomed the valuable discussions that had taken place during the process of drawing up this first set of texts. These debates had made it possible to improve

the texts and test their solidity throughout the process.

She noted that this investment plan, with the Just Transition Mechanism at its heart, was fully in line with the Union's philosophy and the Commission's priorities. She stressed its importance for investors, who would be guided towards sustainable investments. With regard to the Just Transition Fund, she said it was important not to lose sight of the aid intensity per capita that each Member State would receive.

Lastly, the PRESIDENT reiterated the importance of precise and targeted communication setting out the rationale of the various instruments, and invited the Members of the Commission to make use of the excellent documentation available to them. With regard to the two names of the Investment Plan, she explained that this highlighted its intrinsic link with the European Green Deal, while remaining in line with the terminology used in the Commissioners' mission letters.

In conclusion, she recommended to the Members of the Commission that when communicating on the initiatives that translated the important political project of the European Green Deal into concrete proposals, they should indicate the cost to the Union should it fail to act to combat climate change.

At the end of this discussion, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2020) 21/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2020) 22/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- adopted the amended proposal for a Regulation in COM(2020) 23/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments.

**12. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – A STRONG SOCIAL EUROPE FOR JUST TRANSITIONS
(COM(2020) 14/3; RCC(2020) 2)**

**13. CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – FIRST PHASE CONSULTATION OF SOCIAL PARTNERS UNDER ARTICLE 154 TFEU ON A POSSIBLE ACTION ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES RELATED TO FAIR MINIMUM WAGES
(C(2020) 83 AND /2 FINAL; RCC(2020) 2)**

Mr SCHMIT presented the Communication entitled ‘A strong social Europe for just transitions’ and the consultation document on a possible initiative to address the challenges related to fair minimum wages, both of which were tabled for approval. He noted that the PRESIDENT, in her Opening Statement at the first part-session of the European Parliament on 16 July 2019, had held the further development of the social dimension of the Union to be important and had indicated her intention to consult civil society on the introduction of a minimum wage so as to ensure decent living standards to all people working in full-time jobs.

Mr SCHMIT emphasised that the European Union had to make sure that the economic and social transition embarked upon under the European Green Deal was fair and that people remained centre stage when it put forward measures at all levels of the Union and consulted on those that could be in the areas of employment and social rights. He said that no Member State, region or citizen should be left behind and that the European Union should encourage the highest standards in labour markets and social protection so that all Europeans could have a decent and fulfilling life.

He explained that the Communication was putting forward a strategy that should contribute to the drawing up of an action plan in 2021 to implement the European

Pillar of Social Rights. It contained initiatives for this purpose which it anticipated implementing as of 2020. He referred to some of the more significant measures, such as an updated Youth Guarantee, the holding of a Work Summit and an updated skills strategy for Europe. He said that in 2021 the Commission would unveil a full-blown action plan for a fair transition, while stressing that the key to success was in the hands of national, regional and local authorities, as well as social partners and relevant stakeholders at all levels. They all had a role to play in this ambitious venture to ensure that the European social protection model could adapt to the move towards a climate-neutral economy, digitisation and a declining population.

Mr SCHMIT then pointed to the close link between the initiatives put forward by the Commission in the social area and the organisation of the Conference on the Future of Europe which was to act as the framework for widespread consultation with EU citizens on all the social issues of direct concern to them which affect their day-to-day lives.

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

- the opportunity and overall framework that the Conference on the Future of Europe provided for consulting civil society players and debating with them all of the practical initiatives that the Union had to take in a broad range of areas to support the transition towards a climate neutral economy;
- the risk, for some, that the Communication would be seen as recycling initiatives that had already been put forward or, with respect to developing skills, actually put in place;
- the desirability, therefore, of setting a target of innovation, and a break with the past in terms of skills development, that could be regarded as revolutionary in their ambition and adapted to the transition towards a climate neutral economy;
- the importance, in the context of the consultation on possible action to address the challenges linked to a minimum wage, of protecting, respecting and

promoting national traditions and freedom of collective bargaining.

Winding up the debate, the PRESIDENT noted the extent to which people were at the heart of European Green Deal and the strategy for the move towards climate neutrality by 2050. She stressed that, with the prospect of an unprecedented transformation, the European Union would only succeed in meeting the challenge it had set itself if it was fair and was in the interests of everyone. That was the reason why she held that nobody should be left behind and that the Union had to provide support for those that would have to make the greatest efforts as part of this transformation.

Following this presentation, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2020) 14/3 for transmission to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- approved the consultation document C(2020) 83/2 and authorised the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion to send it to the social partners.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

At the invitation of the PRESIDENT, Mr BORRELL briefed the College on recent developments in external relations, in particular the situation in Libya and the Sahel, and on the action taken by the Union to preserve the Iran Nuclear Deal or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – JCPOA, which was a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture.

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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 16.13.