



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2021) 2375 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 2 June 2021

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2375th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Tuesday 27 April 2021

(afternoon)

PV(2021) 2375 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

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Single sitting: Tuesday 27 April 2021 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 13.41 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	Executive Vice-President	
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President	
Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	Items 9 and 10
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President	
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President	
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	Items 1 to 10 (in part)
Ms GABRIEL	Member	
Mr SCHMIT	Member	
Mr GENTILONI	Member	
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member	
Mr BRETON	Member	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member	
Mr REYNDEERS	Member	
Ms DALLI	Member	
Ms JOHANSSON	Member	
Ms VÁLEAN	Member	
Ms URPILAINEN	Member	
Ms SIMSON	Member	
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member	
Ms McGUINNESS	Member	

Attended by videoconference:

Mr LENARČIČ Member

Absent:

Mr VÁRHELYI Member

The following sat in to represent an absent Member of the Commission:

Mr ANDREJKÓ Policy Assistant in Mr VÁRHELYI's Office

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT

Mr CALLEJA CRESPO 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
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Ms PETKOVA

**Director of Coordination and Administration in
the PRESIDENT's Office**

Ms HILI Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office Item 8

Ms SCHULTZ Policy Coordinator in the PRESIDENT's Office

Mr NOCIAR	Chef de cabinet to Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Items 1 to 9 (in part)
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Ms SPINANT Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission

Secretary: Ms JUHANSONE, Secretary-General, assisted by Ms ALLOUIS-LE LOSTEC, Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2021) 2375/FINAL; SEC(2021) 2375/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(2021) 2375)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 26 April 2021.

3. APPROVAL OF THE 2373RD AND 2374TH MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION (14 AND 21/22 APRIL 2021)

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2373rd and 2374th meetings for a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2021) 99 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held by videoconference on Friday 23 April 2021 (RCC(2021) 99/2).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework – Common Agricultural Policy (CAP):**

- **Rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repeal of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Regulation) – JAHR report – 2018/0216 (COD)**
- **Financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repeal of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (Regulation) – MÜLLER report – 2018/0217 (COD)**
- **Amendment of Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (EU) No 251/2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of aromatised wine products, (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union and (EU) No 229/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in favour of the smaller Aegean islands (Regulation) – ANDRIEU report – 2018/0218 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2021) 118/3.

- **Amendment of Directive 2009/103/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 relating to insurance against civil liability in respect of the use of motor vehicles, and the enforcement of the obligation to insure against such liability (Directive) – CHARANZOVÁ report – 2018/0168 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2021) 119/2.

- **Amendment of Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work (Directive) – ZAMBELLI report – 2020/0262 (COD)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 251.

- **Objection pursuant to Rule 112(2) and (3), and (4)(c) of Parliament's Rules of Procedures – Draft Commission Regulation amending Annexes II, III and IV to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for aclonifen, acrinathrin, *Bacillus pumilus* QST 2808, chlorantraniliprole, ethirimol, lufenuron, penthiopyrad, picloram and *Pseudomonas* sp. strain DSMZ 13134 in or on certain products – D070113/03 – 2021/2590 (RPS)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 267.

- **Objection pursuant to Rule 112(2) and (3), and (4)(c) of Parliament's Rules of Procedures – Draft Commission Regulation amending Annexes II, III and IV to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for acequinocyl, acibenzolar-S-methyl, *Bacillus subtilis* strain IAB/BS03, emamectin, flonicamid, flutolanil, fosetyl, imazamox and oxathiapiprolin in or on certain products – D063854/04 – RIVASI report – 2021/2608 (RPS)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 268.

- **2019 Discharge – General budget of the European Union 2019**

Line set out in SP(2021) 263/2.

- **European Child Guarantee– Oral Question O-000026/2021**

Line set out in SP(2021) 270/2.

- **Recovery and Resilience Facility (Regulation)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 271.

- **Conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part, and of the Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning security procedures for exchanging and protecting classified information (Council Decision) – 2020/0382 (NLE)**

Line set out in SI(2021) 123/2.

The Commission approved the lines set out for the following points, for transmission to Parliament:

- **Commission replies to the legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its part-session of March II 2021**

Line set out in SP(2021) 260.

- **Commission replies to the legislative resolutions adopted by Parliament at its part-session of March I 2021 (Part I)**

Line set out in SP(2021) 261/2.

The Commission approved the line set out for the following point, for transmission to the Committee of the Regions:

- **Follow-up to opinions of the Committee of the Regions – Plenary session of December 2020**

Line set out in SR(2021) 10/2.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, amendment of Regulations (EC) No 1936/2001, (EU) 2017/2107, and (EU) 2019/833 and repeal of Regulation (EU) 2016/1627 (Regulation) – FERRANDINO report – 2019/0272 (COD)**

Information set out in SP(2021) 269.

Other information:

- **Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register (C(2021) 2967)**

In accordance with the recommendation from the Chefs de cabinet made during their weekly meeting of 26 April, the contents of which were noted, the Commission confirmed the adoption of C(2021) 2967 by finalisation written procedure for which the time limit expired on Wednesday 28 April 2021 at 10.00 (PE/2021/3098).

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2021) 24)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2021) 24 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held by videoconference on Wednesday 21 April 2021.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2021) 158 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 19 and 23 April 2021.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2021) 159 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 19 and 24 April 2021.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2021) 160 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedure between 19 and 23 April 2021 archived in Decide.

6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2021) 161 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 26 and 30 April 2021 and of the finalisation written procedure initiated following the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet on Monday 26 April 2021.

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2021) 162)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2021) 42)**

***SECRETARIAT-GENERAL / REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD –
APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL ADVISER – MEMBER OF THE
REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD, AT GRADE AD14
(PERS(2020) 76 TO /4)***

The Commission had before it applications under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union for a post of Principal Adviser – Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in the Secretariat-General (PERS(2020) 76 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 1 February and 11 March 2021 (PERS(2020) 76/3 and /4).

The Commission then examined the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT and after consulting Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, the Commission decided to appoint Mr Antonio NICITA to the post as a member of the temporary staff under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities for a non-renewable period of three years.

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

**8. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – THE EU STRATEGY ON
VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION
(COM(2021) 120 AND /2; SWD(2021) 121 AND /2; RCC(2021) 104)**

The PRESIDENT invited Mr SCHINAS and Ms JOHANSSON to present the EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration.

Mr SCHINAS explained that, if the EU's migration policy was to be successful, it would need to comprise a system for the voluntary return and reintegration of irregular migrants. This system was set out in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum adopted in September 2020 as a key deliverable of an EU common return system.

He considered that it was only honest to acknowledge that Europe had not made real progress on the return of migrants who were unauthorised to remain in the EU. It was true that at the height of the migration crisis, this had been a particularly sensitive issue.

To illustrate his point he stated that, in 2019, of the 500 000 migrants who were subject to a return decision by the administrative or judicial authorities of the Member State in which they were staying, only 140 000 had actually returned to their country of origin. On the one hand, those decisions did not always enjoy public support in the Member States and, on the other hand, third countries were sometimes reluctant to accept the repatriation of nationals they had to undertake to reintegrate. Added to those challenges were insufficient data collection, the absence of a coherent framework for advising potential returnees, unsatisfactory coordination between stakeholders, a lack of ownership of the system and underdeveloped reintegration capacities in countries of origin, as well as the limited financial resources available to address the immediate and long-term needs of returnees.

It was therefore necessary to ensure better preparation of voluntary returns. In the spirit of the New Pact, which established an effective and sustainable asylum and migration system while ensuring the efficient and humane return of people who did not have the right to stay in Europe, the overall objective of the communication

proposed that day was to encourage voluntary returns in order to reinforce the effectiveness of returns in general and to ensure sustainable reintegration.

He stated that negotiations were underway to revise the Directive on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals ('Return Directive'). Proposals had also been made to extend the operational mandate of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, to enable it to assist Member States at all stages of the voluntary returns and reintegration process and to appoint an EU coordinator for returns who would be responsible for ensuring technical support in close liaison with Member States. He added that the communication also addressed issues of funding, advice, coordination and the removal of administrative obstacles to voluntary returns.

Mr SCHINAS concluded his presentation by referring to the economic aspect of a voluntary return and reintegration policy. He explained that, in concrete terms, whereas a forced return cost over EUR 3 000 on average, a voluntary return for reintegration in the country of origin cost just over EUR 500. He added that a voluntary return policy would enable cooperation with third countries of origin in order to define reintegration measures in those countries, which could only be beneficial to both parties.

Ms JOHANSSON underlined that this was the very first EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration.

She stressed the importance of this initiative, bearing in mind that only one third of the irregular migrants who were supposed to return to their country of origin actually did so and also that, of that third, only 30% opted for voluntary return.

She stated that, as regards return and readmission, the Commission had adopted a communication in February accompanying the Report assessing readmission cooperation with third countries. The Commission and the Council were currently working on its implementation with a view to adopting recommendations on visas in a few weeks' time.

She reiterated the remarks made by Mr SCHINAS on the economic advantages of a voluntary return strategy over forced returns.

In any event, she stressed the fact that the individual should be the focus of concerns: it was essential to take into account the situation of each person concerned to enable voluntary return in a dignified manner, alongside reintegration measures.

Ms JOHANSSON concluded by referring to the essential role of the EU's external action in assisting third-country partners to manage migration flows effectively.

At the invitation of the PRESIDENT, Mr BORRELL took the floor and welcomed this new initiative, stating that a voluntary return and reintegration policy was preferable to forced returns.

He highlighted the importance of having proper reintegration arrangements in place in countries of origin to ensure that returning migrants were equipped to face the future, which would require sufficient funding.

He recognised that it was difficult, for example in Africa, to have an exact idea of the scale of migration flows. For that reason it was necessary not only to strengthen cooperation between the EU and third countries, but also between the third countries themselves.

Mr BORRELL stated that EU delegations would be mobilised to ensure the success of the strategy of voluntary return and reintegration presented that day, particularly through awareness-raising and support activities.

The PRESIDENT concluded the item by thanking Mr SCHINAS and Ms JOHANSSON for their presentation of the dossier and Mr BORRELL for his additional comments.

Following these presentations, the Commission approved the Communication in COM(2021) 120/2 for transmission to Parliament and the Council and, for

information, to the national parliaments, together with the staff working document distributed as SWD(2021) 121/2, the contents of which were noted.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Mr BORRELL reported to the College on the latest developments in external relations.

He began by referring to the case of the Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny and the decision taken by the Russian judiciary on 26 April to order the temporary cessation of the activities of organisations close to him with the help of legal instruments intended for the fight against terrorism. Mr BORRELL said that the EU intended to adopt a strong declaration condemning this decision as incompatible with the principles of the rule of law.

He then informed the members of the College of his visit to the Sahel the previous week, during which he had visited Mauritania, Chad and Mali, to demonstrate the strategic importance of the region for the security of the EU.

He stated that, along with the French President, Emmanuel Macron, he had attended the funeral of the President of Chad, Idriss Déby Itno, on 23 April. He stressed the precariousness of the situation in Chad, one of the poorest countries in the world on the cusp of a difficult transition. He said that he had called on all the parties present to work towards starting a national dialogue in order to establish democracy in the country.

The following day, in Mali, he had held talks with the representatives of the interim government who had expressed their intention to hold democratic elections. However, he pointed out that two thirds of the country remained out of control and

that the authorities would need support to ensure that the whole territory returned to the control of the State.

He also referred to relations with the Western Balkans, which would be on the agenda for the discussions at the next Foreign Affairs Council on 10 May. He reported on the results of that week's visit to Brussels by the Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and the President of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, and said that he would receive the President of North Macedonia that day.

The Commission took note of this information.

10. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – BETTER REGULATION – JOINING FORCES TO MAKE BETTER LAWS (COM(2021) 219 TO /3; RCC(2021) 106)

At the invitation of the PRESIDENT, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ presented the Communication *Better regulation: Joining forces to make better laws*, submitted to the College for approval that day.

He began by explaining that the communication was long anticipated. The PRESIDENT's political guidelines for the current term of office gave a central role to better regulation, a concern which was reflected in all the Commissioners' mission letters. The political guidelines also specified that EU regulation had to be targeted and easy to comply with, and must not add unnecessary burdens.

A clear signal should to be sent to EU citizens and businesses that the aim of the Commission's legislative proposals was to make life easier for them.

Better regulation cut across all policy areas and applied equally to all legislative proposals. Mr ŠEFČOVIČ then presented the main changes introduced by the

communication, namely (i) the ‘one-in one-out’ approach, as promised by the PRESIDENT in her political guidelines, (ii) simplified and more accessible public consultations, (iii) mainstreaming of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and of the ‘do-no-significant-harm’ and ‘digital-by-default’ principles to make legislation future-proof and drive the twin green and digital transition, (iv) systematic integration of strategic foresight to make regulation fit for 55, and finally (v) a call for the European Parliament and the Council to honour the commitments made in the 2016 interinstitutional agreement in terms of evaluating the impact of their amendments to Commission proposals during the legislative process.

He then elaborated on the one-in one-out principle. This approach took into account all the compliance costs linked to proposed legislation in terms of adjustment and administrative costs.

The adjustment costs were those which might be necessary to achieve the policy objectives and expected benefits of planned legislation, such as investments that businesses might have to make to comply with EU legislation. These costs were calculated and presented transparently in the Commission’s impact assessments. To continue the efforts already made to minimise costs, compensatory measures would be considered.

Administrative costs were those which often did not contribute directly to the policy objectives of EU legislation, to growth or to investment. They would be offset within the same policy area. They would be comparable and aggregated, and would be set out in the Annual Burden Survey, which reported on efforts to simplify legislation.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ said that the one-in one-out approach would be piloted in the second half of 2021 and would be fully applied from the 2022 Commission Work Programme in order to ensure a smooth transition. The initial experience would be assessed in 2023 to make any necessary improvements.

In any event, the Commission always proposed legislation for the benefit of Europe; the benchmark being that the benefits must outweigh the costs.

He referred to the example of the European Green Deal, which would cost an estimated EUR 90 billion a year on top of the investment needed to achieve the EU's climate and energy objectives by 2030. These costs were impossible to offset by savings elsewhere, but were worth every cent given the benefits of this legislation in making the planet liveable for future generations. It was an investment in the future.

It was very important to point out that the one-in one-out approach would not jeopardise the EU's high economic, social and environmental standards.

Beyond this, the main objective of better regulation was and would continue to be producing legislation of the best possible quality, in other words evidence-based and easy to understand and comply with.

Another new aspect of the communication was the suggestion that strategic foresight be incorporated into better regulation. Each impact assessment would thus assess the effect on the proposed measures of future megatrends, such as hyperconnectivity or demographic change, to make sure that they were future-proof.

Similarly, each impact assessment would identify which UN Sustainable Development Goals were relevant to the proposal at hand and assess how the proposal would contribute to achieving them.

Finally, there needed to be a balance between the three EU institutions as regards better regulation. They had signed an interinstitutional agreement on better law-making in 2016. However, it was not the Commission's proposals that ultimately applied to EU citizens and businesses, but the legislation adopted by the co-legislators after interinstitutional negotiations. The Commission should thus not be the only one to analyse the impact of its legislative proposals; the co-legislators should do the same when their amendments made substantive changes to the

Commission's proposals. It was therefore important for the European Parliament and the Council to systematically document the expected impact of their amendments to the original Commission proposal. Hence the title of the Communication: *Better regulation: Joining forces to make better laws*.

The next step in the process was for the Commission to update the better regulation guidelines and toolbox, which would spell out the practical arrangements for implementing these changes.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ wound up by warmly thanking the Commission departments and the Commissioners' cabinets for their constructive cooperation in drawing up the communication, the aim of which was to ensure that all the Commission's legislative proposals were of the highest quality. Incidentally, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development ranked the Commission's regulatory approach among the best of its members.

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

- the quality of EU regulatory practices, which was often superior to that of the Member States;
- the complexity of simplifying legislation in general;
- support for the improvements proposed by that day's communication, in particular the simplification of public consultations, increased transparency, inclusion of the do-not-cause-significant-harm principle, and mainstreaming of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and foresight when drawing up legislative proposals;
- the sound reasons for the Better Regulation exercise, a transparency tool that made it possible to continue focusing on monitoring the regulatory burden; the usefulness of impact assessments in estimating compliance costs;

- the credibility this exercise added to EU legislation, as well as the safeguard it provided against overregulation;
- the need for legislative proposals to be based on the realities on the ground, from the standpoint not just of the costs and the increased administrative burden, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), but also of fundamental rights;
- the need to improve the way in which legislative proposals were drafted in order to make them easier to understand for citizens and businesses;
- the benefits of reassuring businesses in general and SMEs in particular, which were particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 crisis, with a commitment not to add additional layers of regulation and to streamline the rules these businesses were subject to;
- general support for the one-in one-out approach, which some felt could go even further in terms of the ratio between legislative acts added and those removed;
- the validity of this approach, which justified removing, for example, legislation that was no longer fit for the realities of the green and digital transition;
- however, reservations about the feasibility of the approach given the very nature of European legislation, as well as about the mechanical application of the approach and the fact that it was accompanied by exemptions which might undermine its credibility; a mention of the experience of the Member States which had implemented this approach and ultimately abandoned it because of the difficulty of applying it in practice; the risk that implementation of this approach would ultimately fail to satisfy either supporters of deregulation or supporters of regulation;
- in addition to compliance costs, a mention of the considerable benefits that EU legislation brought citizens and businesses, for example the European Green

Deal, whose positive effects would be felt for decades and whose ambition was to make the planet sustainable;

- a suggestion to examine the possibility of introducing sunset clauses in all the Commission's new legislative proposals;
- in order to simplify EU legislation, the suggestion that a codification of acts falling within the same area be added to the removal of acts that were no longer needed; the idea of an EU agency to perform this task, which was a possibility that could be explored;
- the need for a firm reminder to the co-legislators of the need to apply the principle of better regulation consistently and carry out impact assessments for significant amendments made by them to the Commission's initial proposals;
- the hope that when these amendments distorted the Commission's initial legislative proposals, it would have the courage to remove them;
- the need to pay attention to the quality of EU legislation as adopted at the end of the interinstitutional negotiating process and ensure that it was easy to understand;
- a reminder that every EU legislative act obviated the need for 27 national legislative acts, which was a de facto reduction in the legislative burden and also avoided fragmentation of legislation in the EU;
- the need for the Regulatory Scrutiny Board evaluations to consider the cumulative effect of all legislative initiatives and the risks associated with this cumulation;
- a call for the specific rights granted to the social partners by the EU Treaties to be recognised, in particular Article 154 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;

- approval of the excellent initiative of shortly appointing an EU SME Envoy;
- a question on the European Parliament’s right of initiative through resolutions under Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
- a question about the gender balance in responses to public consultations in the light of a recent experience.

In reply to the question concerning European Parliament resolutions under Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the PRESIDENT pointed out she had pledged that the Commission would act on such resolutions if they were supported by a majority of MEPs and were in line with the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ added that the Commission had responded positively to eight of the nine resolutions presented to date. The sole exception had been ruled out because of its budgetary implications.

He then turned to other comments made during the discussion.

He began by observing that the Commission must examine the quality of drafting of the summaries in the introduction to each of its initiatives, aimed at explaining in simple terms the political objective pursued. This was a new feature introduced some years ago.

He said that the possibility of introducing a sunset clause into legislative proposals could be considered, while stressing that integrating foresight and the Fit for Future (F4F) Platform were the guarantee that these proposals were fit for purpose and future-proof.

On the general need for transparency, he noted that the impact assessments and the evaluations of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board were in the public domain, which represented significant progress.

(27 April 2021)

As regards the body that could ensure simplification of regulation, he pointed out that a unit of the Secretariat-General was responsible for better regulation and that the Regulatory Scrutiny Board looked closely at impact assessments, cost assessments, ways of offsetting burdens, and the Annual Burden Survey.

He also said that the selection of the EU SME Envoy was ongoing.

In conclusion, although the communication provided for a degree of flexibility in implementing the new approach proposed that day, there would be a first assessment in 2023, after it had been applied for one and a half years, which would lead to corrections if necessary.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr ŠEFČOVIČ for his excellent work.

Following these presentations, the Commission, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, agreed that the Communication in COM(2021) 219/3 would be adopted by the finalisation written procedure, the deadline for which was set at 10.00 on Thursday 29 April 2021 (PE/2021/2993).

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The meeting closed at 14.57.