



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2022) 2420 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 20 July 2022

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2420th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 1 June 2022

(afternoon)

PV(2022) 2420 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

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Single sitting: Wednesday 1 June 2022 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 16.07 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Mr TIMMERMANS	Executive Vice-President	Items 1 to 11.2 (in part)
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President	Items 1 to 11.1 (in part)
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President	
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President	
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Mr GENTILONI	Member	
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member	
Mr BRETON	Member	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member	
Ms DALLI	Member	
Mr LENARČIČ	Member	
Ms VÁLEAN	Member	Items 11.1 (in part) and 11.2 (in part)
Ms URPILAINEN	Member	
Ms SIMSON	Member	Items 1 to 11.2 (in part)
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member	Items 1 to 11.2 (in part)
Ms McGUINNESS	Member	

Absent:

Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President
Ms GABRIEL	Member
Mr SCHMIT	Member
Mr REYNDERS	Member
Ms JOHANSSON	Member
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member

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

Mr HAGER	Chef de cabinet to Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Items 11.1 (in part) to 11.3
Mr BRIENS	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr BORRELL	
Mr BRAUN	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Ms JOUROVÁ	
Mr LASO BALLESTEROS	Expert in Ms GABRIEL's Office	
Mr KASEL	Chef de cabinet to Mr SCHMIT	
Ms PERIGNON	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr REYNDERS	
Ms WEBBER	Chef de cabinet to Ms JOHANSSON	
Ms TEEDUMÄE	Deputy Chef de cabinet to Mr VÁRHELYI	
Mr ŠATŪNAS	Chef de cabinet to Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Items 11.2 (in part) and 11.3

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	
Ms RISO	Deputy Chef de cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's Office	
Mr FLOSDORFF	Executive Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 11.1
Ms HILI	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 11.2 (in part)
Ms HOPMEIER	Member of the PRESIDENT's Office	Items 1 to 11.2 (in part)
Ms SPINANT	Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms BUKA	Secretariat-General	
Ms ALLOUIS-LE LOSTEC	Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General	

Secretary: Ms JUHANSONE, Secretary-General, assisted by Ms DEPREZ, Director in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2022) 2420/FINAL; SEC(2022) 2420/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(2022) 2420)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Chefs de cabinet held on Monday 30 May 2022.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2416th, 2417th, 2418th and 2419th meetings of 3, 11, 18 and 25 May 2022 for a later date.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2022) 130)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held by videoconference on Tuesday 24 May 2022 (RCC(2022) 130).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, repeal of Directive (EU) 2016/1148 (Directive) – GROOTHUIS report – 2020/0359 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2022) 177.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning measures to safeguard the security of gas supply and Regulation (EC) No 715/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on conditions for access to natural gas transmission networks (Regulation) – BUŠOI report – 2022/0090 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2022) 183.

- **Amendment of Annexes IV and V to Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 of the European Parliament and of the Council on persistent organic pollutants (Regulation) – HOJSÍK report – 2021/0340 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2022) 178.

- **Statistics on agricultural input and output and repeal of Regulations (EC) No 1165/2008, (EC) No 543/2009, (EC) No 1185/2009 and Council Directive 96/16/EC (Regulation) – KOKKALIS report – 2021/0020 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2022) 180/2.

- **Adapting of a number of legal acts in the area of justice (Commission delegated acts) to Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Regulation) – POSPÍŠIL report – 2016/0399 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2022) 184.

The Commission approved the line set out for the following point, for transmission to the European Parliament:

- **Commission replies to the legislative resolutions (and list of non-legislative resolutions without formal reply) adopted by the European Parliament – Part-session of May I 2022**

Line set out in SP(2022) 324/2.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Access of third-country goods and services to the Union’s internal market in public procurement and procedures supporting negotiations on access of Union goods and services to the public procurement markets of third countries (Regulation) – CASPARY report – 2012/0060 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2022) 292, further to note SI(2022) 88, which the Commission had already approved on 21 and 23 March 2022.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters as regards the entry of alerts by Europol (Regulation) – ZARZALEJOS report – 2020/0350 (COD)**

Compromise text in SP(2022) 321, further to note SI(2022) 89, which the Commission had already approved on 21 and 23 March 2022.

- **Protection of the environment through criminal law and replacement of Directive 2008/99/EC (Directive) – MANDERS report – 2021/0422 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2022) 182/2.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2022) 23)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2022) 23 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 25 May 2022.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED

(SEC(2022) 221 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 29 May 2022.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT

(SEC(2022) 222 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 29 May 2022.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS

(SEC(2022) 223 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 23 and 29 May 2022 archived in Decide.

6.4. SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES

(SEC(2022) 224 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 30 May and 3 June 2022

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2022) 225)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2022) 32)**

***SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – ANNUAL REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF
THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMISSION IN 2021
(SEC(2022) 226)***

The Commission took note of the annual report on the application of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission in 2021 set out in SEC(2022) 226.

**8. REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND THE COUNCIL – CONVERGENCE REPORT 2022 (PREPARED IN
ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 140(1) OF THE TREATY ON THE
FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION)
(COM(2022) 280; SWD(2022) 280; INFO(2022) 20; RCC(2022) 135)**

**9. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION AMENDING REGULATION
(EC) NO 974/98 AS REGARDS THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EURO IN
CROATIA
(COM(2022) 281; RCC(2022) 135)**

**10. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION ON THE ADOPTION BY
CROATIA OF THE EURO ON 1 JANUARY 2023
(COM(2022) 282; RCC(2022) 135)**

The PRESIDENT invited Mr DOMBROVSKIS and Mr GENTILONI to present the 2022 Convergence Report.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS noted that the Commission's task that day was to adopt a convergence report assessing fulfilment of the Maastricht criteria by the Member States not in the euro area. The main news to come out of the report was that Croatia now fulfilled all the convergence criteria, which paved the way for it to join the euro area on 1 January 2023, subject to a favourable opinion from the European Parliament and a final decision from the Council. He congratulated the Croatian authorities and the country's citizens on this significant achievement.

Croatia not only fulfilled the legal criteria laid down in the Treaty, but was also performing very well in terms of structural convergence. Since joining the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM II) in July 2020, Croatia had made commitments with regard to the business environment, public-sector governance, management of corporate insolvencies and efforts to counter money laundering. Moreover, Croatia's major banking institutions had been directly supervised by the ECB since the country joined the ERM II. Lastly, given that its levels of private and public debt had fallen, Croatia was no longer subject to a macroeconomic imbalance procedure.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS explained that the next steps would be to monitor the decision-making procedure involving the Member States and continue practical preparations for the adoption of the euro, which were already well under way. To that end, in addition to the convergence report, the Commission was also adopting two legislative proposals that day: a proposal for a Council Decision on the adoption by Croatia of the euro and a proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 974/98 as regards the introduction of the euro in Croatia.

Concluding his presentation, Mr DOMBROVSKIS referred briefly to the results of the assessment, carried out for the convergence report, of the progress made by the other Member States that were not yet part of the euro area, with the exception of Denmark, which was exempted from the assessment process under the Treaty. As things stood, Bulgaria did not fulfil the legal compatibility and price stability criteria, the Czech Republic did not fulfil the legal compatibility, price stability and

exchange rate criteria, Hungary and Poland did not fulfil the public finances criterion, Romania did not fulfil any of the criteria and Sweden did not fulfil the legal compatibility and exchange rate criteria.

Mr GENTILONI welcomed the fact that the convergence report sent a positive message, the significance of which should not be underestimated in view of the major progress made by Croatia in the last 30 years. He felt that the expansion of the euro area ought to be emphasised in public communication on the report, also given that, according to the latest Eurobarometer survey, 69% of citizens in the euro area considered the euro to be good for their country; this figure was almost a record high and had remained stable since 2019.

Mr GENTILONI stressed that, at the same time, it was a difficult moment to be moving over to the euro, given the generally high level of inflation. In his view, in the current economic climate, moving over to the euro would make the risks of even greater price increases harder to avoid. This was especially the case for Bulgaria, which was close to fulfilling the Maastricht criteria, and for Croatia. In both countries, levels of public support for the changeover to the euro were currently low, as people's primary concern was high inflation.

To conclude, Mr GENTILONI again emphasised the positive news for Croatia, but also stressed the need to very carefully prepare for the process of adopting the euro given the difficult economic climate.

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

- the considerable efforts made by the Croatian authorities and the country's citizens to prepare the country for this significant milestone in its history;
- the observation that Croatia's economy was already closely linked to the single currency, particularly through bank loans and tourist revenue, which were often accounted for in euro;

- the importance of ensuring that the process of adopting the euro went smoothly in Croatia, which was a responsibility shared by all political and civil society stakeholders, including the Commission itself with its technical expertise and assistance in financing the communication campaign on the changeover process;
- a reference to the fact that, taking a historical view, this was a concrete example of the benefits that the EU and European integration could bring in terms of a country's post-war reconstruction.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the report in COM(2022) 280, for transmission to the European Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the national parliaments, together with staff working document SWD(2022) 280, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Council Regulation in COM(2022) 281, for transmission to the Council and the European Central Bank and, for information, to the European Parliament and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Council Decision in COM(2022) 282, for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Central Bank and, for information, to the national parliaments.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE APPROVAL OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN FOR POLAND (COM(2022) 268; SWD(2022) 161)

The PRESIDENT began by pointing out that the Commission had started

negotiations with the Polish authorities on their recovery and resilience plan (RRP) about a year previously.

The implementation of Poland's plan was expected to contribute significantly to decarbonising its economy, while boosting its energy independence. The plan also contained several measures to improve the country's investment climate, including a comprehensive reform of the judiciary aimed at strengthening judges' independence. The recommendations sent to Poland in the context of the European Semester had already addressed the issue of the independence of the judiciary.

In that regard, the current Disciplinary Chamber of the Polish Supreme Court would have to be replaced by an independent and impartial body, the review process for the Chamber would have to be reformed and judges affected by decisions of the Disciplinary Chamber would have to be reinstated.

It would also be necessary to verify the new disciplinary regime for judges, in particular as regards the definition of offences. Judges could not be subject to disciplinary penalties for having submitted a request for a preliminary ruling to the Court of Justice, for the content of their judicial decisions or for having verified whether another court was independent, impartial and established by law.

As regards reinstatement of judges, each case was specific and there would be a process whereby each judge concerned could request a review of their case by a court which complied with EU requirements within 3 months, with the procedure being completed within 12 months.

The Commission had made it clear to the Polish authorities that the draft legislation currently before the Polish Parliament had to comply with the established criteria – which seemed to be the case – before any disbursement of funds under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). In the event of a major concern about the implementation of one of the criteria, the

Commission could decide to recover funds unduly paid, as with any recovery plan.

The PRESIDENT concluded by reiterating her faith in the proposed solution.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS pointed out that the Commission had already adopted 24 recovery and resilience plans.

The plan proposed by Poland was substantial in terms of future investments, as it would make it possible to finance the implementation of essential investment and reform measures in Poland worth EUR 35.6 billion, of which EUR 23.9 billion in grants and EUR 11.5 billion in loans. As for content, the Commission had worked very hard with Poland to ensure that the plan met the 11 criteria in the 2021 Regulation establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). A year later and thanks to intensive and fruitful cooperation between the Commission and Poland – as was the case with the other Member States – a draft plan was on the table which now contained a satisfactory set of reforms and investments.

The plan could make a real difference for Poland and for the EU and, while maybe not ideal, as in the case of other Member States, it was a solid plan.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS mentioned that, in the context of the European Semester, in 2020 the Council had recommended that Poland improve its investment climate, in particular by safeguarding judicial independence.

While the plan initially submitted by Poland had contained no such measure, the proposal for a Council Implementing Decision presented that day was a considerable improvement. It provided for a reform of the disciplinary regime for judges, with a new Chamber and new rules, a review procedure for judges affected by rulings of the Disciplinary Chamber and an ex-post check to ensure the completion of the review procedure.

Those milestones were particularly significant since an investment-friendly

climate required an independent judiciary, ensuring that the regulatory framework was enforced in a fair, impartial and effective manner. An independent judiciary was also an essential building block for an effective audit and control system that adequately protected the EU's financial interests.

Poland therefore needed to demonstrate that the milestones relating to the independence of the judiciary were achieved before any disbursement under the RRF. They were 'super-milestones' and the Commission would scrutinise the Polish reform very closely to make sure that all requirements had been met. Otherwise, no payments would be made. Moreover, if any of the measures were reversed after payment, the Commission would block any further RRF payments to Poland.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS acknowledged that the milestones did not solve all the rule-of-law issues in Poland, but pointed out that this was not the objective of the RRP. Anchored in the country-specific recommendations, it was above all a means of implementing reforms in the context of the European Semester, thus complementing – but not replacing – the Community instruments specifically designed to protect the rule of law in the EU.

The endorsement of the Polish plan and the infringement proceedings before the Court of Justice were two separate procedures. Under the RRF, both the relevant country-specific recommendations and the required arrangements for an internal control system able to protect the Union's financial interests were now addressed by the plan.

If a plan met all the criteria set out by the RRF Regulation, the Commission would, taking a fair approach and in order to ensure equal treatment between Member States, need to assess it positively and propose its approval to the Council.

At the same time, infringement proceedings were ongoing before the Court of

Justice and the Court's order imposing financial penalties would continue to be executed until the requirements set by the Court were fulfilled.

Appropriate communication was required in order to clarify the meaning of this endorsement of the RRP. This did not mean that all issues related to the rule of law were settled, but that the Commission required Poland to take important steps in the right direction so that it could benefit from EU funding under the RRF, which was not designed as a rule-of-law instrument. It also meant that money would only start flowing when the Commission had certified that the required reforms were in place and not before, and that no pre-financing would be disbursed, given that the deadline for pre-financing under the RRF Regulation had already elapsed.

The Commission now had more leverage than ever and more than with other tools, but needed to use it now, and wisely.

In conclusion, Mr DOMBROVSKIS reiterated that it was solid plan for which negotiations had extracted the maximum achievable and which passed the test of the RRF requirements.

Meanwhile, Mr GENTILONI felt that, in substance, it was not a question of whether or not Poland had resolved all of issues relating to the rule of law. Nonetheless, given the link for each country between judicial independence and the economic dimension, the plans could be a means of achieving significant improvements in the situation. The situation in Poland would indeed be improved if the established milestones and the three additional milestones, linked to the reform of the disciplinary regime for judges, appeal proceedings and, in late 2023, the auditing and control of procedures, were fulfilled.

There were other instruments for monitoring respect for the rule of law, such as Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union and infringement proceedings. The situation was currently highly unusual, with Russia's war of aggression

against Ukraine, and it was very important for trust to remain between the Commission and Poland.

In conclusion, Mr GENTILONI stressed that, from both a collegial and a political point of view, a serious assessment of compliance with the established milestones would be needed, and that this exercise would have to be carried out in the context of a discussion within the College.

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

- the fact that Poland had generally embarked on a positive path, for example with its exemplary reception of Ukrainian refugees, and that, with this plan, the ball was now in its court;
- with regard to respect for the rule of law, the importance for the Commission to thoroughly analyse the various options and to take responsibility in an uncompromising fashion;
- in this context, the usefulness of the specific rule-of-law milestones which, without prejudice to future infringements, were a clear improvement compared to the previous situation and on which the Commission would be extremely vigilant;
- the lack of risks for the EU budget, since no payments would be made if the established milestones were not fulfilled;
- the composition of the two chambers of the Polish parliament, which meant that the law eventually adopted would be that proposed by the government and which respected the milestones negotiated with the Commission;
- in legal terms, the need for Polish courts to rule on the reinstatement of the judges concerned on a case-by-case basis, as they could not be

reinstated by a general piece of legislation;

- the crucial importance in this matter of good communication from the Commission as soon as the plan was adopted, which contributed to a new political dynamic and vital European unity in relation to Russia;
- for some, however, the fact that the milestones did not resolve everything and that they would have to be fulfilled before the Commission accepted the Polish RRP;
- the independence of the judiciary in Poland, which was difficult to assess as long as the National Council for the Judiciary appointed judges, as this body was not independent;
- the current difference between the position of the Commission and that of the Court of Justice regarding the reinstatement of deposed judges;
- in addition to the ongoing military operations, a reminder that the war in Ukraine also related to the rule of law and European values;
- the need to examine the situation in Poland, which in many respects concerned the foundations of the European Union, politically and in the long term.

Following this exchange of views, the Commission adopted the proposal for a Council Implementing Decision set out in COM(2022) 268, for transmission to the Council, and, for information, to the European Parliament.

11.2. CONCLUSIONS OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL (BRUSSELS, 30 AND 31 MAY)
(SI(2022) 192)

The PRESIDENT informed the College of the main results of the last European Council, which took place on 30 and 31 May. First, she reported on

the difficult discussions that had taken place between the EU leaders preceding the agreement eventually reached on the sixth package of sanctions against Russia following its invasion of Ukraine.

There had been intense debate concerning the inclusion of crude oil and petroleum products in the package of measures, especially given the particular situation of the most landlocked Member States and therefore the most dependent on Russian oil supplies delivered by pipeline. This was why the European Council had finally agreed that the sixth package of sanctions against Russia would cover crude oil as well as petroleum products delivered to Member States from Russia, with a temporary exception for crude oil delivered by pipeline.

She also noted that the European Council intended to return to the subject of the temporary exception for crude oil delivered by pipeline as soon as possible. She stressed that, during this transition phase, it would be important for the Commission to monitor the smooth functioning of the single market in order to ensure a level playing field in the context of the phasing out of the EU's reliance on Russian fossil fuels.

The PRESIDENT then turned to the very warm welcome given by the EU leaders to the measures proposed by the Commission under the REPowerEU package to phase out as soon as possible the EU's dependence on Russian gas, oil and coal imports.

She pointed out, however, that while the talks had been very constructive they had stalled when it came to the question of the funding provided for implementing the package. This financing relied heavily on unused NextGenerationEU loans, but also on other instruments, such as the market stability reserve for the greenhouse gas emission trading scheme, which unlike other EU funds did not provide for a key for distribution among the

Member States, meaning that, inevitably, there were still difficult discussions ahead on how these funds would be distributed.

She briefly mentioned the talks on the defence investment gaps analysis carried out by the Commission and the High Representative in coordination with the European Defence Agency, which had resulted in a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening Europe's technological and industrial base.

During the talks, she had also noted that some Member States appeared to prioritise strengthening and expanding the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) while others favoured developing a stronger EU in the field of security. In this respect, she felt that it had to be possible to reconcile these two approaches, insofar as a stronger Europe in defence terms would make a positive contribution to global and transatlantic security and therefore had to be seen as complementary to NATO.

With regard to the reconstruction of Ukraine, she underlined that global support would be needed to rebuild the country's future and stated that the EU and its Member States were willing to play a major role in this respect. It would therefore be necessary to consider a Ukraine reconstruction platform that brought together the Ukrainian government, the EU and its Member States, the European Investment Bank, as well as international partners, finance institutions, organisations, experts and interested parties. She also noted that, as regards the country's reconstruction, it would be necessary to guarantee that the investment provided allowed reforms to be implemented to prepare Ukraine for future EU membership.

She considered that this last point raised significant challenges and was bound to generate intense debate at the June's European Council, the agenda for which included a discussion of Ukraine's EU membership.

She concluded her presentation with reference to the EU leaders' talks on global food security and affordability. She mentioned the various measures already taken to facilitate exports of agricultural products from Ukraine and to support the Ukrainian agricultural sector, looking forward to the 2022 harvest. In this connection, she noted that the European Council was inviting Member States to speed up work on the 'Solidarity Lanes' proposed by the Commission and to facilitate food exports from Ukraine via different land routes and EU ports. She also stated that she would meet the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah EL-SISI in June and that she intended to expand this meeting into a summit on food security with African and Middle Eastern countries in order to draw up short-, medium- and long-term solutions.

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

- the urgent need to find long-term solutions to continue the macro-financial assistance provided to Ukraine, which as things stood could only be guaranteed until the end of the year;
- in this connection, the benefit of considering solutions in the context of the EU's multiannual financial framework;
- the case for the EU coordinating the international aid provided to Ukraine, no matter what form it took;
- for some, the difficulty of considering financial aid provided mainly in the form of grants, as with the Marshall Plan, hence the need to provide for long-term loans taking account of Ukraine's capacity to repay them;
- for others, the need to ensure a level playing field, especially as regards the Member States that would benefit temporarily from the temporary exception granted in the sixth package of sanctions for crude oil delivered by pipeline;

- the particular attention to be paid to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of the actions and measures to be implemented to ensure global food security;
- in order to avoid further disruption to the agricultural markets of developing countries caused by massive aid, the need for Europe to promote increased food production at local level, particularly in Africa;
- the priority that still had to be given to humanitarian aid and to supporting the most vulnerable Ukrainians, especially disabled people in specialised institutions.

The PRESIDENT concluded the College's discussion by pointing out that the Swiss government was already willing to pool its aid for Ukraine with the aid measures being implemented by the EU. Lastly, she underlined how important it was that the future Ukraine reconstruction platform above all helped to implement structural reforms in Ukraine, and stressed that it would not be based solely on managing financial flows.

The Commission took note of this information.

11.3. COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'GOOD CLOTHES, FAIR PAY', PURSUANT TO REGULATION (EU) 2019/788 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL (C(2022) 3631)

Ms JOUROVÁ being absent, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ presented the proposal for a Decision submitted to the College for approval concerning the registration of the European citizens' initiative entitled 'Good Clothes, Fair Pay', in the authentic language (English).

The initiative essentially called on the Commission to propose legislation

requiring companies in the garment and footwear sector to carry out due diligence in respect of living wages in their supply chains.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ pointed out that the College's task that day was to decide only on the registration of the initiative and not at this stage to analyse its substance or political expediency.

He explained that the conditions for registering European citizens' initiatives were set out in Article 6(3) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of 17 April 2019 on the European citizens' initiative, which had repealed and replaced Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 with effect from 1 January 2020. One of those conditions was the requirement that no part of the citizens' initiative should manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for an EU legal act for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

He noted that the request made by the promoters of the European citizens' initiative 'Good Clothes, Fair Pay' fell within the Commission's powers to propose legal acts for the purpose of implementing the Treaties under Articles 50 and 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ underlined that if, within a period of twelve months, the proposal gathered the minimum support required, in other words at least one million signatures from citizens of at least a quarter of the Member States, the Commission would then analyse the substance of the proposal.

In accordance with the new Regulation (EU) 2019/788, proposed initiatives registered now benefited from more user-friendly arrangements for organisers to collect statements of support and easier access for European citizens. The Commission would have a period of six months to submit its reasoned decision on whether or not to take any action.

Following this presentation, the Commission confirmed that the citizens' initiative 'Good Clothes, Fair Pay' fulfilled the conditions for registration. It

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therefore decided, in accordance with document C(2022) 3631, to notify the group of organisers of this and authorised Ms JOUROVÁ to sign the reply on behalf of the College in the authentic language (English) and send it to the organisers of the initiative.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The Commission's other discussions on certain agenda items are recorded in the special minutes.

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The meeting closed at 18.02.