



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2024) 2494 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 24 July 2024

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2494th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 29 May 2024

(morning)

PV(2024) 2494 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic –

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Single sitting: Wednesday 29 May 2024 (morning)

The sitting opened at 09:07 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Ms VESTAGER	Executive Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Executive Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Executive Vice-President	
Mr SCHINAS	Vice-President	
Mr HAHN	Member	
Mr SCHMIT	Member	
Mr GENTILONI	Member	
Mr BRETON	Member	
Ms FERREIRA	Member	
Ms KYRIAKIDES	Member	
Ms DALLI	Member	
Ms JOHANSSON	Member	
Mr LENARČIČ	Member	
Ms SIMSON	Member	
Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Member	Items 8 (in part) to 10
Ms IVANOVA	Member	
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	

Absent:

Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	High Representative / Vice-President
Ms JOUROVÁ	Vice-President
Ms ŠUICA	Vice-President
Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI	Member

Mr REYNDERS	Member
Ms VÁLEAN	Member
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member
Ms URPILAINEN	Member
Ms McGUINNESS	Member

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

Ms BERGENFELT	Deputy Head of Cabinet to Mr BORRELL i FONTELLES	
Ms MUSILOVÁ	Member of Ms JOUROVÁ's cabinet	
Mr SCICLUNA	Head of Cabinet to Ms ŠUICA	
Ms STAWOWY	Member of Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI's cabinet	
Ms NALIN	Policy Coordinator in Ms VÁLEAN's cabinet	
Ms TEEDUMÄE	Deputy Head of Cabinet to Mr VÁRHELYI	
Mr LAHTI	Head of Cabinet to Ms URPILAINEN	
Ms PREISING	Head of Cabinet to Mr SINKEVIČIUS	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Ms REILLY	Head of Cabinet to Ms McGUINNESS	

The following also sat in:

Mr WHELAN	Acting Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr CALLEJA CRESPO	Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms SPINANT	Director-General, DG Communication	
Mr MAMER	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Ms VILA NUÑEZ	Head of Unit in IDEA	Item 8
Mr NIINISTÖ	Special Adviser for European Defence and Security in IDEA	Item 8
Mr MOLENAAR	Team Leader in IDEA	Item 8

Mr MATTILA	Seconded national expert (SNE) in IDEA	Item 8
Ms ALLOUIS-LE LOSTEC	Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General	
Ms BUKA	Secretariat-General	

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2024) 2494/FINAL; SEC(2024) 2494/FINAL)

The Commission took note of that day's agenda and of the tentative agendas for forthcoming meetings.

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF HEADS OF CABINET

(RCC(2024) 2494)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 27 May 2024.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2489th, 2490th, 2491st, 2492nd and 2493rd meetings of 10, 17 and 23 April, as well as 15 and 22 May 2024 until a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2024) 105)

The Commission took note of the written exchange distributed as RCC(2024) 105 on the files of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) for the period from 21 to 24 May.

The Commission approved the line proposed for the following point:

- **Follow-up to the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in Case C-741/19 Komstroy**

Line set out in SI(2024) 248.

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points, 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 at its April II 2024 part-session**

Line set out in SP(2024) 394/2.

- **Commission replies to the non-legislative resolutions adopted by the European Parliament at its January I 2024 part-session**

Line set out in SP(2024) 393.

The Commission approved the line proposed for the following point, for transmission to the Economic and Social Committee:

- **Follow-up to opinions of the Economic and Social Committee – Plenary session of February 2024**

Line set out in SC(2024) 16/2.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Amendment of Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA (Directive) – ZARZALEJOS & RODRÍGUEZ RAMOS report – 2023/0250 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2024) 239.

- **Combating corruption, replacement of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA and the Convention on the fight against corruption involving**

officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union and amendment of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Directive) – STRUGARIU report – 2023/0135 (COD)

Information set out in SI(2024) 240.

- **Soil Monitoring and Resilience (Soil Monitoring Law) (Directive) – HOJSÍK report – 2023/0232 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2024) 246.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2024) 22)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2024) 22 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 22 May 2024.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2024) 135 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 21 and 26 May 2024.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2024) 136 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 21 and 26 May 2024.

6.3. *DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS*
(SEC(2024) 137 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 21 and 26 May 2024 archived in Decide.

6.4. *SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN PROCEDURES*
(SEC(2024) 138 TO /3)

The Commission took note of the significant written procedures for which the time limit expired between 27 May and 7 June 2024.

7. *ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS*
(SEC(2024) 139 TO /3)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2024) 41 TO /3)

During the meeting, Mr HAHN presented three additional proposals for administrative decisions, which were submitted directly to the College for approval.

First, he mentioned the creation of a Chief Confidential Counsellor function, as a result of the human resources strategy adopted by the Commission in 2022. The aim of this function was to provide staff with a privileged point of contact, easily accessible in the event of allegations of harassment, in order to contribute to a trust-based, inclusive and respectful working environment in line with European values. The Chief Confidential Counsellor would not have decision-making powers, but

would act as a mediator, promoting dialogue. Mr HAHN announced the appointment of Ms Lene NAESAGER to this post, emphasising her recognised skills and wealth of experience.

He also announced the appointments of Mr Philippe VAN DAMME as Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General for Digital Services (DG DIGIT) and Ms Lorena BOIX ALONSO as Deputy Director-General in the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE). He highlighted their respective merits and extensive expertise and congratulated them on their appointment.

**7.1. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – APPOINTMENT OF A
HORS CLASSE ADVISER AT GRADE AD15/16
(PERS(2024) 119 TO /4)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Hors Classe Adviser — Chief Confidential Counsellor — in DG Human Resources and Security (PERS(2023) 119 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 March and 24 April 2024 (PERS(2023) 119/3 and /4).

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

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

**7.2. DG DIGITAL SERVICES – APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY
DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15/16
(PERS(2024) 89 TO /4)**

(29 May 2024)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), 29(1)(b) and 29(2) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General with responsibility for Directorates B and C in DG Digital Services (PERS(2022) 89 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 23 November and 8 December 2023 (PERS(2022) 89/3 and /4).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Mr Philippe VAN DAMME to the post.

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

**7.3. DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY – APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15/16
(PERS(2024) 44 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General with responsibility for Directorates B, C and D in DG Health and Food Safety (PERS(2024) 44).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 22 January and 22 February 2024 (PERS(2024) 44/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms KYRIAKIDES, it then decided to appoint Ms Lorena BOIX ALONSO to the post.

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

**7.4. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR
AT GRADE AD14/15
(PERS(2024) 42 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the ‘Waterborne’ Directorate in DG Mobility and Transport (PERS(2024) 42).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 14 March and 16 May 2024 (PERS(2024) 42/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants’ qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms VĂLEAN, it then decided to appoint Ms Fotini IOANNIDOU to the post.

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

**7.5. DG COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, CONTENT AND
TECHNOLOGY – CLOSURE OF A SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR
THE APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR (GRADE AD14/15)
(PERS(2024) 95)**

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr BRETON, the Commission decided to close the selection procedure for the post of Director of the ‘Digital Excellence and Science Infrastructure’ Directorate in DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology, without making any appointment.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.6. DG HUMAN RESSOURCES AND SECURITY – PUBLICATION OF THE VACANCY NOTICE FOR THE POST OF EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR
(PERS(2024) 43 TO /2)**

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to authorise the publication of the vacancy notice for the post of European Data Protection Supervisor, as set out in PERS (2024) 43/2.

This decision would take effect immediately.

7.7. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – OPENING UP THE ‘SECONDED NATIONAL EXPERTS’ AND ‘NATIONAL EXPERTS IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING’ PROGRAMMES TO ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES

On a proposal from Mr HAHN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission took note of the opening up of the seconded national experts and national experts in vocational training programmes to the enlargement candidate countries, namely Türkiye, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, as well as to Kosovo as a potential candidate country.

8. THE EUROPEAN UNION’S PREPARATION FOR AND RESPONSE TO CRISES

The PRESIDENT warmly welcomed Mr Sauli NIINISTÖ, former President of Finland, who had recently been appointed Special Adviser entrusted with drafting a report on how to improve the EU’s preparedness for civil and defence crises. The report would be timely, as the EU was facing various conflicts in its neighbourhood and multiple threats, including in the fields of health, food security, energy and

critical infrastructure. The PRESIDENT referred to the major events of the previous 2 years, especially Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and highlighted the intensification, scale and increasing sophistication of hybrid attacks against European society. The EU was now constantly confronted with cyber-attacks and massive information manipulation. She also noted that, while the origins of these attacks and manipulation were often clear, the extent of the underlying risks remained to be seen. In response to these challenges, the EU should therefore raise awareness in society, without fuelling fears.

Mr NIINISTÖ thanked the PRESIDENT for her introduction and the entire College for their welcome. He noted that security had become a vast and complex issue, and that his report therefore sought to analyse it in depth. Security was a fundamental need for EU citizens and for European society as a whole. In particular, it was a prerequisite for exercising fundamental rights in the EU and protecting democracy. It was therefore problematic that European society took security for granted. In that regard, it was important politically to explain to people that they could no longer take security for granted and that a comprehensive approach had to be designed to understand the new risks that had been identified.

Mr NIINISTÖ pointed out that the EU had already made a great deal of progress in the security field by creating new mechanisms and tools more suited to current threats and by launching a broad political debate on the next steps in implementing a comprehensive approach. However, it should move from a reactive approach to managing threats to a more proactive approach by building up crisis preparedness, on the basis of different scenarios covering the emergence of new threats.

He then moved on to European citizens' perception of Europe and the world and the need to raise awareness of current risks, especially by fleshing out the concept of the integrity of the EU, where an attack on one Member State was considered an attack on the whole EU. He also considered it crucial to project the image of a strong

Europe, both among Europeans and in the outside world, in order to ensure the EU's security and sustainability.

Lastly, Mr NIINISTÖ raised the question of a potential attack on one of the Member States and the EU's responsibilities in such a case. In his view, it was not enough to rely solely on NATO support: the EU must therefore play a more active role in defence and armaments. He felt that this was not just about increasing defence spending to reach the target of 2% of GDP, but suggested giving some thought to the effectiveness of defence spending and the EU's powers in this area.

The concept of modern war also had to be redefined to include new forms of conflict affecting European society, such as those based on quantum technologies or artificial intelligence. These security aspects fell within the EU's remit rather than NATO's. Future EU efforts in this area should focus on establishing a new type of public-private partnership, involving business more in innovation and increasing trust between the public and private sectors, which together could respond effectively to new security challenges.

The PRESIDENT returned to the concept of the integrity of the EU, pointing out that the many hybrid attacks took different forms in different Member States. She stressed that, while a one-off and relatively limited incident in one Member State may seem minor, the sum of incidents occurring daily across Europe amounted to a general attack on the integrity of the EU, in the form of large-scale manipulation of public opinion in the Member States.

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

- the importance of a 'Europe that protects', which was difficult to translate into policy objectives, especially because of the division of powers between the EU and its Member States;

- recognition of an asymmetry between internal security – where significant progress had been made at European level, in particular during this Commission’s term of office, with the establishment of the Security Union, tougher action against cyber threats, terrorism, money laundering and organised crime, and the stronger law enforcement capacities of agencies such as Europol, Eurojust and Frontex – and external security, where there was still room for improvement in defence and diplomacy;
- the impact of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine on Europeans, and the awareness it had created of the continual interaction between internal and external security;
- recognition of the growing number of hybrid attacks, the instrumentalisation of migration and the rapid expansion of organised crime, and the need to continue constructive cooperation between the relevant authorities in the Member States and the EU to combat these scourges;
- the importance of tackling hybrid threats with a military and strategic approach in all areas of EU competence;
- the need to consider a broader interpretation of European defence and security policy, and to work more closely with the military and intelligence services to produce appropriate strategic forecasts;
- the need to combat disinformation more effectively, as it was used by foreign actors to manipulate democratic rules and weaken the EU and its Member States, by anticipating and reacting firmly to any form of interference, wherever it came from;
- the importance of the concept of comprehensive security, which, as in Finland, enabled all public and private actors to be involved and the whole value chain to be mobilised;

- a reminder of the European response during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it was possible to avoid fragmentation by amending European instruments;
- on that basis, the usefulness of increased mobilisation of industry to react as quickly as possible in the event of a crisis, as proposed by the Commission, for example, in the recent Regulation establishing a framework of measures to strengthen Europe's semiconductor ecosystem;
- in the context of better preparedness for future crises, the urgent need to spend better and more effectively through a more competitive European defence sector and economies of scale in health;
- a reminder of the progress made in preparedness for health crises since the pandemic, including the creation in September 2021 of the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA);
- the importance of combining long-term strategies with solidarity during crises, as demonstrated by the use of cohesion policy as a transitional and emergency tool during the pandemic;
- the importance of addressing climate change and its financial and geopolitical consequences in the future, despite the many uncertainties that remained;
- the clean transition dialogues as a model for promoting interaction with the private sector and fostering EU preparedness and responses to future crises;
- the potential benefits of joint European purchasing of military equipment;
- the need to utilise the EU's strengths as the main player in world trade and the largest donor of development aid to enhance its security;
- awareness of the risks of outsourcing sensitive technologies;

- the need to consider security as a cross-cutting issue for future budgets, to allocate a stable percentage of the next long-term budget to it, and to use the recommendations of the European Semester for policies and measures with an impact on security;
- as stressed repeatedly, recognition of the action taken by this Commission that had already improved Europe's preparedness and response to the various crises;
- the belief that economic sanctions – even if their effects were not immediately discernible – had a long-term impact on Russia that could force it to scale back its war effort;
- lastly, a reminder that discrimination and exclusion were sources of instability in the EU and that it was therefore necessary to continue working towards greater integration and social cohesion in general.

The PRESIDENT wound up the discussion by noting a change in Europeans' attitude towards Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, as citizens now recognised that it represented an existential threat that would not go away by itself.

With regard to cyber-attacks, she regretted the authorities' past reluctance to point the finger at those responsible, stressing in this context that, where evidence existed, it was important to acknowledge it, lay it out clearly and name the perpetrators, be they state or non-state actors, whenever they could be clearly identified. She proposed to establish clear European defence priorities together with the Member States, such as a unified air defence shield, before considering in more detail the question of financing. In this regard, she pointed out that national contributions or EU own resources would be needed to finance additional priorities in this area.

Finally, the PRESIDENT stressed the importance for Mr Niinistö's report of taking account of Member States' competences, for example regarding the control of troop organisation, commitment doctrines and military missions. She added that the

Union's responsibilities in terms of industrial policy and the single market could be used to stimulate collective action.

Mr NIINISTÖ, in turn, expressed his confidence in the EU's past and future actions and stressed the importance of testing existing tools to ensure their effectiveness in real-life situations. He also recognised Finland's unique perspective, based on its experience of sharing a 1 300-kilometre border with Russia. He believed that this experience had contributed to an increased awareness among the Finnish population of the potential threats to the country's security and the need for a collective approach and response. He also stressed the importance of military service in maintaining national unity.

Citizens' acceptance of security needs was crucial, as this made it easier to obtain support for higher public spending on security and defence measures. Trust was essential in this area, including in relation to energy and food supply issues, and everything needed to be prepared well in advance to anticipate future crises. Lastly, Mr NIINISTÖ spoke in favour of increased civil-military cooperation at European level, mirroring what was already the case in Finland, and said that his report would stress the need to raise societal awareness of the risks of war and climate change.

9. WITHDRAWAL OF THE REASONED PROPOSAL UNDER ARTICLE 7(1) TEU PROCEDURE CONCERNING POLAND (C(2024) 3595)

The Commission approved the Communication from Ms JOUROVÁ to the Commission in C(2024) 3595 concerning the withdrawal of the Commission's reasoned opinion on Poland under the procedure laid down in Article 7(1) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

10. THE 2023 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORTS OF THE COMMISSION SERVICES
(INFO(2024) 19)

Mr HAHN presented the Annual Activity Reports of the Commission services to the College. These reports, which were published every year in June, took stock of the achievements of the previous year and prepared the Commission for assuming its political responsibility for the management of the EU budget in an accountable and transparent manner. The detailed information in the individual reports was then summarised in the Annual Management and Performance Report, which would be presented to the College for adoption on 19 June.

In each report, the authorising officer by delegation – the Director-General, Head of Service or Director of Executive Agency – certified by a formal declaration that the funds had been used in accordance with the stated objectives and the principles of sound financial management. If necessary, a reservation could be issued to qualify the statement of assurance. Mr HAHN reported that for 2023, 14 reservations had been issued, compared with 15 the previous year. Although the number of reservations remained relatively stable, the financial impact for 2023 had increased slightly, to around EUR 1 290 million. However, this represented only 0.7% of total expenditure, reflecting excellent budgetary management by the Commission. Action plans had been developed to correct shortcomings and reduce the associated risks.

With regard to recent achievements, Mr HAHN pointed out that in 2023 the Commission had proposed a targeted mid-term review of the current Multiannual Financial Framework in order to ensure that the EU budget could continue to deliver. An interinstitutional agreement concluded in February 2024 had made it possible, for the first time, to revise the expenditure ceilings of the EU's long-term budget. This had enabled the EU to further consolidate its support to Ukraine, continue to address migratory and external challenges, and strengthen

competitiveness and European sovereignty through the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP).

In conclusion, Mr HAHN welcomed the progress made in achieving the Commission's priority objectives thanks to the collective commitment of the Members of the College.

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The meeting closed at 10.48.