



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2024) 2509 final

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Brussels, 15 January 2025

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

**of the 2509th meeting of the Commission
held in Brussels
(Berlaymont)
on Wednesday 11 December 2024
(morning)**

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Single sitting: Wednesday 11 December 2024 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.07 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Ms RIBERA	Executive Vice-President	
Ms VIRKKUNEN	Executive Vice-President	
Mr SÉJOURNÉ	Executive Vice-President	
Ms KALLAS	High Representative / Vice-President	
Ms MÎNZATU	Executive Vice-President	
Mr FITTO	Executive Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Member	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Member	
Ms ŠUICA	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	Items 8 to 10
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	
Mr KUBILIUS	Member	
Ms KOS	Member	
Mr SÍKELA	Member	
Ms KADIS	Member	
Ms ALBUQUERQUE	Member	
Ms LAHBIB	Member	
Mr BRUNNER	Member	
Ms ROSWALL	Member	
Mr SERAFIN	Member	
Mr JØRGENSEN	Member	
Ms ZAHARIEVA	Member	
Mr McGRATH	Member	
Mr TZITZIKOSTAS	Member	
Mr HANSEN	Member	

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Mr MICALLEF

Member

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT

Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT

Mr CALLEJA CRESPO

Director-General, Legal Service

Ms SPINANT

Director-General, DG Communication

Ms PINHO

Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson
of the Commission

Mr ADAM

Deputy Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT

Mr BAERT

Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet

Ms SEMLALI

Policy Assistant in the PRESIDENT's cabinet

Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI

Acting 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) 2509/FINAL; SEC(2024) 2509/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) 2509)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 9 December 2024.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2508th meeting of 4 December 2024 for a later date.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2024) 156)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) held on Friday 6 December 2024 (RCC(2024) 156).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 as regards provisions relating to the date of application (Regulation) – 2024/0249 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 406.

- **Driving licences, amendment of Directive (EU) 2022/2561 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repeal of Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulation (EU) No 383/2012 (Directive) – PAULUS (ex-DELLI) report – 2023/0053 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 401.

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

Line set out in SI(2024) 402.

- **Laying down of additional procedural rules relating to the enforcement of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (Regulation) – GREGOROVÁ (ex-LAGODINSKY) report – 2023/0202 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 403.

- **RESTORE – Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 and Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 (Regulation) – BUŁA & OMARJEE report – 2024/0275 (COD)**

Line set out in SP(2024) 610.

- **Fixing for 2025 and 2026 of the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters (Council Regulation) – 2024/0285 (NLE)**

Line set out in SI(2024) 409.

The Commission took note of the following point:

- **Restructuring of the Union framework for the taxation of energy products**

and electricity (recast – Council Directive) – 2021/0213 (CNS)

Information set out in SI(2024) 407.

**5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION
(RCC(2024) 45)**

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2024) 45 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 4 December 2024.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

**6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2024) 288 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 2 and 8 December 2024.

**6.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2024) 289 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 2 and 8 December 2024.

**6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2024) 290 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 2 and 8 December 2024 archived in Decide.

**6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED
(SEC(2024) 291 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the written procedures specifically identified for which the time limit expired between 9 and 13 December 2024, and of the finalisation written procedure.

**6.5. GRANTING OF AN AD HOC EMPOWERMENT TO THE MEMBER OF
THE COMMISSION WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR FISHERIES TO
ADOPT PROTECTIVE MEASURES IN THE EVENT OF THE
COUNCIL'S FAILURE TO FIX FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR
CERTAIN FISH STOCKS, APPLICABLE IN UNION WATERS AND,
FOR UNION FISHING VESSELS, IN CERTAIN NON-UNION WATERS
(C(2024) 8776)**

The Commission decided to grant an ad hoc empowerment to the Member of the Commission with responsibility for fisheries to adopt, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, on behalf of the Commission and under its responsibility, certain decisions subject to the conditions laid down in Articles 2 to 8 of this Decision.

The Commission adopted the Decision in C(2024) 8776.

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2024) 292/2)**

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(PERS(2024) 83/2)

7.1. DG ENERGY – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART (SEC(2024) 312)

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided:

- to create a temporary Housing Task Force reporting to the Director-General and under the authority of the Commissioner for Energy and Housing, for the duration of the current Commission's term of office;
- to create, at the level of Deputy Director-General, a temporary post of Head of the Task Force, who would be supported by the 'Housing: Strategy and Coordination' Unit (ENER.TFH.01), whose Head of Unit would be the Deputy Head of the Task Force;
- to transfer, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Matthew BALDWIN, currently Deputy Director-General in DG Energy (ENER.DDG3), to the newly created post of Head of the Housing Task Force;
- to abolish the temporary post of Deputy Director-General (ENER.DDG3);
- to change the reporting line of the Energy Platform Task Force (EPTF), so that the Task Force no longer reported to the Deputy Director-General (ENER.DDG3) but rather to the Director-General of DG Energy;
- to create a team of experts comprising one staff member from each of the following Directorates-General: Competition; Economic and Financial Affairs; Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion; Internal Market,

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Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs; Regional and Urban Policy; and from the Joint Research Centre, to support the work of the Task Force. Each of the experts would be made available to DG Energy but would remain administratively assigned to their Directorate-General of origin;

- to create, in the Directorates-General concerned, a network of contact points led by the Task Force.

These decisions would take effect on 1 February 2025.

**7.2. DG BUDGET – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14/15, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14, OF A PRINCIPAL ADVISER POST
(SEC(2024) 313; PERS(2024) 84)**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to amend the organisation chart of the Directorate-General for Budget. The amendments concerned:

- the creation of a temporary post of Principal Adviser for the future financing of the European public administration, reporting to the Director-General of DG Budget; this post would be abolished upon departure of the future jobholder;
- the authorisation, with immediate effect, of the internal and interinstitutional publication, at grade AD14/15, and external publication, at grade AD14, of the vacancy notice set out in PERS(2024) 84 for the post of Principal Adviser for the future financing of the European public

administration in DG Budget, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations.

Unless indicated otherwise, these decisions would take effect on 16 December 2024.

**7.3. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART
(SEC(2024) 314)**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to amend the organisation chart of the Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security. The amendment concerned the creation of a six-month temporary post of *Hors Classe* Adviser on organisational structures. The holder of this post would report to the Director-General to advise on the creation of a new Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa, Gulf (DG MENA).

This Decision would take effect from 1 January 2025.

**7.4. EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE – AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14/15, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD14, OF A DIRECTOR POST
(PERS(2024) 85)**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to authorise the internal and interinstitutional publication, at grade AD14/15, and external publication, at grade AD14, of the vacancy notice set out in PERS(2024) 85 for the post of Director of the ‘Expenditure – Operations and Investigations’ Directorate in the

European Anti-Fraud Office, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations.

This decision would take effect immediately.

7.5. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – LAUNCH OF THE ANNUAL APPRAISAL EXERCISE FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided:

- to authorise the launch of the appraisal exercise for senior management officials for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2024 in line with the rules applied during the previous exercise;
- that the reporting officer would be the jobholder’s direct hierarchical superior, including in cases where the direct hierarchical superior was performing those duties in accordance with the rules on deputising, and to release the Director-General of DG Human Resources and Security from the obligation, laid down in point 5 of Annex III to the Commission Decision of 26 October 2004 ‘Compilation document on Senior Officials Policy’ (SEC(2004) 1352/2), to draw up a list identifying the reporting officer for each jobholder.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.6. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – COMMISSION DECISIONS ON POST TERM-OF-OFFICE ACTIVITIES OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

(C(2024) 9007; C(2024) 9008; C(2024) 9009; C(2024) 9010; C(2024) 9011)

The Commission decided that the professional activities envisaged by

Ms Věra Jourová, Ms Mariya Gabriel, Mr Janusz Wojciechowski and Ms Kadri Simson after leaving office as Members of the Commission were compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and with the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, subject to certain specific conditions and obligations.

The Commission adopted the Decisions set out in C(2024) 9007, C(2024) 9008, C(2024) 9009, C(2024) 9010 and C(2024) 9011.

7.7. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – LAUNCH OF THE 18TH PROMOTION EXERCISE FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS

The Commission took note of the decision of Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, on the 18th promotion exercise for senior management officials, adopted in accordance with the provisions of the Commission Decision of 10 May 2007 on the system of promotion of senior management officials (SEC(2007) 605).

Under that Decision, the 18th promotion exercise would be carried out on the basis of the following criteria: the promotion rate would be up to a maximum of 15% of eligible officials in senior management posts; the exercise would concern posts of Director or equivalent (at grade AD14 and AD15) and the posts of Director-General or equivalent (at grade AD15 and AD16), subject to the availability of sufficient budgetary appropriations; the eligibility conditions would have to be met at the latest by 1 January 2025, the date on which the promotions would come into effect.

8. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ON COUNTERING HYBRID THREATS FROM THE WEAPONISATION OF MIGRATION AND

**STRENGTHENING SECURITY AT THE EU'S EXTERNAL BORDERS
(COM(2024) 570 AND /2; RCC(2024) 159)**

The PRESIDENT pointed out that hybrid attacks based on the weaponisation of migration had started in 2021 at Poland's border with Belarus, a few months before the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The aim of the attacks was to exploit the EU's vulnerabilities as regards migration and to instrumentalise them to divide Europeans. However, the EU had shown a united front in the face of these attacks and had helped Poland using all means available, including measures against transport operators that facilitated migrant smuggling.

The PRESIDENT noted that, unfortunately, migration flows had continued to be weaponised since then, especially at the EU's eastern borders. This problem had to be addressed by helping the Member States concerned, while making a clear distinction between illegal migration, which should be managed effectively, and the weaponisation of irregular flows of migrants, which had to be tackled decisively.

Ms VIRKKUNEN considered that it was important to show solidarity towards the Member States affected by these attacks. Hybrid attacks posed a new security threat at the EU's eastern borders and were a political weapon used by hostile state actors to destabilise the EU and its Member States. She noted that the Communication presented that day was eagerly awaited by the Council, which was expected to discuss it at its next meetings.

The Communication also helped defend democracy and the EU's fundamental values, ensuring the rights of the most vulnerable were respected, in parallel with the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. It was also about protecting European unity by making it clear that an attack on one Member State was an attack on all Member States and on the EU as a whole.

Lastly, Ms VIRKKUNEN announced that additional funds would be made available to the Member States concerned, which could use all means available under EU law

to take exceptional, temporary and proportional measures to combat hybrid attacks based on the weaponisation of migration. European agencies, such as FRONTEX, EUROPOL and the European Union Agency for Asylum, were ready to scale up. Moreover, the additional funding which has just been granted could also improve border surveillance means.

Mr BRUNNER noted that the Communication provided the legal framework for any future action and called on Member States to cooperate closely with the EU and with each other. Beyond the immediate response, preparedness and resilience in the longer term needed to be built up, which would also require a change of mindset among the European population.

In this respect, he pointed out that the Communication was not about migration, but about strengthening the EU's security in a context of hybrid warfare. He concluded his remarks by stressing the importance for the EU of showing it could defend itself against such threats and prevent Russia and Belarus from using the EU's principles and values against it, including the right to asylum.

The PRESIDENT confirmed that a change of mindset among European citizens was necessary in the face of these hybrid threats, and pointed out that a white paper on EU security was being drafted as a follow-up to Mr Niinistö's report. Hybrid warfare had to be seen in a much broader context that also encompassed disinformation and manipulation of public opinion. Lastly, she added that the space for freedom of expression provided by democracies should not be misused by hostile state actors.

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

- full backing for the Communication and solutions put forward to support the Member States concerned;

- a reminder that hybrid threats had to be seen from a broader perspective rather than as isolated events, regardless of their nature, ranging as they did from the weaponisation of migration to cyber-attacks and attacks on warehouses, rail facilities, oil and gas pipelines and critical infrastructure;
- the need for greater transparency towards European citizens as regards the challenges posed by hybrid attacks and the action taken every day at EU level to combat them, including in cyberspace;
- a reminder of the need for precise and nuanced communication on these issues, especially as regards respect for fundamental rights, in the context of temporary, targeted and proportional measures under existing law;
- a desire also to highlight the vulnerability of weaponised migrants in a Europe that defended its values and individual rights;
- the value of combining national measures for preparedness and protection against hybrid attacks with effective implementation by Member States of the Pact on Migration and Asylum;
- the need to communicate effectively with migrants' countries of origin to counter false narratives that encouraged local populations to emigrate to Europe.

In this context, the PRESIDENT stressed the importance of the white paper on EU security, which would be drawn up in the first 100 days of this Commission's term of office. She wound up by highlighting that weaponised migrants were highly vulnerable and pointing out that fundamental rights were universal.

Following these presentations, the Commission approved the Communication in COM(2024) 570/2 for transmission to the European Parliament and the Council and, for information, to the national parliaments.

9. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE UNITED STATES

(SEC(2024) 311)

The PRESIDENT introduced the College's policy debate, focusing on the close relationship between the European Union and the United States, and stating that this bilateral relationship was built on trust and shared interests. To illustrate the dynamic nature of economic relations with the United States, she mentioned that bilateral trade amounted to EUR 1.5 billion in 2023. The United States and the EU were also crucial partners in the field of security and defence, particularly in the framework of NATO. She underlined the importance of working together to ensure global peace, stability and prosperity, including through support to Ukraine for a just and lasting peace.

Ms KALLAS then took the floor, focusing on the importance of the EU positioning itself as a reliable and trusted partner of the United States. In this regard, she advocated for a 'transactional' approach to negotiations, stressing the need to focus on the benefits for both parties.

The College then held a policy debate on the future prospects for EU-US relations following the US election results.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND MERCOSUR

The PRESIDENT informed the College of the conclusion on 6 December of the negotiations for a Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Mercosur countries.

The Commission took note of this information.

10.2. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Ms KALLAS reported on recent developments in external relations.

Referring to the fall of the regime of former President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, she said that she had been in contact with foreign ministers in the region to assess the situation and explore potential responses. She expressed hope that this political change would bring greater stability and security without causing ethnic and religious conflicts. In her view, another civil war had to be avoided at all costs and it was important to engage with the various international actors in order to convey this message. She welcomed the fact that refugees who had fled Syria might be able to return home and stressed the importance of avoiding further large-scale arrivals at the EU's borders.

As regards Georgia, she said that work was ongoing to implement restrictive measures against those who had incited violence against protesters in the country. She also noted that, in coordination with Mr BRUNNER, work was continuing to explore potential visa restrictions for the persons concerned.

Lastly, Ms KALLAS referred to the EU's commitment to continue to support Ukraine and to finalise negotiations on the 15th package of sanctions against Russia with a view to the upcoming Foreign Affairs Council. She was working closely with the Hungarian Presidency of the EU on the European Peace Facility, with the aim of ensuring that the EUR 6.6 billion already agreed upon was released swiftly.

The Commission took note of this information.

10.3. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND SWITZERLAND

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ reported on developments with regard to the negotiations with Switzerland. He set out the general features of the agreement, which entailed upgrading five existing agreements and concluding five new ones.

The overall objective of the negotiations was to ensure fair competition when Switzerland had access to the European single market, bolster the rights of EU citizens in Switzerland and ensure that Switzerland made a financial contribution to EU cohesion policy.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ concluded by expressing his hope that the negotiations could be concluded before the end of the year.

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 11.46.