



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2026) 2567 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 24 June 2026

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2567th meeting of the Commission

held in Strasbourg

(Winston Churchill)

on Tuesday 19 May 2026

(afternoon)

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Single sitting: Tuesday 19 May 2026 (afternoon)

The sitting opened at 14.02 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	
Ms ŠUICA	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	Items 1 to 9 (in part)
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	
Mr KUBILIUS	Member	Items 1 to 8
Mr KADIS	Member	Items 1 to 8 (in part)
Ms ALBUQUERQUE	Member	
Ms LAHBIB	Member	
Ms ROSWALL	Member	
Mr SERAFIN	Member	
Mr JØRGENSEN	Member	
Ms ZAHARIEVA	Member	
Mr McGRATH	Member	
Mr TZITZIKOSTAS	Member	Items 1 to 8
Mr HANSEN	Member	Items 1 to 9 (in part)
Mr MICALLEF	Member	

Absent:

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Member
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Member
Ms KOS	Member
Mr SÍKELA	Member
Mr BRUNNER	Member

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr DE GREGORIO	Director-General, Legal Service
Ms SPINANT	Director-General, DG Communication
Ms PODESTA	Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission
Mr ADAM	Deputy Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Ms HENMAN	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Ms REILLY	Member of the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI	Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General
Ms DAGILE	Deputy Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2026) 2567/FINAL; SEC(2026) 2567/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(2026) 2567)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 18 May 2026.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2563rd, 2564th, 2565th and 2566th meetings of 22 and 28 April and 6 and 13 May 2026 for a later date.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2026) 172)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) held on Wednesday 13 May 2026 (RCC(2026) 172).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights, and Regulation (EC) No 2027/97 on air carrier liability in respect of the carriage of passengers and their**

baggage by air (Regulation) – NOVAKOV (ex-ARIAS ECHEVERRÍA & ex-BACH) report – 2013/0072 (COD)

Line set out in SI(2026) 144.

- **Amendment of Regulations (EC) No 261/2004, (EC) No 1107/2006, (EU) No 1177/2010, (EU) No 181/2011 and (EU) 2021/782 as regards enforcement of passenger rights in the Union (Regulation) – RICCI (ex-VARIATI) report – 2023/0437 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2026) 145/2.

- **Acceleration of permit-granting for defence readiness projects (Regulation) – YAR & DAL report – 2025/0172 (COD) / Amendment of Directives 2009/43/EC and 2009/81/EC, as regards the simplification of intra-EU transfers of defence-related products and the simplification of security and defence procurement – TOVERI & HENRIKSSON report – 2025/0177 (COD) / Amendment of Regulations (EC) No 1907/2006, (EC) No 1272/2008, (EU) No 528/2012, (EU) 2019/1021 and (EU) 2021/697 as regards defence readiness and facilitating defence investments and conditions for defence industry – MIKSER & MARAN & SALLA report – 2025/0176 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2026) 146/2.

- **Non-application of customs duties on imports of certain goods (Regulation) – LANGE report – 2025/0260 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2026) 149.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Establishment of Global Europe (Regulation) – GAHLER & BIEDROŃ report – 2025/0227 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2026) 141/2.

- **Establishment of the Justice Programme for the period 2028-2034 and repealing Regulation (EU) 2021/693 (Regulation) – STRIK & BŽOCH report – 2025/0255 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2026) 142.

- **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034 – Establishment of Horizon Europe, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, for the period 2028-2034, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repeal of Regulation (EU) 2021/695 (Regulation) – EHLEER report – 2025/0543 (COD) / MFF 2028-2034 – Establishment of the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2028-2034, laying down the rules for participation and dissemination under that programme, and repeal of Decision (EU) 2021/764 (Council Decision) – REPASI report – 2025/0544 (CNS)**

Information set out in SI(2026) 143/3.

- **Amendment of Council Directive 98/58/EC and Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the simplification and strengthening of food and feed safety requirements, and repeal of Council Directives 82/711/EEC and 85/572/EEC (Directive) – PICARO & DORFMANN report – 2025/0409 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2026) 147.

**5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION
(RCC(2026) 217)**

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2026) 217 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 13 May 2026.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

**6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2026) 134 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 11 and 17 May 2026.

**6.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2026) 135 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 11 and 17 May 2026.

**6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2026) 136 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 11 and 17 May 2026, as archived in Decide.

**6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED
(SEC(2026) 137 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the written procedures specifically identified for which the time limit expired between 18 and 22 May 2026.

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2026) 138)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2026) 44)**

**7.1. DG AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT –
AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND
INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION AT GRADE AD14/15, AND
EXTERNAL PUBLICATION AT GRADE AD14, OF A DIRECTOR POST
(PERS(2026) 45)**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr HANSEN, the Commission decided to authorise the internal and interinstitutional publication, at grade AD14/15, and external publication, at grade AD14, of the vacancy notice in PERS(2026) 45 for the post of Director of the ‘Markets’ Directorate at the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 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.

**7.2. DG AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT – TRANSFER IN
THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE, UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE
STAFF REGULATIONS, OF AN AD14 OFFICIAL**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms KOS and Mr HANSEN, the Commission decided to

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transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Maria Victoria GIL CASADO, currently Director of the ‘Resources’ Directorate at the Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood, to the post of Director of the ‘Resources’ Directorate at the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

This decision would take effect on 16 July 2026.

7.3. DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT – SECONDMENT OF AN AD15 OFFICIAL IN THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE UNDER ARTICLES 37 AND 38 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr TZITZIKOSTAS, the Commission decided:

- to create a temporary post of Principal Adviser at the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport; this post would be abolished upon the departure of the job holder;
- to transfer to this new post, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Kristian SCHMIDT, currently Director of the ‘Land’ Directorate at the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport;
- to approve his secondment in the interest of the service, under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations, to the European External Action Service in the post of Head of the Delegation of the European Union to South Africa, for the period from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2030, subject to receiving the agreement of the host country; for the duration of his secondment, all costs would be borne by the European External Action Service.

These decisions would take effect on 1 September 2026.

**7.4. DG ENLARGEMENT AND EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD –
EXTENSION OF THE SECONDMENT OF AN AD15 OFFICIAL IN
THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE UNDER ARTICLES 37 AND 38 OF
THE STAFF REGULATIONS**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms KOS, the Commission decided to approve the extension of the secondment in the interest of the service, under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations, of Mr Mark Lawrence MEREDITH to the European External Action Service in the post of Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Australia for an additional period until 31 August 2030, subject to receiving the agreement of the host country. For the duration of his secondment, all costs would be covered by the European External Action Service.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.5. DG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION – EXTENSION OF THE
SECONDMENT OF AN AD16 OFFICIAL IN THE INTEREST OF THE
SERVICE UNDER ARTICLES 37 AND 38 OF THE STAFF
REGULATIONS**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms ZAHARIEVA, the Commission decided to approve the extension of the secondment in the interest of the service, under Articles 37 and 38 of the Staff Regulations, of Mr Jean-Eric PAQUET to the European External Action Service in the post of Head of the Delegation of the European Union to India, for an additional period until 31 August 2029, subject to receiving the agreement of the host country. For the duration of his secondment, all costs would be covered by the European External Action Service.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**8. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – FERTILISER ACTION PLAN: PARTNERSHIP FOR ENSURING THE AVAILABILITY, AFFORDABILITY AND STRATEGIC AUTONOMY IN HOME-GROWN EU FERTILISERS
(COM(2026) 310 TO /3; RCC(2026) 29)**

The PRESIDENT introduced the fertiliser action plan designed to support farmers facing fertiliser scarcity and rising costs. She observed that the recent increase in energy prices was pushing up the costs of imported fertilisers, and that the long-term solution was to develop production within the EU with the focus on innovation and decarbonisation.

Mr FITTO pointed out that the action plan came at a crucial moment, when the war in the Middle East and the tensions in the Strait of Hormuz were putting additional pressure on European farmers. He noted that farmers expected the EU to support them in these difficult circumstances and explained that the action plan met those expectations by setting out both short-term and long-term measures. He added that the purpose of the plan was to strengthen the EU's capacity to produce its own fertilisers, thereby reducing its dependence on imported fertilisers and enhancing its strategic autonomy and resilience.

Referring to the content of the action plan, he stressed that it was a first step and that further measures would be taken in the future. The action plan referred to what could already be done using cohesion policy resources, from biowaste recovery to biogas production. He welcomed the fact that, through the mid-term review of the cohesion policy, EUR 35 billion euro had been mobilised in just a few months and

redirected, in agreement with the Member States and regions, to other sectors, such as defence. Mr FITTO recommended following the same method to engage in dialogue with the Member States and regions on the possibility of using cohesion resources that were available but not yet committed in order to support energy and agriculture.

Mr HANSEN remarked that rising energy prices directly impacted fertiliser production costs. This was a cause of great concern to farmers and threatened the entire food supply chain. For some farms, fertiliser made up a very large share of their costs, and the situation was becoming untenable. Unless the situation improved, some farmers could be forced to reduce the area cultivated or cut back on fertiliser use, which would affect the quantity and quality of agricultural production and, in the long run, food security. Mr HANSEN pointed out the risks of increased pressure on food prices, with particularly worrying consequences in the most vulnerable parts of the world.

He highlighted the structural weaknesses of the EU in relation to its dependence on natural gas and on fertiliser imports, which exposed it to the volatility of world markets. Certain alternatives, such as low-carbon ammonia, were not widely available and remained more expensive to date. Regulatory barriers and market constraints were holding back the development and availability of bio-based and circular fertilisers.

Against this background, Mr HANSEN outlined the main strands of the fertiliser action plan, which combined immediate support measures aimed at supporting affordability and security of supply with longer-term action to strengthen fertiliser production in the EU, improve supply resilience and accelerate the transition to bio-based, low-carbon and circular fertilisers.

The immediate measures included exceptional financial support to European farmers facing high fertiliser costs through existing EU agricultural policy

instruments in order to provide fast relief for the most affected farms and to secure supply ahead of the next sowing season. The Commission would propose mobilising the EU budget to reinforce the agricultural reserve by a substantial amount. This financial package would be presented before the summer to provide immediate liquidity relief for farmers ahead of the next production cycle and to sustain agricultural production. As additional short-term relief, the Commission would also present a targeted legislative package so as to enable Member States to make full use of the support available under their current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) strategic plans. This would principally involve a new liquidity scheme to help with cash flow, greater flexibility for advance payments, and stronger incentives for farming practices that made more efficient use of fertilisers. The Commission will also explore short-term actions to facilitate the use of digestates, including the proposal and set-up of a regulatory sandbox.

As far as longer-term actions were concerned, Mr HANSEN called for reducing dependencies through increased use of solutions developed in Europe, including recycled nutrients and bio-based fertilisers. In particular, he mentioned implementing the Nitrates Directive in a way that took better account of agronomic and climatic realities, and supporting the development of biogas and biomethane. He also highlighted the need to remove certain regulatory barriers, including those stemming from the Waste Framework Directive, in order to facilitate the movement of nutrients within the internal market.

In addition, he stressed the need to improve the transparency and functioning of the market through closer monitoring, strengthened early warning capacities and the availability of up-to-date data provided by the Fertiliser Market Observatory. There were still tensions between the actors in the value chain, and he highlighted the need for a European partnership bringing together producers, farmers and political decision-makers in order to facilitate coordination and improve predictability. Lastly, he called for a discussion on how to create a more integrated internal market

and on tools that could support the emergence of lead markets for more sustainable products.

With regard to decarbonisation, Mr HANSEN reminded the College of the importance of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), whose suspension he felt would run counter to the objectives of competitiveness and protection against unfair competition. In the context of the revision of the Emissions Trading System (ETS), he felt that any flexibility could only be considered in return for increased commitments on decarbonisation and help with ensuring the availability and accessibility of fertilisers made in the EU. He also highlighted the importance of strengthening incentives for carbon farming and farmers' uptake of more sustainable solutions, by combining existing public and private instruments.

In conclusion, Mr HANSEN stressed the urgent need to take action, in view of the timing of decisions on sowing and purchasing farm inputs. The action plan was intended to provide immediate support while initiating a structural transformation aimed at boosting the strategic autonomy, resilience and sustainability of the European fertiliser system to strengthen food security and the EU's competitiveness.

During the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- general support for the action plan, deemed to be particularly timely in the current context;
- the urgent need for a clear and credible message to farmers, combining short-term support that could be mobilised quickly and careful expectations management, given current budgetary constraints;
- the need, in addition to emergency measures, for structural changes to the EU fertiliser market, based on better coordination of the value chain in order to expand production and investment in this sector in the EU;

- the need for a stable and predictable regulatory framework ensuring a level playing field and the key role of the CBAM in this regard, and for an appropriate link with the ETS, with any adjustments to be accompanied by commitments to decarbonise and invest in the EU;
- the need to speed up the development of sustainable alternatives by addressing regulatory barriers in a pragmatic way, in particular with regard to digestates and recycled nutrients, in order to facilitate their uptake without undermining environmental and health safeguards;
- the importance of consistent mobilisation of available instruments, particularly in the field of State aid, while avoiding fragmentation of the internal market and ensuring a balanced treatment of the various strands, including bio-based and circular solutions;
- the need to strengthen market transparency and monitoring without imposing any disproportionate administrative burden, and the value of complementary preparedness and forecasting tools, in order to improve the capacity to react in the event of new market tensions;
- the usefulness of pursuing efforts to diversify supplies and deepen external partnerships, in compliance with EU environmental, health and safety standards and by supporting the most vulnerable partners in terms of food security;
- the need to ensure consistent mobilisation of the various instruments available, in order to avoid a fragmented response and ensure an integrated approach to agricultural, industrial, social, energy-related and geopolitical challenges.

In response to certain points raised during the discussion, Mr HANSEN pointed out that the work undertaken was a follow-up to the guidelines already set out in the February 2025 Vision for Agriculture and Food and responded to a situation that had been aggravated by recent geopolitical tensions. He stressed the importance of

short-term support that could be mobilised quickly, in order to have a tangible impact on decisions on sowing and the purchase of fertilisers.

In this regard, he reminded the College that the agricultural reserve was specifically intended to respond to this type of situation and stressed that it was desirable to decide rapidly on the scale of the possible support, subject to the agreement of the co-legislators, in order to give a clear signal and allow for rapid disbursement of funds in time for the autumn sowing season. Finally, he noted that some potential agricultural or organic resources were still untapped due to suboptimal regulatory frameworks that restricted their contribution to circularity.

Following these presentations, the Commission approved the Communication in COM(2026) 310/3 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1. COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION, PURSUANT TO REGULATION (EU) 2019/788 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'RECONNECTING NATURE THROUGH THE CREATION OF EUROPEAN BIODIVERSITY CORRIDORS' (C(2026) 8550)

9.2. COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION, PURSUANT TO REGULATION (EU) 2019/788 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'RIGHTS FOR NATURE: EMPOWER CITIZENS TO REPRESENT AND PROTECT ECOSYSTEMS' (C(2026) 8551)

In the absence of Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, Ms ROSWALL presented to the College two European Citizens' Initiatives for registration by the Commission.

The first initiative entitled, in the authentic Italian language, '*Riconnettere la natura attraverso la creazione di corridoi europei per la biodiversità*' ('Reconnecting nature through the creation of European biodiversity corridors') called for nature to be reconnected in Europe through a coordination framework for ecological connectivity between inland water and land ecosystems. The initiative aimed to overcome ecosystem fragmentation and support biodiversity and resilience.

The second initiative entitled, in the authentic English language, 'Rights for Nature: Empower Citizens to Represent and Protect Ecosystems' sought the recognition of nature's rights in EU law through a legal act such as a Directive or Regulation in order to strengthen the protection of ecosystems.

Ms ROSWALL pointed out that the Commission was required to register a citizens' initiative if the conditions set out in the Regulation of 17 April 2019 on European Citizens' Initiatives were met, including the requirement that no part of the citizens' initiative in question should be manifestly outside the scope of the Commission's powers. Noting that the two requests for action did not manifestly fall outside the powers conferred on the Commission, she proposed to register them. The organisers could then start collecting the

necessary signatures, i.e. at least one million in seven Member States. Only after the organisers had obtained that number of signatures would the Commission have to examine the substance of the requests for action.

Following this presentation, the Commission confirmed that the citizens' initiatives '*Riconnettere la natura attraverso la creazione di corridoi europei per la biodiversità*' and 'Rights for Nature: Empower Citizens to Represent and Protect Ecosystems' fulfilled the conditions for registration. It therefore decided, in accordance with C(2026) 8550 and C(2026) 8551, to inform the groups of organisers, and authorised Mr ŠEFČOVIČ to sign the replies on behalf of the College, to send them to the groups of organisers, and to publish them, for information, in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

The Commission also agreed to transmit its decisions, for information, to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments.

9.3. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Ms KALLAS reported on the latest developments in external relations.

She began by referring to the visit of the US President to China and its potential impact on the EU. In terms of trade, she noted that the conclusion of agreements between the two powers could have repercussions on China's attitude towards the EU. As regards Taiwan, she highlighted the ambiguity in the US President's stance and a notable hardening of the rhetoric of the Chinese President. She noted that the war in Ukraine seemed not to have been discussed during the meeting. As regards Iran, China had reportedly expressed its support for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and the denuclearisation of Iran. It also stated its intention not to sell arms to Iran, which appeared to be at odds with what was happening in practice.

Ms KALLAS noted the lack of progress in negotiations between the US and Iran and highlighted the work that had been done to coordinate a European response. She also mentioned the deterioration of the internal situation in Iran in terms of human rights, and in particular the repeated use of the death penalty. The situation in the Middle East remained unchanged despite the EU's continued efforts to help de-escalate tensions between Israel and Palestine.

She welcomed Türkiye's lifting of restrictions on trade with Armenia the previous week, which reflected the normalisation of relations between the two countries.

Regarding the question of replacing the international High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, she reported on the discussions held to promote a united European approach and a strong European candidate, reflecting the EU's financial support for the necessary reforms in this candidate country.

With regard to Russia's war against Ukraine, Ms KALLAS deplored the resumption of deadly Russian attacks against the civilian population of Ukraine. However, she noted that the rate of interception of drones by Ukraine's anti-air defence was very high and that the country had made technological advances in this area, from which the EU could draw lessons for its own defence. There had been recent Russian openness to potential talks involving the EU, with the approach to be taken in this respect on the agenda of the Foreign Ministers' meeting the following week.

Ms LAHBIB reported on the health situation following the declaration by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 17 May of an international public health emergency – the second highest level of alert for WHO protocols – in response to the resurgence of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. She warned that the currently published figures most

likely underestimated the scale of the epidemic given the fragility of the healthcare systems in conflict zones, and that there was a significant risk of the virus spreading throughout the region.

The variant identified in the present case was a rare strain for which there was no treatment, and strict precautionary measures were therefore required, including the isolation of patients and contacts and the use of protective equipment by healthcare workers. At EU level, the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) were closely monitoring the situation, and the Commission was in contact with the WHO, with which it was cooperating, in particular on the development of vaccines under the Horizon Europe programme. HERA would also launch a call for tenders for vaccines, and DG ECHO would prepare a potential evacuation of the international workers present on the ground.

The Commission took note of this information.

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The meeting closed at 15.09.