Secretary-General

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SUMMARY MINUTES
OF THE 2ND MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS GROUP ON “FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES”, 16 FEBRUARY 2005

Chairperson: President Barroso

In attendance: F. Frattini, M. Wallström, S. Kallas, V. Reding, J. Figel, O. Rehn, B. Ferrero-Waldner, V. Spidla

Reference documents:

CG4(2005)2 Ordre du jour
CG4(2005)3 Information sur l’organisation et le déroulement de la journée du 8 mars
CG4(2005)4 La création de l’agence des droits fondamentaux
CG4(2005)5/2 La création de l’Institut européen pour l’égalité entre hommes et femmes
CG4(2005)6 Méthodologie horizontale de vérification de la compatibilité de toute initiative legislative de la Commission avec la Charte des droits fondamentaux
CG4(2005)7 Information sur la protection des enfants
GG4(2005)8 Fixation des dates des réunions futures du Groupe

President Barroso welcomed the participants.

1. Discussion and adoption of the Road Map of the Group

President Barroso presented the project of the Road Map.

Participants agreed to the proposed version, but the document still needs to be completed by section on human dignity and bio-ethics at next meeting (to be drafted by SG/GOPA
and RTD). Commissioner Potocnik will be invited to join the group on an ad hoc basis whenever a concrete topic from this section will arise.

For the next meetings of the Group, in addition to the points on the agenda of the present meeting to which the group will return if need be, the most important topics to be put on the agenda are: Accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights; Communication on the policy approach to non discrimination; European year for equal opportunity for all in 2007; Community action programme to promote active European citizenship.

2. Information on the organisation of the meeting of 8th March (International Women’s Day)

Commissioner Spidla distributed a note presenting the programme of the extraordinary meeting of the Group of Commissioners CG4 in Strasbourg open to representatives of the European Parliament, the Presidencies and other stakeholders. The Beijing +10 conference process, the Spring Report and the creation of the European Institute for Equality between Men and Women are among the points on the agenda. Commissioners Wallström and Frattini insisted on the need to make this event visible, in particular by providing to the press concrete elements in relation to these topics (about in particular the Daphne Programme).

Commissioner Kallas briefed other Commissioners on the International Women’s Day celebrations within the European Commission, which will take place on 7th March. The theme for this year’s conference is entitled “Women and Media”. Commissioner Reding suggested involving also female journalists from the Association of European Journalists.

The group took favourable note of the presentations and the President invited Commissioners to attend these events proactively.

3. Articulation between the projects of establishment of the European Institute for Gender Equality and the Fundamental Rights Agency

Vice-President Frattini presented the project of the establishment of the Fundamental Rights Agency and Commissioner Spidla presented the project of the creation of European Institute for Equality between Men and Women.

There was a consensus reached on the need to define clear remit, tasks and procedures for each, on the need to avoid any overlap and on the need to maximise the synergies. Open questions were identified related, in particular, to the taking into account of the international (third country) dimension and activities in the context of the monitoring of candidate countries. Commissioner Rehn recalled that assessments must be made by the Commission itself and cannot be out-sourced.

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner insisted on the role of “clearing house” of the future Institute. As far as the terminology is concerned, she pointed out that the term “gender” seems more positive and uncontroversial.

Vice-President Kallas drew attention to the administrative problems caused by decentralised bodies and the need to ensure a proper administrative framework.
The President confirmed the target date of 8th March for the adoption of the proposal for the European Institute of Equality between Men and Women. He emphasised that each proposal has its own logic, that one is not the blueprint for the other, and that the proposal for the Institute will not pre-judge the one for the Agency.

4. Methodology for the assessment of the compatibility of legislative proposals with the Charter of Fundamental Rights

President Barroso presented the subject. There was a broad consensus reached on the general approach; however, several Commissioners warned against adding additional red tape to Commission procedures. The President clarified that what is needed is a qualitative improvement within existing procedures, not a quantitative extension to new procedures. There was a wide-spread preference for maximum publicity for the Commission's commitments, i.e. adoption as a COM rather than as a SEC document.

Vice-President Frattini suggested extending the methodology to non-legislative activities (e.g. internal administrative acts). Commissioner Figel’ expressed his preference for option 3 of the proposed options for the insertion of additional fundamental rights-targeted questions in extended impact assessments.

The President concluded that the document on the methodology for legislative proposals will be revised on the basis of the comments made and sent into ISC with a view to synchronising its adoption with the Better Regulation and in particular the revised Impact Assessment Guidelines (to be prepared by LS in co-operation with SG and JLS), and that further reflection will take place on the appropriate way to strengthen the assessment of the respect for the Charter in non-legislative activities (to be carried out by LS in co-operation with SG, ADMIN and JLS).

5. Information about children’s protection

Vice-President Frattini presented the elements for a policy strategy. After Commissioners Ferrero-Waldner’s, Reding’s and Figel's intervention on related activities within their portfolios, a consensus on the general approach was reached. The President concluded by inviting Vice-President Frattini to present an issues paper identifying all relevant contributors within the Commission and an operational agenda (on the basis of a draft prepared by SG/GOPA and JLS), and by recalling that the group will also come back to the issue of trafficking of human beings insofar as this issue goes beyond the field of the protection of children (on the basis of JLS's follow-up to the relevant report published before Christmas).

6. Dates for the next meetings

- 8 March: extraordinary meeting (International Women's Day)
- 27 April, 2.30-4 p.m.: ordinary meeting (preceded by preparatory cabinets/services meeting on 20 April, 4.30-6 p.m.)
- 21 June, 2.30-4 p.m.: ordinary meeting (preceded by preparatory cabinets/services meeting on 14 June, 4.30-6 p.m.)
Groupe de Commissaires

« Droits fondamentaux, lutte contre la discrimination et égalité des chances »

16 février 2005

Liste des participants

Président:
M. Barroso

Commissaires:
M. Frattini, Commissaire pour la Justice, la liberté et la sécurité
Mme Wallström, Commissaire pour les Relations institutionnelles et stratégie de la communication
M. Kallas, Commissaire pour l’Administration, l’audit et la lutte anti-fraude
Mme Reding, Commissaire pour la Société d’information et media
M. Figel, Commissaire pour l’Education, la formation, la culture et le multilinguisme
M. Rehn, Commissaire pour l’Elargissement
Mme Ferrero-Waldner, Commissaire pour les Relations extérieures et la politique européenne de voisinage
M. Spidla, Commissaire pour l’Emploi, les affaires sociales et l’égalité des chances

Cabinets:
M. Laitenberger, Cabinet Barroso
Mme Martinho, Cabinet Barroso
Mme Schmitt, Cabinet Frattini
M. Gray, Cabinet Wallström
M. Fitch, Cabinet Kallas
Mme Davies, Cabinet Reding
M. Biervert, Cabinet Figel
Mme Gameiro, Cabinet Figel
Mme Hyvärinen, Cabinet Rehn
Mme Gardes, Cabinet Michel
M. Kuehnel, Cabinet Ferrero-Waldner
Mme Kristin Schreiber, Cabinet Spidla
M. Jarab, Cabinet Spidla
Mme Iva Lanova, Cabinet Spidla

Directions générales:
M. Moavero Milanesi, Directeur général adjoint, SG
M. Brun, Chef d’unité JLS
M. Jacob, Directeur ADMIN
Mme Vlaeminck, Chef d’unité EAC
M. Barbaso, Directeur général ELARG
Mme Smadja, Directeur RELEX
M. De Angelis, Directeur AIDCO
Mme Quintin, Directeur général EMPL
M. Wainwright, Directeur SJ
M. Tavares, Directeur GOPA
M. Roscam Abbing, Porte-parole PRESS
Mme Kovarikova, SG

Secrétaire de la réunion:
Mme Lorenzi, SG