

[Statement by President Donald Tusk on follow up to the European Council meeting of 22 March 2018 regarding Salisbury](#)

Press contacts

[Preben Aamann](#)

European Council President Spokesperson

+32 2 281 51 50

+32 476 85 05 43

Special announcement by President Tusk on EU response to the Salisbury attack

Good afternoon, I would like to make a special announcement about the follow-up to the European Council's decisions last week on the Salisbury attack.

To recall, last week the European Council condemned in the strongest possible terms the recent attack in Salisbury. The European Council agreed with the United Kingdom government's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation is responsible and that there is no plausible alternative explanation. We decided to recall the EU Ambassador to Russia for consultations.

As a direct follow up to last week's European Council decision to react to Russia within a common framework, already today 14 Member states have decided to expel Russian diplomats.

Additional measures, including further expulsions within this common EU framework are not to be excluded in the coming days and weeks.

We remain critical of the actions of the Russian government, but at the same time, today we Europeans – together with the Russian people – mourn the victims of the tragic fire in the city of Kemerovo in Western Siberia. Our thoughts and hearts are with you.

[Download as pdf](#)

[Daily News 26 / 03 / 2018](#)

President Juncker participates in EU-Turkey Leaders' Meeting in Varna,

Bulgaria

Today the Leaders' Meeting on EU-Turkey relations is taking place in Varna (Bulgaria). Hosted by Prime Minister Borissov, representing the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU, President **Juncker**, President Tusk and President Erdoğan will meet for a working dinner to discuss all aspects of current and future EU-Turkey relations. The main points of discussion will be cooperation in energy, security, the fight against terrorism and migration management and the EU's assistance for refugees in Turkey as the EU-Turkey Statement continues to deliver results. Earlier this month, two years on from the launch of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, the Commission proposed to mobilise the second €3 billion tranche after the first part of the Facility was fully committed and contracted by the end of 2017. The visa liberalisation process and the inextricably linked domestic political situation and security matters in Turkey will also feature high on the agenda. The meeting takes place after European Leaders condemned Turkey's continued illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea during the European Council last week as undermining regional stability and security. Energy cooperation will also be prominent in the leaders' discussion where EU leaders will once again stress that good neighbourly relations with all EU Member States are key for an enhanced energy security. Finally, counterterrorism actions and cooperation will also be part of this evening's dialogue. Ahead of the summit, following the European Council meeting last week where Turkey featured high on the agenda, President **Juncker** said: *"The differences in views between the EU and Turkey are many. It will be a frank and open debate where we will not hide our differences but where we will seek to improve our cooperation"*. A press conference will follow this evening, timing to be confirmed. Watch live on EbS [here](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382)

Commission launches safeguard investigation into steel products to prevent trade diversion into the EU [Updated on 26/03/2018 at 15:30]

The European Commission today initiated a safeguard investigation on imports of a number of steel products into the EU. The safeguard investigation is one of the three types of measures the Commission announced in response to the US restrictions on steel and aluminium. It concerns products of all origin and its opening does not prejudice its results. However, the procedure can also result in imposition of import tariffs or quotas that would shield EU producers from excessive imports, if this proves necessary. The surveillance system for imports of steel – in place since March 2016 – has provided evidence that imports of certain steel products have been increasing. This trend may be even stronger now that the access to the US market has been limited and steel products from other parts of the world previously destined to the US may be redirected to Europe, disturbing the market and skewing prices. The investigation launched today covers 26 steel product categories. It will in principle be concluded within 9 months; should provisional measures prove necessary, they can be adopted at short notice. The Commission continues to further examine the market situation and is prepared to react as

appropriate. Safeguards are one of trade defence tools recognised by the World Trade Organisation. The EU investigation procedure follows strictly multilateral rules in this respect. *(For more information: Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383; Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185)*

State aid: Commission concludes Dutch guarantee scheme to support fast growing medium and large-companies involves no aid

The European Commission has found that the “Extended Growth Facility” (also known as “GO”), a Dutch guarantee scheme to support medium and large companies, does not involve State aid. The objective of the GO scheme is to improve access to finance for companies with a considerable growth potential. Under the scheme, the Dutch State guarantees 50% of new loans to companies, for up to 8 years. It will run until the end of 2023, with the maximum annual amount of loan guarantees fixed at €400 million. Loans guaranteed can range from €1.5 million to €150 million, for which a guarantee fee is paid to the Dutch State by the banks issuing the loans. The Dutch authorities expect that this scheme will encourage banks to issue these loans on a larger scale than currently. The Commission found that the guarantees give the Dutch State an appropriate remuneration level, ensuring that the scheme is self-financing, including administrative costs and the remuneration of virtual capital. Therefore, the Commission concluded that the Dutch State guarantee scheme does not constitute State aid to the banks, nor to the borrowing companies. A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [NL](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission approves joint venture between IBM and Maersk

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed creation of a joint venture between International Business Machines (IBM) of the US and A.P. Møller Mærsk group (Maersk) of Denmark. The joint venture will engage in the development and commercialisation of a new digitisation solution intended to provide end to end shipment visibility and document management for global trade. IBM is active in the development, production, and marketing of information technology solutions, comprising software, systems and IT services. Maersk is active in container shipping, terminal services, harbour towage, logistics and energy. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the limited overlap between the joint venture’s digitisation solution and the companies’ activities. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8742](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over Wyndham Vacation Rentals Europe by Platinum Equity Group

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the

acquisition of sole control over Wyndham Vacation Rentals Europe -a business formed by Wyndham Vacation Rentals UK of the UK, Landal GreenParks of the Netherlands and Novasol of Denmark- by Platinum Equity Group of the US. Wyndham Vacation Rentals Europe is active in the serviced holiday rentals sector. Platinum Equity Group specialises in the merger, acquisition and operation of companies that provide services and solutions to customers in a broad range of businesses, including information technology, telecommunications, logistics, metal services, manufacturing and distribution. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited impact it would have on the market. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8825](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Tekfor by KKR

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of sole control over Tekfor Global Holdings Ltd of the UK by KKR & Co. L.P. of the US. Tekfor manufactures and supplies components and assemblies for automotive transmissions, engines, drivelines, fasteners, and other special applications. KKR is a global investment firm which offers alternative asset management services to public and private market investors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because Tekfor is not active in the same product and geographic market as the markets in which KKR and its portfolio companies are engaged, or in any market that is downstream or upstream from the latter. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8763](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat: International trade in goods in 2017: A third of EU trade is with the United States and China. At Member State level, trade within the EU largely prevails

In 2017, the United States (€631 billion, or 16.9% of total EU trade in goods) and China (€573 bn, or 15.3%) continued to be the two main goods trading partners of the European Union (EU), well ahead of Switzerland (€261 bn, or 7.0%), Russia (€231 bn, or 6.2%), Turkey (€154 bn, or 4.1%) and Japan (€129 bn, or 3.5%). However, the trends observed over time differ for these top trading partners of the EU. After recording a significant and almost continuous fall until 2011, the share of the United States in EU total trade in goods had increased to nearly 18% in 2015 and 2016, before decreasing again slightly in 2017. The share of China has almost tripled since 2000, rising from 5.5% to 15.3% in 2017. The share of Russia in total EU trade had been decreasing since 2012 from nearly 10% to around 6% in 2016, and slightly picked up in 2017. The share of trade with Japan has fallen by more than a

half since 2000 – from 7.5% in 2000 to 3.5% in 2017. As for Switzerland and Turkey, their respective shares in trade remained relatively unchanged over the entire period. A Eurostat press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383; Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Andrus Ansip and Commissioner Thyssen participate in G7 Employment and Innovation Ministerial Meeting in Canada

Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Labour Mobility Marianne **Thyssen** will represent the European Union at the 2018 G7 Employment and Innovation Ministerial Meeting. The meeting, taking place in Montreal, Canada on 27 and 28 March, will be the occasion to discuss how G7 economies prepare for the jobs of the future. G7 Employment Ministers will discuss key topics such as the importance of partnerships with private sector, inclusive growth and supporting workers through transitions. Vice-President **Ansip** is co-chairing on Tuesday the session on artificial intelligence. He will give a speech on the importance of creating the right conditions for the development and use of new technologies: in Europe, this means the creation of a Digital Single Market. The Vice-President and Commissioner **Thyssen** will both speak on Wednesday in the joint session of Innovation and Employment Ministers focussing on the impact of transformative technologies on the labour market, the role of industry in supporting workers and policies and programmes for the jobs of the future. Commissioner **Thyssen** will formally present the European perspective on inclusive growth, stressing the importance of investing in people, a principle that is at the heart of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). Representatives of social partners, engagement groups (Women7 and Youth7) and heads of International Labour Organization (ILO) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will also contribute to the working sessions of the meeting. On the sidelines of the event, Vice-President **Ansip** will meet Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Masaki Ogushi and Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination Masahiko Tominaga as well as Michael Kratsios, Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy U.S. Chief Technology Officer. Commissioner **Thyssen** will hold bilateral meetings with French Minister of Labour Muriel Pénicaud, German Minister of Labour Hubertus Heil and Canadian Minister for Families, Children and Social Development Jean-Yves Duclos. Vice-President Ansip and Commissioner Thyssen will in addition visit Hec Montréal business school to meet local startups on innovation, skills and youth employment. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Inga Höglund Tel.: +32 229 55040; Sara Soumillion– Tel.: +32 229 67094)

Une Europe qui protège: le Commissaire King participera à un exercice de coopération transfrontalière dans le domaine de la lutte contre le terrorisme

Le Commissaire Julian **King** sera demain à Dunkerque, en France, où il assistera à un exercice de coopération transfrontalière dans le domaine de la lutte contre le terrorisme organisé par les autorités françaises avec des observateurs britanniques, belges et néerlandaises. Exprimant sa solidarité avec les victimes de l'attaque de Trèbes, Julian King a dit: *"J'aimerais adresser mes condoléances aux victimes et aux familles et proches des victimes de la terrible attaque terroriste qui a à nouveau frappé la France vendredi dernier à Trèbes et Carcassonne. Et je voudrais également saluer le courage extraordinaire du gendarme qui a pris la place d'un des otages. Au niveau européen, nous continuons notre action en soutien aux Etats membres pour renforcer ensemble notre combat contre le terrorisme."* L'exercice, simulant une attaque terroriste sur un ferry touristique, vise à mieux renforcer la coopération transfrontalière dans le domaine de la lutte contre le terrorisme et à préparer les forces de l'ordre de la région à une telle éventualité. Cet exercice s'inscrit dans le cadre plus large des efforts de l'UE pour renforcer notre résilience face aux attaques terroristes. En octobre 2017, la Commission a présenté un paquet antiterroriste qui listait un ensemble de mesures à prendre au niveau de l'Union ainsi que des États membres pour renforcer la sécurité de l'UE et de ses citoyens. À la suite de l'exercice, le Commissaire King discutera de la lutte contre la radicalisation et la coopération police-douane avec les autorités locales à Lille. Un point presse aura lieu suivant l'exercice. Pour plus d'informations sur les efforts de la Commission pour construire une Europe qui protège, veuillez consulter la fiche d'information [en ligne](#). (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 2 296 74 56; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602*)

Le Commissaire Hogan participe à un dialogue citoyen en Belgique sur la future politique agricole commune

Le Commissaire à l'agriculture et au développement rural, Phil **Hogan** participe aujourd'hui à Wuustwezel en Belgique à un [dialogue citoyen](#) sur la future politique agricole commune. Le Commissaire **Hogan** répondra aux questions des participants aux côtés de M. Joris Relaes, administrateur général de l'institut de recherche pour l'agriculture et la pêche du gouvernement flamand (ILVO), Mme Kirsten Haanraads, responsable des affaires publiques de l'association Natuurmonumenten, M. Hans Huijbers, Président de ZLTO, une organisation représentant des agriculteurs et horticulteurs, et M. Pieter Verhelst, membre du conseil d'administration du Boerenbond. Depuis la présentation des [orientations de la Commission sur l'avenir de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation](#) en novembre dernier, le Commissaire **Hogan** a pris part à de nombreux dialogues citoyens pour écouter les points de vue et attentes des citoyens et parties prenantes et répondre à leurs questions. Les dialogues citoyens sont une caractéristique régulière du travail quotidien de la Commission Juncker. Depuis le début du mandat, plus de 130 dialogues ont eu lieu dans plus de 80 villes. (Pour plus d'informations: *Daniel Rosario- Tél.: +32 229 56 172, Clémence Robin – Tél.: +32 229 52509*)

Commissioner Andriukaitis in Italy

On 27 March, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and food safety will be in Italy. In Milan he will hold a meeting with the representatives of the Italian Observatory of Mediterranean Diet, attend the Inauguration Ceremony at San Raffaele University and visit the Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico to partake in a meeting with the European Reference Networks. Commissioner will then visit Turin to participate in a Citizens' Dialogue at the University of Turin that will be webstreamed [here](#). *"I am looking forward to engage in a dialogue in Turin about health and food safety, issues that are very close to citizens' hearts. Moreover open discussions are key to bring people into the heart of debates over our common future. The point of democracy is indeed to be able to get together and exchange views"*, he said ahead of the visit. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Commissioner Navracsics travels to Bulgaria for cultural heritage events

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will be in the city of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, on Monday, 26 March, to open a conference on ["Cultural Heritage: for a more Sustainable Europe"](#), organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU and the European Commission. The Commissioner will highlight the fact that culture and cultural heritage are high on the EU agenda, as we celebrate the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#), and as discussions on a new EU Agenda for Culture and the funding of cultural initiatives in the post-2020 budgetary period are ongoing. During the conference, Commissioner **Navracsics** will also participate in the presentation of the [European Heritage Label](#) to the nine new sites recently awarded the title for celebrating or symbolising European ideals, values, history and integration. The [press release](#) on the launch of the European Year of Cultural Heritage as well as the [Eurobarometer results](#) on the cultural heritage are available online. Plovdiv will be a European [Capital of Culture](#) in 2019. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tél.: +32 229 56184)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

[State aid: Commission concludes Dutch guarantee scheme to support fast growing medium and large-companies](#)

involves no aid

Under the G0 scheme, the Dutch State guarantees 50% of new loans to companies, for up to 8 years. The G0 scheme will run until the end of 2023, with the maximum annual amount of loan guarantees fixed at €400 million.

Loans guaranteed under the scheme can range from €1.5 million to €150 million, for which a guarantee fee is paid to the Dutch State by the banks issuing the loans. The Dutch authorities expect that this scheme will encourage banks to issue these loans on a larger scale than currently.

The Commission found that the guarantees give the Dutch State an appropriate remuneration level, ensuring that the scheme is self-financing, including administrative costs and the remuneration of virtual capital. This is the capital that a company operating on market terms would set aside as a precaution if it issued such a guarantee.

Therefore, the Commission concluded that the Dutch State guarantee scheme does not constitute State aid to the banks, nor to the borrowing companies.

Background

State aid rules are designed to accommodate the specific financing needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In particular:

- SMEs are not considered to be in difficulty if they are less than three years old. They can receive all forms of State aid during that period.
- Small firms can receive start-up aid during their first five years of existence. SMEs can also receive risk finance investments up to seven years after having made their first commercial sale.
- SMEs, like all other companies, can also receive state funding if it is granted on market terms – as is the case for the Dutch G0 scheme.

The non-confidential version of this decision will be available under the case number SA.48350 in the public [case register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website, once any confidentiality issues have been resolved.

Greece: New EUR 100 million EIB and Piraeus Bank initiative to cut energy bills

Energy bills for companies across Greece will be reduced by new energy efficiency investment backed by a new EUR 100 million initiative by the

European Investment Bank and Piraeus Bank. Under the scheme dedicated financing for new investment to reduce energy consumption by small-scale energy users will be provided across the country. Technical and financial expertise gained from energy efficiency investment programmes elsewhere will be used to strengthen new projects in Greece.

This operation is the first initiative in Greece under Private Finance for Energy Efficiency programme and represents the largest engagement in any European country so far.

“New investment to improve energy efficiency reduces energy bills, cuts carbon emissions and creates jobs. The European Investment Bank is committed to supporting transformational investment in Greece and pleased to launch the largest energy efficiency financing initiative to date in any European country under the Private Finance for Energy Efficiency programme. The scale of this new scheme clearly demonstrates the impressive potential for cutting energy bills in the country. This initiative will be strengthened by the local knowledge and professional expertise of colleagues at Piraeus Bank.” said Jonathan Taylor, European Investment Bank Vice President.

“This agreement underlines the longstanding commitment of Piraeus Bank, the largest bank in Greece, to the financing of investments with a positive environmental and social impact, and a focus on sustainable development and financial viability. Expanding our long-standing cooperation with the European Investment Bank Group, we have signed a new EUR 100 million agreement to finance energy efficiency projects in Greece, through the dedicated energy efficiency lending scheme, Private Finance for Energy Efficiency (PF4EE). This agreement, the only one in Greece and the largest provided by European Investment Bank under PF4EE in Europe, re-enforces our support for green entrepreneurship and expands our considerable know-how. Piraeus Bank is ideally positioned in the Greek market to take advantage of this particular innovative financing instrument.” said Mr. Christos Megalou, Chief Executive Officer of Piraeus Bank.

The European Investment Bank and Piraeus Bank have signed an agreement worth EUR 100 million under the Private Finance for Energy Efficiency initiative. This is a pilot scheme currently being rolled out across Europe intended to increase the availability of debt financing to eligible energy efficiency investment.

The EUR 100 million EIB loan will be used by Piraeus Bank for the financing of new investment improving the energy efficiency in existing buildings, outdoor lighting and water pumping stations across Greece.

The PF4EE instrument combines three elements. The first consists of an EIB loan to improve the funding conditions of the energy efficiency investments financed by Piraeus Bank. The second element provides partial risk protection on Piraeus Bank's loans. The third element will strengthen Piraeus Bank's lending capacity specifically targeted at energy efficiency investments, by passing on technical and financial expertise gained from similar schemes elsewhere in the European Union.

“The Private Finance for Energy Efficiency financial instrument, deployed under the LIFE programme, will deliver new finance for Greek companies willing to invest in their sustainability.” said Miguel Arias Cañete, European Commissioner responsible for Climate Action and Energy.

The risk protection will cover 80% of Piraeus Bank’s potential losses under these loans up to a maximum agreed amount. Piraeus Bank will also benefit from the technical and financial expertise of the EIB during the start of the operation for assistance in the identification and appraisal of energy efficiency investments and capacity building support.

The new cooperation with Piraeus Bank in Greece represents the eighth partnership with a European bank to support energy efficiency investments under the Private Finance for Energy Efficiency financial instrument. The European Investment Bank engagement is supported by the European Commission, under the LIFE programme.

In 2017, the European Investment Bank provided more than EUR 4.1 billion for new energy efficiency investment worldwide.

[European Commission confirms: Appointment of Mr Selmayr as Secretary-General decided in full compliance with all legal rules – Questions and Answers](#)

On 21 February, following the notification of then Secretary-General Mr Italianer of his wish to retire, the College of Commissioners, on the proposal of President Juncker, in agreement with Commissioner Oettinger and after consulting First Vice-President Timmermans, unanimously decided to [appoint Mr Selmayr](#) as its new Secretary-General. In doing so, the Commission acted in full compliance with the EU Staff regulations and its Rules of Procedure. The key questions and answers relating to this appointment are summarised below.

1. What are the conditions for appointment as Director-General/Secretary-General or Deputy Director-General/Deputy Secretary-General of the European Commission?

There are two formal requirements for that post: having the grade of AD14 or above (with a minimum of two years in the grade for AD14 officials) and a minimum of two years of management experience as a senior manager at Director level or above. The chart below reflects Annex I of the Staff Regulations.

Criteria for appointment as Director-General (or Deputy Director-General)

Current function:	Current grade:	Seniority required:
Director-General / Deputy Director-General	AD16	No additional requirements
	AD15	
	AD15	
Director / Principal Adviser	AD15	2 years in Senior Management function
	AD14	2 years in Senior Management function AND 2 years in grade
	AD16	No additional requirements
Head of Cabinet	AD15	2 years in Senior Management / Head of Cabinet function
	AD14	2 years in Senior Management / Head of Cabinet function AND 2 years in grade

Beyond these formal requirements, the candidate needs to demonstrate European commitment, have an excellent knowledge of the Commission's policies and priorities as well as of its administrative practices and procedures, have a strong background as a manager and communicator with professional experience in leading and motivating teams as well as strong analytical skills and the ability to communicate efficiently with internal and external stakeholders. Also, the Secretary-General must have the full trust of the President and of the whole College of Commissioners.

2. What is the procedure for the appointment of the Secretary-General?

The EU's [Staff Regulations](#) adopted by the European Parliament and the Council provide for two ways of being appointed Director-General/Deputy Director-General, both of which are the same type of post (graded at either AD15 or AD16, in accordance with Annex I to the Staff Regulations). The two ways are: (1) appointment by the College following publication of the post and selection procedure under Article 29 of the Staff Regulations or (2) transfer in the interest of the service pursuant to Article 7 of the Staff Regulations.

1. Appointment by the College following publication of the post and selection procedure (**Article 29** of the [Staff Regulations](#)). This selection procedure includes a full day Assessment Centre (run by an external consultancy) and an interview, assessment and opinion by the Commission's high-level Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA). For Mr Selmayr's appointment, this Committee was chaired by the Commission's Secretary-General (who was the Director-General recruiting), the Director-General of Human Resources and Security, a high-ranking official from the Directorate-General Human Resources and Security (the Permanent Rapporteur) and a Director-General selected from a list that is adopted periodically by the Commission (the Rapporteur). The candidate has then to pass an interview with the responsible Member of the Commission and with the Commissioner responsible for Budget and Human

Resources. In a final step, the College of Commissioners appoints Directors-General/Deputy Directors-General^[1].

2. Transfer in the interest of the service (Article 7 of the [Staff Regulations](#)). Officials in grades AD15 or AD16 who hold a post or carry out a function at senior management level, are eligible for transfer to another function at senior management level in the Commission in the interest of the service. This does not require the official to undergo the selection procedure outlined in point 1, neither does it require prior publication of the post.

In accordance with the Staff Regulations, the Article 7 procedure was used for the appointment of Mr Selmayr as Secretary-General of the Commission. The College took the decision unanimously on a proposal from the President, in agreement with the Commissioner responsible for Budget and Human Resources and after consultation of the First Vice-President.

3. How did the Commission appoint Mr Selmayr as its Secretary-General?

In accordance with normal Commission practice, and in order to safeguard the necessary degree of confidentiality, senior management appointments at Director-General or Deputy Director-General level are always presented directly to the College on the same day that the College decides on them (in this case on 21 February). The Commissioner responsible for Budget and Human Resources presented a set of proposals for [appointments of senior managers](#) in agreement with the President and after consulting the recruiting Commissioner and the relevant Vice-President(s). Among them was the decision to appoint Mr Selmayr as Deputy Secretary-General of the European Commission. Mr Selmayr had applied for this post (which had been published on 31 January 2018) and underwent the procedure foreseen in Article 29 of the Staff Regulations, including a full day Assessment Centre, an interview, assessment and opinion by the Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA), an interview with Commissioner Oettinger in charge of Budget and Human Resources and an interview with President Juncker.

On 20 February, Commissioner Oettinger was informed by President Juncker about the decision of Mr Italianer to submit his retirement letter the next morning (21 February) and that, consequently, he would propose that Mr Selmayr be transferred (in line with Article 7 of the Staff Regulations) to the post of Secretary-General. Commissioner Oettinger expressed his full agreement, and the proposal was then unanimously agreed by the College on 21 February.

Also on 20 February, the President consulted First Vice-President Timmermans who gave his agreement. The President consulted the First Vice-President, as he consults him on all important decisions of the Commission, in view of the special role he plays in the set-up of the Juncker Commission. In addition, the First Vice-President has a special relationship with the Secretary-General in view of his responsibility, notably for institutional matters, better regulation and the Commission's Work Programme.

When President Juncker then proposed, during the College meeting on 21

February, to appoint Mr Selmayr Secretary-General in line with Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, all Members of the College agreed unanimously.

4 How was it possible that Mr Selmayr was promoted twice within one College meeting?

There was no promotion. Mr Selmayr was an AD15 official before the Commission meeting of 21 February 2018, and he still is an AD15 official today.

5. Did Mr Selmayr have the necessary qualifications to be appointed Deputy Secretary-General and Secretary-General? Does he have management experience?

There is no doubt that Mr Selmayr, an AD15 official (since January 2017) with 8 years senior management experience in the Commission (as Head of Cabinet of former Vice-President Viviane Reding, Principal Adviser in DG ECFIN and then as Head of Cabinet of President Juncker), has all the necessary qualifications for the performance of the function of Deputy Secretary-General or Secretary-General (both being the same grade as can be seen from the table on page 1).

Mr Selmayr's Commission career record in detail:

Mr Selmayr has in fact undergone several selection procedures in his career in the European Commission:

- In 2002/2003, under the Prodi Commission, he was one of the 4,557 eligible candidates in an AD Competition COM/A/10/01 (Law). 156 candidates (3,4% rate) passed the competition, including Mr Selmayr. He was chosen from the 156 laureates reserve list published in the Official Journal (OJ 8.3.2003 C 54/5) and joined the European Commission in November 2004.
- In April/May 2014, Mr Selmayr was one of 91 candidates for the post of Principal Adviser to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (a position at the level of a Director in DG ECFIN) and successfully went through the entire selection procedure (Article 29 of the Staff Regulations), including a full day Assessment Centre, interview, assessment and opinion by the Consultative Committee on Appointments and interview by Olli Rehn, the Vice-President for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro. Subsequently, he was appointed Principal Adviser (a position at the level of Director) by the College of Commissioners under the Barroso Commission.
- In February 2018, Mr Selmayr applied for the position of Deputy Secretary-General and underwent again the procedure foreseen in Article 29 of the Staff Regulations, including a full day Assessment Centre, an interview, assessment and opinion by the Consultative Committee on Appointments, an interview with Commissioner Oettinger in charge of Budget and Human Resources and with President Juncker. He was appointed by unanimous decision of the College of Commissioners.

6. Could Mr Selmayr have been appointed to the position of Secretary-General without having been appointed to the position of Deputy Secretary-General before?

Yes. As an AD15 official holding a senior management function and with 8 years of senior management experience, Mr Selmayr was eligible for the post of Secretary-General and could have been directly transferred by a decision of the College using the Article 7 procedure. In this case, he would not have been required to go through an Assessment Centre and an interview, assessment and opinion by the Consultative Committee on Appointments.

7. How were the previous three Secretaries-General appointed?

They were appointed exactly in the same way as Mr Selmayr. David O'Sullivan, Catherine Day and Alexander Italianer were all transferred to the function of Secretary-General in the interest of the service in accordance with Article 7 of the Staff Regulations. In each case, the appointment was put directly to the College for decision at the very same day of its meeting.

8. Is it true that the post of Secretary-General was offered to him already in 2017? When did Mr Selmayr know what?

This is not true. The option for Mr Selmayr to become Secretary-General only became concrete for him on 20 February 2018 – after his interview with Commissioner Oettinger and after the President had consulted Commissioner Oettinger and First Vice-President Timmermans.

President Juncker explained during his press conference on 21 February that when agreeing to become Secretary-General in 2015, Mr Italianer had told the President that he intended to retire soon after 1 March 2018. The President discussed this information with his Head of Cabinet, like he does with all important senior management matters. The President did not share this information further in order not to undermine Mr Italianer's authority while he was in office.

The President and his Head of Cabinet also kept the hope to be able to convince Mr Italianer to stay on as Secretary-General beyond 1 March 2018. However, in early 2018, Mr Italianer confirmed that he would stick to his decision. Mr Italianer sent the President a formal letter stating his intention to retire on 31 March 2018 on the morning of 21 February 2018. After having sent this letter in the morning, he subsequently informed the College of Commissioners during their meeting on 21 February.

9. Why were the other 25 Commissioners not informed beforehand?

In accordance with normal practice, and in order to safeguard the necessary degree of confidentiality, senior management appointments at Director-General or Deputy Director-General level are always presented directly to the College on the same day that the College decides on them.

The involvement of the Commissioners depends on their respective portfolios. All Members of the Commission concerned are consulted on decisions on senior staff and organisational matters in their respective areas of responsibility before they are submitted to the Commission for approval.

This was the procedure applied for all senior management appointments and transfers proposed to the College on 21 February 2018.

10. Is it true that Commissioners agreed to Mr Selmayr's appointment as Secretary-General only because they had been promised additional "sweeteners", like increased pension allowances or financial benefits after the term of office?

This is not true. The Commission neither had nor has such plans. It does not have the legal competence to change the allowances of Commissioners.

Allowances for Commissioners fall under Council Regulation (EU) 2016/300 of 29 February 2016 determining the emoluments of EU high-level public office holders. The Regulation is based on Articles 243 and 286(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Both Articles do not foresee a right of initiative for the Commission.

11. Should the EU institutions change the way they appoint their senior managers?

The Commission fully shares the goal of a European Public Administration of excellence. The Commission therefore stands ready to discuss with the other EU institutions whether and how the application of the EU Staff Regulations, which apply to all EU institutions, can be further developed and strengthened. The need to recruit, appoint and promote talented officials on the basis of qualifications, skills and experience has to be as prominent in this discussion as the imperative to preserve the autonomy of each EU institution in its personnel decisions, the independence of decision-making processes from external influences as well as the supranational spirit of the European Public Administration.

While enhanced transparency is an important principle, it must not lead to senior management decisions becoming the object of negotiations between Member States and/or political parties, as this could call into question, notably with regard to the Commission, both the supranational spirit of the European Public Administration and the goal of having highly qualified senior managers. The Commission stands ready to pursue a constructive dialogue on these matters with the European Parliament, the Council and other EU institutions. In this dialogue, the Commission will explain that it has made good experience with the use of Assessment Centres and of external experts in our senior management selection procedures; they provide helpful objective input to assess qualifications, skills and experience of senior managers.

[\[1\]](#) Commission Decision C(2016)1881 of 4/4/2016 on the exercise of powers conferred by the Staff Regulations on the Appointing Authority (AIPN).