(EU) EU/BARROSO COMMISSION: José Manuel Durão Barroso Commission will have five Vice-Presidents, including Verheugen (coordinating Competitiveness Council) and Wallstrom (new responsibility for communications) - Dutch Woman, Kroes, as Competition Commissioner - Informal groups of Commissioners - Barroso heading Lisbon strategy and external relations groups - Paving way for Foreign Minister to have soft landing at Commission

Brussels, 12/08/2004 (Agence Europe) - More than a week ahead of his self-imposed deadline, the future President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durão Barroso, outlined to the press on 12 August the portfolios of the 24 members of the Commission of the enlarged European Union who will start work on 1 November 2004. Barroso laid great emphasis on the team spirit he wants to see in the College of Commissioners under his leadership to ensure the European Commission is in the driving seat of Europe. The five Vice-Presidents will include a Commissioner with a new responsibility - Margot Wallstrom will be responsible for institutional relations and also for Communications Strategy. The other Vice-Presidents are Gunter Verheugen (with responsibility for industry - a new portfolio. Barroso told reporters it didn't make sense to have a Commissioner for Agriculture but not for Industry); Jacques Barrot; Rocco Buttiglione (Barroso emphasised the word 'security' when describing his portfolio); ad Siim Kallas. There will not be a Vice-President for foreign relations in order to start preparing the 'soft landing' of the future European Foreign Minister as Vice-President of the European Commission, explained Barroso in response to a question. Barroso said he would himself chair the group of Commissioners with responsibility for foreign relations (Ferrero-Waldner, Michel, Mandelson and Rehn) and would be working closely with Javier Solana. Barroso will also chair the group of Commissioners following up the Lisbon Strategy, in close cooperation with Commissioner Verheugen.

All Commissioners will have equal powers and there will not be any first or second class Commissioners, stressed Barroso. He said he didn't want any clusters (an idea mooted in recent months), preferring informal groups of Commissioners based on responsibilities, like those responsible for the Lisbon Strategy or for foreign relations. There will not be any 'super Commissioners' but Verheugen will have the job of 'coordinating' the Competitiveness Council, commented a reporter. To which Barroso responded that Gunter Verheugen is one of the most experienced Commissioners, adding that co-ordination was needed because up to six Commissioner could be concerned by the Competitiveness Council. Asked about his selection of a Dutch woman, Neelie Kroes, to be Competition Commissioner, Barroso said that Kroes was the right person for the job because she understood the private sector and provided all the necessary guarantees of independence.

The full Commission (in alphabetical order):

Joaquin Almunia (Spain): Economic and Monetary Affairs; Jacques Barrot (France): Transport, Vice-President; Mariann Fischer Boel (Denmark): Agriculture and Rural Development; Joe Borg (Malta): Fisheries and Maritime Affairs; Rocco Buttiglione (Italy): Justice, Freedom and Security, Vice-President; Stavros Dimas (Greece): Environment; Benita Ferrero-Waldner (Austria): External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy; Jan Figel (Slovakia): Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism; Dalia Grybauskaite (Lithuania): Financial Programming and Budget; Danuta Hübner (Poland): Regional Policy; Siim Kallas (Estonia): Administrative Affair, Audit and Anti-fraud,
In its first issue after the summer holidays (24 August), Europe will publish brief biographies of all the members of the Barroso Commission.