

Brussels, 9 February 2005

Personnel: Commission appoints new Deputy Director-General for External Relations

The European Commission today decided to appoint Karel Kovanda as the new Deputy Director-General for External Relations.

Mr. Kovanda who is of Czech nationality, is currently his country's Permanent Representative on NATO's North Atlantic Council and represents the Czech Republic in the Western European Union (WEU). He replaces Mr. Fernando Valenzuela Marzo, Deputy Director-General CFSP, Multilateral Relations and North America, East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, EEA, EFTA, who will shortly take up function as the Head of Delegation of the European Commission to the United Nations in New York .

Karel Kovanda is 61 years old and was appointed by the Commission on a proposal by Vice-President Siim Kallas in charge of Administrative Affairs, in agreement with Commission President José Manuel Durão Barroso. Mr. Kovanda was chosen following the procedure for the appointment of senior officials.

In his new capacity he will operate under the political guidance of the Director General Eneko Landaburu and will also act as Political Director for the Commission. He has held various positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in his country, was appointed Deputy Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, Ambassador to the United Nations in New York. He was also member of the UN Security Council and contributed significantly to the Working Group for Security Council Reform.

He will take up his new post in coming weeks.