

## Commissioner-designate – Mariya Gabriel

Mariya Gabriel has been designated Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society. The Committees on Industry, Research and Energy and on Culture and Education jointly held a hearing with her on 20 June 2017. Parliament is due to vote on her appointment on 4 July.

### Background

The Commission consists of one national per Member State and thus (for now) 28 Members. Following the [resignation](#) of Kristalina Georgieva, who has since rejoined the World Bank, in October 2016, the Bulgarian government nominated Mariya Gabriel, a current MEP, to be a member of the European Commission, in May 2017. After meeting her, the Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, proposed to [allocate](#) the [Digital Economy and Society portfolio](#), previously held by Günther Oettinger, to Mariya Gabriel. As the Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, she will work with Vice-Presidents Andrus Ansip and Jyrki Katainen to support the implementation of the [Digital Single Market Strategy](#) adopted by the European Commission in May 2015. The Commission has already put forward 35 policy objectives, 21 of them [legislative proposals](#), based on three pillars aimed at (i) improving access for consumers and businesses to digital goods and services, (ii) creating growth-conducive conditions and a level playing field for digital networks and innovative services, and (iii) maximising the growth potential of the digital economy.

### Procedure and Parliament's role

According to Article 246(2) TFEU, a vacancy caused by the resignation of a Member of the Commission shall be filled for the remaining term of office by a new member of the same nationality, unless the Council decides otherwise. Under Rule 118(9) of [Parliament's Rules of Procedure](#) (RoP), where a change in the composition of the Commission occurs during the Commission's term of office, the Commissioner-designate shall be invited to participate in a parliamentary [hearing](#), as with appointments at the beginning of the Commission's mandate, and a vote in plenary then follows. [Annex VI, Rule 7](#), of the RoP requires, in addition, that Parliament act promptly. According to [Annex VI, Article 10](#), when such a vote concerns a single Commissioner it is to be by secret ballot. Parliament is expected to vote on Mariya Gabriel's appointment in plenary on 4 July 2017.

An additional issue concerns the position of the Commissioner-designate as a Member of the European Parliament. The [Act of 20 September 1976](#) concerning the election of Members of the European Parliament establishes that the office of Commissioner is incompatible with that of MEP. The RoP state that in the case of incompatibility the Parliament shall establish a vacancy. The President would thereafter invite the Member State concerned to fill that vacancy (Rule 4(4) and (6)).

#### Parliamentary hearing

On 20 June 2017, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) jointly undertook (together with the associated committees, IMCO, JURI and LIBE) a [hearing](#) of Mariya Gabriel. The Committees had earlier also posed [written questions](#) to Gabriel, spanning her personal qualifications (e.g. general competences, European commitment and personal independence) and her priorities and initial views on key policy issues. In her replies, Gabriel explained that she is committed to **promoting transparency and regular and in-depth dialogue with the European Parliament** at every stage of the legislative process. She stressed as well that she will redouble efforts to achieve the **35 policy initiatives from the Digital Single Market strategy** announced in May 2015. As a matter of priorities, Gabriel indicated that she wants, in particular, to reach political agreements with the co-legislators on the proposals relating to the [electronic telecommunications code](#), the reform of [copyright](#), [audiovisual media services](#) and [geo-blocking](#). Gabriel also announced targeted new initiatives in the field of cybersecurity, platform regulation and the cross-border flow of data, in line with [the mid-term review of the Digital Single Market strategy](#) published in May 2017.

