

# Commitments

made at the hearing of

## VALDIS DOMBROVSKIS

**Vice-President of the Commission,  
Commissioner for the Euro and Social Dialogue**



In his answers to the questionnaires and during the hearing on 6 October 2014 before the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Commissioner-designate Valdis Dombrovskis made commitments in his area of responsibility assigned to him by the President-elect of the Commission. Commitments relevant to the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs are highlighted in this document<sup>1</sup>.

## Future EMU

### **Presenting, next year, proposals to deepen the EMU**

*"During the first year of the next mandate, I would carry out preparatory work and present legislative and non-legislative initiatives to deepen our Economic and Monetary Union, firmly anchored in the Community method.*

*The first element among these initiatives will be a review of the "six-pack" and "two-pack" legislation."*

*Secondly, I would look into how the necessary structural reforms in the Member States could be further advanced and accelerated. This includes a reflection on how to improve delivery on reform commitments made and how to encourage further structural reforms in the longer term. We can also look into possible additional financial incentives to bring forward reforms and, in the longer-term, study the possibility, if necessary, of a targeted fiscal capacity for the euro area.*

*Thirdly, I would also work towards a proposal for a more efficient external representation of our Economic and Monetary Union."*

## European Semester

### **Improving the implementation of CSRs**

*"It must indeed be noted that implementation of the country-specific recommendations is probably not as high as one could expect. Different estimates put it at between 10 and 14. Parliament's assessment is 18. But it is clear that there are no, so to speak, sanctions attached to the country-specific recommendations nor is this its intention. So the idea here would be to strengthen ownership of the country-specific recommendations, meaning going deeper in discussions with both Member States and their social partners on those country specific recommendations. Also when we discuss, for example, EU funding, operational programmes,*

*to make sure too that EU funding is put or applied in line with the country-specific recommendations. We know that there is also macro-conditionality of EU funding which can also be used in a context of country-specific recommendations."*

### **Strengthening social indicators**

*"As regards social indicators within the European Semester.... the role of those indicators should be strengthened. This is something that I have repeated, myself, here several times. I look forward to working very closely with both President Juncker and Commissioner Thyssen to actually strengthen this social dimension and to ensure that economic and fiscal policies go closer together, also with social and employment policies."*

*"...should there be excessive imbalances, there are some other excessive imbalances procedures which can be used and in which social aspects should also be given much more prominent weight."*

## Troika

### **In favour of making the Troika more legitimate and accountable**

*"While the "Troika" format was set up under pressure to help prevent a financial and economic catastrophe, it should be gradually replaced with a more democratically legitimate and accountable structure."*

*"Bringing these Troika arrangements under the Community framework. (...) is something with which the Commission fully agrees and which it is very much willing to work towards. We know, however, that, for that, we need a Treaty change."*

### **Promoting fiscal - as well as social impact assessment of future support programmes**

*"In any future case, a strong emphasis must be given to assessing, in a systematic way, the likely social as well as economic impact of proposed*

programme measures. The preparation of social impact assessments should thus become an integral part of any future conditional stability support programme for euro area countries, in addition to fiscal sustainability assessments."

## Social Dimension of EMU

### Closely coordinating economic and social matters

☒ "We need to strengthen the social dimension of the EU and that, while dealing with the financial and economic policies, we need to fully take into account its social and employment consequences. (...) In doing so, I intend to work in very close cooperation with both Commissioner-designate Moscovici and Commissioner-designate Thyssen to put economic and social matters in close coordination."

### Strengthening involvement of social partners

"We need a real exchange with social partners and this must be focused on substance. Social Dialogue is absolutely essential to make the reforms possible, sustainable and effective. I would work in close cooperation with the Commissioner for Employment to ensure stronger engagement of social partners at national level."

"(...) certainly there is a scope for involving them more closely in the European Semester. In the case of the social partners at EU level, this probably means discussing everything with the social partners at specific points in the preparation of the annual growth survey because this is when the main directions are indicated; for the social partners at national level, it applies during the preparation of the in-depth review and country specific recommendations. Those are probably the points where we should be involving the social partners more closely."

### Social dialogue conducted also at the highest level

"As regards political level social dialogue, I would pursue regular discussions on economic and social priorities within the Tripartite Social Summit and consult the social partners prior to the adoption of the Annual Growth Survey, as the Commission already suggested in 2013."

"I would endeavour to give fresh impetus to the social dialogue at EU level. I believe that this is a crucial element of the social dimension of the EMU and an essential part of the EU's social market economy. My approach will be to focus on substance - a real exchange between social partners that delivers results for citizens."

## Wages

### In favour of setting minimum wages in all Member States

"As regards minimum wages in all Member States, this is certainly the proposal of President-elect Juncker, to which I also fully subscribe, that we should be encouraging all Member States to set minimum wages. We can do it through country-specific recommendations and also through social dialogue with the Member States concerned."

## Equal treatment of legislators

### In line with procedure

"I support and commit to fully implement the principle of equal treatment for the European Parliament and the Council regarding access to meetings or the flow of information, in line with the provisions of the Framework Agreement."

## Follow up to legislative initiative reports

### In line with the framework agreement and treaty requirement

*"I will apply the provisions of the Framework Agreement and, in my areas of responsibility, make sure that the Commission responds to parliamentary resolutions or requests made on the basis of Article 225 TFEU, within 3 months after their adoption. In this context, I support and fully endorse the commitment made by President-elect Juncker that the future Commission will be particularly attentive to legislative initiative reports."*

## Delegated and Implementing Acts

### In line with the framework agreement

*"I would make sure that the Commission's existing commitments, in line with the Common Understanding on delegated acts and the Framework Agreement with the Parliament, are fully respected. This concerns in particular the commitment to carry out appropriate and transparent consultations at expert level in the preparation of delegated acts and to ensure that the Parliament and the Member States receive the relevant information. It also means full respect of the provisions in the Framework Agreement in relation to the participation of Parliament's experts in expert groups meetings. I am convinced that the Commission should always be available to respond to questions or concerns of the Parliament. For implementing acts, a clear and comprehensive legal framework is in place with Regulation (EU)182/2011/EC, and transparency is ensured via the Comitology Register."*

## Relations with the EP

### Close cooperation with the committees

*"I would regularly attend plenary and committee meetings, and would be available for informal discussions and would remain in regular bilateral contact with MEPs, in particular the Chairs of my corresponding parliamentary committees. I confirm my full support to the intention of the President-elect to reinforce the special relationship between the two institutions. I also take good note of the President's-elect guidance 'to have a political and not technocratic dialogue with the European Parliament'."*

### Promoting the full use of Economic Dialogue

*"I would like to promote the full use of the Economic Dialogue which provides for discussions between the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the European Council and the Eurogroup. I will participate in discussions on the Commission's Annual Growth Survey and would actively engage with the Parliament on the challenges the Commission identifies at national level as well as on the Commission's assessment on implementation of country-specific recommendations. I would also encourage active participation of the Commission in inter-parliamentary meetings between representatives of the European Parliament and of national parliaments during the European Semester."*

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<sup>1</sup> Quotes are either taken from the commissioner-designate's answers to the questionnaire or from the hearing held on 6 October 2014. In case of multiple quotes on the same issue, only one is reported here to enhance legibility. Some quotes may be free translations of the original language spoken.

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