

Commitments

made at the hearing of

PHIL HOGAN

Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development



In his answers to the questionnaire and during the hearing on 2 October 2014 before the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, commissioner-designate Phil Hogan made a number of commitments. Commitments relevant to the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development are highlighted in this document¹.

Article 43(3) TFEU

“Any **use of Article 43(3)**, which allows the Council to decide alone, **must be the exception**. The ordinary legislative procedure, under which Parliament acts as co-legislator with the Council, is now the general rule in the area of the CAP.

All structural parameters and fundamental elements of a measure must be decided by Parliament and by Council as co-legislators. This is also true for prices, aid levels, quantitative limitations etc. Where these latter elements are part and parcel of a new measure, if I am confirmed as Commissioner, I will therefore include them in the proposal that I will make based on Article 43(2).

I will stand by these principles when defending the Commission's proposals before the Council...

Moreover, as regards the **court case brought by Germany against the use of Article 43(2)** for the fixing of the reference thresholds in the CMO Regulation, **I will fully support the Parliament's position** that the legal base chosen by the co-legislators for fixing these thresholds was the right one.”

Existing proposal concerning new School Schemes

“Any use of **Article 43(3)**, which allows the Council to decide alone, **must be the exception** ... **I will stand by these principles** when defending the Commission's proposals before the Council...

This **also** includes the Commission's existing proposal **for the new School Scheme**, which proposes that all elements of the new scheme, including its financial aspects, should be adopted by Parliament and Council acting together as co-legislators under Article 43(2) of the Treaty.”

Simplification and subsidiarity strategy

“If I am confirmed as Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development ... I would ask my services to carry out **a comprehensive screening of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) legislation** to see what can be simplified without putting the effectiveness of the policy and its sound financial management at risk. In addition, I would want the concept of subsidiarity to play a bigger role in the CAP.

... On the basis of this screening, I would intend to present **within the first year of my mandate a simplification and subsidiarity strategy** for the CAP which will include concrete initiatives together with a realistic planning for their implementation. It will also describe the way stakeholders will be involved in the process.”

“Within the first twelve months we will look at the **potential for further simplifying direct payments**: in particular as regards **greening, rural development, quality policy** and the **fruit and vegetable scheme**.”

“I can already say today that I would see it as **a two-step approach** with a first step being realised in the near future and a second step focusing on mid-term initiatives. The first step could thus include the following initiatives: after the first year of experience with the reform, a review of whether our policy, notably on **direct payments**, is designed so that it is being properly applied in practice. Where this is not the case, I will propose to amend our rules with a view to making them simpler and more efficient. This exercise will of course include the arrangement on **greening** and the **Ecological Focus Area** (EFA) measure, in line with the commitments made by the outgoing Commission.

Reviews and, where appropriate, proposals concerning: possibilities for further

harmonisation and simplification in the area of **geographical indications**; the simplification potential with regard to the **fruit and vegetable scheme**.”

Mid-term review of the CAP

“**We will have a mid-term review of the CAP** once we have sufficient data.”

Multiannual Financial Framework

“We will contribute to the **2016 review of the Multiannual Financial Framework** by identifying ways to further focus the CAP on jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness.”

Water Framework Directive

“I am committing myself to **improving the situation** under the Water Framework Directive.”

Energy and climate change

“We will also examine how the agricultural sector can best contribute to **boosting energy efficiency and cutting emissions**”

Political dialogue with the Parliament

“As a Commissioner I would ensure a **constructive political dialogue** with the European Parliament and its committees based on **openness, transparency, mutual trust, regular reporting and exchange of information**. I see the relationship with you as elected Members of Parliament as vital and I would wish to engage fully with you at all times.”

“I firmly believe that the **Commission and Parliament should work very closely together** in that spirit, and that is the best way to maximise our impact – for the good of

European agriculture and the good of all of the people of Europe.”

“I look forward to **regular meetings, formally and informally**, with members of this committee in order to advance what we wish to do.”

“On the communication: there is certainly a view being expressed that **we need to look at better communication between the services and Parliament**. I want to fully acknowledge this particular issue and to **engage with the leadership of the groups to see what we can do to improve communications**.”

Follow-up of Parliament’s positions and requests

“Concerning the follow-up to European Parliament’s positions and requests, 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**.”

Transparency

“I fully support our **new commitment to transparency** set out in the political guidelines by the President-elect. I commit to making public all the contacts and meetings I hold with professional organisations or self-employed individuals on any matter relating to EU policy making and implementation.”

Equal Treatment of co-legislators

*"I fully subscribe to the need for **equal treatment of the European Parliament and Council.**"*

Provision of documents

*"As regards the **provision of documents** to the European Parliament, I will ensure the provisions of the **Framework Agreement are fully implemented.**"*

*On a day to day basis I will work closely with my cabinet and my services to ensure that **relations are based on loyalty, trust, transparency, a two-way information flow and mutual assistance.**"*

Delegated acts/Scrutiny

*"In the area under my responsibility I will ensure that the Commission's existing commitments in line with the Common Understanding on delegated acts and the Framework Agreement 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 experts from the Parliament in expert group meetings.** This should also facilitate the Parliament's scrutiny, in particular of delegated acts, where the Parliament has **ex-post control rights.**"*

*"I also commit to **a transparent and constructive relationship with COMAGRI and Parliament in general when it comes to the preparation of delegated acts.**"*

Trade agreements developments

*"I am ready to appear regularly in the AGRI Committee to **update on relevant agriculture-related developments, both on bilateral and multilateral trade agreements**"*

¹ Quotes are either taken from the commissioner-designate's answers to the questionnaire or from the hearing held on 2 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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