

# Commitments

made at the hearing of

## **KARMENU VELLA**

**Commissioner for Environment,  
Maritime and Fisheries**



In his answers to the questionnaire and during the hearing on 29 September 2014 before the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Fisheries, the commissioner-designate Karmenu Vella made a number of commitments.

Commitments relevant to the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Fisheries are highlighted below<sup>1</sup>.

## **Green growth as the first priority**

*"With continuing record levels of unemployment, Europe must continue its efforts to strengthen global competitiveness while creating jobs and growth."*

*"Protecting the environment and maintaining our competitiveness go hand in hand (...)"*

## **The 7th Environment Action Programme as a guiding framework**

*"The Seventh Environmental Action Plan sets out a road map for stimulating resource-efficient low carbon growth and innovation, while protecting our natural capital and safeguarding the health and well-being of our citizens." "With regard to the Seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP), as I said, it is a mandate, because it has already been co-decided by Parliament and the Council."*

## **Mainstreaming environmental policies**

*"We need to make certain that environmental policies are streamed – integrated – into every economic policy"*

*"If we are planning any economic policies for the future, then the environment has to be part and parcel of the initial decision-making process as well".*

## **Protecting natural capital and our citizens**

*"My second priority will be protecting the natural capital on which sustainable growth depends and safeguarding the health and well-being of our citizens."*

## **Meeting the 2020 biodiversity targets**

*"We must step up efforts to meet the 2020 biodiversity targets with a legal framework that is fit for purpose."*

*"I plan to present a solid mid-term assessment of progress in achieving our 2020 objectives, including at the international level."*

## **Sustainable development**

*"Finally, the EU will need to maintain its international lead in environmental issues and in developing the Sustainable Development Goals."*

## **Continuation of the current REFIT agenda**

### **The Habitats and Birds Directives**

*"I am committed to ensuring that the on-going Fitness Check in this area provides a thorough, transparent and evidence based evaluation, which will allow us to assess the potential for merging them into a more modern piece of legislation."*

### **The Environmental Liability Directive**

*"The latter (compliance with the polluter-pays principle) will also be addressed in an evaluation carried out under REFIT to assess the performance of the Environmental Liability Directive which I intend to present in the first half of my mandate."*

## **Implementation of the EU legislation**

*"Implementation is the key challenge in the European Union, and it is useless to carry on coming up with more and more legislation unless we start implementing."*

*"I would expect each and every Member State to implement all the directives"*

*"I will not hesitate to make full use of the Commission legal enforcement instruments to ensure compliance including with the polluter-pays principle."*

### **Continuous implementation of REACH directive**

*"And we must continue implementing REACH, as the Union's instrument to address the risks from chemicals. Together with my fellow Commissioner*

*Ms Bienkowska, I will ensure that our objectives are met in the most effective way".*

### **Resource efficiency agenda**

*"I will be fully engaged in taking the resource efficiency agenda forward. This will include assessing the state of play of the Circular Economy Package"*

### **The Air Package**

*"I will take stock of the state of play in the negotiations on air strategy (...). This assessment will guide the next steps in the negotiations."*

### **Multiannual management Plans (MAPs)**

*"My aim will be to keep the plans simple and result-oriented. Consultation with stakeholders and Member States is essential, as is getting the most up-to-date scientific advice. **The first plan to be proposed very soon is for the Baltic fisheries;** other new plans, such as a MAP for the North Sea fisheries, are also under preparation".*

### **Regulation on Technical Measures**

*"The adoption of the proposal on new Technical Measures is one of my most immediate priorities. **This proposal should set the tone of the new approach to law-making in the CFP.**"*

*"Mesh sizes, fisheries closures, or measures to protect sensitive habitats will need to be specified according to the objective the co-legislators have set: to reach MSY for all stocks by 2015, and where this is not possible, by 2020 at the latest".*

### **Eco-labelling**

*"The Commission has committed to run a feasibility study on eco-labelling after consultations with stakeholders, covering both fishery and aquaculture products".*

*"I look forward to the results of the consultation and of the study so that we can have an informed debate on this crucial issue for European consumers*

***and I commit to having that debate during next year."***

### **Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs)**

*"The recent reform of SFPAs has put emphasis on enhanced consistency with external relations objectives (notably with the inclusion of a human rights clause) and with development goals (leading for example to more specific targeting of sectoral support). My intention is to ensure that these principles are fully respected in all the forthcoming negotiations".*

### **Implementation of the Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) regulation**

*"I will report to the EP and Council very shortly on the implementation of the IUU regulation, including **an assessment of consistency** with other EU policies."*

### **Cooperation with the European Parliament**

*"I pledge to establish an open and transparent relationship with the Members of Parliament, based on mutual trust and regular and **comprehensive exchanges of information**"*

*"I reiterate my commitment to consult extensively with Parliament from the very early stages of the legislative procedure and to make myself available for **regular meetings with coordinators, rapporteurs and committee members**"*

*"I will fully respect the **Framework Agreement** on Relations between the European Parliament and the Commission".*

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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 29 September 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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This document is available on the Internet at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/studies>

ISBN: QA-05-14-055-EN-C (paper)

Catalogue number: 978-92-823-6185-6 (paper)

ISBN: QA-05-14-055-EN-N (pdf)

Catalogue number: 978-92-823-6184-9 (pdf)

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