

# Commitments

made at the hearing of

## MAROŠ ŠEFČOVIČ

**Vice-President of the Commission,  
Commissioner for Energy Union**



In his answers to the questionnaire and during the hearing on 20 October 2014 before the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food safety, the commissioner-designate Maroš Šefčovič made a number of commitments.

Commitments relevant to the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and to the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety are highlighted in this document<sup>1</sup>.

## Energy security and supply

### Energy security

*"I will address the issue of energy security with the utmost attention and with the general European interest in mind."*

### Security of Supply

*"A further important element is the diversification of supply, both as regards routes and energy suppliers. We should work intensely on the Southern Corridor to get Caspian gas to Europe. We must further develop our partnership with Norway and promote the Mediterranean gas hub project, including developing energy cooperation with Algeria. Moreover, the development of LNG terminals opens new import possibilities."*

*"So my clear preference is to diversify energy sources and to do our utmost to get the Southern Corridor project well under way and to put our financial and political support firmly behind this project."*

### Nuclear Safety

*"I believe that all the expertise we have in the Commission and all the stress test results and verification of the safety of these installations will be properly done and I can assure you that if there were any doubts from the Commission's side that this nuclear power plant is not up to the highest level of security and safety, the Commission would clearly make its views public and we will deal (...) to make sure that all steps taken in this direction respect the highest level of security and safety for nuclear power plants."*

## Energy Governance

### EU Energy Diplomacy

*"It is time for a more assertive European Energy diplomacy, where our energy interests feature permanently among our top foreign and trade policy priorities. Better energy policy coordination is necessary to resist undue pressure from third countries and to avoid market distortions due to agreements with third countries not respecting EU rules. I am in favour of a European debate leading to*

*a consensus, in order to give a mandate to the European Commission to negotiate international agreements on behalf of the EU with third countries".*

### Coordination of Energy Union

*"Of course it would be very important to work very closely with all the services that are responsible for environmental legislation, so I can promise you that from my point of view the role of the Vice-President is the role of a coordinator, to make sure that services are cooperating together from the outset."*

*"I will make sure that Europe is moving in one direction, speaks with one voice and has a very clear framework for what we want to achieve, not only between now and the Paris meeting, but up to 2030 and up to 2050."*

### Paris conference

*"I think that the top priority would be to have a successful outcome and to have an international legally binding agreement in Paris. I think we owe it to the planet, we owe it to our citizens and we have to make sure that the industry is on a level playing field with its international partners."*

### Relation with Russia

*"We have to very clearly state our positions. When it comes to the operation of Russian companies on European soils, they have to respect European rules. I think that is absolutely unequivocal and very clear."*

## Competitiveness and prices

### Competitive and completed internal market

*"A completed internal market will represent the backbone of the new European Energy Union. This means increasing cross-border flows, more regional cooperation and a better connected infrastructure. EU legislation needs to be improved, reinforced and fully applied. We need to maintain the competitiveness of EU industry and secure affordable energy prices for households, especially the most vulnerable ones."*

### **Energy poverty**

*"I think we could also do a lot at European level, at first to learn from each other what we can do in terms of social policies for the most vulnerable people, for the most vulnerable households."*

*"We can use the European Social Fund, we can use the Structural Funds in this matter."*

*"Therefore I think it is very important that we also adopt state aid guidelines for the energy environment because this framework would allow us to also consider schemes which could be helpful for people who are in dire need of help in their situation and who should have access to affordable energy."*

## **Efficiency and Emissions reductions**

### **Energy efficiency**

*"Energy efficiency has to be perceived more as a 'first energy source'. The cleanest megawatt is the one saved. Energy efficiency should be significantly enhanced beyond 2020. Improving energy efficiency will not only increase energy security, but also enhance the competitiveness of European industry. (...) our priority areas should be buildings, transport and products."*

### **Decarbonisation of the EU energy mix**

*"We must decarbonise the economy in line with the long-term goal set out in the EU's 2050 Roadmap. This will involve reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as increasing the share of renewable energy resources and reducing energy consumption. A strengthened EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) – through the introduction of the Market Stability Reserve – will ensure that these targets can be achieved at least cost." "I want to continue the successful reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We need to be ambitious with our targets for 2030 and I am fully committed to making the EU the world's number one in renewable energies."*

### **Research and innovation**

*"Further investment in research and innovation is crucial, in particular because the European Union needs to step up its efforts to bring new, high performance, low-cost, low-carbon energy technologies to the market. New technologies and solutions are vital to achieving the EU 2030 objectives in energy, climate, economic and social policy, and beyond."*

### **Renewables**

*"I believe that we will see more research and development results in this domain, which will increase the efficiency of energy sources even more. So this clearly would be one of the priorities of the European Commission because if we are talking about indigenous sources, if we are talking about energy independence in Europe and if we are talking about our international obligations, which we entered into as a developed part of the world, relating to 2015, renewable energy is clearly the key way to achieve them."*

*"I can tell you that already right now that I am very convinced that we will exceed the 27% target, because from the discussions we had with the Member States there are several countries which would like to go over that 27% target."*

### **Carbon leakage**

*"I think that in this respect it is quite clear that the carbon leakage mechanism will have to stay in our policy toolbox, not only now but also for the post-2020 period, because otherwise our industry will move to the territories where they do not respect environmental legislation and pollute much more than in our countries, and on top of this we would lose our competitiveness and jobs in Europe."*

### **Carbon capture and Storage**

*"I believe that we can use the support for new carbon capture and storage technologies, and also the investment fund, which I believe will be created, in helping Poland to renew the power stations so that they are much, much cleaner than they are right now."*

## Cooperation with the European Parliament

### Respecting the well established procedures and the Framework Agreement

*"I will, of course, ensure that the Commission respects its commitments in line with the Common Understanding on delegated acts and the Framework agreement with the Parliament which I negotiated on behalf of the Commission, for example the commitment to carry out appropriate and transparent consultations at expert level in the preparation of delegated acts or to ensure that the Parliament and the Member States receive all relevant information. This includes naturally full respect of the provisions in the Framework Agreement in relation to the participation of Parliament's experts in expert groups meetings. For implementing acts a clear and comprehensive legal framework is in place with Regulation (EU)182/2011 and transparency is ensured via the Comitology Register."*

*"It will be therefore one of my most important tasks to ensure coherent external positions between the EU and its Member States, and across climate and energy fields in view of the very significant synergies."*

*In the energy field, we have some examples of international agreements with the EU as a party. I think that we should have more of them in the future. This is key if we want the EU to speak with one voice in order to secure our energy supplies and promote a sustainable transition of our energy systems, but also to export our technologies and standards. I will of course fully comply with the relevant Treaty provisions, as well as with the Framework Agreement in this regard as well.*

### Openness

*Finally, in the nuclear field, the Euratom Community is party to all major international Conventions concluded under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency and has entered into several nuclear cooperation agreements with third countries. I am aware that a practice was agreed with the European Parliament, and I will continue to keep the relevant parliamentary committees informed of all international agreements negotiated on the basis of the Euratom Treaty accordingly.*

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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 20 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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