HIGHLIGHTS  
from the European Parliament hearing of  
NEVEN MIMICA  
European Commissioner  
for International Cooperation and Development

Neven Mimica, the recently-confirmed European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, appeared before the European Parliament’s Committee on Development (DEVE) on 29 September 2014 to answer MEPs' questions.

In that hearing and in his answers to the questionnaire prepared for the meeting, Commissioner Mimica made a number of statements of interest to the European Parliament.

This document provides a summary of his most salient points.

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First priority:  
Post-2015 framework

"My first priority: an ambitious post-2015 framework (...) to eradicate poverty through inclusive and sustainable development. (...) The new framework must fully address the social, economic and environmental dimensions, and achieve the optimal balance between them. Equally, it must incorporate full respect for human rights, equality, democratic values and the rule of law, peace and security."  
"It will be a tremendous challenge to bring all aspects together under one single, universal and comprehensive framework which would apply to all countries, rich and poor alike. But it is a challenge in which we have to succeed."  
"We should strive to achieve acceptance by all stakeholders of two key proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): better governance, including protection of human rights (...), and a more specific goal relating to implementation (...) I expect in this regard the input from the European Parliament’s INI report."

Financing for development

"A core element of the post-2015 process will be development finance (...) All Member States should step up their efforts to (...) invest at least 0.7% of their gross national income in development aid. (...) While recognising the economic problems of Europe in recent years, I would urge Member States to honour this commitment within the new framework."  
"I will be ready to include [blending] in the reinforced informal dialogue with the committee and to include consideration of how to improve parliamentary scrutiny of the blending facilities."  
"A financial transaction tax is one important possibility to increase financing capacities. (...) We have to make this proposal as comprehensive for all Member States as possible."

Aid effectiveness and donor coordination  
(described by the Commissioner as another priority)

"Pledge to further integrate the commitments of the made at the Busan Forum in our operations (...) to help implement the post-2015 agenda." "I will make donor coordination role the fourth priority of my future actions. (...)"

Second priority:  
Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries

Post-Cotonou framework

"My second priority would be to launch and negotiate a post-Cotonou framework (...) I intend immediately next year, at an early stage, to launch a broad consultation including Parliament, including the Committee on Development, on our new approach to the post-Cotonou framework."

"It is not a question whether we shall continue such a partnership with ACP countries, especially with Africa. Yes, we shall do it (...) But we have to adapt to some of the new realities, which means that maybe we can think of having overarching principles agreed with the ACP countries that would cover all aspects of our future cooperation, and then to develop specific programmes for Africa or for regions or for groups of countries within ACP countries."

Human rights and political dialogue

"We shall be more ready to activate political dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. The second step relates to the next provision of suspending aid under Article 96, which means more bilateral discussions including with the European Parliament in order to set the right policy answer to have a continuation of the assistance, not through government channels but directly to those who are in real need of this assistance and aid."

Third Priority:  
Policy Coherence for Development

"My third priority would be to contribute towards significantly enhanced policy coherence (...) I will strive to further improve policy coherence for development under the overall guidance of and in close collaboration with the High Representative/Vice-President. I would insist on forward-looking monitoring of relevant initiatives, engage in early discussions and close dialogue with my fellow Commissioners, and make an in-depth analysis of any contributions to individual initiatives when they take shape."
Trade and private sector
"We have to bring more of a development dimension into the free trade agreements and the economic partnership agreements [EPAs] that we negotiate with the groups of countries and regions in Africa."
"I, as the Development Commissioner, will commit to (...) monitor what impact any aspect of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) could have on the development interests of developing countries (...) ensuring that negative impacts of the TTIP are not translated or spill over into development cooperation or sustainable development goals."
"I will consider very soon how to address [corporate social] responsibility in the garment and the textile industry, bringing on board the issues of child labour and labour standards."

Migration
"Development money and actions should not be directly focused and directed to building the walls in Europe for the illegal migration, but (...) to dismantle the walls back in their countries of origin that prevent them to be a real inclusive part of societies and economies there."

Selected issues for development cooperation
Basic social services
"I can commit to do my utmost to really address this issue in order to have development funds 20% of which will cover basic social services and secondary education."
"The International Conference on Population and Demography in Cairo puts sexual and reproductive health and rights at the forefront of the healthcare action. This will continue to be an important part of the European assistance and development response."

Climate change
"We are in a better position to allocate a bit more than 20% from development funds [to climate change-relevant actions]. (...) Once we come to the mid-term review of the MFF, we really have to take clear consideration of climate change financing where I would be very committed to engage in dialogue with Parliament."

Governance, property rights, tax evasion
"I would really commit to go deeper into programmes that would assist better governance and that would actually enable, for instance, property rights to be given to the small landowners or users of the land, and not the big land-grabbing companies."
"I also see that our programmes that assist good governance capacity-building in the developing countries must be more and more focused on these issues of tax evasion and our monitoring of these processes should be (...) also part of our common policy dialogue."

Cooperation with the European Parliament
"I am firmly committed to ensure transparency of my work (...) towards the European Parliament in order to ensure good inter-institutional co-operation, strengthen legitimacy and accountability of my work, and contribute to efficiency and good governance."
"I will always be available for meetings and the exchange of information with the European Parliament, and I commit to provide prompt and clear information. I will pursue a constructive political dialogue with the Parliament (...) based on mutual trust, transparency, regular reporting and exchange of information."
"The Strategic Dialogue represents a key opportunity to discuss strategic programming orientations at political level (...) I stand ready to personally represent the Commission at future Strategic Dialogues on the DCI with the Parliament. I would ensure that the positions expressed by the Parliament are taken into account before the adoption of programming documents."
"I fully endorse the commitment (...) that the future Commission will be particularly attentive to legislative initiative reports."
"Based on the recommendations of the mid-term review report, the Commission shall adopt delegated acts."

1 Quotes are either taken from Commissioner Mimica’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. Some quotes may be free translations of the original language spoken.